

**UNION #28 JOINT SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Monday, May 15, 2023**

**Final Minutes**

**Present:** Jess Rocheleau, Kate Woodward, Beth Erviti, Nancy Slator, Mandy Blackbird, Jya Plavin, Barbara Doyle, Becky Tew, Tilman Wolf, Dan Hayes, Steven Blinder, Members; Erik Semb, Chair; Corrina Weislo, Director of Student Support Services; Lindsay Rodriguez, Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Caitlin Sheridan, Director of Finance and Operations; Jennifer Culkeen, Superintendent; Public Guests.

**1. Meeting Called to Order by Erik at 6:31 P.M.**

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

**3. Public Hearing: None.**

**4. Approval of the Minutes from March 27, 2023:**

**DAN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 27, 2023. BETH SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**

**5. New Business:**

1. Special Education Legal Counsel Discussion: None.

**6. Old Business: None.**

**7. Superintendent Report:**

Jennifer reported that it is time for her evaluation by JSC and discussed how her evaluation forms will be distributed to JSC members. They can return feedback to either Erik or Pam Rogers. She reviewed her three goals for the year, each of which included four priorities. She reviewed actions she's taken to make progress on each of these priorities, including holding meetings and learning walkthroughs, creating a new grant-writing process, and pursuing efficiencies and shared curricula among the schools of the Union.

Dan commented that he's served on SSC for 20 years and urged all JSC members to fill out the feedback form. He strongly praised Jennifer for her performance as Superintendent, supporting each school to develop in its own way and working to create deeper bonds among the schools and their communities. She's also done phenomenal work to get increased legislative support for all our schools. From the bottom of his heart, he thanked her for her service. Erik also thanked Dan for his long service, and Jennifer thanked Dan and returned the appreciation.

Beth thanked Dan and praised him as a source of wisdom on the school committees. She praised Jennifer for her many marvelous accomplishments on behalf of our schools and kids.

**8. Director of Finance and Operations Report:**

Caitlin reported that Leverett voted to accept the school budget, and Erving voted to accept an amended school budget. The other two town votes are coming up soon. She has completed a course to become a Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official after an exam soon. She's been meeting monthly with the Food Service Directors to wrap up the food service budgets for the year and has been enjoying facilitating the directors' discussions with each other. The U#28 Budget is looking good at the moment.

**9. Director of Student Support Services Report:**

Corrina reported that she will report on legal counsel at the next meeting.

## **10. Director of Curriculum and Instruction Report:**

Math MCAS: Jennifer reported on Lindsay's behalf. Tomorrow will conclude two rounds of Learning Walks in the schools, involving U#28 staff and the Principals observing the classrooms in each school. They found in common across all the schools: students are focused and learning, environments were arranged to promote collaboration, and agendas were arranged to support student learning. Lindsay is also working with each of the buildings to support literacy throughout the curriculum. (She extended her apology for not being able to attend tonight.) Lindsay will be doing a workshop with staff from each school.

Beth asked how long they spend in each classroom: about 15-20 minutes. Erik asked if the School Committee can be invited to one of the meetings run by Lindsay. Dan asked why the SC would attend one of these meetings; Erik said he's been getting reports by staff about them and he'd like to see what's happening. Dan cautioned that the SCs oversee the Principals, but not the staff, so we need to be careful about the line we're taking with staff issues. Beth took Dan's point but added that SC members would be better informed about what's going on in the schools (and in this case, in Lindsay's workshops) if we could connect directly. Jennifer said she would speak with Lindsay to see what could be arranged. Dan added that the meetings should be posted publicly in case there's a quorum of SC members. Becky agreed that it's hard to supervise Jennifer if we don't know what's going on, but at the same time, there are lines we have to be cautious about our roles as SC members. Jennifer added that in each school, there are complaint processes in place that offer Principals to address issues before they go all the way to any SC.

Dan apologized for belaboring the issue, but he pointed out that we added the News & Updates portion to the JSC agenda awhile ago in part to help facilitate discussion amongst SC members to become aware of and address issues that might be affecting several schools. That discussion will inform our ability to hold the Superintendent accountable.

## **11. News/Updates from Each School and Union #28:**

Wendell/New Salem: Beth said we're having all the usual end-of-year festivities and events. The Community Network for Children events are great, and we're all looking forward to enjoying Spring along with finishing up our academics.

Leverett: Jess shared that LSC has been meeting more frequently with the Fin Com and sent a draft of the budget ahead of time to them, a practice that has helped smoothed out the process. Becky said ARMS is going through a very disturbing situation with guidance counselors and leadership possibly grossly mistreating trans and queer students when they came for help with bullying. These students are most at risk in such situations, and we need to continue to work to address transphobia and homophobia in our schools.

Shutesbury: Dan reported that he visited SSC for the Spaghetti Dinner, a great team-building occasion and opportunity to raise money for the 6th Grade. Concerts, a school play, and Field Day are all coming up. It's always good to see rigorous academics and art integrated into this education at every level.

Erving: Erik said some kids are going bowling soon, and Jennifer has enjoyed the talent showcase there as well as a wonderful, super-muddy hike.

Beth asked Jennifer how things have gone with the dispersal of U#28 staff amongst the schools. Jennifer said we use telemeeting tools quite a lot to our advantage. She misses the camaraderie of Central Office, but she also likes being in the school and seeing the kids.

Kate had a question about the U#28 staff being permanently dispersed: is there a plan to find a Central Office space sometime in the future? Jennifer said it's up to the JSC to have a Buildings Committee to look at office spaces.

Steven asked when we added the Pledge of Allegiance to the agenda? Erik said he added it as Chair. Steven said he feels like it's forced patriotism; patriotism is fine when it comes to one freely, however.

## **12. Future Items to Discuss:**

- Next Meeting Date: September 2023 - 6:30 p.m. - Reorganizational Meeting
- Budget & Personnel Committee - October 2023

**13. Adjournment at 7:14**

**BETH MOVED TO ADJOURN. DAN SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.**