

HYDE PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
HYDE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY  
MONDAY, JUNE 20, 2011

Board members present: Mark Freeman, Jim Lipinski (via phone), Dan Regan, Anne Vear, Raven Walters.

Others: Michelle Mathias (via phone), Debra Taylor, Rachel Smith, Marty Spaulding, Noah Noyes, Jen Darrow, Jean Foss-Pratt, Jacinta Raboin, Donna Cullivan, Crystal Koch, Duncan Tingle, Rebecca Dennis.

**Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.**

Items highlighted for follow-up are shown like this.

**1. Call to Order**

D. Regan called the meeting to order at 6:30.

- 2. Approve Consent Agenda (Minutes from 5/23/2011, Minutes from 6/16/2011, Principal's Report, Central Office Report)**  
**M. Freeman moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by J. Lipinski. The motion was passed.**

**3. Tax Anticipation Note – Budget Adjustment**

D. Taylor said the board had received a memo at the last meeting showing the amount the district needed to borrow to cover expenses prior to receipt of property tax revenue. Merchants Bank offered the best rate for a tax anticipation note.

**J. Lipinski moved to award Merchants Bank the tax anticipation note for FY12 in the amount of \$803,227.00 and to approve the resolution, non-arbitrage certificate and note necessary to take out the tax anticipation note, M. Freeman seconded, and the motion was passed.**

J. Lipinski reviewed the memo from M. Frederick describing a recommended budget adjustment. As we approach year end, it appears that the fund balance will end with a deficit. M. Frederick recommends addressing that by taking \$5000 from Capital Reserve to partially offset the cost of capital expenses (HVAC repairs) that were paid from general funds.

**J. Lipinski moved to transfer \$5000 from Capital Reserve to partially offset costs of the \$10,568.50 HVAC repairs spent this year, M. Freeman seconded, and the motion was passed.**

**4. Public Comment**

D. Regan asked what issues the visitors were interested in, so the board could possibly adjust the agenda to accommodate them.

J. Darrow said the teachers from the school had come to gather insight into the process for replacing M. Mathias and to find out how they can be included. She said there is a lot of anxiety about losing M. Mathias at same time as D. Taylor. N. Noyes said he was also curious about those items. D. Regan suggested moving directly to the Principal Recruitment agenda item.

**5. *Principal/Superintendent Recruitment***

J. Lipinski said he thought superintendent recruitment should be discussed before principal recruitment, because the superintendent should be the driver in principal recruitment. He said D. Taylor will be leaving at the end of the month.

Superintendent recruitment is an LNSU matter. The LNSU board is meeting tomorrow night and then will meet again a week after that. According to K. Roberts, the LNSU board chair, the process tomorrow is really fact finding to find out what people's expectations are. Then the following Tuesday will be when things really get put into motion in earnest. The LNSU board will probably be looking to bring on an interim superintendent. If there is an interim, some portion of HPES principal recruitment becomes the interim superintendent's job; otherwise, the HPES board owns it 100%.

D. Regan asked if J. Lipinski had any insight into the timing for an interim superintendent appointment. J. Lipinski said he thinks it might be contracted through VSBA. If so, it could be fairly quick, not more than a month. D. Regan asked about the likelihood of an alternative model where someone else from central office acts as interim. J. Lipinski said anything is possible. He doesn't have any reason to think it will be going that way, but he is not an authoritative source. He thinks one thing we need to think about is what we are going to advocate for and support in this process. Our needs are probably a little more pressing than those of some other districts.

M. Mathias said the HPES board functions very well together and has a strong vision of what HPES will ultimately look like. She would be concerned about a significant delay while the LNSU board looked for even an interim superintendent. Even if that takes only a month, we would be looking at mid to late August before we could identify a principal candidate. D. Regan said many board members tend to agree. He said he sees 2 issues related to the role an interim superintendent might play. One is the timing issue M. Mathias mentioned. The other is who is chosen as interim superintendent. He wouldn't want to see just anyone orchestrate even the initial steps of a principal search. He would want the board to have a gatekeeping role in determining what role that person would play.

