

LAMOILLE UNION DISTRICT #18 BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
LAMOILLE UNION LIBRARY  
TUESDAY, MARCH 20, 2007

Board members present: B. Bailey, J. Eisenhardt, S. Reber, S. Hamlyn-Prescott, C. Hickory, D. Osborn, K. Roberts, W. Sander, C. Mann, D. Whitcomb. Absent: D. Baker, P. Ingvoldstad. Others: T. Bailey (via speaker phone – 6:06), C. Hindes, G. Chicoine, S. Cano, S. Fortune, Brian Schaffer

**Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.**

**1. Call to Order, Introductions, Announcements and Public Input**

**A. Call to Order – 6:01**

**B. Introductions**

Introductions were made for the benefit of B. Schaffer.

(T. Bailey joined the meeting at 6:06 via speaker phone.)

**2. Directors' Orders and Minutes of the March 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**A. Directors' Orders**

**ACTION: D. Osborn moved to approve expense orders in the amount of \$436,701.65, and the motion was seconded.** The majority of the District #18 expenses were for VSBIT, and the majority of GMTCC expenses were for Kingdom Construction and Black River Design. **The motion was passed.**

**B. Minutes of the March 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

Minutes were not available.

**2. Executive Session to Meet One Semi-Finalist for High School Principal Vacancy**

It was decided that it was not necessary to enter executive session. B. Schaffer distributed copies of his resume and talked about his professional career. He described his interest in special ed, which started when he was in high school, and his experience in administration. He distributed letters of recommendation, including letters from all staff members at the middle school where he is currently principal, as well as newspaper articles describing his work and the schools where he has worked. He also described his involvement with community and service organizations. He distributed a brochure on middle school transition procedures and a handbook of teacher expectations that he had created for use at his current school. He talked about the importance of providing for successful transition from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school. He described his school's online reporting system, which allows parents to check on their child's progress at any time. He said he is also a finalist for several other positions, but would very much like to work here.

S. Reber asked what kind of school boards and governance structures he had worked under in the past, and what he thought the proper role of the school board was. He said he had worked in highly political environments as well as those where people didn't much care what he did. Currently he has a strong relation-

ship with his superintendent. He has had a good working relationship with most of the boards he has worked with, though he has met opposition from some individuals. He talked about the importance of a principal getting feedback from the board to let him know how his actions have been perceived by the community.

K. Roberts asked if he could talk about how he collaborated with his sending schools. He referred to the transition brochure. He said for the most part his current school only has one sending school. He described the orientation activities his middle school uses to help elementary students transition. K. Roberts asked if he could describe how he has collaborated with administration at other schools on transition and other issues. He described regular meetings where he was able to talk to other principals, and also talked about collaborating with other agencies. (B. Schaffer left at 6:55.)

3. **Administrative Reports / Action Items**

(S. Fortune arrived at 6:58.)

A. **High School – S. Fortune**

S. Fortune had mailed the draft action plan to board members. K. Roberts said the curriculum committee recommended approving it with one change.

**ACTION: K. Roberts moved to approve the action plan with the following change: On p. 3, add at the end of the Action Step section “to be included in this action plan.” The motion was seconded by W. Sander.**

K. Roberts asked G. Chicoine about the grant development coordinator referred to on p. 4 of the plan – what role does the LNSU see that person fulfilling? G. Chicoine said he had stated at the Hyde Park board meeting the previous night that that person is not to be a grants writer. However, he didn't design that job, and hasn't been much involved in the thinking about it – that was mainly up to T. Bailey and AdCo. Last week he was told to start recruiting for it. T. Bailey told him it's not a grants writer position, it's an administrator for grants and professional development who will also work with boards on policy research and development. The curriculum committee will refer to central office the question of exactly what that position will involve.

S. Reber asked for clarification – this isn't just an update to last year's action plan, but something new? The board is trying a new way of developing the plan? S. Fortune talked about how the action plan had been developed in the past. She said when it came time to renew it, the faculty had prepared a draft organized by department as in the past, quite a large document. But the board had pointed out the lack of parental and student input, and then put approval on hold. So she had parents do a survey and had some interview team time with a group of students. This is a much shorter distillation, organized around the topic of literacy, and also concerned with the need for a positive learning environment. Things don't have to go into the action plan in order to become goals, but someone

should have a record of progress and new initiatives at the school. Tracking progress is an issue. W. Sander and S. Hamlyn-Prescott talked about some ways of tracking progress. **The motion was passed.**

S. Fortune will have a possible teacher hire recommendation to discuss at the April 3 meeting.

**B. Middle School – C. Hindes**

The action plan is coming along. Before long, he would like to present a draft to the curriculum committee.

