

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
October 16, 2023**

5:30 p.m. – Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – Merrimack TV Training Room

- Negotiations
- Staff Welfare

Present: Chair Ken Martin, Vice-Chair Laurie Rothhaus, Board Member Lori Peters, and Board Member Jenna Hardy. Also present were Chief Educational Officer Everett Olsen, Assistant Superintendent for Business Matt Shevenell, and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Amy Doyle.

Not Present:

Board Member Naomi Halter (Excused)
Student Representative Shaun Evidente (Excused)

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

3. RECOGNITIONS

Chair Martin stated that the Merrimack School Board recognized the SADD (Students Against Drunk Driving) Program and the Mock Accident Events.

- Mock Accident Event Recognitions/SADD Program

On behalf of all of the State Representatives representing Merrimack, Representative Rosemarie Rung read aloud a declaration from the House of Representatives from the State of New Hampshire to Mr. Jim Bailey.

Chair Martin presented Mr. Bailey with a plaque on behalf of the Merrimack School District in recognition of more than thirty years of prevention education with his outstanding contribution to the “Mock Accidents” at the Merrimack High School.

On behalf of all of the State Representatives representing Merrimack, Representative Maureen Mooney read aloud a declaration from the House of Representatives from the State of New Hampshire to Mr. Dan Bantham.

Chair Martin presented Mr. Bantham with a plaque on behalf of the Merrimack School District in recognition of more than thirty years of prevention education with his outstanding contribution to the “Mock Accidents” at the Merrimack High School.

On behalf of all of the State Representatives representing Merrimack, Representative Bill Boyd read aloud a declaration from the House of Representatives from the State of New Hampshire to Mr. Mark Rivet.

Chair Martin presented Mr. Mark Rivet with a plaque on behalf of the Merrimack School District in recognition of more than thirty years of prevention education with his outstanding contribution to the “Mock Accidents” at the Merrimack High School.

On behalf of all of the State Representatives representing Merrimack, Representative Nancy Murphy read aloud a declaration from the House of Representatives from the State of New Hampshire to Mr. Steven Claire, Principal of the Merrimack High School.

Mr. Bailey said there were many other people involved in the Mock Accident program, including the fire department, the highway department, the bus company, the police department, and many others. He thanked everyone involved and voiced his sincere appreciation for the team being recognized.

Board Member Hardy presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the following people:

- Mallory Niemaszyk, Advisor, SADD
- Chloe Hardy, President, SADD
- Rob Ketchie, Supports Jim Bailey
- Jeff Hastings, Frame of Mind Photo
- Michelle Bancroft, Manager of Student Transportation of America
- Lori Halverson, Department of Public Works
- The Town of Merrimack Department of Public Works
- The Town of Merrimack Police Department

Mr. Bailey shared a brief slideshow of what the Mock Accident scene looked like and ended by explaining that one of the reasons he would not stop doing the Mock Accidents was in memory of Elizabeth Anne Croke, who passed away in 2021 when a drunk driver who was driving the wrong way on the Everett Turnpike struck her. Neither driver survived.

The School Board collectively thanked all of those who participated in the program.

4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen thanked Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle and her staff on the Professional Development Committee for putting together a terrific program. He said they started having budget meetings with the staff at each building.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen shared that the football team had worked with a student who had attended the extended school year program, and they spoke to the coach, and they decided to make the student an honorary captain of the football team.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen shared that he had sent an email to the staff regarding the tragedy occurring in the Middle East. He said if anyone were experiencing any difficulties and required assistance, the counseling staff would be available to speak with any of them, including students. He added that school safety remained the most important thing every single day.

b. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said they had a very successful professional development day.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said a webinar regarding I-Ready had been scheduled for November 1st between 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. She said parents from grades kindergarten through grade 6 were welcome to join the webinar.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle stated that the previous week, they did their first district data dive for the fall. She said they looked at a wide variety of information, including the state assessment data from the previous spring.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the design for the proposed new central office was pretty much spec'd out. He added they had received four bids, and in either case, they would look at a ten or fifteen-year bond to pay for the project, and it would come in well under the \$800,000 debt that was just paid off for the middle school.

d. School Board Update

Chair Martin commented that he attended the Delegate Assembly the prior Saturday, and all of the New Hampshire School Board Association's recommended proposed resolutions passed. He pointed out that the two resolutions that the Merrimack School Board had concerns about were amended; state aid for kindergarten and the "due diligence" aspect was added to the implied parental consent.

