

**Merrimack School District/SAU 26**  
**School Board Meeting**  
**Preliminary Agenda**  
**October 20, 2025**  
**Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room**

**5:30 p.m. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – Merrimack TV Training Classroom**

- Staff Welfare
- Student Welfare

**PUBLIC MEETING**

|           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                   |
|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6:00 p.m. | <b>1. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE</b>                                                                                                                                                                                  | Lori Peters                                                       |
| 6:05 p.m. | <b>2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Lori Peters                                                       |
| 6:15 p.m. | <b>3. RECOGNITIONS</b><br>- National Federation of High School Active Coaches Award                                                                                                                                               | Lori Peters                                                       |
| 6:25 p.m. | <b>4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES</b><br>a. Superintendent Update<br>b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update<br>c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update<br>d. School Board Update<br>e. Student Representative Update | Lori Peters                                                       |
| 6:40 p.m. | <b>5. OLD BUSINESS</b><br>a. School Board Budget Message                                                                                                                                                                          | Lori Peters                                                       |
| 6:55 p.m. | <b>6. NEW BUSINESS</b><br>a. School Board's Charge to the Planning & Building Committee<br>b. Health Insurance Rates<br>c. Professional Development Master Plan Revision<br>d. Other                                              | Lori Peters<br>Lori Peters<br>Matt Shevenell<br>Kathleen Scholand |
| 7:30 p.m. | <b>7. POLICIES</b><br>a. First Reading of Revised School Volunteers Policy (IJOC) and Appendix IJOC-R                                                                                                                             | Lori Peters                                                       |
| 7:35 p.m. | <b>8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES</b><br>a. October 6, 2025 Public Minutes                                                                                                                                                                | Lori Peters                                                       |
| 7:40 p.m. | <b>9. CONSENT AGENDA</b><br>a. Educator Nomination                                                                                                                                                                                | Kathleen Scholand                                                 |
| 7:45p.m.  | <b>10. OTHER</b><br>a. Committee Reports<br>b. Correspondence<br>c. Comments                                                                                                                                                      | Lori Peters                                                       |
| 7:55 p.m. | <b>11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | Lori Peters                                                       |
| 8:15 p.m. | <b>12. ADJOURN</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                   |

\* These times are estimates and may vary depending on discussion.

October 8, 2025

Merrimack School Board  
36 McElwain Street  
Merrimack, NH 03054

Charge to the Planning and Building Committee,

The Merrimack School Board appreciates your commitment to transparency by consistently televising your meetings and making them easily accessible to community members. It is greatly appreciated. We also want to express our gratitude to MerrimackTV for working with the Planning and Building Committee to televise the meetings.

The Merrimack School Board would like the Planning and Building Committee to prioritize, along with its regular advisory business, two projects for the 2025-2026 school year. The first is related to the Watkins Forest Harvest Subcommittee's work. Mr. Watkins generously donated land to be managed and periodically harvested, with proceeds being donated to the school district. His commitment and love for the Merrimack School District were extensive. For a brief history and understanding of the Watkins Forest Harvest work, I encourage you to view the latest meeting at: <https://reflect-townofmerrimack.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/show/8487?site=5> .

The Merrimack School Board would like the Planning and Building Committee to have a full understanding of the history between Mr. Watkins and research one or two appropriate ways to honor his memory at the schools. This may entail a bench with a memorial plaque or some other way to honor his generosity to the schools in Merrimack.

The second project that the Merrimack School Board would like the Planning and Building Committee to address is a building space utilization audit. Recently, the lower level of the green building had to be closed due to health and safety issues, displacing not only central office employees but also other district employees, particularly those at the high school. It has been a few years since our last space audit, and we would like it to be updated. Working in conjunction with Assistant Superintendent Matt Shevenell, the committee will tour and catalog the spaces, classrooms, offices, and common areas in every district property. Additionally, any needs for repairs, improvements, or changes that align with the strategic plan and CIP should be noted as well.

