

LAMOILLE NORTH SUPERVISORY UNION
BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2008
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER

Board members present: Belvidere – none; Cambridge – Jan Sander, Jeff Coslett, Nanci Lepsic; Eden – Anita Gagner, Warren Earle; Hyde Park – Kalee Roberts, Brian Marshall; Johnson – Tim Sullivan, Greg Stefanski, Casey Romero; Lamoille Union District #18 – John Eisenhardt, Diana Osborn, Becky Penberthy, William Sander, David Whitcomb; Waterville – Beth Lafountain. Others: Debra Taylor (Supt.), Marilyn Frederick (Bus. Mgr.), Gary Chicoine (Hum. Res. Director), Sue Cano (Director of Student Support Services), Brigid Scheffert (JES Princ.), Judy Schultz (JES Bus. Mgr.), Charleen McFarlane (Asst. to Supt.), Michelle Mathias (HPES Princ.), Bonny Grant (WES Princ.), Chris Hindes (LUMS Princ.), Joe Teegarden (GMTCC Director).

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. Call to Order

T. Sullivan called the meeting to order at 6:03.

2. Consent Agenda Items:

Approval of Agenda, Approval of Minutes 10.8.08, Approval of Policy Committee Minutes 10.27.08, Approval of Policy Committee Minutes 11.10.08, Adoption of New 403(b) Plan Document for Licensed Staff and Supplemental Participation Agreement, Approval of UniFund (Human Resource/Accounting Package) Lease

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by W. Earle, and the motion was passed.

3. Clerk's Report

Since the last report, B. Marshall approved orders totaling \$106,220.91. Major expenditures included Kittell, Branagan & Sargent, Study Island, and VSBIT (workers' comp.) K. Roberts said Study Island is a computer-based learning tool many schools are participating in. Her concern is that the youth commentary on Study Island on YouTube is very negative, though teacher commentary is positive. We don't have a full grasp of the pros and cons of using Study Island as opposed to direct teaching methods. She thinks there should be follow-up on what it's doing for us. It was implemented without board input or setting out a goal. N. Lepsic said the comments she's heard about it from students have been positive. She asked K. Roberts what comments she had seen. K. Roberts said many were along the lines of, "They're making us do this so they don't have to pay attention." (*D. Osborn arrived at 6:05.*) Comments also indicated kids felt it was make-work, and the content was not interesting or relevant to kids.

4. Accept Agenda

T. Sullivan asked if there were any objections to the agenda as printed. There were none.

5. Superintendent's Entry Plan Report

D. Taylor gave a PowerPoint presentation on her entry plan. She is completing Phase I. Interviews are at least 95% completed. In the interviews, she asked board members questions about their role, strengths and challenges, their preferred future, and

issues/assistance. She summarized the responses she got. In discussing strengths, comments included nurturing environments, committed staff, strong leadership, special education is sound, thanks to S. Cano, and that fiscal management is improved due to M. Frederick among other positive areas. Challenges noted included themes around achievement results and gaps, lack of pk-12 curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and data analysis. Also noted were need for improved parent communication and involvement and more access, training and integration of the improving technology. Hopes for the future were primarily student focused on reaching potential, nurturing and supporting environments, etc. She listed things she has done with a school focus, such as regular meetings with principals and classroom observations, attending school board meetings, managing personnel and parent-related concerns, leading AdCo and assessment committee, and filling the vacant administrative position with more of a curriculum focus on and interim basis through the end of the school year with a permanent placement planned beginning in July. Debra also reported on her various LNSU and state-wide activities. LNSU board policy work continues, she is a member of the VSA legislative committee, etc. She has received some Educational Data Warehouse training, and learned that the EDW can accept additional data. She will recommend LNSU data be added. We can drill down to individual students. Some other SU's and school districts are putting their own data in the EDW and using it for their action plans and to assess if goals have been reached. (*J. Coslett arrived at 6:33.*) She noted communications efforts including highlighting schools in the local paper, continuing the LINK newsletter and central office board reports, and regular connections with area superintendents. She described what she will be doing in Phase II of her plan resulting in goal development, and her vision for Phase III around leadership development that supports improved student achievement, expanded communication and a technology focus.

