

Ready?

Boards tend to work effectively with youth if, prior to including youth members, board members are willing to:

- Be flexible with meeting times and locations in order to accommodate school schedules.
- Adjust their culture from doing things to and for youth, to working with youth.
- Relax their expectations about efficiency while new members are becoming comfortable with the culture of the board and the use of Robert's Rules of Order.
- Make some adjustments to the way the board supports its members (i.e., paying young people in advance for their expenses, providing snacks at meetings, and/or explaining the young person's role to parents/guardians). Have clear conversations regarding adjustments board member

should make to help youth members feel comfortable at meetings. VSBA can help support this type of conversation through planning and facilitation.

- Inform your board in advance of who your new members are and when they will begin attending meetings.
- Have a plan for orienting the youth board member to the board, which can include having an "Adult Board Mentor".
- Hold meetings at times that are convenient for new members. Take into consideration factors such as school or after-school activities. Occasionally, these times will not be convenient for other board members, so try and reach a compromise.



The following checklist can be used to help give direction, uncover hidden issues, clarify tasks and provide next steps for getting your board ready for a youth member. Use this as a tool and have multiple people fill it out, including board members, staff and young people previously involved.

READINESS ASSESSMENT

(Adapted from "14 Points" by Youth on Board)

Adults can use this checklist to assess your board's ability to have meaningful youth representation. This tool can help everyone involved comprehend the necessary adjustments and to measure their commitment to these changes. It is important to note that we are not implying that every board must meet all of these criteria.

- Does the board have the time and resources to make a commitment to effective youth representation?
- Has the board amended the by-laws or created policies stating that young people will be a permanent part of governing your organization?
- Is the board clear about why it is involving young people in governance?
- Is the board willing to adjust its culture to make meetings youth friendly?
- Has the board defined a selection process? If appropriate, has the board outlined recruitment criteria for new representatives? (e.g., motivation, diversity, competence, quality of past experiences, etc.)
- Is there a mentor or coaching system in place?
- Does the board have a system in place for youth representatives to train new youth representatives?
- Are young people included in all issues, not just those affecting their age group?
- Does the board's culture promote open discussion?
- Is there time for all representatives (including youth) to speak at meetings?
- Are young people's terms of office consistent with those of adults?
- Can your youth representative substantially influence governance of the organization?
- Do young people have access to the resources and technology needed to participate in your board's work?
- Is there informal time to network and build relationships with other representatives?
- Are young people encouraged to keep in touch with their peers about their governance role?
- Is there a place where young people can voice their concerns outside the meeting environment?
- Do adults ask the youth representative(s) how they can better work together and take these recommendations seriously?
- If youth are confused about an issue, how does the board respond and guide them to the information they need?
- Is equal weight given to youth representative opinions?
- Do board representatives take the initiative to get to know all the representatives (including youth) of your board on a personal level?
- Does the board provide support for young people on speaking up in adult groups?
- Do you offer training for young people and adults in governance skills and board work?
- Are youth representatives briefed ahead of time on how to read financial statements?

How Are The Students Doing?

Youth Voice and Youth-Adult Partnership in School Governance



Unleashing the Power of Partnership for Learning

We will hear from teams of youth and adults (Superintendents, Board members, youth) on:

- **WHAT** their need was for youth-adult partnership in school governance
- **WHY** they have authentically partnered with youth in school governance
- **HOW** this partnership can create a meaningful and engaging experience for both board members/school leaders and youth to support systems change and policy
- **WHY and HOW** this might look different from having traditional youth “board members” and what the possibilities are for authentic youth representation

RESEARCH QUESTION

How does working in an authentic
youth-adult partnership reflect
true participatory democracy?

LSUU School Board Equity Subcommittee

2020-2021

- Individual groups from the distinct high schools were working towards the same goal but not in collaboration.
- School board recommended that the groups work together to create a proposal for the addition of the Black Lives Matter flag and Progress flag.
- In conjunction the 2 groups presented to the school board where they voted 6-1 in favor.

