

LAMOILLE UNION DISTRICT #18 BOARD MEETING MINUTES
LAMOILLE UNION LIBRARY
TUESDAY, MARCH 27, 2007

Board members present: B. Bailey, J. Eisenhardt, C. Hickory (6:05), S. Hamlyn-Prescott (6:23), P. Ingvoldstad, C. Mann, D. Osborn, S. Reber, W. Sander, D. Wells, D. Whitcomb. Absent: D. Baker, K. Roberts. Others: T. Bailey, G. Chicoine, D. Jewett (6:42), Tom Pound (6:05)

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order, Introductions, Announcements and Public Input*
Call to Order – 6:02

2. *Meet Two Semi-Finalists*

Tom Pound arrived at 6:04. Introductions were made. (*C. Hickory arrived at 6:05.*) G. Chicoine passed around T. Pound's professional portfolio. T. Pound briefly touched on his experience – he was a math teacher for 17 years – then asked for questions.

S. Reber asked why he wanted to leave his current assistant principal job after only a year. He said his principal feels he's ready and supports him. He trained to be a principal, not an assistant principal – that's his goal. S. Reber asked him what brought him to Vermont. He said quality of life.

D. Osborn asked if he could talk about what he had learned since his initial interview. He said he liked the school layout and the way the custodial staff cleans, and everyone has been very courteous to him.

W. Sander asked how he would get to a 100% graduation rate. He said he would want to implement appropriate academic and attendance intervention strategies, and not wait until April to address students' problems.

S. Reber asked how many feeding schools his current school (North Country) has. He said 13. S. Reber asked him to talk about transition issues. He said they have lots of small schools. It can be daunting for those kids to go to much bigger classes. A couple of schools send a SPED teacher to help kids with the transition.

C. Mann asked what he would do to help school spirit, and what he would do to help honors students. Regarding school spirit, he said he'd want to see what the athletic director could do – things like pep rallies or incentives for kids to go to games. He asked for clarification on the second question. C. Mann said some schools offer a wider variety of courses – how could we help students who are more advanced? He said honors kids tend to be highly competitive, and like AP credits and honors credits. We would need to coordinate with students and parents and find out what we're not offering that they need. Something like a stock market class might be an applied project that honors kids would enjoy.

B. Bailey asked for an overview of his interpersonal skills. He said he always says “Yes, ma’am” or “No, ma’am” to older teachers, and he always listens to recommendations from experienced teachers and maintains respect.

G. Chicoine asked him to talk about what a day in his life as LUHS principal would be like, as opposed to a day at his current job. He said he’d be out of the building a lot more as principal. He would have meetings with T. Bailey, and he wants to go to the sending towns and listen to parents’ concerns.

C. Mann asked, if he received complaints that a teacher was not teaching well, how would he approach it with the teacher? He would first encourage the parent to talk to the teacher. (*S. Hamlyn-Prescott arrived at 6:23.*) He would give the teacher a heads-up and ask for her perspective, then ask the teacher to talk to the parent.

G. Chicoine asked how he would build a positive relationship with D. Jewett, if he were selected over D. Jewett for the principal position. He said D. Jewett would be the first person he’d like to sit down and talk with. He would ask him about his goals, and offer to help him meet his goal of becoming a principal. He wouldn’t treat him as a subordinate.

W. Sander asked about how to reach out to kids who may have potential, but whose parents didn’t go to college, or even graduate from high school – how to broaden their horizons? T. Pound said at his school, they sometimes go talk to parents in person as part of an intervention. Upward Bound is a good program he’d try to get kids involved in. Guidance counselors can help them develop plans. He also said teacher attendance at school helps motivate kids, so he would want to ensure good teacher morale.

D. Whitcomb said he was pleased with T. Pound’s interest in Vermont history. He asked if any Vermont history is taught at North Country. T. Pound said yes, but only as part of another class. He would like to incorporate Vermont history into the LUHS curriculum; it might help make kids proud of their state.

P. Ingvoldstad asked about his personal goals. He said it takes 5 years to realize the fruits of new programs, but the average principal only lasts 3 years at a school. He would like to be able to stay at a school like Lamoille no less than 5 years. After 7 years, then he’d assess where he is and where he’d like to go from there.

C. Hickory asked if there is anything North Country is doing to encourage parental involvement. He there is an attendance policy (which was on the books, but not implemented until he did it) that involves calling parents in after a certain number of absences. He’d start here by inviting parents to be involved.

T. Pound left at 6:39.

D. Jewett arrived at 6:42.

G. Chicoine passed around a copy of D. Jewett's portfolio. D. Jewett gave a summary of his background, education, and work experience, including the development of his interest and experience with technology, how he came to be assistant principal at LUHS, and his accomplishments and responsibilities in that position.

