

Learning Environments and Partnerships (LEAP)

Minutes – Tuesday, April 10, 2018

“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	Melissa Greer, Elementary
Kristin Gundry, CV Montessori	Jeremy Harrison
Chris Hambuch-Boyle, BOE & Chair	Aaron Harder, BOE
Todd Johnson, CV Montessori/Co-Chair	Tim Leibham, Administration
Katherine Rhoades, Community Member	Pete Riley, McKinley Head of Instruction/Co-Chair

Absent: Derek Black, Katherine Rhoades, Kristin Gundry

Visitor: Anna Rybicki, Jim Schmitt

1. Public Commentary

No public commentary.

2. Review and Approval of February Minutes

Committee members reviewed the March 2018 meeting minutes. Motion by Amy Traynor, second by Melissa Greer, to approve. Motion carried.

3. Committee Member Sharing

Gail Halmstad has heard some concern expressed about the future of LEAP and whether there will be support for it. She became involved in LEAP because she liked its mission to modify the way we deliver services to students. She liked that students could have options. Jodi Emerson is running for legislature and was talking about poverty and mental health issues, and drug addiction. She also heard Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, who spoke in Chicago about teachers being ‘jewels.’ Students must take ownership of their learning. Isn’t that what LEAP is about? JAMF is offering a stipend for those who go to summer workshops. Congressman Ron Kind talked about entrepreneurship; WI ranks 50th in startups. Here is where LEAP fits in. We want kids to be challenged.

Tim Leibham said the recent District Update included a letter to staff to solicit volunteers to INDE. There is approval to put an advisory group together of 7 to 10 volunteers.

Pete Riley said he is working with Eau Claire County on a \$250,000 grant that is an alternative to incarceration. Only four grants were given out statewide initiated by DHS. This has been running for about 6 weeks and has different “levels” of student engagement.

4. Planning for LEAP/BOE Work Session

How do we frame it up to ask the Board to move forward or not? Tim Leibham said from the work done with the Action Plan where information was broken down into three or four headings. We can use supporting documents from the February Work Session plus the current LEAP action plan.

Areas we thought we would have available are origins of LEAP, foundational principles, and relevance of LEAP, what is happening in program extensions of LEAP (In-Tech Great, Documentary Theater, Charters) and then next steps. Tim reviewed the talking points that could be discussed with the Board on April 16.

The group discussed the differences between Charter and Innovation Zones. Challenges of Charter may be extra transportation cost and filtering effects for educational disadvantaged and with lottery system that gets enforced. Charters have increased autonomies, not having two cultures under one roof. As a committee we want to be crisp on pros/cons of both, why room for both and value in both. Innovation could be magnet school or could be part of a school and already have its geographic boundaries identified. The objective of LEAP is to create more alternatives, it is the focus of how learning occurs. To create a variety of choices to engage students who aren't as engaged as they think they are.

The group discussed collaboration between the Board and the LEAP committee. Does the Board have a clear vision of what we're about? What is the continued vision? Aaron Harder feels it's LEAP's job to provide that vision of where we see it in the next five years. If the Board finds it appealing, then to make that happen we need X, Y and Z in terms of resources. We need to have a stronger partnership with what is happening in the district and needs to integrate better. LEAP should make it a top priority to make that happen.

Tim Leibham asked about funds for professional development for LEAP. The ARCTIC Zone budget has changed with no resources or money for professional development. Aaron Harder said unless we have concrete resources set aside by Board decree, the attention won't be on LEAP, not until we get X percent of budget. We need to say we want 2% of that by the end of 5 years to promote the program. Setting aside X percent is a voice of support for the Board; reach out to administration to see how we will operationalize and develop assessments. We need to lay it out and say what it will cost. What is needed is understanding, structures, rules, and resources.

People voted yes to allow (other people to take) what goes into work flow. To get that going, the clarity is the belief that title doesn't determine the educational program that is being provided. These people are guided and allowed to figure out how to develop educational programming for this purpose.

Going forward, we could take three documents: 1) Holistic Learning (define quality and achievement in non-standardized ways) and look to develop other indicators of learning and achievement and apply in other ways; 2) Allow teachers to figure out how to create those environments; and 3) Not everyone has to go through the universal program to be ready for post-secondary success.

Aaron Harder said the Board is receptive to ideas and how LEAP can help create more. We can share LEAP's role in terms of split screen process and what we are looking to provide that is fundamentally different. We have 1/2 % of students involved in programming and if we want to expand it, what do we want to expand it to. Split screen book says 10%; could be 5%. The Board will ask about cost and we can work on that. We are ready for growth. It's LEAP's responsibility to provide a buffer for community members, if that extends to needing district resources.

5. Other/Adjournment

Motion by Chris Hambuch-Boyle to adjourn, seconded by Tim Leibham. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:19 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 8, 2018, in Room 123C at the Administration Building beginning at 4:00 pm.