

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
July 14, 2014
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room**

PUBLIC SESSION MINUTES

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

1. Call To Order

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

Chairman Ortega announced that Student Representative Crowley was excused from attending summer meetings.

2. Approval of the June 16, 2014 Minutes

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2014 meeting.

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 7 of 16, line 313, change the word “rulers” to “rules”.

Vice Chair Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 8 of 16, line 332, replace the words “middle school” with “upper elementary school”.
- Page 15 of 16, line 681, replace the words “if she could see it.” with “to please share so she could share it with the District.”

Board Member Guagliumi requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 15 of 16, line 688, remove the word “prescription”.

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 of 16, line 159, add an “s” to the word “educator” to make it plural.
- Page 8 of 16, line 361, replace the word “spend” with “oversee those funds”.
- Page 8 of 16, line 370, replace the word “project” with the words “Service Learning Projects”.
- Page 14 of 16, line 605, the sentence should read “... the initial cutting was done in the District’s Baboosic Lake Road property about ...”

The motion passed 4-0-1 with Board Member Powell abstaining.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation to report.

4. Consent Agenda

a) Teacher Nomination

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin announced the following teacher nominations.

- Jordan Baker, Speech Therapist, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
- Michaela Bessey, Grade 2 Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School
- Alejandra Costas Armada, Part-time Spanish Teacher, Merrimack High School
- Meredith Davine, Special Education Coordinator, Merrimack Middle School
- Candice French, Grade 1 Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
- Sarah Garbarz, Grade 6 Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- Coleen Landry, Grade 5 Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- Jaclyn Moore, Education Technology Integrator, James Mastricola Elementary School
- Michelle O'Neil, Grade 1 Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School
- Tyle Pare, Science Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- Eleanor Robbins, Special Education Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School
- Tracy Ruyffelaert, Grade 6 Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- Michelle Webster, Nurse, James Mastricola Elementary School
- Emily White, Grade 1 Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School

b) Teacher Resignation

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin announced the following teacher resignation.

- Kimberly Sholds, Social Studies Teacher, Merrimack High School

It was noted that the nomination page should have listed Meredith Davine's position as a Special Education Coordinator, not Language Arts Coordinator.

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to approve the consent agenda as amended.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

5. Policy and Administration of First Grade Early Admission Requirements

Chairman Ortega introduced Amanda Rezaoui, a parent. She explained that the current Early Admission to Grade One policy requires a standardized test be administered and that a student scoring below a specific stanine level will not be considered for early admission. Ms. Rezaoui requested that the Board consider changing the Early Admission to Grade One policy. She suggested that the policy be reevaluated annually, that it keep up with the early admission policies of surrounding communities and that a child's readiness for first grade be more inclusive than a stanine level of a standardized test. She would like consideration to be given to recommendations from doctors, parent(s) and teachers.

Chairman Ortega clarified that the School Board is responsible for policy; the Administration is responsible for administering the procedures of policy. He noted that the Early Admission to Grade One policy was adopted in 2008. He read the policy.

Chairman Ortega stated that Ms. Rezaoui's issues were specific to the policy procedure not the policy.

Chairman Ortega stated that the Board would take Ms. Rezaoui's comments and suggestions under advisement and thanked her for her presentation.

6. Technology and Library Media Current Progress and Forecast

Director Rose provided an overview of upgrades and accomplishment. They consisted of servers, WiFi, computer replacement plan, projectors, supporting cabling, and next steps with interactive classroom technologies.

Director Rose explained that literacy in media and coding will be incorporated into the K-12 integrated technology information curriculum. Literacy in media and coding promotes problem solving, critical thinking and how to review and solve problems.

Director Rose reported that during the summer months she will be working with K-6 educators to review the feasibility of incorporating technology information skills into the various content areas.

Director Rose reported that in the fall she will collaborate with high school science and math educators to incorporate alternative technology information skills that hopefully will teach a difficult concept in a non-traditional lesson.

Board Member Guagliumi asked for percentage of the WiFi saturation.

Director Rose replied the WiFi expansion is ahead of expectations because of alternative funding methods.

Board Member Guagliumi inquired about the number of participants for technology workshops held in June.

Director Rose reported there were between 15-20 people at each workshop. She was pleased with the level of participation in light of the fact there was one week of notification.

Board Member Schneider asked if the District has considered exploring opportunities for students or volunteers to teach staff how to use new computer software programs, concepts or problems.

Director Rose Nancy wants to explore technology learning opportunities using a model of students and staff learning at the same time.

Board Member Powell asked what TED talks are.

Director Rose replied TED (Technology Entertainment and Design) are 7 to 20 minute talks/conferences about different ideas that are worth sharing.

Vice Chair Barnes asked about VMware upgrades.

Director Rose stated that the District is not ready to initiate VMware at this time.

