

HYDE PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
HYDE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY
MONDAY, MAY 17, 2010

Board members present: Mark Freeman, Jim Lipinski, Dan Regan, Kalee Roberts, Raven Walters.

Others: Michelle Mathias, Debra Taylor, Dave White.

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Items highlighted for follow-up are shown like this.

1. Call to Order

J. Lipinski called the meeting to order at 6:32.

2. Approve Consent Agenda (Minutes – May 3, 2010; Minutes – May 13, 2010; Directors’ Orders; Principal’s Report; Central Office Report)

K. Roberts moved to approve the consent agenda, including directors’ orders in the amount of \$34,453.01, seconded by D. Regan. The motion was passed.

3. Actions from 5/3/10 Principal’s Report

M. Mathias explained that she accidentally sent out a report for 5/3 that included sections from the previous report. The actions the board had planned to discuss were from the previous report. The board agreed no discussion of the actions was needed.

4. Discussion on Curriculum

M. Mathias said LNSU schools are now at looking at curriculum in a more unified way, working to make sure there is a cohesive effort across the SU. J. Lipinski explained to D. White that the board is doing development work on its guiding principles, looking at how to figure out if we are doing what the guiding principles say we should be. The first guiding principle is: *The Board is committed to ensuring an academic and social atmosphere that will assist each learner toward his or her highest potential.* The board had been saying we could know this was happening because students were learning all the things that are in the curriculum. Then the board realized they didn’t know what the curriculum was. The board needs a better understanding of what we are teaching.

D. White passed out the LNSU long range plan update that will be in the LNSU board packet for next Monday’s meeting. It showed the 3 long range LNSU goals and where we are in relation to each goal. For the Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction goal, 4 mission related learning goals have been developed. These are cross-content core goals we want for students who graduate from our SU. Clarifying essential questions have been developed for each learning goal, to bridge the gap between the expectations of the goals and the learning principles that will enable students to meet the goals. They are intended to help guide content curriculum work at the SU and school level. Development of both learning goals and central questions involved a lot of feedback from teachers. The learning principles are in draft form. In August, when teachers come back for in-service, they will sit down with colleagues from the same grade level and do peer review on these principles, to give

input and recommendations. D. Regan asked, is it correct to say that each of the learning principles applies to each learning goal? D. White said for the most part, that is true.

There are two curriculum committees – one for math and one for science. They have been thinking about what constitutes good science and math teaching, and what that implies for the core learning goals. They will each meet for 3 days in June. They will work on PK-12 enduring understandings, then begin to drill down to grade level benchmarks. Those should be available at least in draft form in the fall; then schools can begin to work on curriculum at the school level. Some preliminary work has been done around literacy. That will be the next big area worked on. Also, next year we need to move into developing a local comprehensive assessment system that will provide a consistent measurement of progress across schools. Our schools are now using AIMSweb as a screening tool, but we need other assessments. Initially we will be looking at assessments for math, science, and literacy. The DOE recently released an item bank of reading and math assessments for second grade to high school. We will look at that kind of resource at the same time we are developing a framework for an assessment system.

D. White said he enjoys sitting in on a lot of the HPES RtI course discussions. That is a great collaborative opportunity for teachers, and it has raised important questions around assessment. M. Mathias said the course was called Response to Intervention, but it was much broader in scope than that. Her vision was for it to be about curriculum, instruction, and assessment. She thinks all of those should be looked at simultaneously. The focus was on research-based techniques. They did discrepancy analysis between HPES practices and what the research says we should be doing. They drilled into NECAP and other assessment data to look at student performance and strengths. They compiled a list of local assessments for math. There has been a huge focus on literacy and not so much on math – not just here, but statewide. Everyone participated in universal screening and learned how to do it. Faculty participated in doing case studies on particular students as part of the course. They looked at EST teams, and put a different system in place, but it didn't work as well as they wanted, so they redesigned the EST process again, and came up with a plan for next year. Fidelity of instruction was identified by everyone as a key problem. Everyone recognizes now that if teachers are not all on the same page, it creates problems. They also have been working on making sure that every teacher has access to a library of appropriate research based interventions. If a student is not succeeding, an intervention is put in place. The student is monitored, and if there is progress, they may just maintain the same intervention. Or if there is a lot of progress, they may end the intervention. If the student is not progressing, they try a different intervention. After 2 interventions, that's when they go into the EST process and do more academic screening. There is an identified process for tiered levels of interventions. Decisions are all data-based, not based on subjective things like hard work or niceness – only on achievement. That will help move us towards a standards based report card. Next year we will be completely enmeshed in RtI. We got to that point pretty fast. We are now much better poised to work in an integrated fashion with the

rest of the SU. D. Taylor said last week at a Lamoille Valley professional development academy she and D. White attended, the statistic was shared that 10% of students in the Lamoille Valley are transient. They mostly stay in the Lamoille Valley region. That gives us another rationale to think about coordination, not just within the SU, but also with neighboring SU's.