W. Sander said he has been impressed with D. Taylor's activities. He said it is encouraging that we have a new Commissioner of Education who believes in public education. D. Taylor said her first few contacts with the new Commissioner have been positive.

K. Roberts said heterogeneous student backgrounds were mentioned as a strength, and the challenges of student backgrounds were also mentioned. What is our perception? Maybe we see our students as heterogeneous and they're not. D. Taylor said the challenge is that we must be attuned to differentiated needs.

D. Taylor encouraged board members to call her at any time with any concerns regarding schools.

6. *Administrative Council (AdCo) Report*

B. Grant gave a report on topics covered by AdCo so far this year. One thing AdCo has worked on is planning meaningful professional development. The VMI training is a good example of all deciding to make a commitment to math. Elementary teachers generally don't have a deep understanding of math, but they need to understand math concepts for effective teaching, and the VMI training is intended to give them more

confidence with those concepts. It is challenging to come up with professional development that is meaningful for everyone. It takes a lot of time and thought.

Other topics addressed by AdCo included legal requirements for Act 154, implementation of the PATH to Wellness initiative, the Employee Assistance Program offered by our insurance company, tightening the process for background checks for independent contractors, budget development, and the January in-service. J. Teegarden gave a presentation to AdCo on the tech center.

7. ***LNSU 2009-2010 Budget***

M. Frederick presented the proposed FY10 LNSU budget. She listed these assumptions and considerations:

- Health care costs up 2%
- Retirement plan benefit up 3.53%
- Dental costs even
- Property & liability insurance costs up 5%
- Utility costs up 41% (10% increase in unit cost plus increased electrical usage for AC in server closet)

The proposed budget for A-B packages is \$1,437,165 (1.67% increase.) The proposed total budget for A-C packages is \$1,448,638 (2.48% increase.)

Significant areas of change were:

- 403(b) incentive: \$8,779
- Study Island software: \$5,200 (C package – offset by IDEA revenues)
- Staff development: \$6,273 (C package – offset by IDEA revenues)

The cost of Study Island is offset by Medicaid revenues as well as IDEA. N. Lepsic asked if we could also use 21st Century grant money for that. S. Cano said she suggested using SPED and Medicaid money because then the cost would be in the LNSU budget, which would take pressure off the local schools. N. Lepsic asked, is it an outright purchase or a lease? S. Cano said there is an annual fee. Schools get the software at a reduced rate if she initiates it through central office for all of the SU.

M. Frederick presented figures on hours worked and savings generated by the technology position, and suggested those services should not be billed out to member schools, as much of the work benefits all schools. W. Sander asked, is utilization relatively proportional among districts? M. Frederick said Johnson and Cambridge used less than other schools. W. Sander said it doesn't make much sense to bill out the services and then get the money back in the assessment, unless there are glaring inequities.

M. Frederick presented assessment figures for all schools based on the proposed budget. K. Roberts asked, is the assessment based on ADM? M. Frederick said it is based on the Oct. 1 count. J. Schultz said that is not ADM. K. Roberts said equalized pupil count is used for some other things. She thinks we are supposed to pick one count to use and be consistent. M. Frederick said equalized pupil count won't come

out until Dec. 15. She said she believes Act 82 says we are supposed to use the Oct. 1 count. J. Schultz said she doesn't think Act 82 specifies a particular count at the LNSU level. She said the board can decide to assess any cost on any basis. We don't have to base it on enrollment, it could be based on usage, for instance. She thought the SU used to use ADM, but we used to calculate ADM ourselves. M. Frederick said it is hard to bill out a person's hours because what a person does and learns at one place is applicable to another. She can't say how much time she spends on the budget for each district. K. Roberts said she thinks the board is supposed to decide each year how to do the assessment. S. Cano said Bob Giroux had 3 different formulas for allocating assessment, distributing revenues, etc. K. Roberts asked that the board discuss some time which formulas should be applied in which circumstances.

M. Frederick said it looks like none of our districts will have to have 2 votes. T. Sullivan said the board could approve the budget tonight or have a special meeting on Dec. 8.