Vice Chair Barnes asked for an update on the cable and wiring upgrades.

Director Rose stated the upgrades vary depending on the location. The capacity is appropriate.

Vice Chair Barnes asked for an update on the phone system.

Director Rose explained the Mastricola Complex will be connected to the VoIP phone system on July 22nd. Central office, special services and maintenance buildings are expected to be connected this summer. Reeds Ferry Elementary School and Thorntons Ferry Elementary School will be connected next year and the middle school the following year.

Director Rose explained that WiFi saturation will be on going for the next four of five years.

Chairman Ortega asked why purchase computers in 2018 rather than continue to lease them.

Director Rose replied leasing would be an option but not needed. The short term leasing allows an affordable way to replace many computers in a short period of time.

7. Update on Special Services and a Look to the Future

Special Education Director Fabrizio spoke about the technology needs of the special education students. He explained that in many situations technology can help the special education student learn and communicate.

Director Fabrizio explained that the Office of Civil Rights now requires Districts to analyze current practices to ensure all students have the right and privilege to access all after school activities. He reported that many after school activities already allow equal access to all students and that there are plans to increase the awareness. Mr. Fabrizio highlighted the high school unified volleyball team as one example of an activity that has been successful with equal access to all students.

Director Fabrizio reported that a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst and an Applied Behavioral Analysis Instructor have been contracted to assist with the individualized therapy for special education students.

Director Fabrizio reported that the Response to Intervention is a multi-year initiative and is ongoing.

Director Fabrizio addressed the changing role of the special educator. The four key roles of a special education teacher are collaborator, interventionist, diagnostician and manager.

Director Fabrizio reviewed the two phases of Focus Monitoring.

Vice Chair Barnes asked how the Focus Monitoring will work with Smarter Balanced.

Director Fabrizio explained that next year will be the last year of Focus Monitoring. Smarter Balanced will be used in the future.

Vice Chair Barnes asked if other unified sports would become equal access, similar to volleyball.

Director Fabrizio replied that space and time and resources are factors.

Board Member Guagliumi asked when the District will receive feedback from the results of the Focus Monitoring process.

Director Fabrizio stated that based on his experience and conversations with special education directors in other district the process is lengthy.

Board Member Powell asked if the District could opt out of the Focus Monitoring.

Director Fabrizio replied that the District cannot opt out of the Focus Monitoring.

Board Member Powell asked how much the Focus Monitoring would cost the District.

Director Fabrizio stated that the cost to the District would be in time, labor and energy away from other initiatives that cannot be calculated to a dollar amount. He added that there is limited funding provided to the District to support the Focus Monitoring.

Board Member Powell asked if parents are notified that student files are being reviewed for Focus Monitoring.

Director Fabrizio explained that parents are not notified because State Assigned Student Identifier (SASID) numbers are referenced, not student names.

Board Member Schneider asked if the Focus Monitoring interview will interrupt the case manager's involvement with students.

Director Fabrizio explained that his office has the SASID numbers of the 71 files that will be reviewed. Training is expected to take place in August. Most of the work, including interviews, will be done by early October and therefore limit any impact to students.

Chairman Ortega questioned if there was an overall percentage rate for the participation in the equal access in extra-curricular activities.

Director Fabrizio offered to provide that information at a later date. He said the equal access was as equally balanced as it could have been. He was proud of the fact that the equal access was so wide spread including interscholastic sports.

Chairman Ortega commented that the Focus Monitoring is well intended but requires a loss of focus in other areas of responsibility. He appreciates the preplanning efforts which will limit the impact.

8. Request for Additional Preschool Speech Language Assistant at Reeds Ferry Elementary School

Special Education Director Fabrizio reported an increase in the overall number of students registered for the Merrimack Early Education Program (MEEP) at Reeds Ferry Elementary School and James Mastricola Elementary School.

Director Fabrizio explained that the MEEP program has seen an increase in the number of students identified in the area of Autism Spectrum Disorder. These children are severely language impacted and need several required hours of speech therapy to communicate with adults and peers.

Director Fabrizio explained that one Speech and Language Assistant has been traveling between James Mastricola Elementary School and Reeds Ferry Elementary School. He reported a need for an additional Speech and Language Assistant as a result of the increased MEEP student population.

Director Fabrizio requested that the Board approve one additional Preschool Speech Language Assistant position for Reeds Ferry Elementary School for the 2014-2015 school year.

It was noted that the cost of the new position, inclusive of salary and benefits, would be \$46,270 and as of July 9, 2014 the district has saved over \$300,000 in personnel expenditures due to the hiring of new staff.

Chairman Ortega asked that the Board consider waiving the two week rule.

