

**Merrimack School Board
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Memorial Room
June 2, 2025**

5:00 p.m. – Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) & (c) – Merrimack TV Training Classroom

- **Staff Welfare**
- **Student Welfare**

Present: Ms. Lori Peters, Chair; Ms. Laurie Rothhaus, Vice-Chair; Ms. Naomi Halter, Board Member; Ms. Jenna Hardy, Board Member; Ms. Rachel Paepke, Board Member; and Mr. Finnegan Haddad, Student Representative.

Also Present: Mr. Everett Olsen, Chief Educational Officer; Ms. Amy Doyle, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum; and Mr. Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent for Business.

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 to, and adjust to the changing world, including civic, economic, social, and technological developments. 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. STUDENT RECOGNITIONS

a. **Boy's Hockey Team**

Chief Educational Officer Olsen and the School Board recognized the following students on the Boys' Hockey Team for being the State Runners-Up:

- Tyler Allen
- Blake Beaulieu
- James Brew
- Mason Crose
- Chase Duey
- Will Farrell
- Colin Hamlin

- Josh Kahn
- Keoni Monte
- Felix Rattunde
- Jonny Turner
- Ryan Warrington
- Jackson Woods

b. Co-ed Bowling Team

Chief Educational Officer Olsen and the School Board recognized the following students on the Co-ed Bowling Team for being the State Runners-Up:

- Hannah Boisvert
- James Fulton
- Colby Kugler
- Ethan Melanson
- Braydon Messuri
- Jake Roehm
- Christiana Smart

c. Individual Gymnastics

Chief Educational Officer Olsen and the School Board recognized the following student on the Individual Gymnastics Team for placing 2nd in the State, all-around, and placed in every event that year.

- Mia LeBlanc

d. Granite State Challenge

Chief Educational Officer Olsen and the School Board recognized the following students on the Granite State Challenge team for securing not only the 5th Championship for Merrimack, but also for three consecutive wins.

- Bridget Clark
- Avis Clever
- Maeve LaRock
- Liam MacIsaac
- Hikari McDowell
- Lauren Murby
- Erin Murray
- Elizabeth Dumais (Assistant Coach)
- Dr. Sara Campbell (Coach)

State Senator Tim McGough, State Representative Miles, State Representative Rung, State Representative Murphy, State Representative Thomas, and State Representative Boyd were present to congratulate the Granite State Challenge team. State Representative McGough read aloud from the proclamation that was presented to the team.

e. Outstanding Band Director of the Year

Board Member Rothhaus stated that the School Board would like to honor Ms. Holly Levine as the Outstanding Band Director of the Year.

f. Student Representative Haddad

Chair Peters commented that Student Representative Haddad had been an integral part of the School Board and wished him the best of luck. Student Representative Haddad replied that he planned to attend the Electrical Engineering Major Program at the University of New Hampshire in 2026.

4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen reviewed the following:

- Thanked the Rotary Club for honoring the Top Ten Scholars at the dinner held the prior Friday evening.
- The high school held its 8th-grade transition night, and it was well attended.
- James Masticola Upper Elementary School – “Project Safeguard” took place on May 30th. He said a former injured veteran was a guest speaker, and it was an extremely meaningful event.
- Received a memo from Mr. Adam French, the Athletic Director, which reflected how much the Merrimack School District athletic teams had advanced over the years.
- Merrimack High School had been recognized as a 2024/2025 Granite State Unified Champion School for their work with the Best Buddies Program, Unified Athletics Coaches, and Student Athletes.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle commented that summer programming was coming together nicely, the Extended School Year program would be occurring through the Department of Student Services, and the summer learning programs at the elementary and middle level were in place, and the 8.5 Program was happening at the high school.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle noted that the NH SAS results were available on the family portal.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle commented that the last day of school would be June 18, 2025 and it will be a half day for students. She said there would be a professional development day on June 19th & 20th for staff.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that he would soon be in contact with Michael Burke of the American Legion because they needed to make a few edits to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell mentioned that summer projects would results in a busy summer.

d. School Board Update

Chair Peters stated that she joined the Leadership Team when they met with Frank Edelblut, Commissioner of Education. She said the meeting was not as productive as they had hoped, in that the leaders were not able to share as much information as they thought regarding bullying and unkindness training in their schools. She said Mr. Edelblut was fighting for the funding felt due to the State of New Hampshire.

Chair Peters reminded the School Board that their Goals Meeting was scheduled for June 19th.

e. Student Representative Update

Student Representative Haddad reviewed upcoming events.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Budget Committee Update

Chair Peters stated that she and Board Member Hardy attended the Budget Committee and mentioned that the committee had elected Heather Robitaille as Chair and Dan Coakley as the Vice Chair of that committee.

Chair Peters noted that Attorney Gray gave an hour-long presentation regarding the Right-to-Know law.

