

LAMOILLE NORTH SUPERVISORY UNION BOARD
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2014
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER

Board members present: Belvidere – none; Cambridge – Jan Sander; Eden – David Whitcomb, Amy Fitzgerald; Hyde Park – Raven Walters; Johnson – Katie Orost; LUSD #18 – Carl Szlachetka, William Sander; Waterville – none. Others: Edith Beatty, Charleen McFarlane.

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order and Approval of Agenda*

C. Szlachetka called the meeting to order at 5:06.

2. *Preliminary Discussion on Superintendent Performance Measures*

E. Beatty said she welcomes this process because she wants to be successful. She has done a fair amount of personnel and program evaluation and what she has learned works is for it to be a process and not one event. She would like formative as well as summative evaluation. She doesn't want to get to the end and find she is not attending to priorities. She and C. McFarlane looked at some different instruments. A few were distributed at the start of the meeting. What would help her and is recommended by VSBA is to develop 1-3 priority areas, goals, or projects. There is a lot that is her responsibility. Everything is important, but it is good to say what matters most.

C. Szlachetka said in his experience in the corporate world, employers and employees typically came up with at most 7 or 8 specific goals. He thumbed through the old evaluation used in LNSU and it appears to have a lot more than 6 or 8 major objectives. Aside from the major objectives there could be space for comments on things that are not specifically addressed as objectives. His recommendation would be to come up with no more than 7 or so primary objectives, maybe even fewer.

D. Whitcomb said p. 17 of the instrument previously used in LNSU is unnecessary. It has questions about the superintendent working with state agencies, but the board has no way to know how well she works with state agencies. If we hear complaints from state agencies then we would have a committee look into that. The questions will be to each board. Each board knows how the superintendent works with them, but not with other boards. Regarding working with families, we only know from what we have heard ourselves. Each board would answer the questions separately and then responses would be combined.

C. Szlachetka said VSBA suggests that the board may collect evaluative information from other entities. One idea he had was to survey not only boards but principals and community partners (e.g. court diversion.) He recommends that whatever this committee develops go out to boards so they can provide input into the final document.

A. Fitzgerald suggested an evaluation with 3 parts, which could have different weights. The first part would be about competencies and daily activities (for instance, does the superin-

tendent come to meetings?) It would be important to ask each board those questions. The second part would evaluate 2 or 3 goals or initiatives we wanted to see worked on. The third part would be future goals and some self-evaluation. She thinks we need to evaluate broad goals like working on the Common Core, but it is important not to dismiss things like whether the superintendent helps at meetings, facilitates when there is a problem, etc. She likes the approach of asking principals and community partners. At Copley, where she works, each employee does a self-evaluation as well. She thinks it is important to evaluate broad spectrum initiatives and also the daily work of the superintendent and what makes her effective to boards and community members.

R. Walters said she agrees. D. Whitcomb said board members can't know about all of the superintendent's competencies. A. Fitzgerald said there can be a "don't know/doesn't apply" option.

C. Szlachetka said that seems reasonable to him. A. Fitzgerald said you can weight it so major initiatives have just as much weight as competencies, if not more.

W. Sander said input from administrators is often a lot more valuable than input from board members because administrators have more interaction with the superintendent, but there is always fear of retribution. In the past he has made sure to provide anonymity to administrators who gave evaluative input. Only he and C. McFarlane knew who said what. He thinks that worked. He is not particularly enamored of the tool we used in the past, but he thinks we do need to include administrators and a guarantee of anonymity. C. Szlachetka agreed. W. Sander said we can say whether input came from an administrator or board member, but no more.

C. McFarlane said each board member who fills out a survey can say which board they are from so each board can get their results. With Survey Monkey, people can fill out surveys online or she can print them out for those who prefer not to do it online. A. Fitzgerald said Survey Monkey aggregates the results, which is convenient. There is also a place for comments, such as what you want to see for initiatives.

W. Sander said this is an important thing but it has to be done in the least burdensome way, especially for the superintendent. The superintendent shouldn't have to spend all her time filling out forms, etc. It is also important that there be a mechanism for destroying original comments after a certain time. D. Whitcomb asked what is wrong with keeping the comments if they are the truth. W. Sander said it becomes a problem if anonymity can no longer be guaranteed. A. Fitzgerald said W. Sander means that we should save the aggregate results, but get rid of the original forms individuals filled out. R. Walters said from a practical standpoint once data is aggregated the originals are not needed and are just taking up space.

E. Beatty said the board should recognize that she evaluates principals and so if principals are asked to evaluate her, retaliation is possible. And if there is one disgruntled person that affects the aggregate results. There are techniques sometimes used such as throwing out the most positive and the most negative responses. She thinks the boards are very different from each other. That is why it would help her to set priorities that all agree on.

