

**Merrimack School Board Meeting  
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room  
April 21, 2014  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Chairman Ortega, Vice Chairman Powell, Board Members Barnes, Guagliumi and Schneider, Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, Business Administrator Shevenell and Student Representative Crowley.

**1. Call To Order**

Chairman Ortega called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.  
Chairman Ortega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. School Board Reorganization:**

Chairman Ortega welcomed Cinda Guagliumi as the new member of the board.

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to nominate Board Member Barnes as Vice Chair of the Merrimack School Board.

Board Member Schneider spoke to his motion, stating that Ms. Barnes is in her second term as a board member and he was sure she would act adequately in this role.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to nominate Christopher Ortega as Chair of the Merrimack School Board.

Board Member Powell spoke to his motion, stating that consistency is very important, and that Christopher Ortega has done an excellent job as Chair and the district will be well-served by his continuing in the position of Chair.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

**3. Approval of the April 7, 2014 Minutes**

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Powell) to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2014 meeting.

Board Member Powell requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 5 of 10, line 214, change “third” to “first”
- Page 5 of 10, line 217, should read, “For the Continuing Contract Educators”
- Page 5 of 10, line 220, at the end of the sentence add ‘after the observation’.
- Page 6 of 10, line 236, change “to use” to “by using”.
- Page 6 of 10, line 241, change “is ongoing” to “will be ongoing”.
- Page 6 of 10, line 244, the line should read, “The fall of 2014 is the goal for district roll-out”.

- Page 6 of 10, line 253, add the phrase “combinations of” between “unlikely” and “educators”.
- Page 6 of 10, line 267 and 268, change the word “day” to “group”.
- Page 7 of 10, line 312, change “Vice Chairman Davis” to “Vice Chairman Powell”.
- Page 7 of 10, line 313 change the word “first” to “pilot”.

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 9 of 10, line 381, add the word “Petitioned” before “Warrant Articles”
- Page 5 of 10, line 213, change the first bullet to read, “For the Probationary Teachers, first to fifth year teachers, multiple, shorter, and primarily unannounced observations will be held.”

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2 of 10, line 85, include an explanation of an environmental scan to read, “The thirty-four liquor licensees in Merrimack were visited and physically looked at to see how the establishments placed signs and beverages.”

The motion to accept the minutes of the April 7, 2014 meeting passed 3-0-2 as amended with Vice Chair Barnes and Board Member Guagliumi in abstention.

#### **4. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

#### **5. Commitment to Board Code of Ethics:**

Chairman Ortega explained that every year, in addition to reorganizing, the board reaffirms the Code of Ethics. The Code was read and signed by all the board members.

#### **6. Consent Agenda**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following items for approval:

- Teacher Nominations
- Teacher Resignations/Retirements
  - Cecily Eldridge, ESL Teacher at Merrimack Middle School and Merrimack High School
  - Cynthia Janiak, Grade 4 Teacher at Reeds Ferry Elementary School

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

The motion passed 4-0-1 with Chairman Ortega in abstention.

#### **7. Thorntons Ferry Elementary School - A Year in Review**

Principal Bridey Bellemare explained that the presentation would feature some of the ways Thorntons Ferry staff prepare students to be successful in a global society. She introduced the panel of educators who shared a few of the ways they are working to meet this goal. She added that the students who were making presentations would give their names when they made their presentations. She introduced Julie DeLuca, Assistant Principal, Denise McLaughlin, Susan Weghorst, Chris Rheault, Julia Cutting, Collette St. Germain, Kim Kelliher, Sabrina Story, and Corinne Starling.

Denise McLaughlin, Education Technology Integrator, spoke about the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills that stated that “the ability to navigate the complex life and work environment in a globally competitive information age, requires that students develop adequate life and career skills such as flexibility, self-direction and leadership.” She added that the staff at Thorntons Ferry encourages students to create, communicate and collaborate in ways that were never before possible.

Susan Weghorst, School Librarian, focused her presentation on the “4 Cs”, which are Communication, Collaboration, Creativity and Critical Thinking. She stated that a 21<sup>st</sup> century learner is a student who has the skills to be successful in a global society. In preparing students, educators integrate the 4 Cs into core content subjects. Two fourth grade students made presentations.

