

LAMOILLE NORTH SUPERVISORY UNION
BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2008
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER

Board members present: Belvidere – Freda Meyer; Cambridge – Jan Sander, Jeff Coslett, Heather Sheppard; Eden – Anita Gagner, Warren Earle; Hyde Park – Kalee Roberts, Brian Marshall; Johnson – Richard West, Tim Sullivan, Greg Stefanski, Casey Romero; Lamoille Union District #18 – Peter Ingvaldstad, David Whitcomb, John Eisenhardt, Diana Osborn; Waterville – Beth LaFountain, Steven Chase. Others: Debra Taylor (Supt.), Marilyn Frederick (Bus. Mgr.), Gary Chicoine (Hum. Res. Director), Sue Cano (Director of Student Support Services), Mary Anderson (CES Princ.), Judy Schultz (JES Bus. Mgr.), Jeff Lindgren (ECS Princ.), Brian Schaffer (LUHS Princ.), Charleen McFarlane (Asst. to Supt.), Shelley Mathias (HPES Princ.), Chris Hindes (LUMS Princ.), Joe Teegarden (GMTCC Director), John Coppens (Network Systems Specialist), Jim Woodard (Staff Dev. & Grants Program Coordinator).

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order*

T. Sullivan called the meeting to order at 5:59.

T. Sullivan thanked Sue Cano for the job she did as interim superintendent, saying she was very generous to step up and accept that role. Everyone applauded. T. Sullivan welcomed the new superintendent, Dr. Debra Taylor. Everyone applauded.

2. *Consent Agenda Items*

T. Sullivan explained how a consent agenda works.

MOTION: D. Osborn moved to accept the consent agenda with the exception of minutes approval, seconded by D. Whitcomb. J. Coslett asked, can board members ask questions about items on the consent agenda without objecting to them? T. Sullivan said if the questions are very brief; otherwise the item should be removed from the consent agenda. **J. Coslett asked to have Adoption of New 403(b) Plan Document for Support Staff and Supplemental Participation Agreement removed from the consent agenda.** **The motion to approve the consent agenda with the exception of the removed items was passed.**

3. *Approval of Minutes 8.26.08*

B. Marshall said that in the second sentence under #2, he also included Gary Chicoine in his praise. G. Chicoine asked for a correction on p. 3, in the second full paragraph, in the sentence “G. Chicoine asked if it was appropriate for B. Bailey to approach a panel member and pump them for information.” He said he did not use any board member name; he said “a board member.” D. Whitcomb disagreed, but P. Ingvaldstad and others agreed with G. Chicoine. S. Cano asked for a correction on the bottom of p. 8, under Future Agenda, in the sentence “T. Sullivan said if we make any changes we will just re-warn the changed sections and adopt the sections that were not changed.” S. Cano said it should read “if we make any

substantial changes.” T. Sullivan said he didn’t remember what he had actually said, but agreed that S. Cano’s change captured the gist of what he meant. D. Osborn said that in these minutes and others, T. O’Hear was mistakenly shown as a member of the Johnson board rather than the LUSD board. G. Chicoine said that if any comments he made at that meeting offended or insulted anyone present, he sincerely apologizes. D. Osborn said that, even though the minutes in question were from an Executive Committee meeting, any voting member, whether on the executive committee or not, and whether at that meeting or not, needs to be involved in approval of minutes, and no one is required to abstain.

MOTION: W. Earle moved to approve the minutes of August 26, 2008, with the above corrections, seconded by J. Sander, and the motion was passed.

4. *Approval of Other Minutes*

MOTION: B. Marshall moved to approve the minutes of March 24, 2008, P. Ingvaldstad seconded, and the motion was passed.

MOTION: P. Ingvaldstad moved to approve the minutes of May 14, 2008, P. C. Romero seconded, and the motion was passed.

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MOTION: B. Marshall moved to approve the minutes of June 19, 2008, seconded by W. Earle. D. Osborn said the minutes should be corrected to show her as not present. **The motion to approve the minutes with that correction was passed.**

MOTION: P. Ingvaldstad moved to approve the minutes of June 26, 2008, W. Earle seconded, and the motion was passed.

