

LAMOILLE UNION DISTRICT #18 BOARD  
POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES  
GTMCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER  
SEPTEMBER 16, 2014

Board members present: P. Ingvaldstad, B. Bailey, W. Sander, J. Eisenhardt, C. Szlachetka, E. McKusick

Others: B. Schaffer, E. Beatty, Chris Tormey, W. Savery

The meeting started at 5:00.

B. Bailey nominated P. Ingvaldstad for chair of the committee. P. Ingvaldstad nominated C. Szlachetka, who said he isn't on the policy committee, but is already on two other committees and is chair of the LNSU board. By consent, P. Ingvaldstad was chosen as chair. (*E. McKusick arrived at 5:02.*)

P. Ingvaldstad said we are supposed to review the policies we have and decide if they are still worth having and consider whether we need other policies we don't have. It has been a while since policies were reviewed. E. Beatty said VSBA is moving toward having fewer recommended policies. P. Ingvaldstad said the board talked a long time ago about the idea of moving to policy governance, but it never got legs. B. Bailey said this board was not receptive. P. Ingvaldstad explained that policy governance is having end policies that create a corral around administrators and let them make any decisions they want as long as they stay within those policy borders.

B. Bailey asked B. Schaffer if there is anything in policy that he feels it would be helpful for the board to address. B. Schaffer said the board and committees have had multiple discussions about a class size policy. The LNSU adopted a class size policy, which really was something individual boards were intended to create. Other boards have used class size policies as guidance if there is a need for any reduction in force. He can do his job with the existing policies. He doesn't see any specific need for changes, though he thinks it would be a good exercise to compare our policies with what VSBA recommends.

P. Ingvaldstad said there is no vision statement at the start of the policy manual. We have talked about vision statements in the past. The board has probably done 3 or 4 of them. Has the work to accomplish them been done?

E. Beatty said there was a lot of passion and good thought in the room during the last curriculum committee meeting. Regarding the question of whether or not students should have the same advisor for grades 7-12, there are schools that do that and others that don't. She would be interested in engaging the community in developing a vision. She hates it when a lot of time is invested in strategic planning that doesn't go anywhere, but she would be interested in working on something that does go somewhere.

P. Ingvaldstad said he would be willing to work on a vision, but some people would say we've already been down this road and someone needs to prove to us there will be accountability if we set some priorities. (*W. Savery arrived at 5:17.*) What is going to actually make these things happen and how will we get accountability? And is this something we should be doing at the LNSU level?

W. Sander suggested the committee delegate the chair and administrators to go through the existing policy manual and note any red flags or things that need to be clarified, rather than having the whole committee thrash through it. P. Ingvaldstad said he would like to have at least one other person do it with him. E. Beatty said she could see 3 or 4 people, including an administrator working on it. It makes sense to at least compare it with VSBA recommendations. B. Schaffer and C. Szlachetka offered to help.

P. Ingvaldstad asked if there is anything in Act 156 about SU policy vs. LU policy. W. Sander said it calls for centralization of special ed and transportation, but there is not much beyond that related to policy. P. Ingvaldstad said we could also look at elementary school manuals. One thing the committee tried to do last time it reviewed policies was to line up elementary policy manuals with ours. It was agreed that B. Schaffer, P. Ingvaldstad, and C. Szlachetka would meet the morning of Thursday, September 25. C. Szlachetka said he would get a copy of Hyde Park Elementary's policies.

P. Ingvaldstad asked if there could be value in having the LNSU board do a visioning session. B. Bailey asked if we have anything in writing now from past visioning sessions. E. Beatty said it would be good to look that up. P. Ingvaldstad said we could see which things we did or didn't do and ask which ideas we still want to have as our vision.

B. Schaffer said the board has a policy about goal setting and implementation. He read from Policy B2 Board Goal Setting and Self-Evaluation, which calls for the board to participate at least annually in goal setting and self-evaluation activities.

P. Ingvaldstad asked if it is worth following our policy manual and doing a visioning session. J. Eisenhardt said we should just have VSBA send their recommendations. E. Beatty said having conversations about what matters most and what we want for our students, then getting agreement and asking how we hold ourselves accountable, is more helpful than spending 3 days on a retreat arguing over wording.

W. Sander said there is overlap between curriculum and policy. For instance, our goal of not precluding options too early for kids. E. Beatty said the Common Core State Standards are very much geared toward making all students college and career ready and life ready. It might be interesting for committee members to look at the Common Core standards. B. Bailey said she doesn't think policy should direct curriculum.

E. McKusick asked if the issue of kids not succeeding in the system as it is structured would fall under the policy committee or the curriculum committee. W. Sander said there is no curriculum manual so it would be under policy. We have addressed this issue in the past. E. McKusick asked, was that through policy changes? W. Sander said no, what was done is not written down anywhere. A committee he was on addressed truancy and drop-outs. E. McKusick said she has a junior who is talking about dropping out, so she is interested. She is wondering what is in place for kids like him. P. Ingvaldstad said there is a policy that basically allows kids to design their own education. He thinks there is a policy around the relationship with homeschooling. There are around 5 different options that provide alternatives to staying in this physical plant. W. Sander said we looked at those options as a stop-gap measure. Ultimately we would prefer to provide everything in-house. Often

when kids want to drop out it is because they failed some classes and won't be able to graduate with their classmates. That fits with the idea of having a consistent advocate for each student so no one slips through the cracks. The advocate can catch it if someone is failing classes. E. Beatty said she hears that one challenge for this community is that we have a relatively high graduation rate but we don't have impressive post-secondary outcomes.

B. Bailey asked if there is any policy or procedure in place to help new students who move in from somewhere else. B. Schaffer said yes.

The meeting ended at 5:46.

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*