Chris Rheault, Grade 3 teacher, spoke about Thorntons Ferry’s Newscast which is a quarterly web video which is planned, designed and produced by the third grade students of Thorntons Ferry School. The newscast highlights learning, news, projects, announcements and other relevant information that pertains to the school and the interests of the students. The newscast is available on the web for anyone to visit. Three third grade students made presentations. A video of an interview with a well-known author was shown.

Susan Weghorst spoke about the Journey North Mystery Class. A team of fourth grade students participated in the Journey North Mystery Class Global Activity. This is a free internet-based program that explores the interrelated aspects of seasonal change. It is a global game of “hide and seek”. Students investigate to find ten secret sites that are hidden around the world. Two of the twenty-five students participating in Journey North made presentations.

Julia Cutting, Grade 2 teacher, spoke about integrating science and writing in a second grade setting. Students collaborate with other students in small groups. They design, build and carry out their own experiments. The 4 Cs are totally integrated into their experiments. Two second grade students made presentations.

Collette St. Germain, Kindergarten teacher, spoke about the writing program as it applies to kindergarten students at Thorntons Ferry. They learned that people have stories to tell and they should be written about. There was tremendous help from parents at home. A video showed Ms. St. Germain’s kindergarten students responding to “what do they know about being a writer?”

Principal Bellemare stated that 21<sup>st</sup> century learning is not simply what students are learning, but how they are learning. Assessments and data are both seen as instructional tools for use while learning is occurring and also as an accountability tool to determine if learning has occurred. Data driven decision making is evident through the Professional Learning Teams. Critical thinking and problem solving, and creative out-of-the-box thinking ensues through multi-level professional learning teams and data review processes. Educators collaborate and communicate regularly to review data, to drive and design different instructional models, interventions and extensions for all students.

Sabrina Story and Kim Kelliher, Grade 1 teachers, and Corinne Starling, Special Education teacher, are educators from the first grade Professional Learning Team at Thorntons Ferry. They have worked within the 21<sup>st</sup> century model to provide for the learning needs of the first grade students in their classrooms and across that grade level.

Sabrina Story explained that the three educators collaborate together to analyze data to drive their instruction. Assessments are used to identify what skills and concepts students understand and which concepts they don't understand. The information is reviewed by the Data Manager who analyzes the data and then presents key fact of the data to the grade level Professional Learning Team. Once the data is presented to the team, a discussion is held that allows teachers the opportunity to identify needs, misconceptions and challenges for students at that grade level in a particular subject matter. Then, based on the results of this conversation, they discuss how to respond to students who are experiencing difficulties and need an intervention with a particular skill or concept. It also allows teachers to discuss the children who have reached the goals. Building Data meetings consist of a team of educators who meet with each classroom teacher to look at data on every student in the school to determine areas of concern and what interventions will be needed. A Data Managers Committee meets with administration to review the data of the whole school.

Corinne Starling spoke about interventions. Once a student has been identified as needing an intervention, there are various assessments that can be administered to determine the areas in need of remediation. Pre and post assessments are done during the intervention period, which lasts for six to eight weeks.

Kim Kelliher spoke about extension groups. When the assessments are looked at and they show that students have already met the goals or they have a deeper understanding of the material that was being assessed, those students can become part of an extension group. New goals can be set for these students based on learning expectations in other grade levels. Extensions can be done in the classroom by differentiating instruction or outside of the classroom.

Principal Bellemare explained that she hoped that the students and the presenters have shown that the educators have an ongoing commitment to the success of all students at Thorntons Ferry.

Board Member Powell complimented the educators and the students for the wonderful presentations.

Board Member Guagliumi asked how often the Learning Teams meet.

Ms. Story responded that the Professional Learning Teams meet twice a month as a grade level team. The Building Data Teams meet three times a year. The Building Data Manager Committee meetings are held monthly or as needed.

Chairman Ortega asked that when a broader group of students is struggling with a concept, are there professional development opportunities or changes in the way they look at the instruction.

Ms. Kelliher responded that they collaborate as a team and work together to find other ways of presenting the information.

Chairman Ortega thanked everyone for attending and making their presentations. He added that the integration and the collaboration gave a very good flavor of what is going on at Thorntons Ferry.

## **8. Merrimack High School Students' Participation in For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST)**

Team members introduced themselves: Isabelle Beauregard, Marketing Captain, Kyra Gustavsen, software and marketing, Robert Killkelley, co-captain of the team and Maslin Laberge, co-captain of the team.