Chair Martin said the Oyster River School District won School Board of Year, and upon seeing their presentation regarding their relationship with the Board and the Superintendent, he was pleased that the Merrimack School District did many of the same things. He also said that there was a person on the New Hampshire State School Board Association who specifically reviewed policies and felt that might be a very good resource.

e. Student Representative Update

There was no update.

5. **OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to discuss.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. Student Wellness Update

Ms. Sara Parrotto, Director of Student Wellness, presented the Merrimack School District Emotional Learning and Wellbeing Update as summarized below:

Goal Category #1: Create an engaged, inclusive, and collaborative district culture built on mutual trust and respect.

Strategic Objective #3

WHAT: Invest in the social and emotional development and well-being of our staff, students, and their families.

WHEN: Initial plan by 2nd October meeting 2022

- Update at the July 2023 meeting
- Annual plan by September
- Updates annually in July

Four Areas of Focus

Ms. Parrotto reviewed the four focus areas below.

- System of Care Framework
- Professional Development & Committee Work
- Student Social Emotional Learning & Wellness
- Community & Family Engagement

Chair Martin asked if Ms. Parrotto had any information regarding the current trends in student behavior. Ms. Parrotto replied that anecdotally, she had noticed that students were about one year behind developmentally in terms of their behavior.

Board Member Peters added that she felt some students were not just developmentally behind but actually were regressing.

Board Member Peters asked what the timeline was for the universal screening. Ms. Parrotto replied that there would be a training session for staff the following Thursday regarding how to implement the DESSA, and they were hoping to implement the DESSA (The Devereux Student Strengths Assessment) in November. She said she would provide the Board with the data when she received it.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that Ms. Parrotto had just recently started working for the district, and he was quite happy with her performance.

b. FY25 Budget Process

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the budget process PowerPoint had been shared with the Budget Committee for preliminary review. He reviewed the presentation as summarized below:

1. Gather the Data
2. Development of Site-Based Budget Requests

3. Present Initial Budget Request
4. School Board Action
5. The Budget Committee – Convenes to begin its Work
6. The Deliberative Session – The Approved Budget moves onto the Ballot

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said they would work with the Budget Committee to put together a one or two-page summary of the essential points of the budget.

Board Member Peters suggested putting together a brief PowerPoint presentation regarding the budget for the MVD (Merrimack Village District) Annual Meeting.

c. Fundraising Discussion

Vice-Chair Rothhaus said she felt it would be important to review information surrounding the protocols for fundraising. Chief Educational Officer Olsen replied that he would put something together and discuss it at a future meeting.

d. New Central Office Discussion

Vice-Chair Rothhaus stated that the new central office building would be on the Warrant Article in March. She said she had recently attended the Planning & Building Committee meeting, and their next meeting would be televised, and they wanted to work with the School Board to develop a strategy on how to get the word out and gain support. She added that a former School Board member had suggested that an Ad hoc Committee be formed consisting of interested citizens who were not connected to the School Board or the Planning & Building Committee but who could assist in getting the Article passed.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus asked if the information regarding the above potential Ad hoc Committee could be placed on the website.

e. Other

Vice-Chair Rothhaus suggested that the next recognition might include a list of retired teachers and volunteers who helped struggling students.

7. **POLICIES**

There were no policies to discuss.

8. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. October 2, 2023, Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Peters made a motion to approve the October 2, 2023, public minutes, as presented. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

- a. October 2, 2023, Non-Public Minutes

MOTION: Chair Martin made a motion to approve the October 2, 2023, non-public minutes, as presented. Board Member Peters seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

9. CONSENT AGENDA

There were no educator resignations or educator nominations for the Board to consider.

10. OTHER

- a. Committee Reports

Chair Martin commented that he had met with the Professional Development Committee, where they discussed how they approved workshops.

Chair Martin also commented that he would be attending his first Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Committee meeting the following day.

- b. Correspondence

Chair Martin said that he received emails from two Merrimack High School students who had concerns about the Advisory Block, and he forwarded the email to Mr. Steve Claire, Principal of Merrimack High School. He said Mr. Claire had put a committee together with students to get more information.

- c. Comments

Board Member Peters commented that Merrimack High School would not have block days the week of November 6th.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were none.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At approximately 7:27 p.m., Board Member Hardy made a motion to adjourn. Vice-Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.