MOTION: P. Ingvaldstad moved to approve the minutes of July 28, 2008, W. Earle seconded, and the motion was passed.

T. Sullivan said, for future reference, minor changes such as who was at the meeting probably can be dealt with in the consent agenda.

5. *Adoption of New 403(b) Plan Document for Support Staff and Supplemental Participation Agreement*

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to adopt the new 403(b) plan document for support staff, the resolution authorizing adoption of the retirement plan, and the resolution authorizing adoption of the supplemental participation agreement, and the motion was seconded. J. Coslett said he had no objection to adopting the plan, but he had a question about the custodial arrangement with AIG. He asked, is there any sense of its stability, given the current situation? G. Chicoine said he has been in touch with a number of people from the company managing the plan – the Variable Annuity Life Insurance Company, a wholly-owned subsidiary of AIG. He has gotten assurances about their financial stability. He has had inquiries from a few employees asking what is going on, he has shared

that, and it seems to have satisfied them. Money on deposit with VALIC is safe in that AIG executives cannot pull funds from AIG subsidiaries. He is going to bring a VALIC rep back for an invitational group meeting to talk about the situation and try to reassure people that VALIC is sound. VALIC may end up being sold to another investment company. **The motion was passed.**

6. ***Clerk's Report***

B. Marshall gave the clerk's report. Since the last report, he has authorized payments totalling \$191,364.11. The only unusual thing was a pretty substantial payment of interest to the high school – over \$9K. M. Frederick explained that at one time, LNSU used to borrow money from LUSD. This was left on the auditing books from before her time. It is not proper for the LNSU board to borrow from any school district, but the amount earned in interest belongs to LUSD. It was time to close that out, hence the large payment.

7. ***Review of Superintendent's Entry Plan***

D. Taylor said she has now visited all the school boards, and has met or been in meetings with all administrators. She thanked C. McFarlane for the work she did preparing for this meeting. She said C. McFarlane is a tremendous asset to LNSU. S. Cano added that C. McFarlane was invaluable during the transition.

D. Taylor talked about her beliefs, knowledge, and experience, and her entry plan. She asked if anyone had feedback on her plan. D. Osborn said she applauds D. Taylor's plans to include parents in decision making and data gathering, and asked what format will be used to get parents' input. D. Taylor said that she has several questions she will be using with everyone during data gathering, about what they see as the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges in their schools. As various initiatives come forward, she will work with the principals to identify parents who may be helpful, perhaps those with relevant expertise or a high degree of interest.

8. ***Technology Update***

John Coppens, network systems specialist for LNSU since March, introduced himself and described his background. When he started work here, he went to each school to determine what systems were in place and what work needed to be done to make technology capabilities more uniform.

M. Frederick gave a presentation on technology goals and progress toward those goals. We now have a digital phone system in all districts. We have VOIP on the high school campus, at Hardwick, and at central office. We have not reached our bandwidth goal. Waterville and Eden are greatly hampered; they can't get broadband. Here we have a T1 line, but bandwidth is way below the needs of the campus. Broadband is promised for Waterville and Eden by Jan. 1, 2009.

J. Coppens described the work he has done at each of the LNSU schools in the 6 months he has been here. M. Frederick said he has worked 1,040 hours, performing 771.05 billable hours. At \$36.00/hr, that comes to \$27,757.80. At industry purchase rates that would cost \$61,684 at \$80/hr or \$115,657.50 at \$150/hr. And some things would have taken much longer to fix if we had had to hire an outside

contractor. Having J. Coppens on staff for 6 months has resulted in labor savings of \$24,616 to \$78,859.50, and equipment savings of \$13,584.

The connectivity agreement between VT Tel and Stowe Cable fell through, but since M. Frederick reported on that situation last night at the LUSD meeting, she had heard VT Tel may have found a radio solution. As a temporary solution another cable modem has been ordered, but that is not good enough. M. Frederick, D. Taylor, and J. Coppens will work to put together some talking points for board members who want to try to use their contacts to push for a solution.

