

Learning Environments and Partnerships (LEAP)

Minutes – Tuesday, October 10, 2017

“The charge of this committee is to provide guidance and recommendations to the School Board, relating to its role as authorizer of current and future ECASD Charter/Choice Schools. This will encourage innovation that could increase our ability to provide diverse programming and methodologies. Through this investigation and advisement, the committee can support the increase in student readiness for and success in ECASD programming and post-secondary options.”

Committee Members Present and Position	
Derek Black, Secondary	Kristen Gundry
Gail Halmstad, Ad Hoc Member	Chris Hambuch-Boyle, BOE & Chair
Aaron Harder, BOE	Jeremy Harrison, CV Montessori Charter
Todd Johnson, CV Montessori/Co-Chair	Mike Kohls, McKinley Charter
Tim Leibham, Administration	Pete Riley, McKinley Head of Instruction/Co-Chair
Katherine Rhoades	

Absent: Melissa Greer and Michelle Radtke

Visitors: Dr. Mary Ann Hardebeck, Elizabeth Harder, Laura Lash, Beth Martin, Shelly Peters, Anna Rybicki, and Jim Schmitt

1. Public Comment

Erica Zerr, 1907 Badger Avenue, Eau Claire WI 54701, shared she has two children attending school in the Eau Claire School District. Erica is one of the proposers of the Little Red Nature Campus (LRNC) recently submitted to the LEAP Committee. Two years ago, this group of parents began researching environmental and project-based learning with the goal of creating a dual-purpose campus for Eau Claire students that would provide an engaging, project-based education with high academic standards and a focus on real-world experiences, community participation, environmental stewardship, and outdoor learning. Studies show that project-based learning (PBL) students retain content longer and we have seen the success of PBL across the state and in our own back yard. The campus and beautiful 38 acres surrounding the school would serve the entire body of the ECASD by creating space and providing facilities for field trips, summer classes, special programs and intensive study courses. Our community is hungry for innovation and the LRNC group is committed to this proposal, to the LEAP Committee and they look forward to working with the school district on Phase 2 and taking it to the school board.

2. Review and Approval of September Minutes

Committee members reviewed the September meeting minutes. Motion by Aaron Harder to approve, seconded by Kristen Gundry. Motion carried.

3. Addition of New Certified Staff Member to Fill Vacancy
Amy Traynor, DeLong staff, has agreed to join the LEAP Committee. Motion by Jeremy Harrison, seconded by Derick Black to add Amy Traynor to the LEAP Committee replacing Joel Dimock. Motion carried. Welcome Amy Traynor!

4. Professional Development/Networking Opportunities
On Friday, October 13, Paula Kaiser from Epiphany Learning shared basics of personalized learning and programs that could be expanded. The staff development training was held at McKinley Charter School. Several principals and staff planned to attend.

Tim Leibham shared he was approached by CESA 10 to host their monthly Board of Control meeting. The Northstar Middle School Commons area has been reserved for Thursday, November 9 from 6:30 – 8:00 pm. The meeting will begin with a few short business items, then an overview of LEAP and IZ programs implemented so far, and lastly participants will proceed to the Arctic Zone classrooms. Amber Dernbach, Documentary Theatre, will attend with a few of her Memorial students as well as Bill Giese, In-Tech-Great, with several staff and students from Sam Davey Elementary. A committee member asked if it could be taped. Tim Leibham will investigate that option.

The Innovative Schools Network (ISN) approached Tim Leibham about hosting a PBL Pre-Flight one day workshop. If it is held in Eau Claire, we would have 20 spots available at no cost and if we have more we would get a reduced rate on the conference fee. The committee discussed various host sites and dates in February and March avoiding teacher conferences and IP days. Tim will talk with ISN about the issues and hopefully come up with a date that works best in late February/early March 2018.

5. LEAP Rules Update and Discussion – Dr. Hardebeck
The LEAP Rules were shared at an Executive Team meeting. One suggestion on #7 was to expand membership to include the Executive Director of Teaching & Learning. The committee discussed the role of the principal, school board and LEAP Committee. What if the staff at that school is not supportive? Is it different than other programs that are implemented at a school? How do we look to sustain a budget now and during the natural budgetary process? Would it be better to deal with a smaller group from this committee vs. the committee as a whole?

Dr. Hardebeck talked about the role of the principal as the instructional leader of the school and accountable for all that takes place in the building. She asked how and when does the principal become involved in the IZ and able to share concerns. Tim Leibham shared on the imaginative narrative the principal needs to sign and be aware of it, but in Step 2 we can implement more principal involvement. Tim will share the LEAP Rules with the principals for their input and discuss the communication process at the next LEAP Committee meeting.

6. Little Red Nature Campus (LRNC) Update and Next Steps

Step 1 of the LRNC proposal was very detailed both in the academic program and as a resource. They've looked at grants and who is more likely to get funded. Currently, Wisconsin is only one of nine states that has been awarded funding for public charter schools and it's through the Wisconsin Association of School Boards (WASB). Wisconsin is being awarded 95 million dollars over the course of the grant. DPI will most likely allocate where it funnels out. There were three types of categories; ours would be for planning/implementation and not construction costs. Also, there was a commentary on mirroring high functioning charter schools in the southern part of the state, targeting underprivileged or marginalized communities.

Dr. Hardebeck shared science as a weak spot so the school district wants to take the next generation/science standards up, especially at the middle school level. If this was implemented next year we could not run the teaming structure because of the number of students required to make a team and staff those teams. We need time to have these conversations with the middle schools. Once you have your initial proposal to the Board then we must start working on the middle school program in a much urgent way. How will we run resource? How will we offer electives? The group discussed transportation and the current situation of balancing boundaries between the two high schools. Dr. Hardebeck asked about the time line stating that to re-open Little Red would cost 3.1 – 3.5 million dollars not including campus grounds. How would we raise those dollars?

Moving towards Step 2, the committee would look to obtain input from middle school principals/teachers and meet with the LRNC group to look at costs of various aspects of remodel, start to solicit community input, grant/funding sources willing to contribute, etc. The committee members agreed the LRNC proposal was well-developed and it would be advantageous to acknowledge there are gaps but pursue the answers to many of these questions by moving forward to Step 2. Dr. Hardebeck recommended first meeting with the middle school principals and then informing the school board through a summary by Tim Leibham and the LEAP minutes.

Chris Hambuch-Boyle moved, seconded by Katherine Rhoades, to approve the LRNC move forward to Step 2, with the condition that first the middle school principals are contacted/informed, and second the board is informed via committee update (Friday Update). When that is completed the LRNC group can be notified to go to Step 2. Motion carried.

7. Expanded Committee Membership Consideration

This topic will be discussed at the November meeting.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Pete Riley to adjourn, seconded by Tim Leibham. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:00 pm.