

WILTON-LYNDEBOROUGH COOPERATIVE
Strategic Planning Sub Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 7, 2018 at the WLC M/H School Conference Room

Committee Members: Chair Jonathan Vanderhoof, Jennifer Bernet, Harry Dailey, Carol LeBlanc, Lisa Post.

Present: Jonathan Vanderhoof, Jennifer Bernet, Harry Dailey, Carol LeBlanc, Lisa Post, Bryan Lane, Superintendent.

Notice of Business: The Committee and Delegate Policy was brought to Chair Vanderhoof's attention by Superintendent Lane. He informed the Committee that within the policy for sub committees, only School Board members have voting rights. He had looked through last year's minutes and did not see any votes. Mr. Dailey said when he was the Chair of the Strategic Committee last year he allowed Budget Committee members to vote. However, their votes were non-binding. He noted that if the majority of School Board members voted in favor or against something, that was put forth as the recommendation. Whenever a recommendation was not unanimous, the vote count was noted. Binding votes are School Board member votes. Mr. Lane noted that during a Policy Committee meeting there a codicil was discovered that said School Board should have a secretary elected member from the nine members of the Board, not Kristina. Mr. Lane was tasked to go through the policies where "secretary" was noted so the Board could remove it from the Policy and that is where he found the information on the voting rights. Chair Vanderhoof noted that anything done by this Subcommittee is non-binding and must be passed by the Board. Mr. Dailey suggested that if the Chair wanted to stray from the policy that the voting record of School Board members on the Subcommittee is made clear to the full Board. Chair Vanderhoof did not see any votes in the previous year's minutes. The only voting item tonight would be the calendar. If it is a consensus, it will be noted as such.

I. Chair Vanderhoof called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Public Comment: Mr. Post said that that the Committee is doing a great job taking a creative approach to a lot of the problems we have. This District has two fundamental problems one is that we have below average scores and we need to do better for our children and the community on this and two we have above average costs and we need to bend that cost curve down. I like the way your group has address the cost to serve and utilization, there certainly is capacity in the School District to bring those students. Mr. Post said he would be happy to go into any Board Meeting in any town and say "we want your kids and for a good price, we can educate them well." Mr. Post stated his mother, his grandmother and his children are teachers and he understands them. He indicated the teachers need to get the message are going to be teachers that they have a life-long calling for or they are going to be labor. If they are just going to be labor, then I think we need to appeal to their high motives. Also if there is going to be a presentation, I do not think we should have the principal speak. It should be the teachers. Chair Vanderhoof indicated that he would support the principal speaking and saying his piece and that he would have many questions for him .

III. Approve Meeting Minutes

A Motion was made by Harry Dailey to approve the October 17, 2018 minutes as written; Seconded by Carol LeBlanc. All in favor with two abstentions (Jennifer Bernet and Lisa Post). Motion passed.

IV. Discussion of Strategic Planning Topics:

a. Calendar

Superintendent Lane provided calendar options as requested by the Chair as follows:

- 178 days starting on August 27, 2019 (add three days at the end of the year)
- 178 days starting on August 29, 2019 (add two days at the end of the year)
- 180 days starting on August 27, 2019 (add 5 days at the end of the year)

Chair Vanderhoof stated that the committee was asking for the four additional collaborative half days. The other potential option is for 4 half days if we wanted to we could add 2 or 3 days to the calendar and still have the four days and not lose instructional time. So that could be a minimum recommendation and I do not want “do nothing” as a recommendation.

Also this provides the holiday week off from Monday, December 23 through December 31. Mrs. LeBlanc noted that this adds days at the end of the school year. The state requires that five snow days be built in to the calendar which they are. Mr. Dailey likes that 178 provides two more instructional days and two more teacher workshop time and feels this is the key. Chair Vanderhoof suggested we can present it either with 176 or 178 days or by a specific calendar with a starting date as provided. He indicated he had done quite a bit of reading and the one thing that made a difference regardless of hours versus days was staff collaboration and professional development. No one is interested in reducing the amount of instructional time, I’ve fine with 176 or 178 and there is not benefit of maxing it out is that it would be punitive. Mr. Dailey felt it gives us a good mix of both.

Mr. Lane’s recommendation would be August 27, however, he believed the teachers would prefer August 29 as it would be less disruptive and better for moral and they are used to this schedule for starting. The new teacher orientation will be the prior week and then Monday, Tuesday Wednesday would be what they had this year and are used to that already. We haven’t changed the hours of the school day.

Lisa Post felt it was a good idea. Carol LeBlanc felt it wouldn’t be such a shock to their (teachers’) systems and could offer both 178 calendars. Chair Vanderhoof said as a parent, he prefers starting on a Wednesday or Tuesday though if it creates better morale and buy in he would support it.