A. Fitzgerald said she always works with the person she is evaluating to create goals. It might be interesting to see what E. Beatty would come up with for important initiatives. E. Beatty said a clear priority this year should be getting to know the boards and what they want. She could come up with her own suggested priorities. A. Fitzgerald said she thinks that will help us build the tool.

C. McFarlane said E. Beatty is in the first year of a 2-year contract. The LNSU board is scheduled to meet in November, possibly in December, then not again until March, then May and September. The committee should think about how the evaluation process timeline fits into that. The contract says by April 1 E. Beatty should know if there will be a successor contract.

C. Szlachetka said he doesn't think the LNSU board has enough meetings to meet its needs. He wouldn't be opposed to a special meeting to discuss this subject. C. McFarlane suggested the fourth week of January as a time when that could happen.

It was agreed to schedule another executive committee meeting preceding the November LNSU board meeting. At that meeting, the committee will review E. Beatty's suggested goals and those suggested by boards and decide on the ones E. Beatty will be evaluated on. The complete tool can be built during the course of the year. The executive committee will report out to the full board at the November meeting on the goals that have been established and will ask board member to think about other criteria that should be included in the evaluation and pass suggestions on to their chairs.

C. McFarlane said administrators in our SU have always completed superintendent evaluation forms. If the board asked teachers or outside organizations to complete them, 80% of the questions would be answered with "don't know/doesn't apply." The committee needs to decide which outside groups should be involved. Some might interact with C. Gallagher, for instance, more than with E. Beatty. And the committee needs to think about which questions would be applicable. We could have different tools for outside people.

A. Fitzgerald said she feels it is a concern that principals are evaluating the superintendent when the superintendent is also evaluating them. She suggests each board talk to its own principal. That way maybe there can be more back and forth. And the board will already know how the principal was evaluated by the superintendent and can take that into consideration. Boards could include community partners, too. Who will be tasked to talk to outside organizations like Laraway? If each board did some of that, it could make it easier because no one would have to do it all.

C. Szlachetka said it had been mentioned that principals might be reluctant to participate in superintendent evaluation for fear of retribution. There might be less reluctance if principals could fill out a questionnaire and send it in rather than talking to their board.

A. Fitzgerald said she thinks Eden's principal is comfortable talking to the board and the board has a good perspective on what the internal relationships are like. She doesn't think he

would be fearful of retribution from the board for what he says. Talking to the board might eliminate some of a principal's reluctance to put his neck out there, even to C. McFarlane.

C. Szlachetka asked how others feel about letting the board query the principal. C. McFarlane said it should happen in executive session. R. Walters said that would work for Hyde Park. She thinks her board has a good relationship with the principal.

K. Orost asked if A. Fitzgerald is saying that her whole board fills out just one evaluation form. A. Fitzgerald said that is what they did the last time. Maybe if they included the principal in their evaluation form, the principal might feel more comfortable with that and it would be less daunting for someone trying to keep track of responses. E. Beatty said it might be harder for the high school board to come to consensus and submit a single form. A. Fitzgerald said she is not necessarily saying each board member wouldn't fill out their own form. But it does it affect the validity of the results if a board includes the principal's point of view and he also does a separate evaluation?

It was agreed to schedule the next executive committee meeting immediately before the November LNSU board meeting. C. Szlachetka suggested each person bring no more than 6 suggested goals and then the group will decide which are most critical. K. Orost suggested there could be a goal for each of the areas in the job description except personal traits. C. Szlachetka said there are some things not specifically identified in there that might be important, such as implementing the Common Core. A. Fitzgerald said she thinks the things in the job description would fit better in the other section of the evaluation she had talked about – the section that would address competencies. The things in the job description are things we always want the superintendent do, as opposed to initiatives that would change from year to year. (*M. Frederick arrived at 5:49.*) R. Walters said she was thinking each board would come up with just one or two suggested priorities, not as many as 6. She thinks it could be a nightmare if each board came up with 6. The committee agreed it would be good if E. Beatty could send out her ideas for goals before the next meeting.

W. Sander said a major function of the executive committee is supervision of retirement plans. He thinks the last time the committee met for this was spring 2008. It should be done at least annually. M. Frederick said the same oversight we would provide is provided at the state level for Great West, so it isn't necessary for us to do it. But the committee should provide oversight for plans not handled by Great West.

A. Fitzgerald said for the November executive committee meeting she can bring multi-tiered tools she has used in the past. C. Szlachetka said that would be great.

3. ***Adjourn***

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 5:58, and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by,
Donna E. Griffiths