

LAMOILLE UNION DISTRICT #18 BOARD MEETING MINUTES
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER
TUESDAY, MAY 19, 2009

Board members present: B. Bailey, D. Baker, J. Eisenhardt, S. Hamlyn-Prescott, P. Ingvoldstad, T. O'Hear, D. Osborn, B. Penberthy, S. Reber, K. Roberts, W. Sander, D. Whitcomb. Others: D. Taylor, B. Schaffer, J. Teegarden, J. Prescott, Michael Zlotucha, Nick Nemeth.

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. ***Call to Order, Introductions, Adopt the Agenda, Announcements and Public Input***
 - A. **Call to Order – 6:36**
 - B. **Introductions**

Introductions were made for the benefit of the visitors.
 - C. **Adopt the Agenda**

MOTION: D. Osborn moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by W. Sander, and the motion was passed.
 - D. **Announcements**

D. Whitcomb said the Boy Scout camp in Eden has been closed because of the asbestos mine, and he wonders when they are going to ask us to close schools. He also said he had put some show tickets up for auction to raise money for the Andrew Parker fund. (Andrew Parker was a former LUHS student.) The tickets were bought and donated to be re-auctioned numerous times, raising \$1000 in ten minutes.
2. ***Consent Agenda Items***

MOTION: W. Sander moved to approve the minutes of May 5, J. Eisenhardt seconded, and the motion was passed.
3. ***Directors' Orders***

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to approve directors' orders in the amounts of \$3,593.76 and \$191,821.46, seconded by W. Sander. There was nothing out of the ordinary. **The motion was passed.**
4. ***Presentation by LUHS English Department***

B. Schaffer introduced Michael Zlotucha, head of the English department. M. Zlotucha said 9th graders take world literature and 10th graders take American literature. There are 3 levels in 9th grade and 2 in 10 grade. Students in 11th and 12th grade choose from year-long English electives, including classes on mass media, science fiction, honors and general level creative writing, and AP English. M. Zlotucha started teaching in 1971. The LUHS English department has always wanted to educate individual students to achieve their life goals. The teachers are teachers, not facilitators. But NCLB has been a problem. NECAP tests are very demanding, and preparing for those and achieving the department's other goals are mutually exclusive at times. B. Schaffer has told faculty they are going to be faced with 21st century learning – concepts which are not developed, but will be coming out. The 21st century concepts do not mention reading and writing, speaking, or mathematics.

LUHS was successful this year in meeting AYP for reading. The action plan has been modified. Faculty have been restructuring the department to make sure they can offer students a wide range of choices and ways of motivating them. For the last 2 years, Eng-

lish faculty have been working from the bottom up preparing kids for the NECAP. They need to work hard in 9th and 10th grade, especially for those who find learning difficult. They have had to work on motivation and skills in both basic and general levels. They have put an emphasis on analysis, strongly developed vocabulary skills on all levels in all classes, and worked on grammar basics. The NECAP is a roll of the dice; the outcome depends on the mood of the class. The school has tried to make sure students buy into the tests. When they put together an action plan a year ago, they emphasized writing, but now they are getting quite a few weak readers. That has become a problem. They have worked on all verbal skills – vocabulary, reading aloud, team reading, Socratic questioning. They are planning to add Everyday English for 10th graders still struggling with fundamentals. J. Teegarden approached M. Zlotucha this last year asking about putting together a class for vocational-specific needs. M. Zlotucha asked D. Boardman if he would spearhead the idea of a vocational English course, open to all but geared toward tech students. He is working on it now. On all levels, classes have been using technology. Ninth graders have worked in the TV studio. Most classes have students who have done PowerPoint presentations. Many students do vocabulary online, and many have handheld electronic dictionaries. Classes use digital recorders. Some classes have their own websites.

W. Sander said when we made the push to increase the graduation rate, we had to work with high needs kids. We would probably have better test scores if we had let kids drop out. M. Zlotucha said there is another type of difficult student – seniors refusing to do work. B. Schaffer said M. Zlotucha is chair of the graduation committee and has been an active participant. The committee provides an opportunity for students to get a wakeup call. He and a panel of teachers meet individually with students to review requirements for graduation. W. Sander said he was alarmed but not surprised by the observations about reading problems. M. Zlotucha said it seems there should be a real push from K to grade 4 or 5 to get kids reading well. S. Reber said there is a huge push in the elementary schools. K. Roberts said the 21st century skills include communication, which is broader than English. English is very primary in the 21st century skills. She is also on an elementary board. Most elementary schools have instituted Reading First or Reading is Fundamental. But she's hearing tonight that there has been a decline in reading skills, so there seems to be a disconnect between what elementary schools are doing and the actual result in high school. What information can M. Zlotucha give to elementary schools about what is not meeting students' needs in 9th grade? M. Zlotucha said we still see vestiges of whole language programs. Intense phonics would be beneficial. D. Osborn asked if he thinks whole language has led to poor spelling in high school. He said there is no question that whole language decided not to teach spelling, but encouraged kids to spell words as they heard them. Phonics and attack skills will help spelling. He wishes we could get rid of "high interest, age appropriate" books. They dumb kids down and don't challenge them with vocabulary.