Bryan Lane indicated to committee members that we can expect the teachers to file a grievance. Mr. Dailey stated that this does not violate the contract. It is not punitive and benefits the students.

A Motion was made by Harry Dailey to recommend to the full School Board the 178 Day School Calendar with an August 29, 2019 starting date; Seconded by Lisa Post. All in favor. Motion passed unanimously.

b. Food Service

The School Lunch Meal Payment Policy was sent to committee members at the request of Chair Vanderhoof. Mr. Lane indicated that currently according the Business Administrator, the District is doing the following:

- Mr. Deignan, Food Service Director is emailing or mailing Customers Statements every two weeks to families that owe monies.
- If payment arrangements are not made, Bob and his staff do not allow children to purchase ala cart items.

Currently:

- No phone calls have been made.
- No letters have been sent out since June 2017.
- The SAU has not pursued filing small claims for families that owe more than \$300.

Superintendent Lane will be pursuing answers. Mr. Dailey asked who is responsible for that and Mr. Lane indicated the building Principal will be put in charge as the families would have a relationship with the families that would make it easier to discuss. We do note the families that are struggling and find ways to help them on a regular basis through different means. If there principal has knowledge of a family struggling, they don’t need to make a call or can talk to the family and work out a payment with a level of humanity to it. Mr. Dailey agreed with that philosophy. Chair Vanderhoof stated that if we have a policy and aren’t following it, we can say it is not working

Mr. Dailey suggest that it be worked on the revenue and expense side and stated if we follow through on this policy it could help a little on the revenue side. He indicated that on the expense side, he wanted to talk to Bob Deignan as it is clear there are two different programs going on. Mr. Lane stated there are

two deliver sites but only one billing which is appropriate for schools. Ms. LeBlanc clarified they are dealing with the same budget but place orders independent of each school. Mr. Lane replied to Mr. Vanderhoof question that Bob has full knowledge of the monetary pieces that are going on, that they are reasonably independent. Mr. Dailey stated it was clear from discussions with Mr. Deignan that he is focused on the bottom line and balances that with the cost of orders and participation rate. Mr. Dailey stated from working on the school renovation he found the cost is not as important as what the outcome is in the end. There was a discussion regarding the regulation of the meals, portion size, minimums and maximums and the waste that goes with it, but in order to receive funding for the reimbursable lunches, the District has to follow the regulations. Mrs. Post asked Superintendent Lane if we can get the numbers on the reimbursable lunches, Mr. Dailey added "what percentage is free and what is reduced. Mr. Vanderhoof questioned who oversees the whole program. Mr. Dailey suggested we should initially look at the two sides of the equations that could have the most instant impact that we can affect right away, and then start digging in the middle. If we sent up the program and it is followed and works then we get Bob to have more control and oversight over the entire process. Mr. Vanderhoof asked for a monthly report of what is happening to keep someone accountable for this information. Mr. Lane asked for specific data requested for the report and Mr. Vanderhoof replied it is what Ms. Tucker would provide. Mr. Lane said it would be given to the board on a monthly basis to understand trends. There was discussion on what was needed. Mrs. LeBlanc suggested we get a profit and loss statement from each school. Mr. Lane suggested that a monthly report that delineates the program from each school and then a combined scenario and we can look at cost benefit, cost analysis and the variation from school to school, and portion size, etc. Mr. Vanderhoof suggested over time the reported can be modified to meet the needs

Mr. Vanderhoof suggest that until we get in the habit of following the policy as it is written, we cannot implement something like the small claims court. Mr. Lane offered a suggestion that would take a full board vote. The current DIG Policy has to be followed to the letter of the law with everything being documented and included in a monthly report. Mr. Lane stated that Bob manages the program which is under the umbrella of finance which is under Lise Tucker and Bob would be directly involved in the monthly reporting. Mr. Lane noted that there has been little success in finding a consultant and training that is relevant and helpful but is still trying and as he gains more information, he will bring it back to the Committee.

c. Building Utilization

Information was emailed to committee members as what we are now and what kind of space we have. Mr. Vanderhoof noted that the route to us getting another town to come into this SAU is not us saying we would like to have another town and noted other towns have better test scores. Mr. Dailey suggests towns to the west want to maintain their small little elementary schools in every single town and they don't want to consolidate. Mr. Vanderhoof believes this is a moot issue until we have someone knock at our door. Ms. Leblanc stated we should not be actively reaching out to towns. Mr. Lane noted that some towns have options to send a percentage of their students to other schools. A discussion of tuition being a complicated scenario and would not include transportation, and take out some portion of special education (para professionals), etc. and then an agreement over a per pupil tuition number. Mr. Dailey stated a short term potential issue may be tuitioning-in from some of the small surrounding towns for Middle and High school students. Ms. LeBlanc suggested that this be moved down the priority list. Mr. Dailey suggest that if full-day kindergarten becomes a trend of larger class sizes, that there would be higher capacity utilization. A discussion of an increase in test scores is necessary as well as an increase in academic rigor that will be seen as a more desirable academic environment to attract students that may otherwise leave the District for private schools. Discussion of the RIT program being extended into the Kindergarten in a 40 minute time block and targeted skills are address. There is a Star 360 early assessment piece for that. Mr. Dailey stated that last year the Strategic Committees goal with Kindergarten was better academic success and which after several years would translate to fewer children with Special Education needs resulting in cost savings.

