

SAU #39 Board

Monday, June 14th, 2021

Meeting Minutes- Not Approved

Attendees:

Administrative Team: Adam Steel- Superintendent, Christine Landwehrle- Assistant Superintendent, Meg Beauchamp- Director of Student Services, Michele Croteau- SAU #39 Business Administrator, Roger Preston- Director of Facilities, Anna Parrill- Principal C/W, Dr. Bethany Bernasconi- Principal AMS, Dr. Kim Sarfde- Principal MVVS, Mike Berry- Principal SHS, Amy Facey SAU #39 Business Administrator- Elect, and Brian Miller- SAU #39 Director of Technology.

Amherst School Board: Chair- Tom Gauthier, Vice Chair- Elizabeth Kuzsma, Secretary- Victoria Parisi, Terri Behm, and Josh Conklin.

Mont Vernon Village School Board: Chair- Sarah Lawrence, Secretary- Jessica Hinckley and Stephen O'Keefe.

Souhegan Cooperative School Board: Chair- John Glover, Vice Chair- Stephanie Grund, Secretary- Laura Taylor, Steve Coughlan, George Torres, and Christie Peters.

Board Minutes: Danae A. Marotta

Public: Maddie McFee, SHS Community Council Liaison, Marilyn Gibson, 166 Mack Hill Road, Amherst NH and Kelly Schmidt, 11 Patricia Lane, Amherst NH.

I. SAU #39 Board Organization

Superintendent, Mr. Adam Steel, opened the meeting at 7:00PM .

He asked Ms. Taylor if it was impractical for her to be at this meeting.

Ms. Taylor replied that she is out of state with two of her children.

He noted that he will take nominations for Chair of the SAU #39 Board. Each member will have one vote. He mentioned that Ms. Maddie McFee is the new Community Council Liaison.

Mr. Coughlan nominated Mr. Stephen O'Keefe as Chair of the SAU #39 Board.

There were no other nominations. He asked Ms. Taylor if there were other nominations.

Ms. Taylor seconded.

Mr. Steel asked Mr. O'Keefe if elected would he serve as SAU #39 Board Chair.

Mr. O'Keefe replied, yes.

31 **Mr. Steel called a roll call: Lawrence- Yes, Kuzsma- Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Taylor- Yes,**
 32 **Coughlan- Yes, Hinckley- Yes, Peters- Yes, O’Keefe- abstain, Grondstra- Yes, Glover- Yes,**
 33 **Parisi- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Behm- Yes and Grund- Yes (14-0-1)**

34 Mr. O’Keefe noted that he is excited to serve again in that role and asked for nominations for
 35 Vice Chair.

36 **He nominated Mr. Coughlan in the role as Vice Chair and asked him if elected, would he**
 37 **serve as SAU #39 Board Vice Chair.**

38 Mr. Coughlan replied that he would accept if elected.

39 **Mr. O’Keefe called a roll call: Lawrence- Yes, Kuzsma- Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Taylor- Yes,**
 40 **Coughlan- abstain, Hinckley- Yes, Peters- Yes, O’Keefe- Yes, Grondstra- Yes, Glover- Yes,**
 41 **Parisi- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Behm- Yes and Grund- Yes (14-0-1)**

42 Mr. O’Keefe asked for nominations for Secretary.

43 **Ms. Kuzsma nominated Ms. Grund as SAU #39 Board Secretary.**

44 He asked Ms. Taylor if she had a nomination.

45 Ms. Taylor replied she can second.

46 **Mr. O’Keefe called a roll call: Lawrence- Yes, Kuzsma- Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Taylor- Yes,**
 47 **Coughlan- Yes, Hinckley- Yes, Peters- Yes, O’Keefe- Yes, Grondstra- Yes, Glover- Yes,**
 48 **Parisi- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Behm- Yes, Grund- Yes. The vote was unanimous.**

49 Committee Assignments

- 50 • Budget Committee- Ms. Parisi
- 51 • Manifest- (2) Ms. Grund and Mr. Conklin

52 SAU #39 Treasurer- **Ms. Grund nominated Ms. CJ Butler effective July 1st 2021.**

53 **Mr. O’Keefe called a roll call: Lawrence- Yes, Kuzsma- Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Taylor- Yes,**
 54 **Coughlan- abstain, Hinckley- Yes, Peters- Yes, O’Keefe- Yes, Grondstra- Yes, Glover- Yes,**
 55 **Parisi- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Behm- Yes, Grund- Yes. (14-0-1)**

