

UNION #28 JOINT SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE
Monday, September 18, 2017
Final Minutes

Present: Carl Seppala, Anna Wetherby, Amy Palmer, Bethany Seeger, Johanna Bartlett, Lauren Thomas-Paquin, Carla Halpern, David Chagnon, Melissa Burke; Dan Hayes, Chair; Prudence Marsh, Director of Student Support Services; Bruce Turner, Director of Finance and Operations; Jennifer Haggerty, Superintendent.

1. Meeting Called to Order by Dan at 6:07 P.M.

Dan noted that JSC will reorganize next meeting, once all new members are determined.

2. Public Hearings:

Carla announced a fundraiser in New Salem for a local family with extraordinary medical expenses for their child; it's a 10-hour race on Nov 19, the Sunday before Thanksgiving, but participants can run/walk for as long as they feel like along the Rabbit Run route. Food and "finishers bling" provided. Registration can be undertaken at regrace.com. Volunteers to help run the race or bring food are all welcome.

3. Approval of the Minutes from June 8, 2017

JOHANNA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 8, 2017. BETHANY SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

4. Director of Finance and Operations Report

Bruce related how happy he is to be working here with such a great group of people. He's sent out the Entry Plan, into which he and Jennifer have put a lot of time. He's also visited all the schools except EES. He met with Sen. Stan Rosenberg, Rep. Steve Kulik, and Rep. Susannah Lee on separate occasions to establish relationships and to bring forth our fiscal concerns surrounding education, particularly towns reaching their levy ceilings. Rep. Lee was particularly helpful in advising us how to proceed with grant initiatives, offering to earmark money for initiatives and write letters of support on our behalf to DESE. Bruce also met with Smitty Pignateli, the organizer of a rural schools advocacy coalition.

The Central Office is starting to track expenses and receipts from schools like lunch and after-school programs as well as facilities expenses (which have been turned back to LES in Leverett); this is snowballing and should help all the schools stay on top of their finances. Bruce also met with safety officials and accountants from the U#28 towns. He gave a shout-out to Peter Mallet and David Emmons for helping clean out a whole room at Central Offices; Jennifer added that Bruce carried a lot of boxes himself on a very hot day.

Bruce concluded by saying that we need to start working on next year's budget, which will require the new, reorganized Budget and Personnel Committee. He'd like to meet with this committee as soon as possible, even informally before it is officially organized. Last year's

budget went over slightly due to computer issues and turning several U#28 positions into full-time ones, but these were expected overages. This year's budget is looking good so far. Dan noted that thinking far ahead in the budget, particularly in relation to School Improvement Plans, is very important. Jennifer and Bruce thanked the Interim Director Stephen Cass, who came back over the summer on his own time to help him acclimate.

5. Superintendent Evaluation Form Revisited

Dan reminded JSC that we've been working with Suzor IT, a local computer company, to create a standard online form (a Google form) in order to eliminate the cumbersome paper version. This has been a complicated process, including some communication difficulties with the company, but Dan did receive information on the form today. He hopes to create a subcommittee to revise the form in order to improve its format for tallying/analysis purposes; this mechanism should go through the Central Office since chairs of the evaluation committee come and go, and the evaluation process shouldn't depend on the individuals involved.

Jennifer reached out on the Superintendent listserv on the topic and got 22 responses; she also got some advice from former colleagues and coaches. We must be in compliance with the regulations, meaning we must use the official DESE form. MLG 603CMR35 governs this evaluation process, and Jennifer quoted from it to clarify the duties of JSC; the official form may be supplemented by JSC as it sees fit to fulfill these duties. Jennifer is most comfortable using the best-validated tool (the DESE form) and is leery of adopting a format that is not inclusive of all parts of the tool. Dan agreed, but wants to collect the data in an online format that can be tallied and summarized systematically and as automatically as possible. He can circulate the form in PDF format for input from JSC.

JSC discussed details of the implementation of the evaluation: the problem is that collating, sifting, and summarizing the 28-page form from every committee member is very labor intensive. Jennifer and Dan will continue to look into our options for tallying the information automatically. Pru wondered whether there isn't someone else on JSC that can investigate how to automate the gathering and tallying of information; Jennifer shouldn't be setting up the details of her own evaluation. Dan noted that the old process, tallying and inputting by hand, can be rife with error and subject to the distorting influence of the tallying person's judgment. Pru urged JSC to contact DESE, which has generally been helpful when Central Office calls them up with questions. Bethany noted there's a long-term problem (who has the "keys" to the online tool going into the future) and a short-term one (how to make this current evaluation cycle easier to manage).

