

**Cooperative School Boards Work Session
RCW 43.30.080**

Tuesday, May 16, 2017
Endicott School Library 6:00-8:00 PM

St. John School Board Vice Chair Jim Rogers, Endicott School Board Chair Marvin Schmick and LaCrosse Board Chair Terry Miller called their respective boards to order and jointly opened the work session at 6:00 PM.

Billy Ray Jr. led the flag salute.

Attendance:

<u>Endicott School Board</u>	<u>St. John School Board</u>	<u>LaCrosse School Board</u>
Marvin Schmick	Jim Rogers	Terry Miller
Nancy Anderson	Alan Blumenshein	Kara Harder
Jamie Misner	Valerie Brewer	Tami Schwartz
Greta White	Shantyl McGuire	Michael Stubbs
Debbie Schlomer		Harmon Smith

Others In Attendance: Doug Curtis, Suzanne Schmick, Bruce Porubek, Jeff Pietila, Mark Purvine, Dana Crider, Billy Ray Jr, Sandy Martin, Jeff Parker, Amanda Webb, Lori Loomis, Shani Hergert, Michelle Welch, Christy Thrasher, Linda Greenhalgh, Laura Jones, Gary & Janet Luft, Chris & Kelli Melhus, Chris & Michelle Stach, Travis & Rachell Anderson.

Marvin Schmick welcomed everyone to the work session of the LaCrosse, St John and Endicott School boards.

By the request of St John board member Valerie Brewer, Superintendent Schmick announced that director Brewer would be making a recording of this work session.

SJE Superintendent Schmick provided an update of the SJE/ESJ self-study committee along with an explanation of how and why the committee was formed. One of the outcomes of the public forums was to form a self-study committee to assess and make recommendations for SJE/ESJ athletics. A few items the committee was tasked with was to determine what constituted a successful athletic program; review the results from the student survey to determine why participation is declining; and how do we move forward. The committee was formed with members from both communities that represent elementary, middle school and high school. Members of the committee include: St John Principal Mark Purvine, Endicott Principal Bruce Porubek, SJE Athletic Director Darrell Miller, ESJ Athletic Director Billy Ray Jr. along with St John community members Bill Parrish, Dr. Lundberg, Heidi Hough and Endicott community members Tia Langston,

Linda Greenhalgh and Steve Selk. The formal report from the self-study will be presented at the regular board meeting on Monday, May 22nd.

Superintendent Schmick presented the results of the mailer sent to St John and Endicott patrons and families that asked the following question: Would the public be in favor of moving forward with high school athletics in 2017-18 without high school volleyball or should we wait until 2018-19 when all sports will be combined with LaCrosse. The results of the survey are as follows:

- 221** Yes, please go ahead and start the SJEL High School Sports Cooperative in 2017-18 without Volleyball.
130 = St John
91 = Endicott

- 81** No, please wait until 2018-19 to start the SJEL High School Sports Cooperative with Volleyball included.
68 = St John
13 = Endicott

- 5** No decision = St John

LaCrosse Superintendent Doug Curtis commended the St John and Endicott schools for taking a deeper look into their athletics programs. He appreciates their willingness to hear the good, bad and ugly. Sports are one of the best classrooms we have as it teaches love and respect on the team and he feels the self-study will help in the long run.

Discussion then moved to the 6 points of the LaCrosse proposal. The 6-point listing/proposal was shared for the purpose of discussion by the board groups. Each item was discussed individually as described below:

1. Finances: If ALL-in, then LaCrosse pays 25% of all athletic expenses for each season.

a. Rationale: With only having 1 game per sport, we are not equal members in regards to playing sites.

b. LaCrosse is paying to transport athletes for practices and games.

LaCrosse is suggesting they pay a flat rate of 25% of all athletic expenses for each season. Endicott board member Greta White shared concern about LaCrosse paying 25% for a sport that they have no participants. LaCrosse board member Tami Schwartz responded that LaCrosse expects to pay their share because we would be a coop. Endicott board member Jamie Misner shared with the group that at the SJE work session the night before, it was agreed to ask LaCrosse to pay 30%, which represents more of a one-third share. When asked if the St John and Endicott boards had any plans to change the SJE Cooperative Agreement to reflect 1/3 payment by each school, Superintendent Schmick responded that no conversation has been had about changing the SJE Cooperative Agreement and there are no plans to alter it at this time. St John School

District will continue to pay for all high school sports and Endicott School District will continue to pay for all middle school sports.

