

UNION 28 JOINT SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE
Wednesday, January 13, 2016
FINAL Minutes

Present: Scott Bastarache, Bethany Seeger, Johanna Bartlett, Son Hui May, Sarah Dolven, John DeWitt, Kip Fonsh, Sean Woodard-McNiff, Audra Goscenski, Alan Mully, Dick Baldwin, Katie Fiander, Carla Halpern, Jessalyn Zaykoski; Dan Hayes, Chair; Prudence Marsh, Director of Student Support Services; Aaron Osborne, Director of Finance and Operations; Jennifer Haggerty, Superintendent.

1. Meeting Called to Order by Dan at 7:07 P.M.

2. Public Hearings

Dan thanked Jennifer, the SRS chef, and Kelley Sullivan for their efforts to provide a delicious, warm, pre-meeting meal to JSC.

He also made sure that JSC members had the latest update to Charting the Course and reminded everyone that there is a forum on standardized testing at SRS tomorrow at 5 p.m.

3. Approval of the Minutes from October 29, 2015

Committee members one emendation for the minutes.

**JOHANNA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 29, 2015 AS EMENDED.
DICK SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.**

4. Budget & Personnel SubCommittee Update

a. FY17 Union #28 Budget and Budget Process: Bethany reported that the B&P SubCommittee went over the U28 budget, particularly the drivers. Aaron added that while this is in draft form now, it's a good representation of what the final version should look like. Dan asked JSC members to encourage their respective school committees to bring concerns to Aaron as they arise.

5. U28 Central Office Security Improvements – Update

Scott reported that the Erving Selectboard will not be looking to allocate money in the FY16 budget for updates to the U28 offices. Dan wondered whether leftover funds in the current U28 budget might be put to this purpose at the end of the fiscal year. Jennifer said they're looking at putting in a buzzer system, and Son Hui commented on the very unwelcoming nature of the bushes near the entrance. Jennifer agreed and indicated the FY17 budget includes funds to do something about the bushes.

Scott concluded by saying he will continue to talk with the Erving Selectboard about renovations, but that there is some question there about even keeping the building in the first place, as the town is considering building a new library; a new, single-story library will be more

cost effective than renovating an old building. Dan thanked Scott for his work with the Erving Selectboard on this issue.

6. Regionalization Update

Kip said that the RSC will meet and vote on January 23 on sending the revised regionalization proposal to the four towns. After that, each town must vote individually to amend the regional agreement; if this vote passes for all four towns, each town may then vote on whether to join the new region. These votes would happen at Town Meeting.

Bethany emphasized that voting yes to amending the agreement does not obligate a town to join the new region; it only allows the process to continue so that towns can decide what is best for them regarding the new region. If the first vote fails, no town will have the opportunity to join the amended region.

Dan said that one concern of Shutesbury residents is that there would be a shift in representation in the region; there is also a feeling in town that the current agreement is satisfactory.

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

Wendell / New Salem: Carla invited everyone to the forum on standardized tests tomorrow night at 5 p.m. Enrollment is slightly down at SRS, which is presenting some budget challenges alongside some grants that might not come through. SRSC approved a complaint policy and looked at how to save energy by replacing lights and toilets. SRSC discussed the PARCC results that came in; SRS is a Level 1 school and a Commendation School, which puts it in an interesting position.

Kip asked whether it would be helpful for school committees to track enrollment and other data such as charter school and School Choice enrollment over time, and have a collective discussion about trends that appear there. Carla agreed that School Choice is problematic because it provides extra funds, but at a cost to surrounding towns. Jennifer added that CES has collected and analyzed data on charter schools; they significantly impact public schools in Franklin County. Johanna noted that it's clear Boston ignores what we want out here; Jennifer responded that banding together can make our concerns and voices heard, and she appreciates the work CES does. Dan said that a lot of information is going to legislators, so we do need to advocate to help focus them on how the impact of charter schools is disproportionate on rural districts. The decline in enrollment is hitting many schools in Western Mass. Son Hui asked why; Dan said there are many factors contributing to an overall decline. Johanna added that Wendell has been having discussions about the lack of affordable housing for young families here.

Leverett: Bethany reported that enrollment is stable; we're up one preschooler. One teacher will go on maternity leave in April. LSC has started to have educational forums in the evening to engage parents on issues like regionalization and the budget. The first such forum was successful, with about a dozen people showing. We're also putting together a survey about the summer and after-school programs. A talent show and game night is coming up soon as well.

Erving: Scott reported that he hasn't been EES as much as he'd like to have been lately, but there is an anomaly in projected vs. actual enrollment that is cause for a little concern. Free school breakfast and lunch have started with the new year, and the food service has seen a lot more usage as a result. Aaron added that breakfast in the classroom is okay now as well, not for intensive instruction like math, but for social skills and so on. Contract negotiations are about to start and sports are in full swing; Son Hui reported the basketball team is playing games with other towns. Scott also said there's a desire to look at the after-school program and bolster it; there's already an After-school Academy for academic support that's going very well, but we'd like to add educational components to the after-school program as well.

Shutesbury: Katie reported that SES enrollment is down currently, mainly due to five families moving out of state, but that a large class is coming up through the preschool. A big MCBA event just happened, and the students have come up with fun activities related to the books. We're trying to secure grants for a track as well as an updated or new playground; the success of SRS's track is encouraging and is being used as evidence for this grant. Dan added that this track is intended to be accessible to the whole community. He attended a science-based dance performance recently that was amazing; it was beautiful and amazing, incorporating both science and art. It was a showcase of best practices, engaging students, giving teachers autonomy, integrating domains of knowledge, and so on; events like this make students want to be at the school, which is crucial. He recently went to a conference where he learned about a study done in New Orleans at poorer schools that were nevertheless high performing; student engagement is key to this success.

