

LAMOILLE NORTH SUPERVISORY UNION BOARD
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2015
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER

Board members present: Belvidere – none; Cambridge – Jan Sander; Eden – David Whitcomb; Hyde Park – Raven Walters; Johnson – none; LUSD #18 – William Sander; Waterville – none.
Others: Edith Beatty, Catherine Gallagher.

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order*

D. Regan called the meeting to order at 5:27.

2. *Superintendent Goals and Evaluation Process*

The draft evaluation instrument developed by Amy Fitzgerald had been sent out prior to the meeting. D. Regan said he understood that at the last meeting E. Beatty had handed out samples of evaluations used in other SU's and that they tend to be more process-heavy than instrument-driven. Is that correct?

C. Gallagher said she can comment on evaluations used in education. A. Fitzgerald's draft is not typical of what is used in education. When evaluating teachers, we ask them to identify goals and objectives and then evaluate them on the agreed-upon objectives. This seems a little more subjective.

D. Regan said he was under the impression that E. Beatty had formulated a handful of goals and he had assumed this instrument integrated those goals into its sections. Is that the case or not?

C. Gallagher said it's not apparent to her that the goals are integrated.

E. Beatty said pages 1 and 2 of the draft evaluation instrument covers what people had said they wanted the superintendent to do. Then page 3 covers the goals E. Beatty set.

R. Walters said the committee had discussed the fact that many things we need a superintendent to be effective at – facilitating meetings, etc. – aren't appropriate goals. We talked about capturing some of those with a rating scale so we could identify if there were gaps in those areas. She thinks there is more to do to make E. Beatty's goals articulated goals with milestones that can be evaluated.

J. Sander said these are the same goals we talked about at the last meeting. This is a 2-pronged evaluation. There is a subjective part and a part addressing the goals. She likes the subjective part. If someone is having difficulty with leadership or is a good leader, it can identify specific ways they are falling short or excelling, which makes it easier to discuss.

W. Sander said he thinks the instrument items are well done and may get to the point better than some prior instruments. Evaluation of an administrator is quite different from evaluation of a classroom teacher. He thinks an item specifically addressing whether the superintendent keeps well abreast of state and national standards and proposed standards might be in order.

D. Regan asked when the process, including the instrument, has to be approved.

E. Beatty said that was discussed and not really resolved. She has a 2-year contract, so the evaluation would have to be done by next December. But she thinks it was the executive committee's desire to do something this school year.

D. Regan said E. Beatty had talked about wanting formative, not just summative, evaluation – a gauge of how people think she is doing. That seems desirable, so it seems we should do an evaluation this year.

W. Sander said it should be done annually and April is probably the best time to do it.

There was discussion about when the executive committee should meet again to discuss this further. W. Sander said he thinks the executive committee should meet monthly. If there is a full LNSU board meeting one month, the executive committee could meet before that meeting.

D. Regan asked if it would be reasonable to meet in February and then again just before the March meeting of the full board.

R. Walters said she thinks so. She thinks it would be wrong to wait until next year to give E. Beatty feedback. She thinks there is work to do on this evaluation instrument, but it is better to use it this year and then refine it next year than to do nothing this year. For future years we might want to think about institutionalizing a time frame for doing superintendent reviews that would allow us to identify whether the superintendent was not working out in plenty of time to advertise for a new one at a time of year when many applicants were available.

E. Beatty said this instrument seems like a dipstick. There are a lot of ways to think about an ongoing plan. The board might start by asking her to bring evidence of accomplishment of the goals.

D. Regan said he thinks if something needs to be corrected having it surface is good, but in his opinion an earlier process is important even if nothing glaring needs to be corrected. In student learning, there is always room for improvement; continuous improvement is the mantra. It should be the same for the superintendent.

C. Gallagher said she was thinking the same thing about how important feedback is in student learning. A good evaluation system has a coaching piece as part of it. This draft does not allow for that.

D. Regan said this instrument has many virtues, including incorporation of goal areas. How do we move from this “dipstick” approach to more of a process that includes the superintendent and other constituencies? What would the process people desire look like?

W. Sander asked, the comments section here would not be sufficient to develop a coaching strategy?

C. Gallagher said she doesn’t think so. How do you quantify, for example, “Establishes credibility in interactions?”

W. Sander suggested including space for saying how areas for improvement should be addressed.

C. Gallagher said good supervision and evaluation in education begins with observing and recording only objective data, having a conversation with the teacher about it, then discussing together what is already great and what the supervisor and teacher would like to see going forward. There is more give and take.