Isabelle explained that FIRST is a world-wide organization, with over 2,700 FIRST Robotics Competition teams at the high school level. The game, which is the activity the teams compete in, is released to the competing teams in January of each year and then the team has six weeks to build a robot to play in the game.

Kyra explained that the team is active all year round. There are team activities over the summer to plan for the upcoming year, such as a team picnic. Participants help the Nashua Soup Kitchen with their "back-pack" program, as well as working with the Rotary Club in preparation for and during the day of Merrimack's July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration. They also run a Lego camp at the middle school for two weeks during the summer.

Robert spoke about events after the summer. The team holds a meeting for the students and parents who are interested in becoming part of the team. At this information night they go over what the team does and what the parents and students should expect for the upcoming build season. Then the interested students are introduced to several sub-teams. These sub-teams are the mechanical sub-team, software sub-team, the animation sub-team and web site sub-team.

Isabelle spoke about the activities of FIRST in the fall. They attended a training lead by ITPC, which is a software company. They also attended a competition in Goffstown. They hosted a qualifying event as well as helping another FIRST team who was hosting the State competition. They host the Haunted House at the Merrimack Town Haunted Walk. They also host a fund-raising pot-luck dinner. They have given some money to Operation Santa through BAE, one of the team sponsors. This year in order to promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) they gave a demonstration to about seventy young girls of elementary age, promoting opportunities that they may not be familiar with, such as FIRST.

The game animation for this year's competition, Aerial Assist, was shown. Robert explained that there is a rule book which much be followed, including how to avoid penalties. After going over the rules, the team members discussed strategies they would use. They spend two weeks prototyping and then they begin the build.

Kyra explained that this year the team hosted "Week Zero" which is a scrimmage that allows FIRST teams to test their field and software components.

Isabelle explained the competition season. This year a District Model came to New England for the first time. The Merrimack team, Chop Shop 166, participated in two District events where teams accrue enough points to move on to the District Competition in Boston and then on to the National Competition in St. Louis. Merrimack's team won the Entrepreneur Award for their business plan and the Spirit Award. They did not move into the finals.

The next competition for the team is at WPI on Memorial Day weekend where they will compete against sixty teams.

On May 31<sup>st</sup>, the team will host a competition. They will compete and run everything for it. The public is invited to attend. At this event they collect money for the “Build a Bike” program, where bicycles are purchased and assembled by the team and given to local charities for distribution.

FIRST Lego Camp takes place during the last two weeks in July at the middle school. There are two sessions, each one is held for one week. This is the tenth year the team has participated in this event.

Isabelle, speaking for the team, thanked the school board and the school district for all their support.

Chairman Ortega asked about adult supporters for their team.

Isabelle responded that their advisors, Mr. and Mrs. Petrovic, have been with the team for quite a while. She thanked them and also thanked all of their mentors.

A demonstration of the robot, Stitch, followed. It was noted that the highest speed of the robot is around 16 feet per second and the low speed is around 9 feet per second.

Board Member Powell asked about the STEM program at Girls, Inc.

Isabelle responded that STEM is an acronym that stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. FIRST tries to promote STEM in schools.

Board Member Powell commented that he is extremely impressed by the amount of the community service performed by the group.

Board Member Schneider stated that STEM is very important and that the team’s participation is above and beyond building robots. He congratulated them on what they have done.

Vice Chair Barnes asked for some examples of opportunities for girls, such as those presented at Girls, Inc.

Kyra responded that BAE has a program called Women in Technology that meets once a week for 14 weeks with a focus on Engineering.

Vice Chair Barnes asked how long each member has been on the team and what grade they are currently in.

Isabelle is a junior and this is her second year in FIRST. Kyra is also a junior and this is also her second year. Robert is a senior and this is his fourth year on the team. Maslin is also a senior and this is also his fourth year on the team.

Vice Chair Barnes asked about the future of the team when the seniors move on.

Isabelle responded that many of their team members have joined after being on the FIRST Lego League teams. She stated that about one-half of their members came from the FIRST Lego league in town. She added that one third of their mentors are alumni of a FIRST team.

Vice Chair Barnes asked about the resources for their business plan.

Isabelle responded that FIRST sponsors the Entrepreneur Award and they provide a template for people to follow. They also ask specific questions describing how the team is organized, how they respond, etc. She added that Merrimack's business plan is writing down what they know and what they have always done.

Superintendent Chiafery asked what the students are planning for their future and if FIRST has inspired them to go into engineering.