A member of the Planning and Building committee will collaborate with the administration to update and vote on the CIP, and the chair will present it to the School Board at a future meeting.

Lastly, as a continuation from last year's charge, the Planning and Building Committee will collaborate with the Athletic Advisory Committee to discuss fields and athletic facilities.

We appreciate the members of the Planning and Building Committee and your continued work to ensure safe and welcoming facilities for students to thrive.

Lori Peters  
Chair, Merrimack School Board

To: Merrimack School District School Board Members

From: Dr. Kathleen Scholand, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment

Date: October 16, 2025

Re: Request for Approval of Amendment to the District's Professional Development Master Plan

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At the October 10, 2025 Professional Development Committee meeting, the members approved an amendment to the Merrimack School District Professional Development Master Plan 2021 - 2026.

**Summary:**

Composition of the committee membership changed from having "six paraeducators (one per school)" to "twelve paraeducators (two per school)" (see attached document identified as page 11).

**Rationale:**

The Merrimack School District Professional Development Master Plan includes the process for certification, activity development, and procedures for certified paraeducators to seek continuing education credits and reimbursements.

**Superintendent and School Board Approval of Amendment:**

As per the Master Plan, the amendment must also be approved by not only committee members but also by the Superintendent, the School Board, and the New Hampshire Department of Education (see attached document identified as page 15).

**Superintendent Action Taken:**

On October 16, 2025, Everett Olsen, Chief Educational Officer for the District, gave his approval of the amendment.

**School Board Action Requested:**

*The School Board is requested to approve the amendment to the Master Plan.* If approval is granted, the amendment will be sent to the New Hampshire Department of Education for approval.

**MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY**

Every certified educator in the Merrimack School District is eligible for election to the Professional Development Committee. The term of office is two years. One half of the Committee shall be elected between March and May each year and will begin serving their term starting June. Should a mid-term vacancy occur, the Committee will request that the school represented by the resigning member will select another representative to fill the remaining term. If no educator volunteers, the principal can invite an educator to become the representative.

**COMPOSITION AND ELECTION/SELECTION**

The Professional Development Committee shall be composed of members in the following fashion:

- Twelve professional staff representatives (two per school)
  - One of which is a certified licensed service professional
  - The method of selection is by vote of the building professionals.
- ~~Six~~ **Twelve** paraeducators (~~one~~ **two** per school)
  - The method of selection is by vote of the building paraprofessionals.
- Three administrative representatives from the district:
  - One administrator from the Superintendent's office
  - Two Leadership Team administrators
  - The method of selection will be appointment by the Superintendent of Schools.
- One School Board representative
  - The method of selection will be appointment by the chairperson of the School Board.
- Administrative Assistant from the SAU26 (non-voting member)
  - The method of selection will be appointment by the Superintendent of Schools.

And may include two community representatives by invitation of the Superintendent of Schools: Parent and/or community representatives (non-voting member(s))

Additional professional staff (non-voting member)

***Election of Committee Chair & Co-Chair***

The Staff Development Committee elects a Chair for a three-year term and Co-Chair. Upon completion of the Chair's three-year term, the Co-Chair automatically succeeds the Chair position. If the Co-Chair chooses not to

succeed the Chair or is not reelected to the committee, then the Professional Development Committee will elect a Chair and Co-Chair from the committee members.

## PROCESS FOR ADOPTING AND AMENDING THE MASTER PLAN

This Master Plan describes the process for identifying and meeting professional needs that lead to both educator recertification and improved student growth, learning and/or achievement.

The writing of the Master Plan is the responsibility of the Master Plan Revision Subcommittee. Amendments will be made as needed to keep the Master Plan consistent with such documents as master agreements, State Board of Education guidelines, and Merrimack School Board objectives.