W. Sander said another question is who will fill out the forms. Board members don’t have the opportunities for extended observation that other administrators and staff do. But evaluating the superintendent is different from observing a teacher.

C. Gallagher said she thinks board members can get a lot from board meetings.

D. Regan said he thinks, whatever criteria we establish, there have to be multiple perspectives on them. Then we can see if the various perspectives lean in the same or different directions. There has to be a self-evaluation component, an administrator component, and a board component. At the very least, he hopes people can note when they fill out the evaluation form which broad constituency they belong to. He agrees that C. Gallagher’s example evaluation item does not provide a scientific measurement, but if multiple constituencies said E. Beatty did not communicate clearly he thinks the board would want that information. Just lumping all responses into a single bin doesn’t seem very helpful to him because different groups have different perspectives.

C. Gallagher said before any tool is adopted we have to answer the question of who will be responsible for it.

W. Sander said the chair of the LNSU board orchestrates the whole thing – seeing that it gets done and if it is to be confidential seeing that it remains so. C. McFarlane sees evaluation forms but she is good about keeping them confidential from the superintendent. At least, that is how it has been done in the past.

E. Beatty said the evaluation method discussed is very traditional. She is hearing comments about deficiencies and making sure the evaluation is confidential. Her preference would be for a far more open process with more of a growth model. If she had come in

and told principals she wanted to do a 360 evaluation without understanding their goals and seeing their evidence reflecting accomplishment of goals, they would have been alarmed. She would be willing to take the ideas that have been offered, as well as A. Fitzgerald's work and the standards used for leaders across the nation, and come back in February with a suggested evaluation process that might include an instrument or two. It would include rigor, attention to what the community said they wanted and what she said was important.

W. Sander said he thinks in her case people evaluating her would be more willing to identify themselves, but in the case of a past superintendent there were people who had criticism but were afraid of retribution. It is a problem to set up a standard for one superintendent that is not used for others.

E. Beatty said if the board was not convinced that the process she brought forward was comprehensive enough and met the board's needs, it could be edited or changed at any time. She would propose bringing a suggested more comprehensive ongoing evaluation process that would include formative and summative components, as well as evidence from various constituency groups.

R. Walters said she would be very supportive of seeing that.

D. Regan suggested E. Beatty could share her ideas with this committee in February and then the committee could meet again in March before the full board meeting.

D. Whitcomb said he hates forms like this. He has argued for years that they are unnecessary. How does he know about some of the things included, like how the superintendent interacts with state agencies? He would like her to give us what she wants to do in the next year and then we would evaluate to see if she did it.

D. Regan said he thought E. Beatty's proposal to come in February with a draft of a process addressed what D. Whitcomb was talking about in terms of goal setting. He thinks it would be a good idea for E. Beatty to talk to the board chair about this before the February meeting. Perceptions of different constituencies are also a form of evidence that is not irrelevant, but that is not the only evidence.

W. Sander said there needs to be an instrument in place and evaluation needs to be better defined. The first middle school principal was fired after never having been evaluated. That was terrible. There has to be feedback along the way.

D. Regan suggested that in the next couple of weeks E. Beatty should meet with C. Szlachetka, then she should bring a proposed process to the February executive committee meeting. The committee would discuss it, then in March the committee would meet prior to the full board meeting to make a decision about a recommendation to the full board. The full board would consider it and hopefully pass it and it would be implemented in the following two months.

J. Sander said a lot of the things on the draft evaluation form are expectations. R. Walters agreed; they are minimum standards, not goals. J. Sander said maybe expectations could be included as a subset of goals. R. Walters said she thinks things from the first two pages that are exemplary or in need of attention would easily emerge from evaluation of the goals. It would be hard to achieve the goals if the minimum standards were not being met.

D. Regan said he agrees with what E. Beatty said about the evaluation identifying strengths rather than being cast in a negative light. But in a full-blown evaluation process he would feel we had fallen short if some shortfalls were not identified.

It was agreed that the first choice of a date for the February meeting would be February 16, with February 11 as a backup date in case the 16th doesn't work. C. McFarlane will check with all committee members on availability.

E. Beatty said she wanted to thank A. Fitzgerald for the work she did. She thinks she listened to the committee and did what was asked.

3. ***Adjourn***

The meeting was adjourned by consent at 6:17.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths