

LAMOILLE UNION DISTRICT #18 BOARD
CURRICULUM COMMITTEE MINUTES
GTMCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER
JANUARY 17, 2012

Committee members present: P. Ingvoldstad, D. Baker, S. Reber, K. Roberts
Others: B. Schaffer, C. Hindes, J. Teegarden.

The meeting started at 5:32.

B. Schaffer said the School Improvement Grant calls for a family/school partnership component. He proposes involving parents in examining whether the current graduation requirements policy offers what we want. We are part of the New England Secondary School Consortium. They can bring someone here to take us through a training on their High Leverage Policy Framework. The training is about asking guided questions on development of policy, about the rationale, evidence it will be effective, etc. As early as the next board meeting, he could bring in a presenter to go through the High Level Policy framework. We could open the training up to parents, staff, faculty, and other administrators. He has had some parents come forward who would be interested. Then the group could craft a proposal for consideration by the board.

S. Reber said he sees a couple of different goals. One is to come up with the best graduation requirements policy and another is to engage families in the process. The question is, is this a good test case? He thinks it is helpful to have a specific thing to talk about if we are trying to get parents involved. Would the training happen at a board meeting? B. Schaffer said it could be tied to a committee meeting. S. Reber said he thinks the first thing to do is to get some word out to people with some explanation, giving them some sense of how big a commitment this would be and letting them know that it is limited, not open ended. He would be interested in hearing strategies for that.

P. Ingvoldstad said it sounds like the training is about how to come up with good policy. Is it really necessary for people to go through the training to have a discussion around graduation requirements? B. Schaffer said he feels a lot of times we bring our own experiences, our children's experiences, current practices, or our feelings about best practices into the policy development process. When we have future policy discussions, having had a training that guides us to ask critical questions and look at things like meta studies would help inform all board members and there could be further spill-off aspects. We're operating from the base we know, but this approach encourages us to go out and find information. That movement toward finding out what the research says and putting it into practice is happening at Lamoille Union. Let's not just ask people what they think graduation requirements should be, but do a research project.

P. Ingvoldstad asked how big a group we can have for the training. (*J. Teegarden arrived at 5:47.*) B. Schaffer said there are targeted individuals – curriculum and policy committee members who have an interest, a handful of parents who have expressed interest, a handful of faculty. He thinks we would get 8-12 people willing to commit. P. Ingvoldstad said he thinks parents of young kids would be ideal people to get involved because it might make a difference to their kids.

P. Ingvaldstad asked if B. Schaffer could write a short release, 3 or 4 sentences, that could go on Front Porch Forum, in the News & Citizen, etc. B. Schaffer said yes. D. Baker asked about the timeline. B. Schaffer said town meeting is good place to advertise. There will probably be a meeting a month for the next couple of months. S. Reber said he thinks we might want to have an introductory meeting. It will be a little hard to be clear about all the details in a brief statement. P. Ingvaldstad asked how long the training takes. B. Schaffer said roughly an hour. The real training is taking an example and going through it. S. Reber said ideally we would have some notion of a schedule and be able to tell people how much they will be getting into, and be able to give people guidance along the way. People often work better if they are given a proposal.

K. Roberts said she hasn't heard the essential question we are asking phrased in a way that would be interesting or marketable. She thinks we need to work on what the question is. She also asked if we will have any students in the mix. D. Baker said she thinks we should. K. Roberts said students who are soon to graduate, who have recently lived the experience, are likely to have more helpful opinions.

B. Schaffer said he can put together a process, but he wants the board's hand in it. C. Hinds said, with the High Leverage Policy processes he is familiar with, the group may have a goal in mind, but the process forces a discussion around systemic change. Does that fit comfortably with what is happening now in the high school with the School Improvement Grant? B. Schaffer said yes. What we were and what we are becoming are two different organisms. There is a culture shift. This is timely.

C. Hinds mentioned the idea that the group might find that other policies need to be changed to support changes in the graduation requirements policy. S. Reber said he would argue against mission creep. He would like this to be a coherent project that is done at a specific point. There is also the question of the board's ownership. On one hand, it is important that everyone understand that the product ultimately has to go to the board, but we should not make this process the board's task. He thinks B. Schaffer needs to lead this, and he would love it if some board members would participate. B. Schaffer said student participation is more likely if it is not open ended. He doesn't mind being the catalyst.

S. Reber said he thinks town meeting seems like a natural time to publicize this. If there were a handout, board members could distribute it and bring this to people's attention. B. Schaffer said he will put together a proposal, timeline, and charge and present it at a curriculum committee meeting, or email it out if it is hard for the committee to meet again before town meeting.

The meeting ended at 6:12.