Carl asked whether each individual school committee could submit an evaluation to the JSC Chair, breaking down the tallying task to the committee level; even if one committee only submitted a small number of responses, those could be weighted in the combined summary. Lauren and Johanna support this idea; it's easier for the chair of each to summarize five summaries than it is for the JSC Chair to summarize twenty-five. JSC then discussed the perennial problem of veteran versus new JSC members undertaking the evaluation. Can former JSC members be evaluators? Carla says yes, if they're evaluating something that happened during their tenure; Carl says no, as they're no longer duly elected representatives. Jennifer read from the draft JSC Policy Manual that committee members participate as evaluators. Dan will

seek clarification on this point. Pru noted that there's some guidance in her Charting the Course notebook on the whole evaluation process; perhaps this source could be of help in answering these questions. Lauren wondered whether the Policy Subcommittee needs representation from each school; Dan says not necessarily since the policies would be edited and voted on at the JSC level. Johanna noted that in the past, a pair of people interested in policy worked to update policies and brought them to SRSC. Anna and Lauren volunteered to undertake this task, and Carla said she could help after November. Lauren added that when not all members agree about the quality of the Superintendent's work, we will certainly need these policies spelled out clearly.

MELISSA MOVED TO ACCEPT ANNA, LAUREN, AND CARLA AS THE MEMBERS OF THE POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE, WITH LAUREN TO CHAIR. JOHANNA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

6. Superintendent's Report

Jennifer reported that the Leadership Team came together in a marigold-themed meeting to start the year, both in memory of Dick Baldwin and in recognition that there are “marigolds” among us (marigolds are known to be good companion plants that enhance or protect the growth of other plants). Marigolds were had from Five Acre Farm at cost due to Jennifer's excellent storytelling. Our new Curriculum Coordinator, Annie Foley-Ruiz, began in July and is moving into what used to be the nurse's office at Central Offices. She's going to facilitate our Professional Development Days and has already written an application for an Early Literacy grant from the Department of Early Education. We will continue our focus on Universal Design for Learning this year; the Leadership Team will read two UDL books, and each member will represent a chapter to the Team in a way that's significant to them. Pru and Jennifer will present a UDL-infused survey of all the student support services we offer to each of the schools. We favor the term Spectrum of Variability to account for all the various ways we learn. This presentation is the second iteration of the presentation Pru and Jennifer offered at a statewide conference earlier in the year.

7. News/Updates from Each School and Union #28

Wendell / New Salem: Johanna and Carla reported that SRS has a new art teacher and a new P.E. teacher. The 100-Mile Club is up and running, and the time-honored tradition of Community Sing continues. Salt levels in the school water are low right now, and Highway Department members are trying to figure out how to reduce salt use on the roads outside the school. Jennifer added that SRS has done a great job with alternative seating for kids, including a counter at the window, balls, and net chairs. Carla added that SRS continues to provide free lunch for all students, if they apply for it, even though we lost our SEP funds.

Leverett: Bethany reported that we have all the same teachers as last year, although they've moved around a bit. A Peace Day is coming up aligned with Picture Day to get an all-school picture. A volunteer day is coming up as well on a Saturday to take care of various things around the school. Open House is on the way, too. We're trying to figure out how to have more Field Days in order to get the kids outside during the whole year. One parent reached out to see what we have in the curriculum regarding race, tolerance and inequality; is any other school

doing something with these topics in their curricula or as an entire school, or would other schools be interested in collaborating with LES? Carla suggested reaching out to Danika Tyminski and Dan suggested consulting with CES.

Shutesbury: Dan reported that the track has been installed, as well as some new flooring. SES also has new laptops and some air dryers in the bathrooms. The library collection has been updated, and several new staff are coming aboard. Everything is off to a good start.

Erving: David reported that the parking lot has been repaved and a track project is underway. There are some new teachers, including a P.E. teacher. Jennifer added that the staff is working with Chip Wood. EES is also starting to loop teachers with students as a trial. Renovations around the Central Office building have also gone well.

8. Future Items to Discuss

a. Next Meeting Date: Monday, November 13, 2017, 6:00 P.M.

9. Adjournment: 7:35 P.M.

CARLA MOVED TO ADJOURN. MELISSA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.