5. *Administrative Action Items*

A. GMTCC

A computer lab of Macintoshes will be replaced, and the old computers will be sold. There is a board policy that says proceeds should go to the District #18 budget, not the school's internal accounts. J. Teegarden asked the board to waive the policy so the multimedia program can use the proceeds (about \$8K) for their program.

MOTION: P. Ingvaldstad moved to waive board policy to allow proceeds from sale of old GMTCC computers to be used by the GMTCC multimedia program, seconded by J. Eisenhardt. W. Sander offered the friendly amendment, which was accepted, that instead of waiving the policy, the board would allocate the funds from the sale to GMTCC multimedia spending.

D. Osborn asked, is there any way to combine the disposal of these computers with getting computers into the hands of families? J. Teegarden said the board could give them away. D. Osborn said maybe there could be a lottery to give them away to students who participate in the NECAP's, for motivation. W. Sander said part of the discussion at today's curriculum committee meeting was that one reason NECAP scores are low is that kids don't show up for the tests, and aren't fully engaged. This might be an incentive, but it would take from J. Teegarden's resources. B. Schaffer said the environmental club is collecting used computers for a computer recycling project. There is also a laptop loan program at the high school, and students can go to the public library to use computers. P. Ingvaldstad said he thinks D. Osborn's idea is good, but he thinks it is best to pass it along and let administrators decide if they think it's a good idea. W. Sander agreed. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said that decisions about this budget item involve all the sending schools to GMTCC, not just LUHS. S. Reber asked, what does the environmental club do with the used computers? B. Schaffer said the program is just starting. People can bring in used equipment and get credit to select something else. D. Taylor said the topic of incentives is something the curriculum committee could discuss. There are a variety of incentives schools use. **The motion was passed.**

J. Teegarden said every year he applies for \$150-160K from the state through the federal government. There are strict rules about how the funds are spent, and he has to make a plan for how they will be allocated – the Perkins local plan. He showed the plan to the RAB at their last meeting, and they approved it. D. Taylor signed it, and now a board chair needs to sign that the data and statements are correct and that the plan has been authorized.

MOTION: W. Sander moved to accept the recommendation of the RAB and endorse the Perkins local plan, and authorize S. Reber to sign off on it, and the motion was seconded. D. Baker asked what J. Teegarden plans to do with the money. He said historically it has been part of GMTCC's revenue stream. He applies it in different places, to pay salaries, etc. This year he plans to use it for the electronic technology program and for professional development. K. Roberts asked, this is in accordance with the budget we approved, right? He said yes. We will get \$151,716 this year. The amount is based on the number of kids at the poverty level. **The motion was passed.**

B. Central Office

At last week's LNSU executive committee meeting, alternatives to the current board schedule were discussed. A carousel schedule was proposed. All boards would have a joint meeting for the first meeting of the month. There would be some regional work, followed by individual board meetings. Meetings could be held in the Community Education Center, with different rooms used for individual board meetings afterwards. During the individual time, administrators from cen-

tral office would go among the boards. The principals would be at meetings, too. Each board's second meeting of the month would be held at the local school.

D. Baker said we get little enough information at the meetings we have without cutting meetings shorter, as would happen if we had to meet with other boards first. P. Ingvaldstad said when a carousel schedule was used before, one reason he thinks people drifted away from that was that it was usually a late night because the boards continued to do all the same things, rather than cutting meetings shorter. D. Whitcomb said one issue with carousel meetings was that members of the public who have an issue didn't want to travel to Hyde Park to meet with their local board. He thinks we could do 2 joint meetings a year at this location. That would be plenty. He said this is a bad time to bring up the idea, with gas prices going up again. K. Roberts said her memory was that the carousel meeting night got very late. Also, some local boards had to change their meeting night to coincide with the high school board meeting, and the location didn't meet elementary boards' needs well. She thinks for coordination, people need to make an extended effort to go to LNSU meetings, but we haven't been consistent about the LNSU board schedule, which makes it hard for her to go. D. Taylor said she thinks attendance has been fairly high at LNSU board meetings. B. Penberthy said she was on the Waterville board when there were carousel meetings, and she remembers competing for LNSU office staff. It was hard to get someone to sit with them for long enough. W. Sander agreed that we need to get back to a regular schedule for LNSU board meetings. He said that in the past, not all elementary boards were in favor of collaboration with LNSU, which may have been a factor. He said maybe we could have carousel meetings here twice a year and possibly circulate around for other meetings. P. Ingvaldstad suggested compromise – the 4 LNSU meetings we now have could be done as carousel meetings. He feels attendance at LNSU meetings could be better. He likes the idea of rotating around. D. Osborn commented that when she attended carousel meetings as an elementary board member, she did not enjoy the format. One drawback was that there was a very blurred boundary between the high school board and the LNSU board. There was often great attendance from the high school board, and elementary board representatives were overwhelmed. S. Reber said it is important for boards to meet locally and at their convenience. But the sheer number of meetings the superintendent has to attend needs to be taken into account. D. Whitcomb said the superintendent doesn't have to be at every board meeting. She or M. Frederick or S. Cano should come only if there is an issue where they're needed. J. Teegarden said he thinks the superintendent's board schedule is brutal, and he thinks something should be done about it. All board members are invited to the next LNSU board meeting, May 26 at 6:00.