The adoption/amendment procedures are as follows:

- The Professional Development Committee, representative of all constituents, will approve the Master Plan and make future amendments to set plan.
- The Master Plan will also be approved or amended by the Superintendent, the School Board, and The New Hampshire Department of Education.
- If the Master Plan is not approved or is amended at any level, it will be resubmitted to the Master Plan Revision Subcommittee for redevelopment.
- If an amendment to the Master Plan is not approved at any level, it will be resubmitted to the Professional Development Committee for reconsideration.
- The Master Plan states that a periodic review and evaluation of the professional development program will be conducted to ensure that it continues to meet the changing needs of certified professional personnel and paraeducators. In the last year of the Master Plan, a new plan will be submitted to the State Department of Education for the next five-year period.

## SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

- A. **General Policy.** The School Board supports and encourages the use of parent and community member volunteers in our schools to assist school and District staff in meeting the needs of students and serving the school community at large.

B. **Definitions**

1. **Volunteer.** Under the Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”), “volunteers” are persons who perform service (1) without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for the services rendered (reimbursements, and modest stipends excepted); (2) have offered their services freely and without pressure or coercion from any employer, and (3) are not otherwise employed by the District to perform the same type of services for which the individual intends to volunteer. Volunteers may receive nominal stipends for their service at the discretion of the School Board.

This expansive definition includes such services whether for classroom or other student programs or activities, or for services such as committee work, chaperones, trades work, etc.

2. **“Designated Volunteer”** as used in this policy is any person who:
- a. Comes in direct contact with students on a predictable basis;
  - b. Meets regularly with students;
  - c. Chaperones **any** field trip or overnight student trip;
  - d. Meets with students in group settings or on a one-to-one basis without the presence of a Merrimack School District teacher or other professional staff member;
  - e. Is a Coach or Assistant Coach of any student athletic program or co-curricular activity; or
  - f. Any other volunteer so designated by the Superintendent or designee.

**Exceptions:** The following persons will **not** typically be considered Designated Volunteers:

- a. Current Merrimack School District students who volunteer to assist in student athletics or co-curriculars or to assist in a classroom activity, provided they are **under the direct supervision of a teacher or other Designated Volunteer;**
- b. Parents or community members who volunteer to perform duties at school athletic or co-curricular events, such as ticket sales, concession stand, etc., where they are **not expected to exercise supervision over students or have direct student contact;**
- c. Guests who are invited to a school or school activity for the purpose of a single or occasional presentation or event provided such person is accompanied by a Merrimack School District staff member while in the building and is **not permitted to be alone with a student or students during the school day or school activity;**

**SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS**

- d. Persons who serve on district-wide or building level committees which do not involve supervision of students, provided that if students are on the committee, **such persons may not meet or work alone with any student.**

- C. **Volunteer Selection and Assignment.** Persons wishing to serve as a volunteer in the Merrimack School District should complete a Volunteer form describing their skills, interests and availability. Such forms will be made available on the District website, the School Main Office, or SAU office.

The School Board recognizes that students volunteering to work with younger students can provide a valuable experience for both the volunteer and the younger student. Current students of Merrimack School District may volunteer to assist in the classroom and in student athletic and co-curricular activities provided they have a letter of good standing from their current principal or assistant principal, and a completed parental permission form.

Volunteer selection shall be made based on the qualifications and availability of the volunteer. Volunteers shall be assigned only to those staff members who have requested volunteer assistance through their administrative supervisor (e.g., principal, athletic director, facilities director) or to administrative or district level committees.

Every applicant for a volunteer role which falls within the definition of a Designated Volunteer must also complete the Merrimack School District's Risk Management courses through the online platform, to include the following topics: bullying, sexual harassment, and child abuse, and any such other training identified by the Superintendent or Building Administration. Certificates of completion must be submitted to the volunteer coordinator or administrator before they can begin to volunteer.

Volunteer assignments shall be made by the building principal or administrator responsible for that program, or the appointing authority in the event of a committee.

Volunteers will be notified annually of their responsible supervisor.