C. Mann asked if he has written grants while at LUHS. He said no, grant-writing is very time consuming.

C. Hickory asked how he thinks his day would be different as principal, and what he is looking forward to, and what he will regret passing on to someone else. He described his current work day. He said he enjoys working with the students he works with on discipline now, but is looking forward to getting to know more of the other students in different settings. He'll be dealing with a broader range of issues. He'll delegate as much as possible.

P. Ingvaldstad asked about his vision for the school. He said one main role of the principal is to help the school community come up with a vision, and then keep articulating it and reminding people of it. The curriculum hasn't changed much in many years, so he wants to look for opportunities for improvement. The school needs to respond to the needs of middle school kids who are now getting ahead by taking high school courses. There could also be more of a partnership with the tech center. Perhaps a cooperative program – a science or math academy – which could give high achieving kids, including those from the others schools served by the tech center, some hands-on experience.

C. Mann asked what he would do for high achieving students. He said the high achieving students S. Fortune had interviewed felt they could use more support. The school has created lots of ways students can learn – through independent study, personal learning plans, or college courses. More could be done. There will be more such students in the future because of the influx of 8th graders who have taken high school classes. We will need to make adjustments every year in response.

G. Chicoine asked, if he were not to get this position, how would he establish a relationship with the new principal? He said he would have a high amount of respect for the person, but he's looking for a step up. He's not looking to leave Lamaille. He would work with the person as long as he felt his talents were appreciated. If there was any discomfort, he'd look for something else.

D. Whitcomb remarked that this was a Dana Jewett he'd never seen. He asked D. Jewett if he had been held back in his current position. D. Jewett said no one has been holding him back, but he takes his role as assistant principal seriously. He's

here to support the principal. When they have disagreements, they're private. He has tried not to draw too much attention to himself.

B. Bailey asked how he thinks his interpersonal skills will be tested by dealing with the teachers. He said there are teachers who probably would prefer that he not be principal, but he thinks most would perceive him as fair and reliable. He said interpersonal skills are probably not his greatest strength. He sometimes hasn't taken enough time to talk with teachers and make a personal connection, but he doesn't think it will be a problem. He thinks people here like and understand him. G. Chicoine asked, if he becomes principal, how will he reach out to people whose toes he has stepped on? He said he would start by eating lunch with teachers once or twice a week. He's not concerned about any individuals. He'd probably meet with them and reassure them they have nothing to fear. He has had some frank conversations with people in the last couple of weeks, in the context of his candidacy.

C. Hickory asked if he sees any ways we can gain in the area of parental involvement. He said we suffer in that area. When he calls parents, he finds most of the time they're good to work with – they want what's best for the students. But sometimes parents are angry because of what happened to them at this school when they were kids. Getting beyond that is the first challenge. Usually over time he wins them over. Talking to parents is good. Visiting towns during board meetings could be effective. Some small things might help – having spaces labelled "Family Parking," for instance. Maybe shorter newsletters more often, and opportunities for parents to meet people from the high school in their own area.

D. Jewett left at 7:29.

T. Bailey suggested a 5 minute break, and the board took a break from 6:29 to 7:34.

G. Chicoine described the selection process so far. We placed our advertising on Jan. 20, and we got 17 candidates. Eight were screened out during the paper screening phase. One of the remaining candidates didn't respond to queries and was rejected, and another withdrew early. Seven packets were placed in the library for review. Six people were invited in to interview, but one withdrew. The 5 interviewed were screened down to 3 semi-finalists. T. Bailey said those 3 were given opportunities to tour the school and meet with teachers. Then he and Gary met with about 25 faculty members who had met all 3 candidates to listen to their opinions.

3. *Executive Session to Hear Superintendent's Recommendation and Discuss the Three Semi-Finalists*

ACTION: J. Eisenhardt moved to enter executive session to discuss a matter of contract at 7:28, seconded by D. Whitcomb, and the motion was passed.

The board consented out of executive session at 8:55 p.m. (W. Sander returned to the board in executive session at 8:45 p.m, after having left around 6:50.)

4. *Vote on Selected Candidate*

ACTION: W. Sander moved to offer a two-year contract to Brian Joseph Schaffer of Delta Junction, Alaska as principal of Lamoille Union High School, seconded by C. Mann. The motion was passed 7-2.

ACTION: W. Sander moved to pay Brian Schaffer \$80,000 for the first year of his contract and to provide \$4000 in relocation assistance, seconded by D. Whitcomb. The motion was passed 9-0.

D. Whitcomb requested that T. Bailey call Brian Schaffer and offer him the position. From a speaker phone to the board, Brian Schaffer accepted the board's offer for the contract as principal and thanked the board members. The board acknowledged B. Schaffer with applause.

5. *Request for Future Agenda Items and Adjourn*

ACTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 9:20 and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted by,
Donna E. Griffiths

Actions taken at the LU District #18 Board Meeting 3-27-07

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