6. *Committee Reports and Action Items*

A. *Board Goals Planning*

D. Taylor and administrators have prepared a draft agenda for a meeting to work on board goals. She suggested doing it at the second meeting in June.

B. *Finance Committee*

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the fund balance is now anticipated to be around \$350-375K, less than what was shown in the packet report. D. Baker said the report in the packets shows a budget balance of close to \$90K under student transportation.

Is there one more quarter to be paid? S. Hamlyn-Prescott said the report is not totally encumbered. She doesn't know the answer to D. Baker's question, but can get back to her with it. She said the board developed its budget based on a tax rate of 85 cents, but it will be 86 cents. The impact will be between 1.25 to 2 cents among the different towns.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott distributed some information on procurement cards that M. Frederick wanted people to have. They are already used by the state of Vermont, and the reports they generate are approved by all auditing boards. History shows that about 80% of fraudulent activity is in the petty cash arena. We would be at less risk with procurement cards. They are also more efficient, and each purchase is backed by insurance. There is a rebate schedule based on annual purchase amounts. M. Frederick will come to the board with more information later. The board will eventually need to take action and decide on limits. The hope is to have cards ready to use by July 1.

British Telephone has put in a bid for Nortel, the phone company that went bankrupt. The loans for the plow truck and the Chevy maintenance truck have been paid off using money in the current budget. Loan payments were in the budget for next year, so we will have some extra money. In answer to P. Ingvaldstad's question, S. Hamlyn-Prescott clarified that the 1.25 to 2 cents impact on the tax rate she mentioned will be the increase to the individual taxpayer. The finance committee's recommendation is for a letter to go out to taxpayers after the budget is approved at the state level. K. Roberts said the legislature got rid of the notice in tax bills saying tax rates are impacted by how much is spent per pupil. D. Baker suggested including information on the surplus in the letter sent to taxpayers. K. Roberts talked about the effects of a number of state decisions on tax rate.

C. Policy Committee

D. Osborn said the draft driver's ed policy had been included in the packet. She summarized the changes that had been made. The procedural portion regarding who can sign up was removed, and now the policy refers to state mandates to determine who is eligible.

MOTION: W. Sander moved to warn Policy 6.24 (Driver Education), seconded by P. Ingvaldstad. W. Sander said there is a redundancy in the bulleted points at the end: the second ("The student presents a false or invalid Driver Learners Permit") is covered by the first ("The student does not possess a valid Driver Learners Permit.") It also appears to him that the fourth item ("The student is non-compliant with a substance abuse treatment program") is not necessary because such students are already considered ineligible according to the third item ("The student has violated the school's substance abuse policy.") D. Baker said a student could be in treatment without having violated the substance abuse policy. B. Penberthy said a student may have violated the policy in one semester, then may be non-compliant with a treatment program in the next semester. The eligibility described is for the current registration cycle. W. Sander said he still felt the second bullet was redundant. B. Penberthy said there is a difference between "possess" and "present." S. Reber said he thought the items were slightly

different. S. Hamlyn-Prescott said she thought it was better to include both to make it easier for students to understand. **The motion was passed.**

D. Osborn said B. Schaffer will be reworking the substance abuse policy over the summer. Anyone who wants to have input should talk to him or come to the next policy committee meeting. Committee members should bring their calendars to the next meeting to plan work on the remaining policies.

D. Curriculum Committee

W. Sander said today the committee talked about graduation rate and how more schools are not meeting AYP on the NECAP, and began to discuss some of the ways we might address that – realigning the sequence of courses a bit, etc. B. Schaffer said he and C. Hindes received information on mandates from the commissioner for schools in Level 1 school improvement. Some are in place already, and some we'll have to build. W. Sander said next time the committee will continue discussing the same topics, and B. Schaffer will update them on alternate ways to get degrees, e.g. ABE and Job Corps.

E. Staff & Community Relations Committee

T. O'Hear will work with M. Spaulding on the teachers' appreciation lunch, and will bring a sign-up sheet to the next meeting.

7. *Review of Full Board Annual Calendar, Request for Future Agenda Items, and Adjourn*

S. Reber said he had asked P. Ingvaldstad to serve as the board representative at graduation.

D. Baker asked D. Taylor to ask M. Frederick why she hasn't gotten the bus figures D. Baker asked for.

D. Taylor said her daughter is graduating from high school at the same time as the LUHS graduation, so she will be unable to be here. She said she had a great interaction today at the tech center faculty meeting, which was very impressive and well run.

D. Whitcomb said there was an excellent article in Reader's Digest on the subject of internet risks that people should read.

J. Teegarden said the GMTCC website has a link to a story on the forestry competition Hardwick students were involved in. GMTCC graduation will be Monday, June 15, at 7:00 PM, at JSC's Dibden Center.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 8:26, and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by,
Donna E. Griffiths

Actions taken at the LU District #18 Board Meeting 5/19/09:

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