D. Taylor agreed with J. Lipinski that the LNSU board will probably tend toward hiring an interim superintendent. However, because she has a strong commitment to LNSU, she thought the principal search process might be an area she would focus on during her remaining time here. The principal position has already been posted, and as of this morning there were 10 applicants. She has helped orchestrate principal search processes with other boards over the last few years, and she has consulted with M. Mathias. She is willing to devote time to the principal search if the board wants. D. Regan said because it is summer, he is thinking staff and teachers are dispersed. In previous searches D. Taylor was involved in, to what extent did staff and faculty play a role? D. Taylor said most haven't occurred this late in the year. She thinks staff would be involved to the extent that they were available. There will be opportunities for board members, staff and community to take part in the process.

J. Lipinski said he is not advocating sitting back and waiting for the superintendent hiring question to be resolved. If we do the superintendent search and principal search in parallel, he thinks we could hand off some of the principal search work, such as first round screening, to the interim superintendent. M. Freeman said it sounds like D. Taylor, M. Mathias, and R. Smith could handle the first round screening, and he would be more comfortable with that. M. Mathias said she will be available for longer than D. Taylor. D. Taylor said M. Mathias had recommended some staff members who could be involved. M. Mathias said she thinks it would be appropriate to put out an email and an AlertNow message to make sure all faculty and staff are aware of the principal search process, so those interested and available can step forward. R. Walters said she strongly supports that. D. Regan said he thinks M. Mathias should not commit to much in the way of participation beyond the end of her contract. M. Mathias said she intends to work at least some in July anyway. She said she could help by answering principal candidates' questions or giving them a tour of the building. N. Noyes said it is important to consider community representation. He would encourage the board to involve students in some capacity. R. Walters said teacher and community involvement is central to how this board strives to do its work.

D. Taylor distributed an outline of a suggested principal search process. She went through the 11 steps:

- 1) Advertise opening. This has been done
- 2) Active recruitment. She has already begun making contacts with the Principals' Association and other people she knows who might be able to identify someone interested or who might be interested. So far that has yielded 2 of the 10 applicants.
- 3) Form interview team. Some schools choose to have 1 or more board members on the team. D. Taylor suggests having R. Smith coordinate interview team meetings and probably facilitate conversation with candidates, and she suggests having one other central office person on the team. She also suggests one elementary and one secondary administrator from LNSU, as well as Hyde Park teachers and support staff, parents and community members. She didn't include students, but she thinks including students is a good idea.
- 4) During that same time period, develop interview questions and reference check questions. We will want to standardize both. A bank of questions has been developed. The board could look at those, or develop their own questions to ask when they interview finalists.
- 5) Superintendent and HR director prescreen resumes and conduct reference checks. Typically reference checks are done farther along in the process, but we want to accelerate the process of identifying quality applicants.
- 6) Following pre-screening, determine the slate of candidates to interview or disqualify.
- 7) Typically boards make information about candidates available at central office and the school. Some schools post it on the web. That would depend on the candidates' willingness to have information published. When people view the information in person, they can fill out a form saying who they support based

on looking at the documents. D. Regan said he thinks it would be even easier to obtain that information on the web. D. Taylor said we could set up a Survey Monkey survey. R. Smith said she wouldn't want to exclude people who didn't have internet access. We could do it both ways.

- 8) Schedule team interviews. M. Mathias suggested that candidates provide a presentation to staff/community on the day they come in. Maybe each person could also have a tour of the building with M. Mathias.
- 9) Interview. The interim superintendent could participate, or D. Taylor could participate by phone.
- 10) Reference checks.
- 11) Board review of finalist or finalists by end of July.

