

1 **Lake Region Union High School Board Meeting**
2 **Lake Region Union High School - Orleans, Vermont**
3 **Meeting Held at Lake Region UHS**
4 **Monday, February 17, 2021**
5

6 **Board members in attendance:** Dave Blodgett, Toni Eubanks, Michael Sanville, Jennifer
7 Edlund, Gerry Cahill, Michael Conner, Jennifer McKenzie, Linda Michniewicz, and Tammy
8 Wiggett

9 **Administrators in attendance:** Andre Messier- Principal, Bev Davis- Superintendent, Heather
10 Wright- Business Manager

11 **Community Members in attendance:** Leanne Harple- *The Chronicle*, Amanda Ticehurst, and
12 Karen Ceraso

13 **Call to Order:** David Blodgett, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:15.

14 **Additions/ Deletions:** Deletion under New Business: 7- a motion to rescind policies.

15 **Privilege of the floor:** Amanda Ticehurst of Brownington addressed the board with concerns
16 related to comments made by board members at previous meetings and reported in the Chronicle.
17 As a parent of a future Lake Region student, Ms. Ticehurst expressed concern that board
18 members have been dismissive of equity work. She stated that, in her experience, racial issues do
19 exist in our community and should be looked into. She encouraged the board to have a growth
20 mindset and to be willing to learn where issues of equity are concerned.

21 **Approval of Consent Agenda Items:** Michael Sanville moved to approve the following items:
22 the minutes of the February 1, 2021 board meeting, written reports, updated FY '21 financial
23 reports, and payment of the bills. The motion was seconded by Linda Michniewicz and approved
24 by unanimous vote.

25 **Old Business**

26 **Superintendent Search Update:** Dave Blodgett reported that the committee and interviewed
27 four candidates and narrowed the pool to three finalists. Since that time, one finalist accepted
28 another position, leaving two finalists to be interviewed by the OCSU board on March 3, 2021.
29 There was to be a Meet and Greet event held on Google Meet on March 1, 2021 so that the
30 community could also have an opportunity to meet the candidates.

31 **Annual Meeting Planning:** A brief check-in confirmed that all presenters were prepared for the
32 Lake Region UHS Annual Meeting, which would directly follow this board meeting.

33 **School Choice:** Mr. Messier reported that he had been approached by a LR staff member asking
34 if children of staff members could be given preference in regard to school choice. Mr. Messier
35 reported that Lake Region had received 3 sibling applications, which would be given priority.
36 There were a total of 7 or 8 applicants, which is more than the number that was set by the board
37 at a previous meeting. It was decided to make this issue a future agenda item, where it could be
38 discussed more fully.

40 **New Business**

41 **Memorandum of Understanding:** Michael Sanville moved to approve the Memorandum of
42 Understanding with OCEA for Laurie Wolff for FY21-FY23, due to the fact that she would take
43 a decrease in pay should she be placed on the salary schedule. It was seconded by Jennifer
44 Edlund and approved unanimously.

45 **Memorandum of Understanding:** Linda Michniewicz moved to approve the Memorandum of
46 Understanding with OCEA for Erin Knight for FY21, due to the fact that she would take a
47 decrease in pay should she be placed on the salary schedule. It was seconded by Toni Eubanks
48 and approved unanimously.

49 **Letter to the Board:** Dave Blodgett acknowledged the receipt of a letter and read the letter to
50 the board. The text of the letter is included below:

51 Lake Region High School District Board
52 317 Lake Region Rd
53 Orleans, VT 05860
54

55 CC: Orleans Central Supervisory Union
56 130 Kinsey Rd.
57 Barton, VT 05822
58

59 Dear Members of a the Board:
60

61 This letter is respectfully submitted to you, a group of parents and community members
62 who have stepped up to the difficult, elected, but essentially unpaid task of helping to
63 guide decision making for the OCSU district. We honor and respect your work. We
64 appreciate your commitment to serve the community and to help oversee education in the
65 district. We are writing to you as parents, community members and educators, teachers,
66 and administrators also highly concerned with our schools, to ask that you respectfully
67 consider the following.
68

69 Honest discussion of school climate requires education, bravery and a number of factors,
70 which do include issues of race and racism within our predominantly white schools. In a
71 Chronicle article covering a LRUHS Board meeting in January, members of our board
72 are quoted dismissing conversations of race with such comments as “Unfortunately,
73 racism is a lot like ketchup. People have a tendency of putting it on everything;” and “If
74 you say ‘anti-racist,’ you know, you’re just pointing fingers at people” We feel it
75 important to analyze these comments, not to point fingers, but to inform while building a
76 bridge toward best practices and to mitigated harm for all in our community.
77

78 These comments reflect sentiments widely held in our community, and it is educational,
79 important, and positive for us to address them. As co-signers, we again thank members of
80 the Board in advance for the additional work and attention in hearing this response. The
81 statements are troubling because they are dismissive of the vast documentation that exists
82 of both collective and individual manifestations of racism that permeate our society,
83 which affect us all in different ways.
84

85 In July 2019, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued a policy statement on racism
86 stating, “Racism is defined here as a ‘system of structuring opportunity and assigning
87 value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call ‘race’)
88 that unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities, unfairly advantages other
89 individuals and communities, and saps the strength of the whole society through the
90 waste of human resources,’ as described by Camara Phyllis Jones, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H.”
91 The statement continues, “Racism is a social determinant of health that has a profound
92 impact on the health status of children, adolescents, emerging adults, and their families.”