- 56 • Professional Development- Ms. Behm

57 Deputy Treasurer- **Ms. Kuzsma nominated Ms. Peg Bennett effective July 1st 2021. Mr.**
 58 **Glover seconded the nomination.**

59 **Mr. O’Keefe called a roll call: Lawrence- Yes, Kuzsma- Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Taylor- Yes,**
 60 **Coughlan- Yes, Hinckley- Yes, Peters- Yes, O’Keefe- Yes, Grondstra- Yes, Glover- Yes,**
 61 **Parisi- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Behm- Yes, Grund- Yes. Nomination was unanimous.**

62 II. Public Comment I of II

63 Ms. Marilyn Gibson, 166 Mack Hill Road, Amherst NH, commented that she has served on
64 boards in Massachusetts and Rhode Island and she knows how difficult the task is. She
65 congratulated all the teachers and staff; however, she is concerned with the transparency in the
66 SAU, website and so forth. There are board meetings that are recorded, but she does not find the
67 meeting notes to some committees.

68 Her main point is in support for Curriculum Mapping. CM would make all curriculum
69 transparent. If you ask Heidi Jacobs, it is an essential tool to classroom resources and Depth of
70 Knowledge. If you ask Gardner, who is a psychologist there are 9 types of learners. Not only
71 that, if you are familiar with education, you can see them in best practices. She has discussed this
72 with Ms. Landwehrle for the past three years.

73 Mr. O'Keefe thanked Ms. Gibson for her comments.

74 He asked for further Public Comment.

75 There were no additional comments.

76 III. Principals Reports

77 Mr. O'Keefe started with CW Principal, Ms. Anna Parrill.

78 Ms. Behm thanked for the teachers for the remote specials for the extra work.

79 The Board thanked Ms. Parrill.

80 Mr. O'Keefe asked for questions for AMS Principal, Dr. Bethany Bernasconi.

81 Ms. Behm thanked her for allowing remote families to come in and be a part of the final
82 ceremonies she knows how much extra work it has been.

83 Ms. Kuzsma added that it was great for the remote students.

84 The Board thanked Dr. Bernasconi.

85 Mr. O'Keefe asked for questions for MVVS Principal Dr. Kim Sarfde.

86 Mr. O'Keefe congratulated Dr. Sarfde for a great event tonight. He thanked the MVSB and the
87 ASB for the pizza.

88 Ms. Lawrence noted that it was exciting to see the updates.

89 The Board thanked Dr. Sarfde.

90 Mr. O'Keefe asked for questions for SHS Principal, Mr. Mike Berry.

91 Ms. Grund thanked Principal Berry for an outstanding graduation. She asked about the AP tests,
92 the number of students took it and the pass rate. She asked about the enrollment and where the
93 8th graders are at the end of the year and how many pass on going to Souhegan. It would be
94 interesting to understand.

95 Ms. Landwehrle replied that they do send their folders to the next school.

96 Mr. Glover congratulated Principal Berry on his first year.

97 Principal Berry noted that Ms. Sue Downer received the Presidential Award in Science and
98 Engineering. It is the third teacher at SHS, and it is quite an honor.

99 Ms. Behm thanked Principal Berry for a seamless transition for the remote students to return to
100 in person learning. Project Graduation was fun and important for the seniors.

101 Principal Berry replied that he was glad that the students felt comfortable to come back and
102 forth.

103 The Board thanked Principal Berry.

104 IV. Consent Agenda

105 Mr. O'Keefe remarked that he will go through the items one by one and started with the April
106 and May Treasurer Reports.

107 Ms. Grund thanked SAU #39 Treasurer, Ms. CJ Butler, for all of her work.

108 Mr. O'Keefe asked about the Discrimination Plan.

109 Mr. Glover commented that there was work that was done. There are a lot of classes on this list
110 and he would like to define them more easily.

111 Ms. Landwehrle replied that this was a large undertaking and tightly aligns the law. It is based on
112 the different protections of the plan and the legal requirements.

113 Mr. Glover noted his concern with it getting lost in the shuffle. It would help everyone comply
114 with this and he recommends.

115 Mr. O'Keefe asked they provide training.

116 Ms. Landwehrle replied, yes. They provide training on Anti-Discrimination in general.

117 Ms. Grund asked if it was every year.

118 Ms. Landwehrle replied, yes and it is in Frontline. They do run a report to see who has done the
119 training.

120 Mr. O'Keefe asked for questions about the Grading Software Update

121 Ms. Landwehrle mentioned that they are gathering additional information about piloting
122 PowerTeacher Pro. She was able to get the committee together and they did recommend going
123 forward with the program at SHS for next year and taking an extra year for the middle school.