After July 1, she is no longer officially the LNSU superintendent. But she is committed to making sure we get a good leader. By the end of July, following the above suggested accelerated process, we would be able to offer an employment contract. It is possible that we might not find the right fit for a permanent principal, so we might want to let people know that this could be either a permanent or an interim position. Or there are retired people who sometimes take on the role of interim principal.

J. Raboin said she is starting her 14<sup>th</sup> year at HPES, and this will be her 10<sup>th</sup> principal. That is her biggest concern. She would prefer going with an interim because this late in the year she is concerned about who will apply. She does not like the idea of putting in the ad that this might be an interim position, as people may be less likely to apply. She is concerned the suggested process is too fast. This is our leader. She would like to see more thought placed into it.

Another teacher said she agreed with J. Raboin, and she thinks most of the teachers share those concerns. She said she is afraid this process won't allow much staff involvement because of the timeline.

J. Foss-Pratt said she has been through 9 principals. We seem to get 3-year terms and then they leave us. The last principal search committee worked diligently to bring a candidate forward and the board did not choose the candidate that faculty and the committee brought forth. It makes faculty and community not want to be part of the search. D. Taylor suggested that perhaps J. Foss-Pratt could share her concerns directly with her, R. Smith, or M. Mathias. She doesn't know the history of the last search. She would appreciate hearing it about it, but what happened with the committee should be confidential. J. Foss-Pratt asked how much validity the board will place on the committee. D. Taylor said generally when an interview team is brought together there are parameters defining their role. The board makes the final hiring decision; that is their statutory responsibility. The superintendent is required to make a recommendation. Sometimes between interviews and the final process information may come to light that might change the decision; however, those details can't be shared back with the personnel selection committee. She has seen that happen. But she is not speaking about the HPES situation.

N. Noyes said he likes the idea of the candidates providing a presentation. Another extension would be sending the committee or some of its members out to do a site visit if the person is already in a school setting. But that is more difficult if a candidate is from out of state.

A teacher said staff are looking for longevity. She is not sure this is going to give us that. We want a stable, smooth running environment.

Another teacher said for an interim principal, it might be good to consider someone already familiar with our district. It is concerning to think of someone new coming in who might make changes to initiatives in place. Staff might feel more comfortable with someone familiar. M. Freeman and R. Walters said they have the same concerns.

M. Freeman said the board will listen to the committee. D. Regan asked what he means by that – does he see the committee’s recommendation as simply a recommendation or as a binding moral commitment? M. Freeman said he sees it as just a recommendation, but the board would have to have a good reason to move in another direction. D. Taylor said it is usually not black and white. There is often not unanimity on the committee. *(D. Tingle arrived at 7:22.)*

A teacher said she would like to see longevity. The school needs a strong leader, and consistency. We need a good leader who matches our community. She likes N. Noyes’ suggestion of visiting the places the candidates are from and talking to people there; she thinks would be invaluable. She is not sure this timeline allows for that. She thinks we should consider placing that in our timeline.

J. Lipinski said, regarding the composition of the interview committee, he has found that the optimal size is closer to 5. It is more difficult if the committee is bigger. He agrees that all constituencies need to be represented, but some people might be able to represent more than one constituency. For instance, Dave Manning is an administrator and a parent, or there could be a board member who is also a parent. If we do go with only 5, that doesn’t mean that staff and community will have less input. People on the committee need to commit to representing a constituency, not just giving their own opinion. He was on the last 2 or 3 committees. He’s not aware that a committee passed on a recommendation that the board overruled. Especially during the last search, a very rigorous process was followed. There was not unanimity among the committee, but there was a strong consensus. It is important that we have an objective process. It should be driven by core values, policy governance, desire for longevity, etc. Maybe the board could put forth its values and let R. Smith put together questions based on those. We should reserve the right to turn this position into an interim one. We should not go beyond an interim position unless we are very comfortable with a candidate.