Director Fabrizio emphasized it is not possible to predict how many three-year-old children with disabilities will enroll in the MEEP which creates a challenge during the budget process as it relates to the long-term strategy of having MEEP Programs (Merrimack Early Education Programs) at all three elementary schools.

Vice Chair Barnes expressed her support for the additional Preschool Speech Language Assistant position. She requested that Director Fabrizio address the topic during the budget process.

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to approve the new Preschool Speech Language Assistant position at Reeds Ferry Elementary School costing \$46,270, inclusive of salary and benefits, and to waive the two week rule as this is a time sensitive issue.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

9. Merrimack High School Bleachers

Business Administrator Shevenell reported that on July 11, 2014 the annual inspection of the high school bleachers revealed approximately 40 broken structural elements. He explained that the broken structures will be welded. The repair will only allow for limited use of the bleachers.

Business Administrator Shevenell stated that he received a quote to replace both sets of broken bleachers that are approximately 40 years old at the high school for approximately \$100,000 with

a completion date of late November if acted upon immediately. The new bleachers will address safety concerns and will be ADA compliant.

Business Administrator Shevenell reported the Emergency Repair Capital Reserve Fund has a current balance of \$118,000.

Business Administrator Shevenell asked the Board to withdraw \$100,000 from the Emergency Repair Capital Reserve Fund to purchase two sets of bleachers for the high school and to waive the two week rule.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if all the bleachers were being replaced.
Business Administrator Shevenell noted half the bleachers needed to be replaced.

Board Member Schneider suggested that the wood and the metal from the old bleachers be either donated to the technology education department or be sold to help offset the cost of the new bleachers.

Board Member Powell questioned how the limited use of the bleachers would affect the basketball season.

Business Administrator Shevenell expects the new bleachers to be installed before basketball season.

Board Member Powell questioned if the installation of the new bleachers would interfere with Election Day on November 4th and suggested that Town Moderator Christensen be made aware of the plans to install new bleachers in the high school gym.

Superintendent Chiafery noted that there are many details to consider after the Board approves the expenditure to replace the bleachers.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to authorize the district to purchase two sets of new bleachers for the high school in the amount \$100,000 from the Emergency Repair Capital Reserve Fund and to waive the two week rule.

Board Member Schneider emphasized that the vendor be instructed not to remove the wood and metal from the old bleachers.

Chairman Ortega asked the Board to consider increasing the Emergency Repair Capital Reserve Fund balance during the next budget cycle.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

10. Merrimack Educator Evaluation Pilot Findings

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin reviewed the evaluation findings of the Merrimack Educator Evaluation Pilot dated June 2014. The report contained focus group findings and survey findings. He stated that the educators felt that the foundation principles put in place were

appropriate, the dialogue was authentic, there were opportunities for growth and the path to understanding the expectations for educators became clearer.

Vice Chair Barnes asked if there would be another pilot with revisions prior to rolling it out.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded the roll out details still needed to be addressed.

Chairman Ortega commented on the volume of data in the report and was encouraged by the report outcome.

Board Member Powell asked if the committee members who were pilot participants felt the educator evaluation pilot program worked the way the committee expected it to work.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin replied the pilot played out much different than expected. For example, the opportunity for dialogue felt better to people than expected.

11. Other

a) Correspondence

There was no correspondence to report.

b) Comments

There were no comments to report.

12. New Business

There was no new business to report.

13. Committee Reports

Vice Chair Barnes reported that the Grater Woods Subcommittee met on July 8. A request for proposal for the Gateway project (the woods road) was posted on July 24th. She felt the project will be beneficial to the District's property.

Vice Chair Barnes reported that she attended a Parks and Recreation Committee meeting. The July 4 events were successful. The Lions Club is raising money for diabetes by selling scare crows. The Bylaws have been postponed indefinitely as a result of the unexpected death of Town Council Chair Yakuboff.

Board Member Powell reported that the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee met on June 4. The percentage rate of completed health assessment surveys for the District for the month of May was 53% which is higher than the average percentage rate for entire HealthTrust membership. The 2018 Cadillac Tax and the implications to the District were reviewed. The next meeting is September 10th.

Board Member Guagliumi reported the Budget Committee met on June 17th. The reorganization of the Budget Committee was tabled until September when more committee members would be present.

Board Member Schneider reported that Merrimack Safeguard did not meeting in July.

Board Member Schneider explained that he will not attend science curriculum meetings; however, he will be kept up to date through correspondence and plans to provide the Board with updates.

Board Member Schneider attended a Planning and Building Committee meeting on June 17th. The committee will talk about the next steps in the process for a proposed consolidated SAU/Special Services building. He feels that it is important that the Planning and Building Committee take the time to review all previous options again, even if the outcome is the same.

14. Public Comments on Agenda Items:

There were no comments from the public.

15. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 10:25 p.m., Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.