*(C. Hindes and S. Fortune left at 7:14.)*

**C. SPED – S. Cano**

S. Cano talked about her testimony before the VT Senate Education Committee. She told the committee about the SPED services we offer and their impact, and talked about outcomes. She talked about how we have implemented research – early literacy, universal access for preschool, SPED students in an inclusionary preschool program. In kindergarten readiness, we meet or exceed the state average. In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade reading assessment results, children who qualify for free and reduced lunch are meeting the standard at the same rate as those who don't. We have a growing high school graduation rate. Our students on IEPs are graduating at 18-20, mostly 18 or 19. We have a lot of children with very complex needs, but we try to educate students on our campuses as much as possible to be cost effective. Last year we only had 3 students whose program costs were over \$50K - 2 were state-placed and 100% reimbursed. We are 5.62% above the state average for SPED expenses. Children on IEPs are not the only ones to benefit from our SPED programs.

S. Reber asked what kind of response she got. She said they peppered her with questions. They were genuinely interested and asked basic questions at first, but were quick learners. They were very interested in our outcomes and how cost effectively we had provided services, and impressed by how our services weren't just focused on kids with IEPs. They asked about gifted services. Gifted students can have a student support plan. C. Mann asked how many gifted students are on special plans. S. Cano said she doesn't know what all the needs for kids on plans are, so she doesn't know. She knows there are some. K. Roberts and C. Mann thought getting the data would be useful. C. Mann said there seems to be some community concern about gifted students not getting enough resources. S. Cano said she'd take that to AdCo and talk to them about how they could answer that question without violating confidentiality. C. Cano said gifted students may have more mental health needs, and our mental health services are available for everyone. C. Mann asked, what is the definition of a gifted child? S. Cano said there is no SPED definition, because it is not a disability. In order to be considered gifted, a child has to have an IQ score above a certain level in one particular area. "Talented" is a lower level designation used to recognize a student's high level abilities. Our

schools support students who are talented, but don't typically initiate IQ tests. We do accept and seriously review IQ test results provided by families. Sometimes we do IQ tests for SPED students and discover giftedness. S. Fortune said there are programming options at the high school that address the needs of kids who can do much more challenging work. K. Roberts said the public may be concerned about what efforts we make to identify those kids. She also noted that HPES has a very informal way of dealing with the needs of gifted kids, but it's hard to go to the public and say the needs are being met when the program is so informal. C. Mann said that in grade school and middle school, there is no equivalent to AP courses. S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked S. Cano to take to AdCo the question of how our schools are meeting the needs of gifted students, then suggested W. Sander could put it on the agenda for an LNSU meeting, or S. Cano could go back to the individual boards. S. Cano said she could prepare a document – it may not need agenda time at an LNSU meeting.

S. Cano said the VT SPED regs are open for public comment right now because of proposed changes. One significant change is elimination of the core staffing allocation which enables a school to have a certain FTE of SPED staff that can work with students on IEPs, 504 plans, and EST plans. It would be devastating to LNSU schools to lose that. S. Hamlyn-Prescott asked, what is our board role in this? S. Cano said to take a look at the thoughts and ideas she has passed along via email to the principals to pass to their boards, look at her points, get points from the principals or W. Uzzle, then send input and concerns to the Board of Ed. S. Fortune will send the material S. Cano mentioned to C. McFarlane, who will send it to the board.

**D. Central Office – G. Chicoine**

G. Chicoine distributed resumes of the other principal candidates. S. Reber asked about how the principal selection process will proceed. G. Chicoine said there will be a special meeting next Tuesday. Each candidate will have the opportunity to tour the school and talk to faculty. The other two candidates will come before the board next Tuesday, then T. Bailey will give a recommendation and the board will decide. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said one role of the board should be to ask what our transition is going to look like, and request that some transition plan be put in place.

K. Roberts said she and Patrick Cray testified before the VT House Education and Ways and Means Committees last Wednesday concerning a proposed education bill. The bill incorporated many different recommendations. All 50 people who spoke were against the bill. The new version did away with some of the most onerous provisions. But it still shifts the penalty box ceiling down. S. Reber asked about the penalty box. K. Roberts explained that if a district's per pupil cost is more than 125% of the statewide average, there is a financial penalty. The second onerous provision is that high SPED spending schools will have overspending arbitrarily dis-

allowed. D. Whitcomb mentioned what he had heard at last night's Eden board meeting about the bill and testimony about it.

**4. Formation of Committees**

S. Hamlyn-Prescott listed the currently existing committees: Policy, Personnel, Curriculum, Finance (with Sweeney House/Building and GMTCC subcommittees), and Staff and Community Relations (with LUSD Historical/40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary subcommittee). The board also needs to select 3 voting representatives for the LNSU board. S. Reber asked what the Personnel Committee does. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said there are 3 members, and no person will serve more than 3 years, so everyone will have the opportunity to be on it. It mostly deals with contractual issues. W. Sander's 3 years are up, so there is one position available. The committee meets as needed. Usually it meets with G. Chicoine and the principals.