- D. **Background and Criminal Record Check.** Before a person may perform any services in a position falling within the definition of a Designated Volunteer, in Section B above, such person must undergo a background investigation and criminal history records check as described in Policy GBCD. The District will pay the cost of the fingerprinting requirements for Designated Volunteers.
- E. **Training.** All volunteers shall be provided appropriate training at the building level consistent with their tasks, existing District standards and applicable laws and Board policies. This training shall be coordinated under the leadership of the principal or other supervising administrator. At a minimum, such training will include (1) general volunteer responsibilities; (2) information about school facilities, routines, and procedures, including safety and evaluation; (3) schedule and location of volunteer services; (4) expected relationship to regular staff and (5) information on non-discrimination and prohibition against teaching or advocating discriminatory concepts.

Additionally, as required by RSA 189:13-a, XII, all Designated Volunteers must receive training and information relative to child abuse prevention and reporting mandates.

## SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

- F. Volunteer Responsibilities and Duties.** Other than committee volunteers, and head coaches/directors, volunteers may only serve in the capacity of assistants. Instructional services shall be rendered only under the supervision of certified staff.

All volunteers will sign a Confidentiality Agreement provided by administration and shall refrain from discussing the performance or actions of a student except with the student's teacher, counselor, Principal, or other school district employee who has a legitimate educational purpose for discussing such information. The Confidentiality Agreement is included as Appendix IJOC-R.

All volunteers are expected to model the character traits and moral conduct that are expected of the District's staff. Volunteers must comply with all applicable laws, regulations and District policies, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") and the Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention (RSA 193-F).

Volunteers will refer to their immediate supervisor or other regular staff member for final solution of any student problems which arise, whether of an instructional, medical or operational nature.

Head coaches of team or individual sports must be in compliance with all regulations and certification requirements for that sport as set by NHIAA or the applicable organization within which the athletes/members compete or participate. Assistant coaches must meet the same requirements as head coaches or be under the direct supervision of the head coach.

All student volunteers must be directly supervised by a Merrimack School District teacher or other Designated Volunteer at all times and shall not work alone with any student.

- G. Termination of Volunteer Services.** Volunteers serve at the pleasure of the District. Except as may be provided in an individual volunteer's agreement, services of a volunteer may be terminated, without notice, at any time when circumstances in the judgment of the supervising administrator warrant termination or if the services of the volunteer are no longer needed. Decisions of the administrator shall be final and not subject to appeal to the School Board.

Any volunteer or guest who is disruptive to the school operation or the school activity or who is deemed to present a risk to student health or safety may be asked by any administrator to leave the premises immediately.

- H. Implementation.** The Superintendent, or their designee is authorized to develop and administer any regulations or procedures they deem necessary or appropriate to implement this policy.

### **Legal References:**

RSA 189:13-a, School Employee and Designated School Volunteer Criminal History Records Check  
RSA 354-A:31, Prohibition on Public Employers

#### Revision

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: October 19, 2020  
2<sup>nd</sup> Review: November 2, 2020  
Adoption: November 16, 2020

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: October 6, 2025  
2<sup>nd</sup> Review:  
Revision:

**Merrimack School District  
School Administrative Unit #26  
36 McElwain Street  
Merrimack, NH 03054**

**SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

Specific information regarding SAU #26 students and/or its employees is confidential. Examples of such information include specific student data, special education related information, employee deduction/benefit information, etc. Any volunteer in the Merrimack School District or SAU #26 who has access to such information is required to keep such information confidential. Such information may be discussed with appropriate school district or SAU personnel.

Failure to exercise reasonable and prudent action in compliance with the above rule may result in termination of the volunteer/SAU relationship.

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Printed Name of Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the above-posted notice regarding confidentiality of student/employee information. I understand its provisions and penalty.

Signature of Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**MERRIMACK SCHOOL BOARD POLICY****IJOC****SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS**

The District recognizes the valuable contributions made to the school programs by the volunteer assistance of parents and other citizens. The Superintendent is responsible for developing and implementing procedures for the selection and utilization of volunteers. The Superintendent may also develop such additional training requirements as he/she deems appropriate for volunteers and may establish such health and medical screening criteria and standards as he/she deems appropriate for volunteers. School district employees who desire the assistance of a volunteer should request a volunteer through proper administrative channels.