93
94 We concur with the extensive research that shows racism has deadly consequences for
95 people of color, is harmful to all, and deprives many white students of the right to
96 develop into empathetic and engaged members of our increasingly multiracial society.
97 This, in turn, impacts how we all work together more effectively on common goals and
98 for the betterment of community and the country as a whole.

99
100 We lack the space here to scratch the surface of documentation, well-researched
101 resources, and individual testimonies, on the pervasiveness of racism and how it plays out
102 in our society and communities. We invite everyone to further study this history and we
103 are glad to make reading and content recommendations.

104
105 We respectfully ask that the Board reflect on the roles and responsibilities of school
106 board members, as outlined by the Vermont Agency of Education, to take racism, school
107 climate, and a commitment to equity seriously. This will be especially important in light
108 of likely curriculum and school content changes under Act 1, also known as “The Ethnic
109 Studies Bill,” signed by Vermont’s Governor in March 2019. Act 1 established an Ethnic
110 and Social Equity Standards Advisory Working Group, to make recommendations to the
111 Vermont Board of Education for implementing ethnic, social, and equity standards for
112 grades k-12 into Vermont schools.

113
114 We need school board members and everyone involved willing to see this as an
115 opportunity for progress, rather than as a poke that triggers personal defenses. Racism is
116 real, so analyzing it could spare us from its harmful effects. Not one of us signing this
117 letter is perfect and all of us are strengthened by each other. We will work and ask and
118 hope for growth. We look to explore these issues further and to possibly hear a correction
119 of statements that upholds this critical work for our children. Thank you again for your
120 service to the community.

121
122 Sincerely,

123
124 Karen Ceraso, Glover
125 Amanda Ticehurst, Brownington
126 Theresa Peura, Glover
127 Heidi Riendeau, Glover
128 Roderick Owens, Orleans County Coalition for Cultivating Equity
129 Netdahe Stoddard, Building Fearless Futures
130 Russell Shoatz III, Cabot

131 Sharon and Jay Caroli, Barton
132 Rachel Wilson, Building Fearless Futures
133 Joan Vincent, Glover
134 Karen Hack
135 Mark Mohrmann
136 Rosa Mohrmann, LRUHS Graduate
137 Alyssa Chen, with Core Members of the Education Justice Coalition of Vermont
138 Vicki Garrison, LCMHC
139 Darlene Young, Glover
140 Ned Andrews, Glover
141 Elizabeth Nelson, Glover
142 Mariel Hess, Glover
143 Infinite Culcleasure, Voices for VT Kids
144 Amanda Colon
145 Lindy Sargent, Barton
146 David Sargent, Barton
147 Kristina Snook, LRUEMS
148 Jodi Baker, GCS
149 Renee Piernot, GCS
150 James L. Dam
151 Samantha Cochran, GCS
152 Sam Carbonetti, IVS Teacher and Orleans resident
153 Emma Vogel, OCSU Teacher
154 Emily Corkins, OCSU Teacher
155 Tara Capra, OCSU Teacher
156 Natalie Dalpe, Barton
157 Jennifer Schoen, ACS Teacher
158 Donna Bousquet, ACS Teacher
159 Rachek Deonigi, ACS Teacher
160 Emily MacLure, LRUHS Alum
161 Kit Basom, LRUHS Alum
162 Jeff Coburn, Orleans
163 Amy Rosenthal, Chair, OSSU School Board
164 Danielle Blanco, Brownington
165 James Barton, LRUHS Alum
166 Heather Clark
167 Kathy Paul
168 Helen Beattie, School Psychologist
169 Jonathan Snyder, Thaddeus Stevens School
170 Dr. Mark Allen, DMD, Hardwick
171 Kristin Urie, Albany
172 Leila Nordmann
173 Emmi Chapdelaine, Brownington
174 Wendy Little, Brownington
175 Anja Pfeffer, teacher, Hazen Union
176 Alan McGrath, teacher, Millers Run School