124 Ms. Parisi asked about the plans for more teachers to piloting.

125 Ms. Landwehrle noted that she has had teachers approach her. There has been a greater push at
126 the high school.

127 Ms. Lawrence asked if they will still have grades in Empower.

128 Ms. Landwehrle replied both. K-8 will still be using Empower for the next school year. They
 129 will then upload those scores in PowerTeacher Pro.

130 Ms. Kuzsma asked about CW and MVVS.

131 Ms. Landwehrle replied that they had teachers take a look at PowerTeacher Pro. They need to get
 132 a better sense from the teachers to see if there is an interest in piloting for next year. They
 133 definitely want more teacher feedback.

134 Mr. Glover asked if the costs are scaled on usage.

135 Ms. Landwehrle replied that they will have budget savings and is a per user fee.

136 Mr. O'Keefe went to #5 Enrollment Update.

137 There were no questions.

138 Mr. O'Keefe moved on to #6 May 20th, 2021 Draft Minutes.

139 There were no questions or comments.

140 Mr. O'Keefe went to #7 April Facilities Report.

141 Ms. Grund asked about the air quality tests.

142 Director of Facilities, Mr. Roger Preston replied that they are still waiting on the results. They
 143 did the tests in the first week of May. Once they get them, they will share them on the website.

144 Mr. Steel to be clear they are only required to do them once per year. They do them 4 times per
 145 year with two different vendors.

146 Ms. Grund asked about the Building Management System upgrade. She inquired if this is the
 147 same thing as what they did last year.

148 Mr. Preston replied yes, they have been working on this all year and were able to pick up
 149 additional items with their Covid funding.

150 Mr. Glover gave his support for the reports.

151 Mr. Preston gave his appreciation for his staff.

152 Ms. Parisi questioned if the boring results for Upper Wilkins came out as expected.

153 Mr. Preston replied, yes.

154 **Ms. Kuzsma motioned to accept the Consent Agenda items 1. Treasurer's Report- April**
 155 **2021 2. Treasurer's Report- May 2021 3. Revised Anti-Discrimination Plan, 4. Grading**
 156 **Software Update 5. Enrollment Update, 6. May 20, 2021 Draft Minutes, and 7. April**
 157 **Facilities Report. Mr. Coughlan seconded the motion. (14-1) Motion passed**

Mr. O’Keefe called a roll call: Lawrence- Yes, Kuzsma- Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Taylor- No, Coughlan- Yes, Hinckley- Yes, Peters- Yes, O’Keefe- Yes, Grondstra- Yes, Glover- Yes, Parisi- abstain, Conklin- Yes, Behm- Yes, Grund- Yes. (13-1-1)

V. Board Chair Updates

- Amherst School Board

Mr. Gauthier noted that he is Chair, Ms. Kuzsma is Vice Chair and Ms. Parisi is Secretary. They also approved \$300k amount out of their UFB for end of year priority projects.

The Board thanked Mr. Gauthier.

- Mont Vernon School Board

Ms. Lawrence commented that she was reelected as Chair, Mr. Eckhoff is Vice Chair and Ms. Hinckley is Secretary. They did their committee assignments and have \$100k to give back to the Town. They have a vacant seat opening and they will be scheduling interviews. The position was vacated by Mr. St. Denis. She thanked him for his service.

The Board thanked Ms. Lawrence.

- Souhegan Cooperative School Board

Mr. Glover added that he was elected Chair, Ms. Grund is the Vice Chair and Ms. Taylor is the Secretary. They did not get through their full agenda and they will start an action item list. Mr. Steel will be reporting back in August on how teachers and staff can communicate with the boards. They have an action item about the National Student Data Privacy Consortium. They are

The Board thanked Mr. Glover.

Mr. O’Keefe thanked the previous Board Chairs.

VI. Superintendent’s Report

Mr. Steel noted that they have just about all of their administrative hiring positions completed. There is still an opening for the AMS Assistant Principal and at SHS there is a Science Domain Leader position open.

Graduations and end of the year celebrations went well. He thanked all of the principals.

He will discuss the reopening plan in a bit.

First, he would like to talk about the election results from last week. He thanked both Mont Vernon and Amherst communities for their support in voting for their budgets and warrant articles, in the most part, with substantial margins. He is proud of the MVEA agreement that has passed. It is fair to acknowledge that in Amherst and Souhegan the budgets barely passed.