MOTION: W. Sander moved to approve the proposed FY10 budget of \$1,448,638, including A-C packages, seconded by J. Eisenhardt. J. Coslett asked for clarification on the billable hours approach to the tech position. Under the proposed budget, will the position be paid through the assessment? M. Frederick said about half of our costs for that position was already in the budget. The assessment already supported our technology. The rest was to come from billable hours, but practical application of that has been difficult. Most of J. Coppens' time is spent doing things for all schools – learning, exploring Power School, etc. She suggests not using an a la carte approach. W. Sander said he agreed that billing out hours becomes very burdensome, and it is hard to be accurate. The money is all coming from individual districts anyway. J. Schultz said she disagreed strongly with the entire underpinning. She said there was a fair amount of skepticism about this position when it was first proposed. The idea was always that districts that did not need services so much would not be stuck with the burden of paying. There were huge discrepancies in how J. Coppens' services were used. It is not a good analogy with M. Frederick's position. An enormous part of her job is uniformly needed by all districts. J. Schultz doesn't see the parallel in the area of technology. About a third of J. Coppens' time was for LNSU. His services were largely site specific. Some districts have local personnel hired who do that work. If hours were not billed out, Johnson would pay \$6-7K on top of what it is already paying for a full time tech person. That is way disproportionate to 20 hours of service per year. It is not that hard to track time to specific clients. Johnson will be subsidizing districts that need more site level work. M. Frederick said J. Coppens didn't count half the time he was at LNSU, for instance when he talks to Keith at Cambridge. Even though Cambridge's hours are minimal, the value of that support from J. Coppens is great. K. Roberts said part of J. Coppens' work this year included some ramp-up work. This may not reflect a continuing pattern. If we agree to go forward with M. Frederick's suggestion, we can still ask him to repeat time studies so we can decide if it is unfair or not. Or we could bill out his services for a year, and then reassess. B. Grant said she agreed with J. Schultz. She asked, if J. Coppens divides up his time more equally, will there be enough of him

to go around? Schools that don't have someone on site will need more of his time. M. Frederick said all schools have someone on site. M. Mathias said HPES used his services heavily for a while, but now it's rare that they see him. If they're going to pay for it, she wants to expect to see him on a regular basis. D. Taylor said the issue of technology came up frequently in her interviews. There doesn't seem to be a well-articulated plan for ramping up technology throughout the SU. She would like to use J. Coppins to help develop the plan. Once that plan is developed, we might be in a better position to analyze how his time is assessed. **The motion was passed.**

M. Frederick said the only change in the Act 82 figures is that NEEP has been finalized at 2.9%. None of the remaining questions about Act 82 have been answered.

W. Sander said we have a major problem with heat distribution at central office, and he thinks we could save money if we look into that. M. Frederick said M. Spaulding is aware of it. He thinks we need a new boiler. The building doesn't have enough zones. He is pursuing a solution.

8. *Adopt LNSU Policies*

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to adopt Policy 1.5 (Officers and Committees), and the motion was seconded and passed.

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to adopt Policy 2.1 (Operating Procedures), seconded by G. Stefanski. N. Lepsic asked, do we need to look at whether October 1 enrollment is the appropriate basis for apportioning expenses? D. Taylor said that in 2007, the board determined this particular assessment method should be used. J. Schultz says she thinks the law says we should do it however the commissioner says to do it. M. Frederick agreed that is correct, unless the SU agrees on something else. S. Cano thought maybe this should be covered under Policy 7.3, not this one.

MOTION: W. Sander moved to amend the motion to add to the policy: “The above shall be operative unless otherwise directed by the Commissioner of Education.” K. Roberts seconded. N. Lepsic asked M. Frederick how much discrepancy there is between the Oct. 1 estimate and the Dec. 15 number. M. Frederick said the numbers probably vary a lot, but the percentage ratios probably don't. J. Schultz said the only difference between Oct. 1 enrollment and pre-weighted ADM will be from kids moving in and out, which is not a big difference. D. Taylor said there is no direct reference in law to assessment criteria. The 2006 version says the board may set criteria for distribution of federal and state funds. **The motion to amend was passed.**

The motion to adopt Policy 2.1 was passed.

MOTION: W. Sander moved to adopt Policy 7.1 (Annual Budget), J. Eisenhardt seconded, and the motion was passed.