Guests

A guest is an invitee of the District for the purpose of a single presentation or occasional event. Guests shall always be accompanied by staff while in a school building. No guest shall be permitted to be alone with a student or students during the school day or any school activity. Guests shall only be admitted in schools in accord with the building visitor procedures. Any guest who presents a risk to student health or safety shall be considered a trespasser and shall be required to vacate the school premises.

Procedure for School Volunteers

All school volunteers will be required to undergo a background investigation and a criminal records check prior to volunteering. "School Volunteer" means any individual who provides a service to the District without pay or any form of compensation, and includes, but is not limited to, the following: (*here and after titled "volunteer"*)

1. Comes in direct contact with students, meeting regularly without the direct supervision of a Merrimack School District employee;
2. Volunteers who will be involved in extended overnight trips;
3. Any other volunteer so designated by the Superintendent or his/her designee;

All school volunteers are subject to the provisions of Policy GBCD – Background Investigation and Criminal Records Check. No individual shall be considered a volunteer unless they have been approved to serve as a volunteer by a school district administrator.

School Volunteer Application and Selection

Persons wishing to volunteer at the District must complete a *Volunteer Application*, describing their skills, interests and availability. Also, the volunteer shall fill out a *Confidentiality of Student/Employee Information Agreement*. Such forms will be made available at the

### SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS (continued)

school/district website or upon request at the school or district office. The Superintendent is authorized to develop additional procedures for selecting and approving Volunteers.

Every school volunteer must complete the Merrimack School District's two Risk Management courses through Primex (*or other trainings identified by the Superintendent*) titled: *Anti-Bullying for Schools K-12* and *Understanding Sexual Harassment*. Volunteer applicants must share their certificates of completion of both of these courses with the Principal's office before their application can be accepted.

Volunteer selection will be made based on the qualifications and availability of the volunteer. They shall be assigned only to those teachers who have requested volunteer assistance. Staff should request volunteers through administrative channels for selected activities and as resource persons.

Volunteer assignments shall be made by the school administrator or designee.

Volunteers will be notified yearly of their responsible supervisor.

Volunteers shall be provided appropriate training at the building level consistent with their tasks and existing district standards. This training shall be developed under leadership of the principal. Exceptions would be district-wide programs established by the administration whereby general volunteer programs would be defined.

Volunteers serve at the pleasure of the District's administrators and shall reflect and model the character traits and moral conduct that are expected of the District's staff and shall comply with all applicable laws, regulations and District policies, including but not limited to, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Act.

A volunteer may be asked to terminate his/her services when circumstances, in the judgement of the administrator, necessitate termination. Any volunteer who is insubordinate, incompetent, presents a risk to student health or safety, fails to act in a manner consistent with the Code of Conduct and Ethics for educators, engages in any criminal conduct, engages in any discriminatory conduct, or fails to meet the expectations of their volunteer position or the applicable policies of the District may be dismissed. The decision of the school administrator shall be final and there shall be no appeal.

#### School Volunteer Duties

Selected volunteers will serve in the capacity of assistants and will not be assigned to roles that require specific professional training. Instructional services shall be rendered only under the supervision of certified staff.

**SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS  
(continued)**

All volunteers will sign a confidentiality agreement and shall refrain from discussing the performance or actions of a student except with the student's teacher, counselor, Principal, or other school district personnel who has a legitimate educational purpose for discussing such information. The Confidentiality Agreement is included as Appendix IJOC-R.

Volunteers will refer to their immediate supervisor or other designated employee for any concern(s) which may arise, whether of an instructional, medical or operational nature.

The district will incur the cost of the fingerprinting requirements for school volunteers. No volunteer will be considered a "school volunteer" until the completion and return of the criminal records check and all required coursework/training. The Superintendent may waive this requirement under special circumstances and to the extent permitted by law.