2021-2022

- New superintendent and creation of equity policy within school board.
- Creation of Equity Subcommittee to focus efforts on drafting the policy.
- Supreme Court ruling regarding public flag poles.
- Passing and adopting of Equity Policy by school board and district schools.

CODE C29
LAMOILLE SOUTH UNIFIED UNION
DISTRICT EQUITY POLICY

Overview

- **Statement of Tolerance:** The Lamoille South Unified Union School District (LSUU) does not tolerate hate speech, acts of harm that target identity (race, ethnicity, religion, family economics, class, geography, ability, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or initial proficiencies) whether it be a generalization or an interpersonal act, or any form of discriminatory behavior by faculty, students, or other members of the school district.
- **Acknowledgment of Inequity:** LSUU acknowledges that the public education system, as well as every other system in the United States, is built on institutionalized inequalities. These systems make it more difficult for marginalized groups to thrive in all areas of life. LSUU acknowledges that our district buildings lie on the land of the Wabanaki Confederacy, specifically the land of the Abenaki tribe.
- **Representation of Students:** This policy will ensure that there is room for under-represented student voices to be included in school board and administrative decisions, specifically students who are part of marginalized stakeholder groups because of their identity, whether it be their race, ethnicity, religion, family economics, class, geography, ability, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or their initial proficiencies.
- **Responsibility:** The superintendent shall ensure that this policy is considered in the development of continuous improvement and strategic plans and identify outcome indicators as necessary to monitor this policy. The superintendent shall provide a status report to the board at least annually.

Policy

The Lamoille South Unified Union School District (LSUU) will develop and maintain a safe and inclusive environment for each and every student. LSUU is committed to the success of every student, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, family economics, class, geography, ability, language, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or initial proficiencies. The Lamoille South Unified Union School District Board holds itself and all district and school-site decision-makers, faculty, and support staff accountable for building a district-wide commitment to equity. The district will incorporate principles of equity and inclusion within all policies, programs, operations, practices, and resource allocations. The LSUU board and district recognize and acknowledge the challenges of working toward equity in our communities and state. We are fully committed to living our commitment to equity and inclusion in all we do. We believe academic excellence depends not only on a diverse body of students and families but also on affirming the perspective of all voices.

Definitions

Educational Equity: Educational equity occurs when all students are provided with what they require to support of their academic, social-emotional and career development. Equity recognizes that economic, social, political, and educational historical and current practices have created inequities that require explicit, intentional intervention.

Lamoille South Unified Union: Portrait of a Graduate

Portrait of a Graduate Project Goal: to create a shared vision for the LSUU graduate by engaging all stakeholders in the community to understand ***the most important characteristics, skills and experiences that graduates of LSUU need to prepare them for success in learning and life.***

- **PoG Team:** 3 Board members, Superintendent, administrators, classroom teachers, support staff, community members/parents, and youth (representative of all schools)
- The Portrait will guide **the strategic planning process for the Board**





Winooski Antiracism Steering Committee



In July 2020, the **Winooski Students for Antiracism** (WSA) presented 8 demands to the school board. 6 of the 8 were approved.

The Steering Committee is an innovative **multi-stakeholder committee** that creatively **guides the dynamic work of the WSA Demands**, serves as a communication hub for the demand-based Action Teams, and ensures that the WSA Demands are centered in every aspect of the work.



WSD Antiracism Action Demand Teams

These groups meet at least once a month and report back to the Steering Committee. They are all composed of youth and adults.

Group 1: Racial Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Group 2: Hiring and Retaining Faculty and Staff of Color

Group 3: Ethnic Studies Curriculum

Group 4: Equity Review Committee

Group 5: Civil Rights Workshops

Group 6: Multilingual Learner Mentorship Program



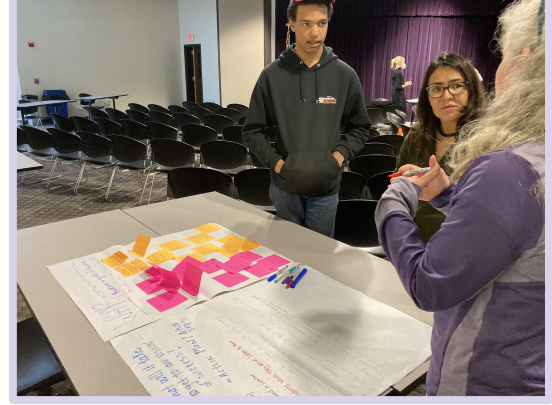
Lamoille North Supervisory Union: Equity Visioning and Design Team