MOTION: W. Sander moved to adopt Policy 7.3 (Investment), seconded by N. Lepsic. J. Coslett asked for clarification about relevant state statutes. M. Frederick said VT doesn't put into law any specific language about investments. She couldn't think of any specific state statute we would need to follow. Two spelling errors were noted. W. Sander said “implore” should be changed to “employ.” B. Penberthy said “statues” should be changed to “statutes.” **The motion to adopt the policy with the above spelling corrections was passed.**

9. *Other Business*

G. Chicoine asked the board to adopt two resolutions to amend for the 2007-08 plan year the retirement plan that was just terminated. This is required to conform with regulations that prohibit inclusion of severance not approved during employment in determining retirement benefits.

MOTION: J. Eisenhardt moved to approve the following resolutions, seconded by W. Sander:

RESOLVED that the Amendment for application of Final IRC Section 415 Regulations to the LNSU Retirement Plan (the Plan) generally effective for Limitation Years beginning on or after July 1, 2007, is hereby approved and

adopted and that the Plan Administrator is hereby authorized and directed to execute and deliver to the third party administrator one or more counterparts of the amendment.

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Plan Administrator of said Plan be and is hereby authorized on behalf of the Employer to take any and all actions as may be required for the proper amendment of the Plan and is further authorized to execute any and all documents required to amend said Plan.

J. Coslett asked if there is any specific instance where this would apply. G. Chicoine said not in our case. **The motion was passed.**

W. Sander said he thought there should be participation by LNSU in the joint contract negotiations that are about to start. He volunteered to represent the LNSU board as well as the high school board. There was no objection.

M. Frederick asked for a motion directing the treasurer to establish a checking account for processing payments to our common remitter for the 403(b) plan.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to direct the treasurer to establish a checking account for processing payments to our common remitter for the 403(b) plan. M. Frederick explained that instead of sending checks directly, we send them to a common remitter, and they want a single checking account. K. Roberts explained that each town would write a check to deposit in that account, then one check would be sent to the remitter. W. Sander asked how we will prevent a zero balance in the account. M. Frederick said she hadn't thought about how to handle it if we need to keep a balance, whether LNSU would provide the amount needed, or assess it out to all towns. There might be a minimal amount needed to keep the account open. **The motion was passed.**

D. Taylor suggested scheduling a meeting for Jan. 26. She recommended that it be primarily a work session to look at data and action plans and come up with some preliminary goals for LNSU. W. Sander said that sounded like a good idea. He said he would hope we would generally stick with the last Monday of the month for meetings. C. McFarlane noted that May's meeting would not be on the last Monday because of Memorial Day. The board agreed to a Jan. 26 meeting.

D. Osborn asked if there was any assignment for board members regarding interfacing with local boards to be prepared for the goal setting meeting. D. Taylor said she plans to work with individual boards to prepare for the meeting.

10. ***Adjourn***

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 8:00, and the motion was passed.

Respectfully submitted by,
Donna E. Griffiths

Actions taken at the LU District #18 Board Meeting 11/24/08:

2. ***Consent Agenda Items:***

Approval of Agenda, Approval of Minutes 10.8.08, Approval of Policy Committee Minutes 10.27.08, Approval of Policy Committee Minutes 11.10.08, Adoption of New 403(b) Plan Document for Licensed Staff and Supplemental Participation Agreement, Approval of UniFund (Human Resource/Accounting Package) Lease

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by W. Earle, and the motion was passed.

7. ***LNSU 2009-2010 Budget***

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8. ***Adopt LNSU Policies***

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MOTION: K. Roberts moved to adopt Policy 2.1 (Operating Procedures), seconded by G. Stefanski.

MOTION: W. Sander moved to amend the motion to add to the policy: "The above shall be operative unless otherwise directed by the Commissioner of Education." K. Roberts seconded. The motion to amend was passed. The motion to adopt Policy 2.1 was passed.

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FURTHER RESOLVED that the Plan Administrator of said Plan be and is hereby authorized on behalf of the Employer to take any and all actions as may be required for the proper amendment of the Plan and is further authorized to execute any and all documents required to amend said Plan. The motion was passed.

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