Chair Peters shared there had been some discussion regarding digital versus physical textbooks.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Composting and Health Initiatives at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

Ms. Jackie McMahon, Ms. Cinzia Bibb, both School Nurses at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, and Ms. Kate Viands, Art Teacher at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, were present to share some new initiatives at the school.

Ms. McMahon shared that throughout the presentation, there were icons that represented the Merrimack School District's vision of a Learner. She also said many aspects of their Hydroponic Food Recovery and Food Diversion Programs were aligned and integrated with the district's framework.

Ms. McMahon said that in the 2023/2024 school year, they started having conversations regarding how they could bring more health and wellness and innovative education to students at the elementary level.

Ms. McMahon said they purchased two small hydroponic gardens and created lessons for the 3rd and 4th-grade students. She further stated that the PTO (Parent/Teacher Organization) and St. Joseph's Hospital purchased another, larger hydroponic garden.

Ms. McMahon also said that the Department of Education offered a grant as part of its "Farm to School program," which they applied for and received for \$6,000. She said there were two units in the lunchroom and that they could grow over 50 pounds of lettuce in one month!

Ms. Bibb stated that they were asked to speak about their hydroponic journey for the NH Farm to School Webinar series. She said Uplift New Hampshire provided a presentation regarding composting. She said the school started composting, and the program was fully funded through Uplift New Hampshire.

Ms. Bibb shared that according to the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture), over 800 pounds of food waste were diverted from trash, over 200 unopened milk cartons were recovered via Share Table, and over 50 pounds of fresh carrots and apple bags were also recovered via Share Table.

Ms. Viands stated that the program provided the students not only with hands-on exploration but also with critical thinking and real-world problem-solving skills.

Ms. McMahon stated that only food from the School Lunch Program could be placed on the Share Table, which included unopened pre-packaged food and beverage items or whole fruit with peel intact.

Ms. McMahon reviewed some initiatives happening at the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School:

- The Great Tomato Giveaway
- Try-Day Friday
- Garden Girls
- The Great Apple Crunch

Ms. Viands explained that extended learning opportunities were also available, including clay pottery and lessons on hydroponics versus soil growing.

The School Board collectively thanked the staff for their presentation and expressed how happy they were that the program was being taught, and it had tremendous opportunities to expand.

b. Other

Vice-Chair Rothhaus noted that if the School Board was going to invite the Budget Committee and the School Planning & Building Committee to the Fourth of July parade, they should send them invitations soon.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. May 5, 2025 – Non-Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Paepke made a motion to accept the non-public minutes from the May 5, 2025, meeting, as presented. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

b. May 12, 2025 – Non-Public Minutes

MOTION: Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to accept the non-public minutes from the May 12, 2025, meeting, as presented. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

c. May 19, 2025 – Public and Non-Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Halter made a motion to accept the public and non-public minutes from the May 19, 2025, meeting, as presented. Board Member Paepke seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Teacher Retirements/Resignations

- Jennifer Gonzalez, Science Teacher, MHS
- Ashley Cocciardi, Classroom Teacher, (One-year leave of absence) TFS
- Emily Ingham, Special Education Teacher (One-year leave of absence) JMUES
- Catherine Eckmair, Special Education Teacher (Retirement) RFS
- Louis Mailoux, Classroom Teacher (Retirement) JMUES

b. Administrator Resignations

- Sarah Reinhardt, Director of Special Education (Districtwide)
- Bridget Pare, Assistant Director of Special Education (Districtwide)

MOTION: Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to accept the above-listed retirements and resignations. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

c. Teacher Nominations

- Madison Johansson, Classroom Teacher, JMUES
- Benjamin Moyer, Science Teacher, MHS

d. Administrator Nomination

- Kathleen Scholand, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (Districtwide)

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept the above-listed nominations. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

9. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

Board Member Halter stated that she attended a Parks & Recreation Committee meeting on May 21st where they discussed the summer programming. She said the after-school program would be open to all four elementary schools.

Board Member Halter commented that she had attended the Art Night at Thorntons Ferry, and it was very successful.

Chair Peters stated that she was a member of the Joint Loss Management Committee, and she performed an unannounced inspection of the Merrimack High School with Melissa Fazlic, HR Director,

and Tom Tousseau, Director of Facilities. She said the school was exceptionally clean and she commended Principal Steve Claire for his leadership.

b. Correspondence

Chair Peters stated that she received multiple pieces of correspondence regarding a parent concern, a personnel concern, a transportation and summer concern, and a legal matter that would be taken up with the district's attorney later in the month.

Board Member Hardy commented that she received correspondence from a parent who actually wanted to thank the School Board for keeping the provision for the B team for soccer.

c. Comments

Chair Peters welcomed Kathleen Scholand, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were none.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At approximately 7:51 p.m., Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Paepke seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.