D. Regan said it seems to him that a great deal of change is necessary to implement the learning principles so as to guide instruction. He said that if any of the others on the board had seen the curriculum committee in action, they would be confident that the human resources exist in LNSU to bring about those changes. The document so far is the work of the curriculum council only. The proof of the pudding will be how much this percolates throughout the instructional ranks at the schools. We are talking about very significant instructional changes. For our board, the extent to which this document can be embraced across all faculty and play itself out will be significant. He will be interested in what happens to make a reality of these commitments at the school level. M. Mathias suggested we might offer some lesson plans showing how to implement the recommended practices. This has to be modeled. We have to remember why people don't do it – because when they were students they never experienced it. We need to make sure they have the ability to see it in action and know it when they see it. Differentiation is an example. A lot of people don't know what it truly is. She and D. White have talked about how we can teach these practices. We can do lesson studies to help people understand how they can do what is recommended. They need time to bounce ideas off each other and they have to see it in action.

K. Roberts asked, how does the national movement on core curriculum influence the work now? What if we roll out a curriculum and someone puts the kibosh on it? Also, when the curriculum is racing forward, how do students who are in need of intervention keep up? (*D. Taylor left at 7:19.*) M. Mathias said the math curriculum group is working with national groups. The draft national standards are pretty similar to what our group is developing – much narrower and deeper. She thinks the state ultimately will be going there. M. Mathias said the NECAP is totally in line with national math standards. It is a huge mistake to equally weight everything in the state standards. We need to make sure our instruction is giving the same level of importance to each area as the national standards do – which matches the importance on the NECAP. In answer to K. Robert's question about how kids receiving interventions can keep up with the curriculum, they may get a double dose of instruction, or sometimes they may have to drop back a grade or two. The goals for struggling kids are higher than for others, but they have to be attainable. Some kids won't be able to make up 3 years of work in one year. Especially for the youngest kids, brain scans have shown that interventions can change brain function from abnormal to normal.

D. Regan said one mission related learning goal he finds less than fully satisfying is the 3rd one – Culture and Social Responsibility. The essential question about students learning about their own rights and responsibilities doesn't seem to connect well with

the goal to understand diverse cultures. Also when he tries to map that onto the grid, he doesn't find it anywhere. For him, in this world, these cultural issues are integratable into everything. He feels the translation of this goal into planning is a bit wanting. D. White said they were trying to encompass a lot in a few short goals. M. Mathias said this is one area we are testing that is completely lacking. There was nothing in the Transformation Policy Commission's document about social or civic responsibility. She thinks it was important to articulate this and make sure this piece was incorporated in the learning goals.

D. White said making this a reality will require a lot of strategic planning. We need to think about professional development, both direct and embedded. If teaching becomes more transparent, teachers can learn from each other. Collaborative practices are important. We can look for opportunities like the one Tammy Hugulet had to go to the Math Leadership Institute and bring information back to colleagues.

M. Freeman said he thinks the document is wonderful and the work impressive. His concern is buy-in from teachers. M. Mathias said she thinks part of that will be addressed in development of the teacher evaluation process. The SU will be working on getting a systemic approach. She is dissatisfied with the evaluation models she has; they are too cumbersome. She has been doing some research on other models. Having clear expectations linked to our goals is going to be key, as well as ways of giving more regular feedback. K. Roberts said if the board, community members, etc. all communicate an expectation, that helps it become part of the culture. M. Freeman said he thinks parents need to get involved with this. He knows some who want to get involved. That's where we can get momentum going in changing attitudes.

5. School Improvement Grant

M. Mathias had no updates. D. White said for SU's that contain Tier I, II, and III schools, rather than schools applying for grants individually, the DOE is really looking for an SU plan. The next step is a planning meeting with someone from the DOE who will help support us, then our application is due June 15. HPES will be part of that, but our required actions will be less because we are Tier III.

J. Lipinski asked if the very ambitious plan the board had previously seen is still the one M. Mathias is submitting. M. Mathias said that's what she wants to ask for. They've been told every Tier III school will get at least \$50K for the coming year, and they have no idea what will happen next year. The \$8.5 million available is for this year only, not for all 3 years. K. Roberts said she is concerned with how this far-reaching plan aligns with reality, in light of recent discussions about staffing. It could be a recipe for disaster to put this plan in writing when we are struggling with other problems. D. White said he will find out whether we are committing ourselves to doing everything in the plan even if the whole plan is not funded. K. Roberts said it is hard to see how to decompose that plan if we receive only a tenth of the funding we ask for. M. Mathias said she could decompose it. Her top priority would be the functional behavioral specialist.