S. Reber asked whom the Policy Committee meets with. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the principals. S. Reber asked what the job of the Curriculum Committee is. W. Sander said passing on new courses and making sure the curriculum is up to snuff. The goal of most of the committees is to receive information and formulate recommendations that come back before the board. D. Osborn suggested discussing the committee structure in general. She said she had researched what other boards do. She thinks it would be valuable for the board to consider how we do things. She thinks maybe a lot of issues could be discussed by the whole board rather than by a committee. Much information is never heard by the whole board. She sometimes feels she's voting on something she hasn't fully been informed on. W. Sander said he thinks the current structure is working fairly well. He doesn't think there would be time to go into all the committee issues at regular meetings. Committee meetings are open to anyone. He doesn't think the full board would want to be involved in all the issues. J. Eisenhardt said at one time all business was transacted by the whole board, and meetings sometimes lasted until 2 am. No committees means long meetings; 12 members means a lot of input. D. Whitcomb suggested that he, J. Eisenhardt and W. Sander be on the GMTCC subcommittee of finance. K. Roberts said she tends to agree with D. Osborn, not because of lack of confidence in the committees, but just because she sometimes wonders, did they think about this? Do I have a perspective that wasn't brought to the table? Were the materials presented fair and balanced? She thinks committee structures can work very well. But there is not much opportunity for review between committee meetings and regular meetings. She'd like to maximize technology use to make sure everyone gets all information for review. S. Reber said he didn't see how a group of 12 could discuss each issue in detail. K. Roberts said one question is, who is deciding on the committee focus – the whole board, or the committee? S. Reber said that is a good point – it should be the whole board. K. Roberts said she wants a more open process.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott summarized what she was hearing: The board would like as a group to come up with a focus outline for each committee, there should be some type of process in committee, and there should be a summary that goes out before a recommendation to the board. C. Hickory said agendas and minutes for commit-

tee meetings would be helpful. K. Roberts said by law there should be minutes. D. Osborn said she doesn't want to mess with something that's working well. But if there is too much business for the board to handle without committees, maybe another way to look at it is to say that we're dealing with too much business. Maybe we should be delegating more to central office or administration. It's atypical for a school board in VT to have this many standing committees. It's more typical to have committees that form and dissolve to meet special needs like construction. K. Roberts said she wouldn't say it's atypical. How often committees meet varies. She thinks there is nothing wrong with the committee structure. W. Sander said there is not an overwhelmingly large number of committees. Staff and Community Relations is dormant a lot. Personnel is ad hoc only, responding to particular difficulties. Policy most people would be bored with. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the Finance Committee was driven by the deficit. W. Sander said it makes sense for that committee to meet year round. He said the building sub-committee is needed. K. Roberts said it's just a question of having materials fully available. W. Sander thinks the Curriculum Committee is important; some board members are very interested in that. D. Osborn said we also need to acknowledge some problems. Because of the Curriculum Committee, the action plan didn't move forward. There would be a greater sense of equitability on the board without committees. Committee meetings during the day limit participation. All community members should least theoretically be able to serve. C. Hickory said, what if all committees have issues at the same time? The board would have to have special meetings. Only a few committees meet on a regular basis. K. Roberts said the document on NECAPs she had should be something everyone on the board has access to. As far as meeting times, they try to make them as open and accessible as they can.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said she thought she was hearing that the board needs to come up with focus guidelines for each committee, with a timeline regarding what they want to hear about when. She suggested committees could come up with focus outlines and bring them to the board to approve. S. Reber thought that was a good idea. There should be a written summary in the packet whenever possible before something is brought to the board. K. Roberts said it would be good to have the information online. S. Reber said he's not interested in spending more time on the computer.

**K. Roberts moved to appoint S. Reber, J. Eisenhardt, and P. Ingvaldstad as the 3 voting members on the LNSU board, with D. Whitcomb and S. Hamlyn-Prescott as alternates, seconded by C. Mann, and the motion was passed.**

D. Baker and B. Bailey will continue on the Personnel Committee, and S. Hamlyn-Prescott appointed P. Ingvaldstad as the third member.

The Policy Committee will consist of S. Reber, K. Roberts, and C. Hickory.

The Curriculum Committee will continue with the same members.

The Finance Committee will consist of S. Hamlyn-Prescott, D. Whitcomb, C. Mann, and J. Eisenhardt.

The GMTCC subcommittee of Finance will consist of J. Eisenhardt, W. Sander, and D. Whitcomb.

The Staff and Community Relations Committee will consist of W. Sander, C. Hickory, and J. Eisenhardt. S. Reber said he'd help out with the teacher appreciation lunch.

The 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday subcommittee will consist of D. Baker, D. Whitcomb, and W. Sander.

D. Osborn said she'd be interested in any committee that meets after 5:30.

S. Reber suggested setting aside half an hour at the next meeting for committees to discuss meeting times and come up with a schedule.

5. ***Request for Future Agenda Items and Adjourn***

**ACTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 8:39 and the motion passed.**

Respectfully submitted by,  
Donna E. Griffiths

Actions taken at the LU District #18 Board Meeting 3-20-07:

2. *Directors' Orders and Minutes of the March 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting*
  - A. **Directors' Orders**  
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3. *Administrative Reports / Action Items*
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**ACTION: K. Roberts moved to approve the action plan with the following change: On p. 3, add at the end of the Action Step section “to be included in this action plan.” The motion was seconded by W. Sander.** The motion was passed.
4. *Formation of Committees*  
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