**No New Liability**

Nothing in this policy or any procedure shall be interpreted to create any new liability or obligation on the part of the District.

**Legal References:**

RSA 189:13-a, School Employee and Designated School Volunteer Criminal History Records Check

Appendix: IJOC-R

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: October 19, 2020

2<sup>nd</sup> Review: November 2, 2020

Adoption: November 16, 2020

**Merrimack School Board Special Meeting  
Merrimack School District, SAU #26  
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room  
October 6, 2025**

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**Present:** Ms. Lori Peters, Chair; Ms. Laurie Rothhaus, Vice-Chair; Ms. Naomi Halter, Board Member; Ms. Rachel Paepke, Board Member, and Mr. Matthew Brown, Student School Board Representative.

**Not Present:** Ms. Jenna Hardy, Board Member

**Also Present:** Mr. Everett Olsen, Chief Educational Officer; Dr. Kathleen Scholand, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum; Mr. Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent for Business; and Matthew Brown, Student School Board Representative.

**1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

At 6:00 p.m., Chair Peters called the regular meeting to order.

Chair Peters read aloud the Merrimack School District's mission statement into the record as follows:

The Merrimack School District will provide a high-quality, future-driven education to all students in the community. Students will engage in learning opportunities that reflect both rigor and relevance and meet their cognitive, social, and emotional needs. The district will prepare students to understand, adapt, and adjust to civic, economic, social, and technological changes in the world. Our overall goal is to inspire, create, and encourage students to be curious, connected, prepared, resilient, and dedicated individuals who are lifelong expert learners. Merrimack graduates exercise judgment; they are innovative and will become responsible contributors to society. We hope the discussions we have tonight will always align with that mission.

**2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were none.

**3. RECOGNITIONS**

a. VOYA Unsung Heroes Award

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the following employees had received the VOYA Unsung Heroes Award for their work with the Hydroponics Garden.

- Julie DeLuca, Principal, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
- Brooke (Ross) Concannon, Assistant Principal, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
- Jackie McMahon, Nurse at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
- Cinzia Bibb, Nurse at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

50  
51 **4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES**  
52

53 a. Superintendent Update  
54

55 Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the district had begun the budget process. He said  
56 that there would be additional restraint and seclusion training with the district's legal team.  
57

58 b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update  
59

60 Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Scholand commented that there would be  
61 an early release day the following Friday, for students and staff would work on their Vector  
62 trainings via online webinars regarding bullying, sexual harassment, child abuse, and blood-  
63 borne pathogens. She noted that P.E. Health teachers in K-6 would continue to work with  
64 the Catch Health virtual training, and at the high school, there would be a presentation on  
65 Artificial Intelligence for teaching and learning.  
66

67 Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Scholand stated that the paraprofessional staff  
68 would be completing a Needs Assessment Survey to ensure their professional needs are met.  
69

70 Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Scholand commented that she had  
71 recently visited all of the school's guidance counselors to discuss the 504 programs,  
72 ensuring consistency across the district.  
73

74 Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Scholand stated that the Professional  
75 Development Committee would meet on October 9, 2025, and there would also be a  
76 Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Committee meeting at the end of the month. She  
77 added that if the School Board approved the Artificial Intelligence policies, they would put  
78 together an Artificial Intelligence working group.  
79

80 c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update  
81

82 Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that the roof and gym floor projects  
83 at James Masticola Elementary School were nearly complete.  
84

85 Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said that the administration was also  
86 starting to work on the 2026-2027 operating budget.  
87

88 d. School Board Update  
89

90 Chair Peters said she had attended the Homecoming game, and they won.  
91

92 Chair Peters said the School Board would present its budget message at the next meeting.  
93

94 Chair Peters noted that they had begun discussions with the Merrimack Teachers'  
95 Association regarding negotiating a new contract.  
96

97 e. Student Representative Update  
98

99 Student Representative Brown said that the class of 2026/27 had a big mattress fundraiser,  
100 and it was a success. He noted that the marching band would participate in the Salem Band  
101 Show Invitational on Saturday. He welcomed all the newly inducted members of the  
102 National Honor Societies and said the class of 2028 would have a fundraiser at Papa Gino's  
103 the following day.