He wanted to articulate that these are concerns in both communities. They have the #19th ranked High School in *U.S News and World Report* and frankly it costs too much. He has been working

in public school education for the past 20 years and he has heard similar concerns from the residents. He wanted to spend time thinking about what those concerns mean. Moving forward, with slim margins on the budget, is not the kind of support they want from the community.

First, he believes that they have great teachers and staff. There are high expectations from the community, and it is an asset. These are factors for laying the groundwork for a successful school system. In addition to that, they have an engaged group of parents, are on the leading edge of educational work and innovation and have a faculty that is engaged and believes in making their craft better.

The challenges are first, the facilities are in a state of challenging disrepair. There has been a lack of a real vision for their schools and this is not a criticism but a reality. They have less instructional time than other high performing schools, less school days and less hours. For example, they give up a week for high school final exams. Class sizes at the elementary schools, are not comparable. They know that and have had lots of discussions.

In preparing for the next few years, he would like to take stock in the vision of where they want to go and how they will get there. He has made it a priority to build a leadership team. He has worked with the school board to create the Joint Facilities Advisory Committee, which is community led and school board run organization. He has also worked with them to create a lot more transparency. Mont Vernon has hit their class size goals and has achieved that for a few years. It is a number one contributing factor to their success.

Most importantly, they should talk about what school should be moving forward. They have begun that process and it does take between 3 to 5 years to show consistent results. The changes that were made have just begun to have the smallest amount of impact.

He wants to ask for board support and believes that they are building for sustainable success. One of the number one traps for superintendents are creating goals that are not sustainable.

Mr. O'Keefe asked for questions for the board.

Ms. Behm inquired about cost in general. She does not know that a lot is being pushed down to the local level and it is not sustainable for some residents.

Mr. Steel explained that in NH the money starts and ends at the local level. The question for him is great schools at the most affordable cost possible or cheap schools. With cheap schools, our academic outcomes would worsen.

Mr. O'Keefe added that it is impactful and working on a good strategy.

Mr. Steel asked if he was on the right track.

Mr. O'Keefe replied yes. The community expects a lot and it is refreshing to hear those thoughts.

Mr. Glover added that the Strategic Vision from 2019 is still relevant. There is something they can do on the metrics front to highlight the successes and the struggles.

227 Ms. Grund noted that students may not be great at test taking. They need to understand their
228 expectations and have those conversations. A lot of people in the community do not understand
229 that.

230 Ms. Lawrence added that she would like focus on things that cannot they cannot measure, for
231 example connections with the teachers.

232 Ms. Parisi mentioned that they are not really providing the community with how they are doing
233 on Competency Based Learning.

234 Mr. Steel replied that every august they want to provide the board with a comprehensive report
235 almost like an annual report.

236 Ms. Peters mentioned that she would like to see it in a nice printed format for the town.

237 Mr. Glover added that there are 80 calendar days between the end of school and the beginning of
238 school. It can be incumbent on them to inform the parents and students to continue their learning
239 through school sponsored resources or on their own. To also provide that at the end of every
240 school year so that there is no remedial teaching. Maybe there is a gap there that they can fill.

241 VII. Reopening Plan

242 The Reopening Task Force Committee has resumed their meetings with a goal is to provide the
243 SAU with a plan for adoption in mid-August. He suggested the board to attend the meetings if
244 possible. The one thing that was clear is that this year went well. Some things that worked as an
245 unintended consequence, remote or hybrid. The question is what should remain that is separate
246 from Covid. Our survey of parents shows that less than 2% are looking for the need for remote
247 instruction. As you recall, it is a comprehensive committee

248 Mr. Coughlan noted that the board approved additional powers to the Superintendent. He
249 suggested that they revisit those items.

250 Mr. Steel replied, yes.

251 Ms. Grund asked if there was a Souhegan teacher/ administrator on the subcommittee.

252 Mr. Steel replied that there are representatives from Souhegan.

253 Ms. Grund added that the Souhegan meeting is in late august. They need a meeting way before
254 the Aug timeframe.

255 Mr. Steel replied later in July or Early August.

256 VIII. K-1 Looping Presentation

257 Ms. Landwehrle noted that she added a presentation to the agenda packet. This is something that
258 they plan on implementing in Amherst and Mont Vernon. She explained that looping is the
259 practice of a teacher staying with the same group of student for more than one academic year.
260 Looping is not the same as multi-age placement. Looping keeps similarly aged students together
261 with their teacher for more than one year. Many schools that loop keep students and teachers

262 together for two years, while some have models of three years or more. Looping is not a new
263 concept; it was first used in Germany in the early 1900's.