M. Mathias suggested maybe someone from the HPES leadership team could be part of the process. We have a leadership team and a 5-year rolling action plan with initiatives outlined. That should provide continuity. Faculty worked together for a lot of hours to identify things that are in the action plan. A new principal should be able to pick up the ball and run with the initiatives with the support of staff.

D. Regan said he has been involved with and run a lot of searches in higher education. He believes in pools. This is one instance where size matters. He believes in timing. As time marches on and we get closer to a new academic year, judgment gets skewed. At this point, the size of the pool is likely to be modest. He is inclined to think we're most likely looking at an interim appointment. He would like to echo concern about how rigorous the timing is. It only works if constituencies other than central office are not much involved in some of the initial steps. Interview questions need to be connected to our core values and our initiatives and where we are moving. Maybe J. Lipinski's suggestion to be mindful of those is a compromise.

D. Taylor said the questions have to be a reflection of the school. In some processes the committee or board might spend a meeting framing them. We could add that to the timeline, or we could have some drafted by a group – perhaps a member of the school leadership team, M. Mathias, and a board member. The committee could review them and give feedback. And the board could develop questions for its own interview – or does the board want input into the questions for the committee? J. Lipinski said if there are 15 people on the interview team, the team can end up selecting the person who can remain calm during an inquisition. J. Raboin said the committee should have about 10 questions. That's realistically what you get through. They could have 3 from the board, 3 from the committee, 3 from staff, and 1 from students.

D. Tingle said he thinks longevity is important. It takes more than a month to put careful thinking into the process. Knowing the amazing amount of work this school has done and the board has done, he feels HPES deserves a person who will be able to continue with that.

N. Noyes said he feels what is much more significant than the number of people on the interview committee is the atmosphere you are intentional about creating. Any principal candidate should be comfortable in front of a group of people. He wouldn't necessarily shy away from having more than 5 if we are intentional about the way we set it up. It can be an asset to have more people, but it takes a little more planning to have an environment that will get what you want out of candidates without scaring them away.

D. Regan suggested J. Lipinski could discuss with D. Taylor how this conversation might change what D. Taylor has laid out. J. Lipinski said if we ask the wrong questions, we will get the wrong person. It is very important that the questions be exclusively driven by the board's goals and values, no matter who comes up with them. Maybe there should be some discussion about the best way to get those

questions. The answers should tell us how much the person believes that every individual is important, believes in evidence-drive decision making, etc. Questions we have used in past or typical questions are often not designed to pull that information out. Questions like “What was the biggest challenge you’ve had?” don’t get at what we want to know. R. Smith said he is describing behavioral interviewing. She is happy to craft those questions. She has done that before. J. Lipinski suggested the board could weigh in on the questions during the retreat on Sunday. We need to make sure the board and stakeholders have an opportunity to weigh in. R. Walters said she doesn’t think that gives us enough time to get stakeholder participation. D. Taylor suggested moving interviewing to 2 weeks later than she had initially proposed. R. Smith said it would be helpful for her to have a conversation with the board to learn what other pieces they want to talk about. D. Taylor said she heard from staff that they want people who are familiar with the initiatives currently underway at HPES.

D. Regan invited anyone present tonight, or anyone else who is interested, to send a note to the board about any further perspectives, concerns, or sample questions. M. Mathias said she can send out an email to the rest of the staff. J. Lipinski said the board can spend half an hour on values, etc. at the beginning of the retreat, then get that to R. Smith to let her start crafting questions. Then the questions can be approved by the community. D. Regan said staff input would be helpful. D. Taylor said she will talk to M. Mathias about that. D. Cullivan suggested maybe the P.I.E. group could also be invited. M. Freeman said he can handle that.

R. Walters thanked faculty and community members for coming. She said she thinks it is important that the process be transparent. She was on the interview committee 3 years ago. They were tasked with sending more than one name and told it would be a board decision, but it sounds like not everyone knew that. She wonders if there are ways to include more people on the committee, such as having a number of people who can’t all vote but who could caucus with the voting members.