104  
105 **5. OLD BUSINESS**  
106

107 a. Comparison Data  
108

109 Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Scholand reviewed iReady data, noting it  
110 was the benchmark assessment data for fall, winter, and spring. She also reviewed the  
111 New Hampshire State Assessment System (SAS) data from the spring of 2021 to the spring  
112 of 2024. She noted that the data from 2025 was embargoed, and she would update the  
113 Board after obtaining it.  
114

115 Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Scholand commented that the 2024 iReady  
116 data, compared to the 2024 SAS data, indicated that grades 5, 6, 7, & 8 all had higher  
117 proficiency results in the spring NH SAS. She said that was a good indicator that the Wit &  
118 Wisdom program was effective.  
119

120 Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Scholand said that when looking at  
121 mathematics, the curriculum's strength was in grades 3 and 8. She said the NH SAS data  
122 was also higher than the iReady data. She said that this led to what might be considered  
123 weaknesses, and it would make sense to explore different options in mathematics.  
124

125 **6. NEW BUSINESS**  
126

127 a. Camp Invention  
128

129 Cathy Goodman and Kimberly Morgan, Co-Directors of Camp Invention, reviewed a  
130 PowerPoint presentation that explained what Camp Invention was. Amanda Lessard,  
131 Assistant Director, was also present, while Mary-Elizabeth Hauver, also an Assistant  
132 Director, was not present.  
133

134 Ms. Goodman explained that Camp Invention was a summer day camp program featuring  
135 hands-on STEM adventures and led by qualified local educators.  
136

137 Ms. Goodman added that 174 campers from grades K-6 attended the summer program, and  
138 35 high school students volunteered as Leadership Interns. Amy and Ella, Leadership  
139 Interns, shared their experiences with the Board and how much they enjoyed it.  
140

141 The students shared their inventions with the School Board, including claw machines,  
142 mission control panels, penguin launch pads, and an illusion workshop.  
143

144 Ms. Goodman thanked all who were involved for making Camp Invention a success. She  
145 reviewed activities for the 2026 program.  
146

147 The School Board collectively thanked the staff and students of Camp Invention, stating  
148 they were all very impressed with their projects!  
149

150 b. Artificial Intelligence Update  
151

152 Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Scholand stated that some of the topics that  
153 would be discussed during the professional development session would be:  
154

- 155 • Community Trust & Teacher Empowerment
- 156 • Curiosity & Collaboration
- 157 • Teacher Empowerment

- Efficiency & Authenticity
- Personalization
- Equity & Access
- Student Agency, Curiosity, & Discernment
- Future Ready Creative & Critical Thinkers
- Accountability & Integrity
- Taking Ownership & Responsibility

Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Scholand stated that they were examining successful AI implementation to achieve seamless integration and growth, while also empowering educators through professional development in AI. She added that the district was partnering with AI Navigator for its professional consulting services.

Board Member Paepke asked if equipment needed to be purchased, which would affect the budget. Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Scholand replied that she did not think "it would be a heavy lift," but she would look further into it.

c. Enrollments as of October 1, 2025

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the pre-K through grade 12 enrollment was 3,375. He added that there were 23 students out of district and 150 students who were homeschooled, and he said he would keep the School Board updated.

d. 2026 – 2027 Budget Process Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen reviewed the steps involved in the development of the process:

- Step 1: Gather the Data
- Step 2: Development of Site-Based Budget Requests
- Step 3: Present Initial Budget Request
- Step 4: School Board Action
- Step 5: Budget Committee Action
- Step 6: The Deliberative Session

e. 2026 – 2027 Budget Meeting Dates

The School Board reviewed the proposed 2026 – 2027 budget meetings.