PHASE 1 (Spring 2022)

- The youth-adult team worked together to identify shared values and built on these to develop a sense of power and agency for all in our school community.
- We identified what makes learning meaningful by capturing stories from all and we not only shared a sustainable communication plan, but we also shared a vision for what Diversity, Equity and Inclusion looks like at LNSU.
- We brought in voices not heard before and we started to talk about positive changes we can co-create.

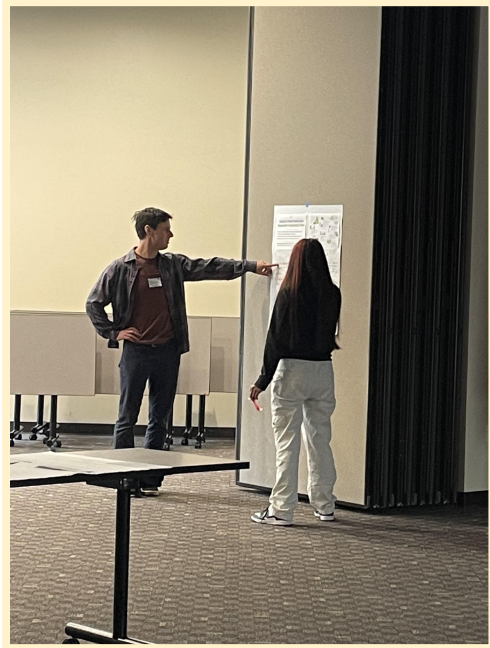
Together we:

- Established an understanding of the educational landscape
- Formed a core youth-adult Core Planning Team that we hope to grow with more school community participation.
- The Core Planning Team (CPT) will assist with a presentation to the School Board and Leadership Team training on Climate, Culture, Equity and Learning through our Youth-Adult Partnership encouraging youth representation throughout LNSU.



Lamoille North Supervisory Union: Equity Design Team

PHASE 2 (2022-2023)



The Equity Design Team (EDT) will conduct Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) to collect and analyze data to identify key issues associated with the following questions:

1. What lessons can we learn about equity from the successes, challenges, and needs of members of the school community?
2. What have we learned about effective policy and practices related to teaching, learning, equity, diversity, inclusion, relationships, engagement, etc.? Where are there gaps?
3. In what ways can the district, local schools, teachers and professional staff, students and families/caregivers work together to reimagine, reframe, and adapt to the diverse and changing needs of students, families and these communities?

The EDT will **identify issues of equity and hold community dialogue and engagement events** to examine data and collect information to shape the shared vision.

The EDT will **draft a vision and actions steps for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in LNSU** that can be shared with all stakeholders.

WHY and HOW this might look different from having traditional youth “board members” and what the possibilities are for authentic youth representation:
Current and Former Youth Board Members Share Their Perspectives

- **Jeswin Antony**, Senior, Harwood High School
- **Maisie Franke**, Senior, Harwood High School
- **Ana Lindert-Boyes**, Graduate, Twinfield Union School



Ana, Jeswin, Maisie - youth on boards takeaways.....

Jeswin- joined board as sophomore, took an interest in the school board, students had grievances with school, wanted to see what channels existed where I could use my voice, wanted to be a spokesperson and to gain experience in how boards work - was able to join others who wanted to see change, felt respected, bureaucracy and Robert's Rules were confusing, board's job is not to focus on not one school but whole district- eye opening

Ana - similar experience, wanting to make a difference, already involved in leadership, board felt limiting and not all that accessible, seemed surface-level, not effective, put me in a good position to effect change (like raising the BLM flag), wasn't as effective as I would have liked

No voting rights on board- just "sports team" "what students are doing in classes"
Students should have a more active role