

UNION #28 JOINT SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE
Monday, March 18, 2024
Draft Minutes

Present: Jya Plavin, Beth Erviti, Anna Wetherby, Julie Martel, Bethany Rose, Katelyn Mailloux-Little, Jeremy Mailloux, Becky Tew, Mackensity Bailey, Kate Woodward, Mandy Blackbird, Barbara Doyle, Mark Blatchley, Nancy Slator, Members; Steven Blinder, Chair; Lindsay Rodriguez, Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Caitlin Sheridan, Director of Finance and Operations; Jennifer Culkeen, Superintendent; Shannon Cleveland, Superintendent-To-Be; Public Guests.

1. Meeting Called to Order by Steven at 7:01 P.M.

2. Public Hearing:

3. Approval of the Minutes from January 29 and February 16, 2024:

Steven offered an emendation to the minutes of January 29.

JULIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JANUARY 29, 2024 AS EMENDED. BETH SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

BETH MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 16, 2024 AS PRESENTED. MANDY SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

4. New Business:

1. Superintendent of School's July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2027 Contract - Vote:

Steven moved Executive Session up to discuss the Contract prior to voting on it.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH OPEN MEETING LAW (CHAPTER 30A SECTION 21 (A)), BECKY MOVED TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS STRATEGY WITH RESPECT TO CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS WITH NONUNION PERSONNEL, SUPERINTENDENT, AND RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION FOR A VOTE, INCLUDING CAITLIN AND TREVOR FOR NOTE-TAKING AND BUDGETARY PURPOSES. JULIE SECONDED. VOICE VOTES ALL AYE.

JESS MOVED TO APPROVE THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOL'S JULY 1, 2024 TO JUNE 30, 2027 CONTRACT AS PRESENTED. MANDY SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

2. Day on the Hill Legislative Event:

Steven noted this event; is there money available to attend? Caitlin: Yes, you can just get reimbursed. No need for JSC to approve.

3. Special JSC Meeting:

Jess said if we need two votes, time is tight, since Leverett's Town Meeting is very soon. Caitlin will check with Pam to see if two meetings are required. Steven suggested we schedule a date for the meeting and schedule another one depending on the results of Caitlin's inquiry. Becky suggested scheduling two meetings back to back (they're only 5 minute meetings). Jess noted it's too late to present an adjusted budget at the Leverett Town Meeting. Caitlin noted it's about a 0.1% difference, and Mackensity said adjustments can also be made on the floor.

JSC worked out dates for the special budget adjustment meetings: 3/27 and 3/28 at 6:30.

MACKENSEY MOVED TO SCHEDULE ANOTHER JSC MEETING PRIOR TO MAY IN ORDER TO APPROVE AN ADJUSTED U#28 BUDGET THAT REFLECTS THE ACTUAL SALARY OF THE

SUPERINTENDENT. BECKY SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

5. Old Business: None.

6. Superintendent Report:

Jennifer noted most of her report will be on the following agenda item. On August 24, 2024, Pamela Rogers will be retiring. She's been working in school systems 31 years, 6 years in U#28. She's an invaluable member of our office staff, and Jennifer has never worked with a more professional, collegial, and kind person in all her 36 years in education. We'll be posting the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent position in June. She thanked Pam for her excellent service to the Union.

7. Director of Curriculum and Instruction Report:

1. Student Opportunity Act - Presentation, Discussion and Vote:

Lindsay presented the Student Opportunity Act steps we have to take. We've analyzed data and identified a student subgroup (High Needs). Lindsay reviewed percentages of high-needs students at each school who show significant disparities. We've set goals (increases in students meeting or exceeding ELA MCAS and benchmarks in school-based data) and planned to meet those goals. For Social-Emotional Learning and Mental health, we're doing high-quality professional development for staff as well as using a screener for SEL competencies, reviewing the current SEL curriculum to make sure all areas are covered, and improving attendance for chronically absent students. For Literacy, we're developing and implementing a comprehensive approach to early literacy education. We've gotten a DESE grant to help us create a District Literacy Plan. Finally, we have a community survey.