6. *AYP Discussion*

M. Mathias distributed NECAP results. She said the school as a whole made AYP, but not free and reduced lunch students. However free and reduced lunch students had a 23 point jump in reading, and 20 points in math. Scores for students with disabilities went up 90 points in reading and 102 points in math from the 2008 numbers. The increase has to do with having the staffing we needed for special ed this past year.

D. Regan asked if M. Mathias had any sense of what a different data display showing growth for individuals or cohorts might look like. Would we see substantial gains? K. Roberts said something like this gives rise to more questions than answers. If kids with disabilities went up so much, but overall scores are essentially flat, what does that tell us about the rest of the kids? M. Mathias said reading went up for the school as a whole. K. Roberts said students with disabilities are part of that total. She said this is not really valuable. M. Mathias disagreed. She said the bottom scores are the ones that will pull you down. Bringing these up impacts the whole school. Work didn't cease with other kids. If we look at all students, we did make gains in reading. K. Roberts said because of way they calculate progress, this doesn't address our guiding principle about all students making progress. M. Mathias said we will be able to follow students longitudinally, starting with this year. K. Roberts asked, but don't we already have that data if we wanted to look at it? M. Mathias said yes. D. White said we can go back through the data warehouse to get that information. We have a part time analyst now who can help with such work. M. Freeman said the board is happy and excited, and M. Mathias should express that to teachers. The board just wants more information. Others agreed. K. Roberts said there is so much more the board needs to know. For instance, we don't know if the same kids who do well in math do well in reading.

D. White said he agrees that general data like this does prompt questions. From the SU perspective, there is a lot of flatness across schools. M. Mathias noted that AIMSweb data will follow kids as they move through school. J. Lipinski asked, is it possible to correlate AIMSweb scores with NECAP scores? M. Mathias said she is working on that. What she's seen so far seems to indicate that we want our kids to be above the 50th percentile on AIMSweb (when using national norms) to be proficient on the NECAP. D. White said they did an informal correlation analysis between math AIMSweb and math NECAP scores. There was a fairly strong correlation in the lower grades with the skills assessment in AIMSweb, but it fell apart in the middle and upper grades. M. Mathias said the focus in AIMSweb has been more on literacy. People are starting to use it more in math, and she thinks there will be some evolution. We have to make sure there is equivalent focus on math and literacy at HPES. (D. White left at 8:08.)

7. *Negotiations Update*

There was nothing new to report.

8. *Plan to Manage Directors' Orders Monthly*

K. Roberts moved to authorize M. Freeman to execute directors' orders on behalf of the board, with his actions to be ratified by the board at the meeting

following, seconded by M. Freeman. J. Lipinski will upload directors' orders on Friday, and M. Freeman will sign them on the following Tuesday, if board members have no problems with them. It was agreed to follow this procedure even during weeks when the board will be meeting. Ratification will be part of the consent agenda. **The motion was passed.**

9. Long Term Planning – Work with Dr. Lengel

M. Mathias had nothing new to add about this work.

10. Culture Improvement

R. Walters congratulated M. Mathias on how much she has done on culture so far, through work on RtI and so forth. J. Lipinski asked, are we going about this the wrong way when we look at getting more time for professional development, etc. instead of looking at culture? M. Mathias said there were a couple of reasons why she approached the RtI course the way she did. Partly it was because of the contract. Also, the amount of work that had to be done was massive, and asking people to work on that when they were already exhausted would be stupid. The way we did it did create more work for faculty in some ways, because they had to create sub plans. Blocks of time set aside to work on something have to be significant enough so progress can be made. If we built in half days throughout the year, for instance, she believes it would be beneficial. That would require a calendar change and the community would have to buy in. She thinks Cambridge has a half day once a month. J. Lipinski said he was suggesting the opposite of that. We have been negotiating for certain changes to workloads to facilitate initiatives. He wonders, if we can address underlying cultural issues, might we get enough of a boost from that to negate the other need? M. Mathias said she doesn't think so.

D. Regan said he thinks a focus on outcomes will drive cultural change, rather than a drive for cultural change producing different outcomes. He brought up the school motto. K. Roberts said when she first came to this community, there was a Drop Everything and Read program where a group of volunteers would teach classes from a lesson plan. Then there was Sports for Life, which was also heavily parent based. There are creative ways to give teachers more time. She said communication between parents and teachers used to be better. M. Mathias asked what she based that on. K. Roberts said there was more time in the hallways, more physical interaction with your kids' teachers. It was more anarchistic. People came and went, and that opened up a lot of avenues. Now, people come up to board members in parking lots to talk about concerns.

