

UNION 28 JOINT SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE
Monday, September 19, 2016
Final Minutes

Present: Jack Radner, David Briand, Dick Baldwin, Bethany Seeger, Fred Steinberg, Son Hui May, Carla Halpern, Tara Acker; 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 7:01 P.M.

2. Public Hearings: None

3. Approval of the Minutes from June 15, 2016

CARLA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 15, 2016. DICK SECONDED. UNANIMOUS. (ONE ABSTENTION.)

4. Budget & Personnel Committee Update

Carla reported that the committee discussed having a policy in place in the case of death or incapacitation of the Superintendent. Jennifer will get some legal advice and bring it back to B&P, who can then bring it to the full JSC. The committee also discussed a proposed U#28 budget timeline, which the committee recommends to JSC.

Dan noted that the timeline includes two opportunities for individual school committees to consider and weigh in on the draft budget.

CARLA MOVED TO APPROVE THE TIMELINE PROPOSED BY AARON FOR THE FY17-18 BUDGET PROCESS. SON HUI SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

5. Regionalization Update

Bethany reported that Sarah Dolven recently resigned from the Amherst-Pelham Regional School Committee. It seems that the question of regionalization has no momentum at this point, although Leverett passed a motion at Town Meeting to explore regionalization options.

Jennifer updated JSC on the proposed West Quabbin Regional School; a DESE representative was not openly supportive of the idea, though it is possible. Jennifer and Aaron can continue to look into the idea if JSC so desires.

6. News/Updates From Each School and Union #28

Wendell / New Salem: SRS enrollment is currently 170. We still have free lunch and breakfast, our Kindergarten grant was cancelled, and our CPC grant was fully funded. SRSC is still considering the resolution against Question 2. The Open House just went very well, and our new staff is adjusting. Our 6th Grade teacher, Danika Tyminski, recently gave a talk to MTA about the importance of love in education; she reviewed many practices and events at SRS,

including the weekly Community Sing, the 100-Mile Club, staff participation in the Talent Show, composting, gardens open to the community, a chicken coop, the supportive response to families over the question of whether to opt out of PARCC, and fundraisers donating to families in need. The video of this talk is available online; Jennifer will forward to all school committees.

Leverett: Bethany reported that LES is up in enrollment, at 138; this has resulted in a very large 2nd Grade (24 students), challenging staff to work with it without splitting it up. One of the paraprofessionals at LES will be joining the class as an assistant teacher. Today was the International Day of Peace at LES, with an art project, a storyteller, and peace-related activities throughout the day. At the storytelling event, any students who wanted to could stand up and tell a story. Tara added that LES agreed to sign a resolution against Question 2 and put it out to the community to consider voting No on Question 2.

Erving: Jennifer reported that EES is involved with the work with Chip Wood around building an adult community. The Opening Day theme for staff was “Gifts We Bring” to our community. There are a few new staff members. EES, along with SRS, was awarded a grant for breakfast in the classroom.

Shutesbury: Frank reported that SES got a CPC grant for a new track and playground equipment, which has already been installed. They have a few new staff members, including a new Phys. Ed. teacher and a new ELL teacher. Enrollment is declining, and is now at 120, despite SSC voting to open seats for School Choice this year. The Opening Day potluck was a success.

7. Superintendent Report

Jennifer reported that the Leadership Team will be spending the year working with Chip Wood on a leadership approach that focuses on the “missing piece” of trying to transform schools for the better: building an adult community based on trust and support. We added a value to our Core Values: deep confidentiality, which explains that safety is built when we all know the stories we share with others will not be repeated unless it's been made clear it's fine to do so. We'll start to try tactical meetings once a month where the agendas are set by the Principals; the other monthly meeting will be strategic, with the agenda set by Jennifer. She is still in the Superintendent's Induction Program; this year, they'll be setting long-term goals and outcomes. Charter schools are a hot-button issue, and Jennifer urged committee members to talk with people about the impact of more charter schools on rural districts.