The responses for the students varied. Robert is going to Wentworth Institute with a double major in Electrical Engineering and Mechanical Engineering. Maslin will study Engineering, but has not decided what college he will be attending. Kyra stated that she wants to go into Engineering, due to her involvement in FIRST. Isabelle stated that she fits in the Marketing Team. She doesn't think she is going into Science or Technology.

Superintendent Chiafery commended the team on their sportsmanship.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that it is gratifying that a lot of alumni return to help the team. He asked about the biggest changes in FIRST through the years.

The advisor, Mr. Petrovic, stated that the students are getting some real tools that they can use in industry. He noted that BAE offers internships. The students are getting hands-on experience with real world experiences. He added that over the years the games have become more challenging.

Superintendent Chiafery thanked Mr. and Mrs. Petrovic. She also thanked BAE because they have been a phenomenal business partner.

Board Member Guagliumi asked the students when they first became interested in FIRST. Kira responded that it was Isabelle who convinced her to join the team, though she had no interest in math or science at all. Robert joined the FIRST Lego League in elementary school and then in high school which led to his interest in the robotics. Maslin also came to FIRST after participation in the FIRST Lego League in elementary school. When he was in middle school he learned that there was a high school program and he joined the team. Isabelle was familiar with FIRST because her family had been very involved in the past. She added that being on the FIRST team has been life-changing for her.

Chairman Ortega commended them and thanked them for all the work being done on the robotics but also in the community.

## **9. School Board Committee Assignments for 2014-2015**

Chairman Ortega asked board members to look at the choices of committee assignments and then email him over the next week with their preferences for assignments. He added that board members should not necessarily choose the same assignments as in the past, unless there is some reason for consistency. At the next board meeting he will align those assignments with the preferences of the members. He asked them to pick six or seven choices and rank them in order of preferences.

## **10. Other**

### **a) Correspondence**

Board Member Powell received correspondence regarding the Educator Performance and Evaluation Committee discussion at the last meeting.

### **b) Comments**

There were no comments.

## **11. New Business**

Vice Chair Barnes made a request for a future agenda item regarding the YMCA and the after school pilot program at the middle school.

Superintendent Chiafery explained that the pilot program, as it was previously presented to the board, did not take place. She added that it could be discussed when the middle school makes their presentation to the board on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

## **12. Committee Reports**

Student Representative Crowley gave her report:

- The Mock DUI was set up on O’Gara Drive on April 17<sup>th</sup>. SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) hosted the event for the senior class. An accident scene was set up with a drunk driver and a victim. She added that she heard it was a very moving performance.
- On May 9<sup>th</sup> the juniors will attend Junior Impact, which is a smaller version of Mock DUI in anticipation of the prom, which is that night.
- The juniors (class of 2015) won Spirit Week, the freshmen came in second place, the sophomores in third place and the seniors in last place.
- She spoke about the National History Day Competition. The students competed on the state level on April 2<sup>nd</sup> at Plymouth State University against twelve New Hampshire schools. A total of thirty students competed from Merrimack. Nineteen students will be attending the National competition in Washington D.C. She noted that the National History Day competitions are not funded by the school; therefore, the students will pay for themselves. She added that there is hope that in the future such trips will be funded by the budget.
- Kira added that seven National Archives Research Awards (NARA) for the use of primary sources were presented at the State level. For the first time, Merrimack received five of these awards.

Chairman Ortega stated that in the past one or maybe a handful of students competed in the National History Day Competition, so it is quite an accomplishment that nineteen students have qualified this year. He added that Ms. Crowley made a very eloquent case for future funding for the program and the board would take that request very seriously.



Vice Chair Barnes attended the Parks and Recreation meeting on April 15<sup>th</sup>. They are doing a full by-laws review which must be completed by June. She stated that there are areas where they need more stability and growth. She added that the skate park will open on Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup> with special vacation hours. The regular hours will be posted at the park and on the Merrimack website. The Easter Egg Hunt was held on April 19<sup>th</sup> and was very successful. The new director is doing a lot to reach out into the community.

Board Member Schneider asked Student Representative Crowley if there are special dispensations for the students attending the National History Day competition during final exams.

Kira responded that they are going to Washington D.C. during the last week of school so the students will have to organize another time to take their finals, whether it is before or after the trip.

### **13. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

There were no public comments.

### **14. Manifest**

The Board signed the manifest.

At 9:15 p.m., Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.