**R. Walters moved to replace A. Vear with D. Regan as a voting representative to the LNSU board, M. Freeman seconded, and the motion was passed.**

**6. *Board Member Recruitment***

Board members said they have enjoyed A. Vear’s membership on the board, they are sorry to see her go, and they wish her well. No one knew of anyone who might want to replace her. (*R. Dennis arrived at 8:02.*) N. Noyes said he might be interested. However he is an employee of LNSU until June 30. D. Taylor said N. Noyes has been a leader at the middle school. He is knowledgeable about LNSU initiatives. J. Lipinski said there will be a special meeting in July to firm the interview questions. The board will wait until then to nominate a new member. D. Taylor said N. Noyes can call her for more information. Board members said he is welcome to call them also. (*N. Noyes left at 8:06.*)

**7. *Facilities – Staffing, Gym Floor Project***

M. Spaulding said he hasn’t posted the open position. We added a .5 FTE position, and have already hired that person. He also added 2 summer helpers and has hired

those. So we currently have 2.5 FTE, but we are missing 1, and one is on vacation. He has already heard of a couple of people who are interested in the open position. He may fill it with a summer sub, then hire someone.

M. Spaulding said the community voted to set aside \$100K for replacement of the gym floor, including the floor itself, waterproofing the slab under the floor, possible asbestos removal, and a grating outside the gym. (*R. Smith left at 8:08.*) Asbestos was found. We got one bid for asbestos removal. The amount was lower than anticipated.

**R. Walters moved to award the asbestos abatement work to Catamount Environmental, Inc., seconded by M. Freeman.**

M. Spaulding said the total for everything else leaves about \$15K for site work. He doesn't have a concrete figure for what that will cost, but one person advised him to set aside about \$20K for it. M. Mathias said she would like to be able to spend an additional \$5K to replace the pads in the gym. Or maybe we could just clean them and take one to an upholsterer. **The motion was passed.**

We received only one gym floor replacement bid. There are 3 possible thicknesses of waterproofing that might be used, depending on results of slab moisture level testing. Or we may not test and just use the maximum thickness. The cost for the thickest waterproofing is \$13,000. The cost of the floor is \$42,000.

**M. Freeman moved to award the gymnasium floor replacement work to Danaher Floor Restoration, Inc., for a total of \$55,900, R. Walters seconded, and the motion was passed.**

**8. *Visioning Work – Final Edits before Submission***

M. Mathias said one staff member went through the entire vision and was very complimentary and enthusiastic. The kids who looked at liked it but didn't have anything to add. (*M. Spaulding left at 8:18.*) M. Mathias didn't get any input from other faculty. J. Lipinski said he feels the board gave ample opportunity for input at all levels. It was agreed to send it to the Lengels as it is. J. Lipinski said he will send it this week.

**9. *Home Days Participation***

M. Freeman said the P.I.E. group is very interested in participating. He thinks one co-chair has already spoken to Judy Clark. They are interested in working with the board, or they can handle it themselves if the board can't or doesn't want to be involved. M. Mathias said Christina Norland would prefer to have the students performing in a place where there are more people if they do another performance. Last year the only people who benefited were parents of students. **M. Freeman said he and P.I.E. can be in touch with the Home Days organizers and tell them we want to be more involved.** The board expressed its appreciation for the parent group's involvement and work and all the support they have given to the school. It was agreed that having a student concert in the main part of village would be a good idea.

**10. *Other***

D. Regan said the board knew about D. Taylor's and M. Mathias's departures, but he felt a bit awkward the last day of school because he hadn't had official word whether any other staff members were leaving, only rumors. He asked if M. Mathias could

confirm what the staff situation is. M. Mathias said Sandy Conklin decided to retire. She will work at least until the end of the month. There are quite a few applicants for her position. M. Mathias feels we should not wait for a new principal to be hired to replace S. Conklin. M. Mathias said 2 of our support staff have new babies. One of them, Tasha Bradley, intends to be back in the fall. The other, Dana Crowley, asked for a leave of absence.