Finally, Aaron has been offered and accepted a job in another school district and will be leaving October 31. He explained that he was made an offer a month and a half ago, but turned it down. They came back with a better offer that he couldn't refuse. He is still committed to getting the U#28 schools through the budget process, however, and will happily attend our meetings to help with that. He'll also put together the End-of-Year Report so that his replacement can come in and learn on the job. He concluded that Jennifer is a fabulous Superintendent, just the right person for the job, and he's confident she'll find the right replacement. Dan noted that it was a good opportunity to understand what the Director of Finance and Operations position really is, and why it's superior to a Business Manager. He thanked Aaron for his service.

Jennifer suggested that we look for an Interim because January is usually when permanent positions are advertised. Dan asked JSC what they thought of position details, posting timeline, etc.

8. Director of Finance and Operations Report

Aaron reported that there's not much to talk about at this point because expenses are largely salaries at this point. The SPED instructor variances will be covered by grant monies that we're waiting to come in. Some hourly positions have been converted into salaried, exempt positions that we can offset elsewhere; legal guidance has suggested this because of the nature of the positions. Our IT budget is being spent steadily and we're looking at places where we can consolidate technology to bring expenditures down. These employees really appreciate the switch because of the slight increase in money as well as the flexible scheduling time and the increased responsibilities.

Audra wondered whether Aaron could give JSC some written guidance on how things are being shifted around in the budget so that the new Director will understand what's going on. Aaron noted that the biggest such item is that he's holding back on spending out School Choice monies at the outset. He also encouraged LES and SES to consider doing what SRS and EES have done with free breakfast and lunch through the CEP grant.

9. Superintendent Evaluation

Dan explained the process. Every school committee member (as well as former members) is invited to fill out an evaluation; the JSC Chair collects and compiles them. Dan commented that it would be better to receive all evaluations in a format that's easier to compile (he received a mixture of formats last time). Part of the evaluation is an End-of-Evaluation Report that includes all data and all comments and which goes to all committee members. The whole data set is confidential although the summary produced by the Chair is not, and tonight is the first night that Jennifer has had access to the whole data set. Dan endeavored to highlight emergent themes in the comments. His summary indicated that Jennifer is considered an expert manager who is intelligent, cooperative, an excellent listener, and a great builder of relationships.

Dan said he thought Jennifer was a good fit for U#28. He tried looking for comments that would indicate areas in need of improvement in her performance, but he couldn't find any. He said he's grateful for her excellent performance. Carla said that this is a really, really hard job, and she's very appreciative of Jennifer's work; the areas she marked as "proficient" are only areas of unusual complexity that she sees Jennifer quickly climbing the learning curve on. Dan emphasized that it's important for all JSC members to fill out the evaluation completely. He also emphasized that this process is important for maintaining a balance of power between the school committee and the Superintendent that is deplorably lacking in certain regional school districts one might name. Audra echoed Dan's request to complete the review, and to try to provide some constructive, honest feedback, even on performance areas that are already good but that could be awesome.

Carla thanked Dan for his work compiling and summarizing the feedback. Jennifer said that she

insists on being evaluated with the same rubric format that all her teachers must face.

CARLA MOVED TO ACCEPT THE EVALUATION OF JENNIFER FOR SY15-16 . AUDRA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

10. Security Upgrades at Central Offices

Aaron reported that security upgrades are being installed that will allow staff to see visitors on a camera and buzz them in. They're also in negotiations with the Town of Erving regarding rent and various parts of the building that need to be brought up to code as well as maintenance scheduling. They'll be meeting regularly with the new Town Manager, who's very easy to work with.

11. Future Items

- a. Next Meeting Date – TBD
- b. Superintendent proposed current-year goals
- c. Interview process for Interim Director of Finance and Operations

12. Adjournment

CARLA MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:07. TARA SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.