Becky asked about the SEL goals: is there anything in them about an audit of the structure of the space and the way people's mental health can be impacted. Is there an environmental assessment, in other words? This is a 3-year plan, so each year we'll report on progress and expand, so we can incorporate that audit in the future. Becky commented that the survey could have been put in a way that's less technical. Lindsay said the tricky part was that a lot of the language was from the DESE categories; we tried to massage it, but maybe we need to edit it more. Jennifer said we can incorporate changes and suggestions from the survey in future years.

Jess asked why students are missing more school. There's a tricky balance between keeping the community safe from illness and encouraging attendance. DESE's priorities might be misplaced here. Jennifer said we can't remove their focus, but we can have one-on-one conversations with parents about attendance.

Mackensy asked about SEL screening tools. She added that absence from school even from illness means there's still learning loss. Lindsay said SAEBR is the tool we're using right now, with teachers each filling out a piece that can be run through reports. There's a self-assessment as well. Schools that are using both see alignment between student and teacher responses. That gives us confidence we're on the right track with our plans.

Mandy expressed reservation about voting on the plan without reading it fully. Katelyn suggested adding this vote to one or both of the special JSC meetings on 3/27 and 3/28. Becky suggested taking some time to read the plan during the meeting tonight, then voting. Steven asked members to mute and shut off video in order to read, then resume the meeting at 8:15. JSC read the SOA plan.

Mandy asked how the hiring can be sustained with this plan. Lindsay: It's not a grant, but an ask for what we can commit to within our own budget and personnel already. We report how much of our budget is devoted to accomplishing this plan. Jennifer said we're using already allocated resources. Steven asked if we're committing ourselves to items in the budget that aren't there now. No: everything in the plan is what exists right now. We don't need additional hours to accomplish it.

Katelyn asked about the survey: How was it shared? It went out to all families and Jennifer and Lindsay hosted a virtual open house to make the SOA presentation. Katelyn didn't get the survey; Jennifer said she doesn't know how each Principal shared it out to their community.

BECKY MOVED TO ADOPT THE STUDENT OPPORTUNITY ACT REPORT AS PRESENTED. BETH SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.

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

Wendell/New Salem: Beth said we had great Candy Bar Bingo, a fundraiser for a field trip to the Cape. It was something like \$600 raised.

Leverett: Jya said we had our talent show on March 15, we have caregiver conferences coming up in April, and we have a grant for puppets to work with students, which is very fun. Jess added that the MCBA Party was amazing, and she was so proud of U#28 and all the Librarians; the kids loved it. LSC has approved a budget that includes the Adjustment Counselor and sent it to the Fin Com; it's moving forward. We're using more School Choice money to cover these choices and increases. The Town-wide budget meeting is coming up Tuesday. Becky added she's always wondering what's going on in other towns with their budgets. LSC is interested in working with other SCs to find efficiencies, since there's Fin Com pressure to cut things.

Shutesbury: Julie said March 8 Shutesbury hosted the MCBA Awards Party. It was super enjoyable and fun for the kids. March 9 the Leverett and Shutesbury PTOs hosted a skating session at the UMass skating rink. The Gender and Sexuality Alliance has signed up to march in the Pride Parade. Some students collected and boiled sap for syrup, and the 5th and 6th Grades took a field trip to the museums at Amherst College, and we're in negotiations with our teachers' union.

Erving: Mackensey said we're negotiating with Unit B (everyone not in Unit A). Becky asked how Erving SC members are feeling about the budget talks this year. Mackensey said we need to take a hard look at the budget in order to be responsible to the taxpayers of Erving. We need to decide whether our budget is truly meeting our needs.

9. Executive Session: See 4 above.

10. Future Items to Discuss:

- Next Meeting Date: May 20, 2024
- Budget & Personnel Committee - TBD

Becky said she's not running for re-election and thanked JSC for the collaborative work they've done while she's been here. She thanked Steven for his leadership.

11. Adjournment at 8:33

MANDY MOVED TO ADJOURN. BETH SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.