264 Benefits of Looping include, improved relationships among students and between teachers and
265 students, more efficient instruction, higher attendance rates, reduced student retentions, fewer
266 referrals of students to special education programs and improved student behavior

267 It would be a two-year looping model for all K and 1 teachers across SAU 39. Loop begins for
268 the 2021-2022 school year. The incoming K has met, doing activities with observation so that
269 they are a good match. At CW, they have expanded their screening process. They have had
270 parent nights with discussion. In addition to curriculum work, teachers will be doing deep
271 professional development work, especially in math. They want to set them up for success.

272 Supports Needed for a Successful Model include, teacher professional development in looping,
273 K and 1 curriculum / standards, and student development, expanded kindergarten screening
274 process, communication with families regarding our looping model, additional classroom
275 materials (K and 1 materials needed), physical space determination and a clearly outlined process
276 to "break the loop". Teachers are a little nervous, but they are excited to bring this to the
277 elementary level.

278 Ms. Kuzsma cautioned them with the divide in the two different buildings.

279 Ms. Landwehrle added that they had the same concern.

280 Mr. Glover gave his support. He asked why they picked K-1 another grade.

281 Ms. Landwehrle replied that a lot of the K and 1st grade are very different. A lot of K standards is
282 guidance and support and then in 1st grade require more independence. It is a lot to catch up to
283 speed.

284 Mr. Coughlan commented on the transition between grades 8 and 9.

285 Ms. Parisi asked about the teachers meeting during Grade Level times.

286 Ms. Landwehrle replied that they typically meet during their Late Start time. want ASD and MV
287 to work together as a full team.

288 Mr. Conklin gave his support. He asked about how could they measure success.

289 Ms. Landwehrle replied that they did not yet develop something formal. They would look at both
290 NWEA but what is more critical is feedback from the teachers in the second year. Questions to
291 ask are the looping teachers out pacing the pacing guides. Also looking at acquisition of
292 standards, do they have more students meeting expectations.

293 Ms. Parisi inquired about the educational expectation timeline.

294 Ms. Landwehrle replied that the grade level meetings are going to be so critical. There are
295 expectations in math with guidance and support. They would want them at a "D" or "E" reading
296 level at the end of K. They do not want to get into a hole early on.

297 Ms. Parisi noted her concern with the teachers not having break out groups and letting them
 298 level. She asked if they are going to allow that.

299 Ms. Landwehrle replied that one of the ideas from teachers is to go deeper and more hands on,
 300 experiential activities. It will be important piece to monitor all of the students in the classrooms.

301 Mr. Torres asked why the districts stepped away from looping.

302 Ms. Landwehrle replied that there is a lot of teacher professional development. Some districts
 303 may not have made it a cohesive practice. There is a district in Massachusetts that continually
 304 loops, and they have continued that practice for many years. She can look into it more deeply.

305 Mr. O’Keefe asked about privacy issues with the students. He inquired about when and what are
 306 the benchmarks for that.

307 Ms. Landwehrle replied that they can look back at previous cohorts. She has had a conversation
 308 with Ms. Amy Lavoie it is a big lift for teachers, and she feels confident that they are providing
 309 supports.

310 Mr. O’Keefe asked if the parents could opt out on the loop.

311 Ms. Landwehrle replied that they will have a parent appeals process. It will have to be a
 312 significant reason.

313 Mr. Glover commented on breaking the loop.

314 Ms. Landwehrle added that there could be a rationale.

315 Ms. Lawrence remarked that by the second-grade year when they are no longer there could be an
 316 impact.

317 IX. Public Comment II of II

318 No Public Comment

319 X. Meeting Adjourned

320 **Mr. Grondstra motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:49PM. Ms. Lawrence seconded the**
 321 **motion. The vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

322 **Mr. O’Keefe called a roll call: Lawrence- Yes, Kuzsma- Yes, Gauthier- Yes, Taylor- Yes,**
 323 **Coughlan- Yes, Hinckley- Yes, Peters- Yes, O’Keefe- Yes, Grondstra- Yes, Glover- Yes,**
 324 **Parisi- Yes, Conklin- Yes, Behm- Yes, Grund- Yes.**