2. Practices: The week of the LaCrosse game site, Coaches will/can schedule some practices at the LaCrosse campus.

a. Rationale: Give kids and coaches the home site feel and experience

The suggestion to have practices in LaCrosse before the games, originally came from coaches trying to make it as much of a home game as possible. Concerns were heard regarding the need to keep students in the classroom and not leaving early from school for practice in LaCrosse. When asked how LWK handled practices at their different sites, LaCrosse board member Michael Stubbs explained that no one left the building for practice until the last bell rang and the goal was to have the kids back in LaCrosse by 6 pm. This meant losing practice time but it was important to make sure the students/athletes were not out late during the week. Superintendent Curtis stated that if the LaCrosse practice is important enough to coaches, they will keep it within the designated time frame. He also encouraged the group to remember that there will only be 1-2 practices in LaCrosse per sport season and it will be planned in advance.

3. LaCrosse AD: Be part of the interview/hiring and evaluations of coaches and programs. Be part of developing athletic guidelines and handbooks.

a. Rationale: To represent our students, parents and community

Superintendent Curtis would like LaCrosse involved in the interview/hire process along with performing evaluations of coaches since LaCrosse kids will possibly be participating with SJE/ESJ coaches. One expectation of the possible athletic director in LaCrosse will be to travel to St John and Endicott to observe practices. LaCrosse will use SJE/ESJ's current evaluation tool.

4. LaCrosse Board: Part of voting either as a board or as individual board members in approving athletic policies and decisions at the board level.

a. Rationale: To represent our students, parents and community

These are not decisions that the Athletic Directors would make but would include policies & procedures involving athletics, dissolving sports programs, etc. Superintendent Schmick stated that St John and Endicott boards work together and would see all three boards making decisions for both middle school and high school athletics. All 15 board members would meet quarterly (June, August, November, February) to hear reports from athletic directors about the season/sport just finishing and to look ahead at what's coming next. This would also allow the boards to approve the administration's recommendations for coaches. As discussed in prior SJE work sessions, Endicott board member Jamie Misner proposed a possible sports board that would include 3 board members from each district that would meet quarterly at alternated locations between the three districts. The athletic directors and administration would set the agenda. Each board would have three votes and majority rules. She believes this would present a fair and equitable solution to overseeing SJEL athletics.

**5. Contracted agreements: 1-year agreement with yearly review by April 1st.
Combined boards meet quarterly throughout year.**

LaCrosse is proposing a 1-year agreement however; St John and Endicott would like to see a 3-year agreement with annual reviews. St John and Endicott believes this shows there is a commitment. Superintendent Curtis reviewed other sports coops in the state and all have one-year agreements. He senses that SJE feels LaCrosse is not committed to make this work. He reminded the group that back in 2015, LaCrosse held a community meeting and the results were to keep their kids together and to find a way to bring sports back to LaCrosse. Participating with St John and Endicott is the best thing for our kids and our community. Superintendent Schmick encouraged the SJE boards to keep in mind our high school numbers and the importance to work with LaCrosse. She stated it is also important to know who is committed to SJE/ESJ. Even though there are high numbers of participants in current peewee sports programs, trends show that participant numbers decline in middle school and even more in high school. Superintendent Schmick asked the boards to contemplate a 2-year agreement rather than a 3-year agreement. LaCrosse board members expressed their desire to commit and work with St John and Endicott. They stated they have never broken a commitment and they do not give promises or commitments lightly. The LaCrosse board understands there will be bumps along the way and if we are all doing this for the kids, there isn't anything that can't be fixed if we're all committed. LaCrosse is at the table because they want to be here. LaCrosse is willing to discuss a 2-year agreement.

6. Role of Administration: To work together in overseeing Athletic Directors in regards to their involvement as athletic co-op progresses.

Superintendent Curtis emphasized the role of athletic director is more than just paper pushers. We want creative thinkers; forward thinkers that have a passion for the kids. The athletic directors must work together as they are critical in making this arrangement work. Communication is key. Administration will oversee and evaluate the athletic directors. Superintendent Curtis does not want Principals or Superintendents running athletic programs.

The next step is to start working towards an agreement. Item #1 (Finances) was briefly discussed before LaCrosse board chair Terry Miller suggested that St John, Endicott and LaCrosse administrators draft a multi-point agreement for the boards to review at their next board meetings. LaCrosse will call a special meeting since their next board meeting will not be until June. St John and Endicott will discuss at their upcoming board meeting on Monday, May 22nd.

St. John, Endicott and LaCrosse board chairs closed the work session at 7:38 pm.