177 Jennifer LaPoint, Craftsbury
178 Mateo Kehler, Jasper Hill Farm
179 Rose Friedman, Educator, Modern Times Theater
180 Rachel Siegel, ED, Peace and Justice Center
181 Peace & Justice Center (organization)
182 Noreen Hopkins, Counselor, Hardwick Elementary
183 Ceilidh Galloway-Kane, Hardwick Equity Team
184 Janet Van Fleet, Reading to End Racism
185 Rachel Cogbill, Reading to End Racism
186 Ellen Halperin, Reading to End Racism
187 Lynn Rockwell, Reading to End Racism
188 Laura Ceraso, Plainfield
189 Henekis Stoddard, Lyndonville
190 Sallyann Stoddard, Lyndonville
191 Michelle Authier, St Johnsbury
192 Bonnielee Hooper, VT Voices
193 Martha Zweig, Hardwick
194 David Van Deusen, President, VT AFL-CIO
195 Erik Remmers, Director, GMTCC
196 Jim Flint, Craftsbury
197 Emily Purdy, Greensboro
198 Emily Lanxner, Hardwick
199 Alana Considine, Hardwick
200 Central VT SURJ
201 SURJ-BTV and AWARE organizations
202 Marianne Perchlik, Orchard Valley Waldorf School
203 Kira Kelly, National Lawyers Guild
204 Brian Tokar, E. Montpelier
205 Susan Shoenfeld, South Burlington
206 Allison Vega, MHS, Milton Inclusivity and Diversity Initiative
207 Zoe Gascon, E Burke
208 Neil Favreau, E Burke
209 Jennifer Olson, Wolcott
210 Kathleen Hoyne, Director, Cabot Public Library
211 Kenya Lazuli, Co-director, Radical Imagination Co
212 Tom Gilbert, Black Dirt Farm
213 Henry Harris, Grassroots Organizing Center
214 Cat Buxton, Regeneration Corps
215 Mindy Blank, Community Resilience Organizations
216 Amber Carbine-March, Wolcott
217 Beth Cate, Hardwick
218 Ed Sunday-Winters, Gr-boro United Church of Christ
219 Brook Marcotte, RN, Hardwick Area Health Ctr
220 Tonda Bryant, AWARE
221 Ben Gordesky, Burlington
222 Pablo Coddou, Craftsbury

223 Amy Skelton, Greensboro
224 Erik Gillard, Plainfield
225 Amanda Spector, Westford
226 Anna Pirie, AWARE
227 Ross Connelly, Hardwick
228 Megen Hall, E Hardwick
229 Tevye Kelman, teacher, RUHS
230 Peggy Roche, teacher Orchard Valley Waldorf School
231 Nina Regan, Charlotte
232 Bill Regan, Charlotte
233 Karen Mueller-Harder, Cabot Community Theater
234 Benjamin Adler, owner, Skinny Pancake
235 Skinny Pancake Company
236 Jonah Bourne, Provender Farm, Cabot
237 Robin Cappuccino, Wheelock Mountain Farm
238 David Flaschenriem, Bristol
239 Deborah Hartt, E. Hardwick
240 Ruth Gaillard, Hardwick
241 Annie Gaillard
242 Penny Patch, Lyndonville
243 David Martin, Lyndonville
244 Graham Unangst-Rufenacht, Marshfield
245 Loui Pulver
246 Marjorie Smith, Harwood UHS
247 Harwood Youth Lobby
248 Alessandra M. Nichols
249 Mary Mullaney, SURJ
250 John Lockwood, OSCS alumnus
251 Shaun Stephens
252 Karen Ciechanowicz
253 Jana Koschak
254 Karen V. Holmes
255 Cathy Austrian
256 Aly Johnson-Kurts
257 Jennifer Maclean
258 Dana Woodruff
259 Sarah Parker-Givens
260 Claire Wheeler
261 Diane Grenkow
262 Elizabeth Rossano
263 Jean Marie Pearce
264 Judy Jarvis
265 Jasmine Lamb
266 Greta J. Quintin
267 Kamael Mishra
268 Eloise Reid

269 Ginger Nickerson
270 V. Pearson
271 Erin Kelly

272

273 **Administrative Requests/ Reports**

274 **Winter Activity Outlook:** Mr. Messier reported that Vermont schools had been cleared to begin
275 indoor contests between schools with strict scheduling measures in place. There was to be four
276 and one-half weeks of games, with playoffs planned for the conclusion of the season.

277 **Music:** New guidance has been provided to allow for singing and playing instruments inside,
278 with strict attention to masking, distance between musicians, and air exchange in the space.

279 **VT School Counselor Award:** Mr. Messier reported that Tim Chamberlin was awarded the
280 2021 James F. Crawley Outstanding School Counselor of the Year Award by the VT School
281 Counselor Association. As such, he will be nominated to apply for the national American School
282 Counselor Association School Counselor of the Year Award.

283

284 **Executive Session**

285 None

286 **Business of the Board**

287 **Career Center RAB Report:** The Director Search Committee had selected a new director for
288 the Career Center.

289 **OCSU Board:** Dave Blodgett reported that the OCSU Board had not met since the Lake Region
290 Board's last meeting.

291 **Future Agenda Items**

- 292 • Discussion of the letter received by the board
293 • Parking Lot Paving Project
294 • Annual Meeting Debrief
295 • School Culture- Student Surveys
296 • Solar Lab Update
297 • Covid Recovery Plan Update
298 • School Choice
299 • Policies

300 **Upcoming Meetings**

- 301 • Full Board: Thursday, March 11, 2021 at 6:15 PM
302 • Full Board: Monday, March 22, 2021 at 6:15 PM

303 **Adjournment:** David Blodgett adjourned the meeting at 7:05.

304 Respectfully submitted,

305 Tammy Wiggett