M. Mathias said she has spoken to a number of parents about the cafeteria, and said she would support them learning about federal guidelines and helping Shirley to deliver things they would be more satisfied with. But they have not come back to her to work on that. She said she was clear that her focus has to be on academics, but she would value having their help. M. Freeman said he thinks that is where having a parent-community group would be helpful. J. Lipinski said when he refers to culture, he doesn't mean any one group. M. Mathias said the 6th grade has culture issues. Kids are wrapped up in social interactions, and some problems involve how parents

are dealing with the issues. M. Mathias is encouraging kids to shut down Facebook accounts.

D. Regan said he thinks it is hard for the board to legislate cultural change, but there are different activities we could get behind that might help, like supporting outcome improvement, or coming up with some kind of board-supported program for community involvement. In the past we have talked about getting seniors into schools. That proposal foundered because it wasn't so easy to organize. There were some logistical problems of transportation. Maybe it is time to address that. He and R. Walters came up with some ideas about public communication. The school motto is minor, but deserves to be addressed. M. Freeman added that the board could get behind a community building activity, like a celebration.

K. Roberts asked, when people come in and say they want to talk or do something about an issue, are we actually calling them in for a meeting, or waiting for their action? M. Mathias said she told parents that if they got together and gave her a time and place, she would go. She is maxed. K. Roberts said she could delegate it to Shirley, or put a meeting time in the Newsflash. Everyone will sign up but if you don't call and give them an assignment, they will never show up. She thinks it is M. Mathias's job to call a meeting. M. Mathias said she was the one who made sure the facilities committee kept going. She can't do that for everything. She has to prioritize her time. K. Roberts said the board needs to accept a certain amount of responsibility, and staff needs to be involved. When an issue arises that is negatively impacting culture, we have to put together a strategic plan and do something. R. Walters asked, where are the people who wanted to form a parent group? Could they fill this role? M. Mathias said she met with a couple of people last week. She gave them some background info. She thinks would be more successful to have a framework for a parent organization so they have cultural norms. Otherwise, there could be people that just have their own agenda. She talked to the faculty on Monday, as she told the parents she would. They want to do something like a teacher appreciation breakfast. M. Freeman said he thinks they could be useful when issues come up; they could be a liaison. R. Walters agree that a framework is important. She suggested there could be a corner in the Newsflash where the parent group could announce a meeting on a particular issue. K. Roberts said we also need to educate parents. We could find experts to bring in. The parent group could put on something like a nutrition night.

J. Lipinski said to look at the future of education, we are bringing in Lengel; for math we brought in Mahesh Sharma. This problem seems as complicated and daunting as those, but we are trying to solve it ourselves. Is there an expert that turns around culture? K. Roberts said there are experts on community involvement, and some grant money for community involvement. D. Regan said he has no objection to an outside expert, but he thinks the community we are talking about is too diverse for one solution. We may need to be experimental and do a variety of things.

M. Mathias said we can gauge the level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction by looking at how many people from the public are at board meetings. That is not a perfect barometer, because things have to get pretty bad (or people have to believe they are bad) for them to come out. Parents could use information about supporting adolescents. Parents of kids in younger grades could also use information about what to expect. Maybe there could be some educational nights dedicated to each grade level. K. Roberts said maybe we could commit to one event a month, to reach out and show people we care. J. Lipinski asked, what if the school did something of a similar magnitude to the ice cream social, and invited the whole community? M. Freeman suggested a barbecue or picnic. M. Mathias said she had gotten an email from the Community Circle about Home Days. They want to revitalize it. Maybe we could get involved. There was discussion about ways HPES could participate in Home Days. R. Walters said she and D. Regan had put together a list of public communications ideas, but they had decided to table their list for now so as not to inundate the board. D. Regan said he thinks they should meet again and prepare their list to present to the board. K. Roberts will contact the Community Circle and let them know we are interested in getting involved in Home Days, and see if they would be interested in having something centered at the school for Home Days.

11. Future Agenda Items

K. Roberts will chair the June 7 meeting, as J. Lipinski will not be here. He will put together the agenda. There will be no meeting in July. The board will meet August 2, and consider dropping the August 16 meeting.

12. Other

K. Roberts said the VSBA, superintendents, and principals met last week with a group that is trying to bring a pilot program to Vermont and other states, in partnership with 5 providers that offer intensive support and assessment for a program involving assessing out of high school requirements. Partners include International Baccalaureate, ACT, and Pearson. A. Vilaseca signed Vermont up for this program in December.

13. Executive Session – Personnel Issue

J. Lipinski moved to enter executive session for a personnel issue, inviting M. Mathias to remain, seconded by K. Roberts, at 9:27, and the motion was passed.

The board consented out of executive session at 9:32, with no action taken.

14. Adjourn

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 9:32, and the motion was passed.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths

Items highlighted for follow-up:

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UNAPPROVED