D. Taylor said as a follow-up to the last meeting she did research with the help of John Coppens. She distributed a memo discussing status of the HPES internet content filter's operational effectiveness and recommendations for a fair use policy and security training. The settings for the firewall rules and content profile changed during an update earlier this spring. The default setting was automatically switched from Block to Allow. This has now been corrected and the technical problem with firmware upgrades was reported to the company. Pornography is no longer accessible via internet on the school's computers. Different schools in LNSU use different security systems with different costs. There are currently 3 different systems. The LNSU Technology Committee will need to look at whether it would be best for all, or at least all the elementary schools, to have the same system.

D. Regan said the memo mentions pornography specifically. What about sites with, say, extreme violence? Are those also no longer accessible? D. Taylor said there are various categories that are blocked, but she isn't sure what they all are. She thinks the Technology Committee should look at that in the context of developing a fair use policy.

M. Mathias said one thing that became evident from the recent incident was that any person in a position to work with computers should have a periodic computer audit. And we should alert people that that will happen. D. Taylor said John Coppens told her that a full audit of all computers would take 3-5 days at a time. She thinks periodic random audits would probably be more reasonable. M. Mathias said she would recommend a system to keep track of when each computer is audited, to make sure each is hit 2-3 times a year. R. Walters said we had also talked about the capacity to notify an administrator if a blocked site is pinged. D. Taylor said there are different notification programs we can set. Right now the system is programmed to notify the administrator about spam or viruses. Now that the block is in place, it would be unlikely for anyone to be able to get around it. R. Walters suggested maybe the administrator could be notified of someone's attempt to get to a blocked site. D.

Regan said it seems important to formulate a computer use policy as soon as possible. He thinks staff and faculty input would be important. If we conduct computer audits, we need to know what's worth remarking on, and we can only tell from a fair use policy. J. Raboin said she doesn't want to see staff punished for accidentally bringing up an inappropriate site or image. Occasionally that happens.

D. Taylor said Detective Sawyer is willing to conduct a forum where he could explain dos and don'ts of internet use to parents and the community, especially in relation to home use. She suggests doing that in the fall. M. Mathias said she tried to

have something like that in the winter, and only one family said they would come. Maybe now more will be interested. Regarding violence, M. Mathias said when they put the filters in place they wanted to balance the ability to get educational information with the need to censor unnecessary things. If controls are too tight it eliminates the ability to go to legitimate educational sites.

R. Walters asked how many calls D. Taylor has had about the issue with the former custodian. D. Taylor said none. She said every parent received a letter inviting them to contact administration. J. Raboin said staff have heard a lot of talk and questions from parents.

D. Taylor said at the LNSU board meeting in May, a minor change to the master agreement was presented, to allow us to provide 2% raises to staff.

**M. Freeman moved to approve the support staff side letter of agreement covering the period from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012, and the motion was seconded and passed.**

***11. Adjourn***

**It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 8:51, and the motion was passed.**

*Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths*

**Items highlighted for follow-up:**

M. Mathias said she thinks it would be appropriate to put out an email and an AlertNow message to make sure all faculty and staff are aware of the principal search process, so those interested and available can step forward.

D. Regan invited anyone present tonight, or anyone else who is interested, to send a note to the board about any further perspectives, concerns, or sample questions. M. Mathias said she can send out an email to the rest of the staff. J. Lipinski said the board can spend half an hour on values, etc. at the beginning of the retreat, then get that to R. Smith to let her start crafting questions. Then the questions can be approved by the community. D. Regan said staff input would be helpful. D. Taylor said she will talk to M. Mathias about that. D. Cullivan suggested maybe the P.I.E. group could also be invited. M. Freeman said he can handle that.

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