9. *LNSU In-Service Report*

J. Woodard gave a report on the LNSU in-service. All elementary and middle school math teachers, and selected paraprofessionals, plus one HS math teacher, attended training provided by the Vermont Math Initiative, a UVM program. LNSU has contracted with the VMI to provide 5 full days of instruction. The first 2 days were Aug. 20 and 21, during the in-service; the remaining three days will be Oct. 22, Nov. 24, and Jan. 19. The feedback we've gotten from VMI is that our teachers are great, and VMI staff were delighted at how well the training was received. They don't teach strategies to bring into the classroom; rather, they work to improve teacher confidence with math concepts. Teachers and other staff members who did not participate in VMI training were offered a slate of technology-related workshops, based on a needs assessment J. Woodard put out last May.

K. Roberts asked J. Woodard if he has thought about what type of assessment of in-service success could be used beyond self assessment, such as looking at how much we have increased technology use. That kind of assessment would also be important in selling training to the public. J. Woodard said that at the end of the 5 days of training, VMI will provide a much broader assessment of success than the feedback we have gotten so far. He thinks effectiveness of the training will be reflected in test scores over time. With respect to technology, the offerings were broad, and teachers picked what they were interested in, so success is hard to measure. But teacher confidence in technology is transferable. D. Taylor said a lot of work has been done recently to try to link professional development to improved student achievement. When staff are involved in a long term experience gaining skills linking to curriculum it is much easier to gauge outcomes than when there is short term training. M. Mathias observed that John Coppens' work is closely intertwined with professional development. It is imperative that technology infrastructure works so teachers are not discouraged trying to implement what they have learned. J. Woodard said LU campus and tech center staff had a workshop on PowerSchool. The measure of success will be if they use PowerSchool without freaking out. K. Roberts observed that with kids, we measure if our teaching efforts succeeded. J. Woodard said he will address success of the VMI training next spring after it is concluded.

10. *Budget Development Timeline*

M. Frederick distributed a budget timeline and gave a presentation on budget development. She listed the following budget assumptions:

- 10% increase in health care costs

- 3% overall salary cost increase if not known, otherwise per contract
- 10% utility cost increase
- level income
- developed within Act 82 with dollar amount noted for 2 vote trigger and corresponding recommended adjustments to budget if necessary.

She discussed several areas to consider: equalized pupils, education spending, state average education spending, NEEP index, and offsetting revenues. She explained the two vote budget approval process. The two vote measure begins in 2010. FY09 is the base year. She gave an example of how to figure out if a school district is subject to a second vote.

P. Ingvaldstad asked, if the state paid what they owe us, would it put us over the state average? M. Frederick said she thinks we can exclude that. Some things about Act 82 are still up for question and debate.

11. *Adopt LNSU Policies*

K. Roberts suggested there were a number of policies that could be adopted without discussion.

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to adopt Policies 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, 5.1, 7.2, 7.3, 7.5, and 7.6, seconded by P. Ingvaldstad. C. Romero said she had suggested changes for about half of those. She added that policies are important, and we have a new superintendent. She advocates stepping back and having a committee review the policies with D. Taylor. D. Taylor said she has reviewed them. She is aware that the policy manual in place is at least 10 years old, and she has some concerns with lack of compliance with state statutes. **K. Roberts withdrew her motion, with P. Ingvaldstad's agreement.**

D. Osborn said she feels comfortable with the policy development process, and she feels the most important thing is to have updated policies that are in compliance. We can fine tune them later as time allows, but we've been apprised of the process, and she doesn't see why we can't just adopt them now. C. Romero asked, are there policies that are out of compliance? K. Roberts said yes, giving Policy 1.4 (Voting) as an example. T. Sullivan suggested working through the list of policies and adopting any the board felt it could adopt.

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to adopt Policy 1.1, seconded by B. Marshall.

K. Roberts asked, why don't we combine 1.2 with 1.1? She also suggested perhaps a change should be made to the sentence "A legal vote taken at such meeting shall be binding upon each school district in the supervisory union" addressing the possibility that such a vote may be in conflict with a district's contract. J. Woodard said the sections are basically based on the high school policy manual, and policies are based on model VSBA policies. He said a fundamental problem with the whole process was that the goal of the project was a moving target. The original idea was to come up with the bare bones of what is required under statute. He would have taken a different approach. D. Taylor said the wording K. Roberts questioned is in state statute. C. Romero said the edit the JES board came up with

was to add “provided the vote pertains to a matter over which the LNSU board has jurisdiction.”