V. Discussion of Next Steps:

a. Information Needed:

Mr. Vanhoof referenced the School within a School scenario and has no problem with diving into something like that if we want to do it. We were tasked to look at Alternative Education options. Mr. Lane stated in speaking with Betty Moore, the Rise Program that is a school within a school concept, we only have six out of district student and their disabilities vary so we don't have four with similar disabilities to create a program around. Mr. Dailey stated in the short term, pushing for more advanced placement classes will get us to the next step. Ms. LeBlanc stated Charter Schools are starting kids learning more advanced coursework earlier and most of these kids are being introduced to Algebra in 6th grade instead of 9th grade and indicated that we should start offering that here and we may have to go to the Middle School model. A discussion regarding funding these advance classes ensued. Mr. Lane suggested that for 5th grade students reading at a higher level, give these student opportunity to do algebraic style thinking and problem solving giving students the opportunity to have both offerings and could be done within the current budget in a co-teaching structure bringing a teacher down from the High School to the Middle School which then can be expanded out to Art and Music. If this model brings in six students that is \$20K added to the district's budget. Mr. Lane indicated the question becomes "are we tracking," and suggests if we have two teachers co-teaching then both groups of students can be reach increased academic achievement. The only subject area that would present a present a problem is in English. Mr. Dailey suggests we start with STEM and build from there and prove the model. Mr. Lane said that the next step would be to bring in professionals; department heads, school counselors and the curriculum coordinator to discuss. For students who are accelerated don't have to leave the district to have higher level learning bringing in 6-10 students while working on academic achievement, the Arts and Music. Ms. Bernet suggested it would be nice to bring in students to WLC who go to Pine Hill but don't move on to High Mowing because they want more academic rigor. Ms. LeBlanc suggested that all students should be taught to their maximum potential. Mr. Vanderhoof suggested the same argument of vouchers, private schools and charter schools is the exact same argument that could take place in a micro scenario here.

Middle School Configuration, Chair Vanderhoof questioned the time frame for bringing this to the whole board, the reason he asked is because depending the outcome of that vote, the Administrative Structure and what we truly wanted to recommend. He would bring this back around to discuss further pending the outcome of the Board's vote. Mr. Lane suggested that if this is not made part of the budget discussion, hypothetically, if the recommendation is after the budget process, if that plan is approved and the funds for the teachers are approve, then I would suggest that a motion be made by a Board member to take the funds that were targeted for the salary and benefit of those two people for the 2019/20 budget and put it into a holding account that cannot be spent and that money has to go back to the taxpayer. Chair Vanderhoof wants to put it on the agenda and hear from the teachers and delay the vote to have time to digest the information and have a vote at the subsequent meeting. Mr. Dailey concurred with this being done upfront as a part of the budget process with the Budget Committee so they know where we are coming from and why we are doing what we are doing. Mr. Lane said indicated that the Middle School Configuration could be added to the December 11th Agenda for public feedback to board members and if not vote it taken in that meeting, it can be added to the Agenda again on January 8 and still meet budget deadlines. Chair Vanderhoof said this then becomes the crunch issue for the budget. Mr. Lane replied if the change in Administrative Structure was cost neutral, then is does not need to be made a part of the budget process. Mr. Dailey suggested in the spirit of transparency, the discussion needs to be had as a part of the Budget Committee discussion so they understand it as it is their budget number that will be presented at the Public Hearing. The Committee tasked the Superintendent to create a document that explains the cost and different pieces of the Middle School Structure, the Calendar changes and the related costs along with the Administrative Structure to be distributed at the next meeting in a packet to the Board as a whole from the Strategic Committee. Chair Vanderhoof will then bring it up for discussion at the meeting as an action item.

VI. Schedule Next Meeting: Wednesday, December 5, 2018 at WLC M/H School Conference Room

VII. Adjournment: 9:45 p.m.

A Motion was made by Mr. Dailey to adjourn the meeting; Seconded by Mrs. LeBlanc. Voting: All Ayes. Motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Lisa C.M. Post