Dan thanked everyone for reporting; it's wonderful to hear about what's going on at all the schools.

Union #28: In her State of the Union address, Jennifer reported that No Child Left Behind has now been replaced by ESEA, bringing some substantial changes to our schools. Essentially, there is no more AYP and no waivers, since states have been given more discretion although they still need to report on school progress to the federal government. She also plugged the forum on standardized testing at SRS tomorrow night; Johanna added that she's hoping parents will turn out.

Jennifer continued that she's been doing formal and informal visits to the schools, which has given her a lot of firsthand knowledge about leadership structure, process, and school culture. Formal observations help the Leadership Team develop their evaluation and leadership skills. Leadership Team reports are due mid-April; now the Team is working on developing three to five strategic objectives related to core values. She also continues to attend her Superintendent Induction workshops and coach meetings monthly; recently, her coach observed her observing a principal observing a teacher. The feedback chain is quite interesting, and the coach said he'd never seen such a high-functioning Leadership Team; he was quite impressed with U28.

Our letter about charter schools will be shared with the Boston Globe. Mitchell Chester has chosen Civic Engagement as a focus for curricula this year; more on that next meeting. Soon, Dorothy Presser from MASC will be offering workshops for committee members, and could come help U28 develop a perpetual calendar. The U28 school committees can choose which workshops they'd like to attend. Dan and Jennifer spoke very highly of Dorothy's abilities to

help school committees.

Jennifer has one update on the MAKER Lab grant at SRS; she reached out to the Superintendent at Franklin County Tech, who was enthusiastic about training someone at SRS on a 3-D printer, as well as sharing software and other resources. Dan thanked Jennifer for her outreach and praised U28's process; things work so well here in part because principals are empowered with more autonomy, authority, and discretion than in other districts.

8. Superintendent's Mid-Cycle Review

Jennifer provided a boxful of evidence relating to her goals and invited JSC members to review items at their leisure. She reviewed the four goals and four standards JSC approved last fall, as well as evidence that indicates progress toward and achievement of same. She also answered committee questions about goals, standards, and evidence. The goals are: Effective Entry and Direction Setting; Maintaining Momentum During the Transition; New Superintendent Induction Program; and Fair, Effective Classroom Teacher Evaluation. The standards are: Instructional Leadership, Management and Operations, Family and Community Engagement, and Professional Culture.

In working toward these standards and goals, Jennifer has worked very closely with Central Office personnel as well as the Leadership Team and administrative support at each school. Attending school events, Superintendent round tables, and public forums are also ways Jennifer is able to engage with community members and build relationships.

Scott asked a question about Standard III, specifically connecting with family; how is meeting with parents and inviting them to contact you working out so far? Is this more of an ideal, a lofty goal as it were, or more practical? Jennifer responded she has met with some families regarding specific student concerns and student support, and has engaged with families at school events. Dan shared that Jennifer attended the dance performance, greeting people at the door. Johanna related that she appreciates this process because she feels this year she'll be able to write something coherent and well supported on the year-end evaluation. Jessalyn added that she appreciates Jennifer's availability; it's great to have opportunities just to meet with her and get to know her. Scott continued that this evaluation process is much better as well because committee members know what to look for in evaluation; he also appreciates the effective leadership structure and processes that are clearly working well. Dick commented that he sees relational responsibility in action in Jennifer's work; everything is transparent, well organized, and clearly communicated. He also appreciates the dynamic between action and reflection, which is evident in the U28 team's presentation tonight.

Dan thanked Jennifer for her presentation, and reiterated the open-door policy at the Central Office.

9. Director of Finance and Operations Report

Aaron reminded JSC that there is a forum on standardized testing at SRS tomorrow night at 5 p.m. He explained several items in the expenditure report; there are no big concerns at present, and due to offsets we are currently well within budget. It's possible we could put money into the

building renovations later on. Scott responded that there might be an opportunity for Erving to work collaboratively with U28 on those capital improvements, particularly safety.

He then reviewed budget drivers in the draft F17 budget; there is about a 2% increase this year. Individual town contributions to the U28 budget are calculated using October numbers for each year. Important to note is that benefits for U28 staff aren't in this budget because they pass directly to the towns. There's about \$13,700 in net savings to the towns for Aaron's and Jennifer's positions when retirement and insurance differentials are rolled together. The proposed U28 budget has already been built into the school budgets; there is also the possibility of moving a part-time position into the U28 budget as a full-time employee because she is currently employed part-time by all four towns under different pay rates.

Aaron also presented the 5-year plan to JSC and welcomed any comments or thoughts on the plan or the budget.

10. Future Items

- a. Community Forum Regarding Standardized Testing – January 14, 2016 5:00 p.m.
Swift River School

Carla thanked Johanna for all her work organizing the forum on standardized tests tomorrow at SRS, 5 p.m.

- b. MASC Dorothy Pressor – Future Visit
- c. Next Meeting Date: TBD

11. Adjournment

Dan thanked all school committee representatives for attending tonight, and for doing what they do to support their schools.

JOHANNA MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:55. SON HUI SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.