MOTION: C. Romero moved to amend the motion by adding “provided the vote pertains to a matter over which the LNSU board has jurisdiction” to the end of the sentence “A legal vote taken at such meeting shall be binding upon each school district in the supervisory union.” K. Roberts seconded. D. Osborn said we shouldn’t bring a matter before the board that is irrelevant. J. Sander agreed. **The motion to amend failed with 4 in favor.**
The motion to adopt Policy 1.1 passed with 2 opposed..

MOTION: W. Earle moved to adopt Policy 1.2, seconded by Heather Shepard. P. Ingvaldstad asked, at this rate, when will we finish? K. Roberts suggested setting a cutoff time. C. Romero suggested a one-word change to the headings of all policies, replacing the word “Section” with “Title,” as in the Table of Contents. **The motion was passed.**

MOTION: P. Ingvaldstad moved to adopt the whole document provisionally, and during the subsequent year, form a policy committee to recommend changes, seconded by J. Sander. K. Roberts said she was opposed, because there is enough in the content that is questionable. C. Romero agreed with K. Roberts. D. Osborn said this is preferable to the old policy document, and she supports the motion. G. Stefanski said it seems backwards to vote to adopt the policies, then go back and review them. We should not put them forward if we have questions. S. Cano said when she took over as interim, it was made clear to her that adoption of the policies was scheduled for the fall LNSU board meeting. T. Bailey felt he had provided opportunities for input into the policies and that it was appropriate for them to be on the agenda for adoption. She thanked J. Schultz for providing a document with input into policies, which she has discussed with J. Woodard and D. Taylor. She appreciated wanting to adopt everything so we would have some current policies. She feels some could be adopted without problems. But there are a couple that she thinks are going to require some substantial changes. She said Policies 1.5, 1.6, and 2.1 should be set aside for further discussion with staff from schools and board members. Section 7.0 contains finance policies which were not provided in May. M. Frederick had a need for finance policies that were at least warned, for an audit issue. M. Frederick reviewed J. Schultz’s feedback and took a further look at the law, and she would like the policies to line up directly with the statutes. She has alternative language for the finance policies, so S. Cano would recommend tabling them. Some others may require minor technical changes but she does not think they contain anything substantially detrimental.

MOTION: P. Ingvaldstad moved to amend his motion to include all policies except 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, and the policies in section 7.0, seconded by J. Eisenhardt. K. Roberts said she would like to suggest minor changes to 2.2 and 4.1. C. Romero said she had suggested changes to 3.1 and 5.1. **The motion was passed with J. Coslett opposed.**

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to amend the motion to make the following changes: In the first line of Policy 2.2, change “may annually vote” to “shall annually vote”; In Policy 4.1, at the end of the second paragraph, change “state-mandated assessments” to “state-mandated and local assessments.”
The motion was seconded and passed.

S. Cano suggested a change to Policy 5.1.

MOTION: P. Ingvaldstad moved to amend the motion to change Policy 5.1 as follows: In the first line, change “provide” to “coordinate.” W. Earle seconded. G. Stefanski asked, would the administrators agree that is the practice? J. Lindgren said it is the responsibility of the school to provide an Educational Support System, not the SU. **The motion was passed.**

K. Roberts said she is not sure the way Policy 3.1 is worded conforms to law. D. Taylor said the statute requires 10 days, as opposed to 15.

MOTION: C. Romero moved to amend the motion to change Policy 3.1 as follows: Change “a fifteen (15) day warning” to “at least a ten (10) day warning.” The motion was seconded and passed.

D. Osborn suggested a change to Policy 3.1, but then realized the version of 3.1 she was referring to was J. Schultz’s proposed version, not the version being adopted.

The motion to adopt the policy document with the exceptions and changes described in the above amendments was passed.

D. Whitcomb said there is something in Policy 1.6 he thinks a committee should take out. It says individual board members can communicate with staff only at the direction of board as a whole. He feels that is a violation of his freedom of speech.