Board Member Paepke suggested adding two snow dates. Chair Peters replied that she would look into what dates would work.

f. Student Safety

Chief Educational Officer Olsen reviewed the Merrimack School District's Threat Assessment process. He explained the differences between a credible threat and a non-credible threat. He added that the district had a crisis management plan in place that was updated frequently. He said that the district also had primary and alternate evacuation reunification sites. He said many of the details of the plans remained confidential at the request of the Merrimack Police Department.

g. Other

Vice-Chair Rothhaus commented that she and Chair Peters would attend the Planning & Building Committee meeting the following Wednesday, where Chair Peters would outline expectations for the coming year.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus also pointed out that she attended the Harry Watkins Forest Meeting the prior week, where she found out that in his Will, he left forest areas on Lawrence Road and Mitchell Street to the Town of Merrimack for the schools. She said she would like to ask the Planning & Building Committee to obtain a complete history on him and then make a dedication in his honor at one or more of the schools.

**MOTION:** Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to request that the Planning & Building Committee obtain a complete history of Harold Watkins and come up with a plan to honor him in the schools. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

Chair Peters commented that she would also discuss a Building Utilization Audit with the Planning & Building Committee, noting that Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell would work closely with that Board to complete it. She added that the lower level of the SAU building had to be shut down due to safety concerns, and all employees had to be relocated.

## **7. POLICIES**

### **a. Student Use of Artificial Intelligence (EHAGA)**

**MOTION:** Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve policy (EHAGA) Student Use of Artificial Intelligence. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

### **b. Staff Use of Artificial Intelligence (EHAGB)**

**MOTION:** Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve policy (EHAGB) Staff Use of Artificial Intelligence. Board Member Paepke seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

### **c. Revision to Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment, and District Anti-Discrimination Plan (AC-R)**

**MOTION:** Board Member Halter made a motion to approve the revision to policy (AC-R) Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment, and District Anti-Discrimination Plan. Vice-Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

### **d. Revision to Annual Notice of Contact Information for Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment, and Anti-Discrimination Plan (AC-R-2)**

**MOTION:** Board Member Paepke made a motion to approve the revision to policy (AC R-2) Annual Notice of Contact Information for Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment, and Anti-Discrimination Plan, as amended. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

265  
266 **8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

267  
268 a. September 15, 2025 – Public and Non-Public Minutes

269  
270 **MOTION:** Board Member Paepke made a motion to approve the public and non-public  
271 minutes from the September 15, 2025, meetings, as presented. Vice-Chair Rothhaus  
272 seconded the motion.

273  
274 **MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

275  
276 b. September 27, 2025 – Non-Public Minutes

277  
278 **MOTION:** Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve the non-public minutes from the  
279 September 27, 2025, meeting, as presented. Board Member Paepke seconded the motion.

280  
281 **MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

282  
283 **9. CONSENT AGENDA**

284  
285 a. Educator Resignation

- 286  
287
  - Matthew Castonguay, Classroom Teacher, JMUES

288  
289 b. Teacher Nominations

- 290  
291
  - Beth Stevenson, Classroom Teacher, JMUES

292  
293 **MOTION:** Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, as presented.  
294 Board Member Paepke seconded the motion.

295  
296 **MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**

297  
298 **10. OTHER**

299  
300 a. Committee Reports

301  
302 Vice-Chair Rothhaus encouraged the Board to find out more about the Harry Watson Forest  
303 presentation, noting that it was extremely interesting.

304  
305 b. Correspondence

306  
307 Chair Peters commented that she had received multiple correspondence regarding the  
308 incident at the middle school, and she forwarded them to the administration. She said she  
309 also received some correspondence regarding the letter sent out by the Director of Student  
310 Services, and Chief Educational Officer Olsen addressed those concerns.

311  
312 c. Comments

313  
314 There were none.

317 **11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

318  
319 There were none.

320  
321 **12. ADJOURNMENT**

322  
323 **MOTION:** At approximately 7:52 p.m., Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn.  
324 Chair Peters seconded the motion.

325  
326 **MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.**