T. Sullivan asked those who are interested in serving on the policy committee to email him.

12. *Begin Discussion on New Labor Agreement*

G. Chicoine said a provision of Act 82 says that no individual board that is a member of a supervisory union can negotiate its own labor agreement. The SU must have a board negotiations council which will negotiate contracts for all schools. He asked that this be on the agenda for discussion at the next meetings of all the boards. There are 6 questions on back of the handout he distributed that he needs to have discussion on at local board meetings. T. Sullivan asked, does each board need to appoint someone to serve on this council at its next meeting? G. Chicoine said yes, but it doesn’t have to be a board member. A board can appoint anyone to represent it; it could be G. Chicoine. J. Schultz asked, does this apply to JES? G. Chicoine said yes.

13. Other Business

MOTION: D. Osborn moved that the policy committee review VT state statutes and add any mandated policies that we do not have, such as a policy on the executive committee. The motion was seconded and passed.

MOTION: K. Roberts moved that the meeting schedule be increased to 6 times a year on the 4th Monday of the month, seconded by D. Whitcomb. She said the schedule was too full tonight. The board was asked to rush through business that should be more fully considered. And we have a new, ambitious superintendent who will add to our business. **The motion was passed with 5 opposed.**

G. Chicoine suggested that the way meeting minutes are currently drafted, corrected, and approved is not correct. As he understands it, when a correction is approved, the text of the original minutes is not changed. He thinks it needs to be, and then those minutes labelled as official. D. Whitcomb and S. Cano agreed. T. Sullivan suggested changes to procedures could be dealt with administratively at central office.

T. Sullivan said he doesn't own the agenda. A member who wishes to have something put on the agenda should let him know. Approval of the agenda will be listed in the consent agenda. The board can remove things from the agenda.

D. Osborn said she has an issue with executive committee meetings. She has discomfort with using them at times when a quorum is not expected to be met. T. Sullivan said any board member is welcome at executive committee meetings. D. Osborn said she has a problem with the way executive committee meetings are used. T. Sullivan suggested addressing this when working on policies.

14. Adjourn

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 8:42, and the motion was passed.

Respectfully submitted by,
Donna E. Griffiths

Actions taken at the LU District #18 Board Meeting 10/8/08:

2. *Consent Agenda Items*

MOTION: D. Osborn moved to accept the consent agenda with the exception of minutes approval, seconded by D. Whitcomb. J. Coslett asked to have Adoption of New 403(b) Plan Document for Support Staff and Supplemental Participation Agreement removed from the consent agenda. The motion to approve the consent agenda with the exception of the removed items was passed.

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B. Marshall said that in the second sentence under #2, he also included Gary Chicoine in his praise. G. Chicoine asked for a correction on p. 3, in the second full paragraph, in the sentence "G. Chicoine asked if it was appropriate for B. Bailey to approach a panel member and pump them for information." He said he did not use any board member name; he said "a board member." D. Whitcomb disagreed, but P. Ingvaldstad and others agreed with G. Chicoine. S. Cano asked for a correction on the bottom of p. 8, under Future Agenda, in the sentence "T. Sullivan said if we make any changes we will just re-warn the changed sections and adopt the sections that were not changed." S. Cano said it should read "if we make any substantial changes." T. Sullivan said he didn't remember what he had actually said, but agreed that S. Cano's change captured the gist of what he meant. D. Osborn said that in these minutes and others, T. O'Hear was mistakenly shown as a member of the Johnson board rather than the LUSD board. G. Chicoine said that if any comments he made at that meeting offended or insulted anyone present, he sincerely apologizes. D. Osborn said that, even though the minutes in question were from an Executive Committee meeting, any voting member, whether on the executive committee or not, and whether at that meeting or not, needs to be involved in approval of minutes, and no one is required to abstain.

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11. *Adopt LNSU Policies*

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to adopt Policy 1.1 (Board Meetings (policy)), seconded by B. Marshall. The motion to adopt Policy 1.1 passed with 2 opposed..

MOTION: W. Earle moved to adopt Policy 1.2, seconded by Heather Shepard. The motion was passed.

MOTION: P. Ingvoldstad moved to adopt the whole document provisionally, and during the subsequent year, form a policy committee to recommend changes, seconded by J. Sander.

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