

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
June 15, 2015
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

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

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Ortega called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Ortega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Focus on James Mastricola Upper Elementary School

Chairman Ortega introduced Principal Marsha McGill and Assistant Principal William Morris.

Principal McGill introduced Educators Helen Fitzgerald, Laura Livie, Kathy Goodman, Lisa Labreche, Courtney McDonald and Colleen Rush. She introduced Students Daisy, Shennin, Calvin, Anthony, Kayleigh, Julia, Justin and Trevor.

Principal McGill stated the team would highlight the Response to Instruction (RTI) initiative that was implemented at the upper elementary school this year. She explained the Response to Instruction is a proactive and systematic integration of school resources to promote achievement for each learner.

Technology Coordinator Helen Fitzgerald explained the Response to Instruction assessment process.

Special Education Teacher Colleen Rush and Students Shennin and Daisy spoke about the print processing and oral reading fluency.

Fifth Grade Teacher Cathy Goodman highlighted the instruction calendar consisting of twenty-four lessons and biweekly progress monitoring for the listening comprehension unit.

Student Calvin reported his group read stories, answered questions and discussed the main idea of the story. He learned to write a response containing four sentences using evidence from the text. He felt his reading improved.

Sixth Grade Teacher Lisa Labreche highlighted the word identification unit.

Student Anthony reported that his participation in word identification activities involving prefixes, suffixes and root words helped him to break words apart and fix the meaning of an unknown word based upon the prefix or suffix. He now feels more comfortable and independent when working with words and vocabulary.

Sixth Grade Teacher Courtney McDonald spoke about reader's theater, a collaborative process with small groups rehearsing and acting out skits in front of the class.

Student Kayleigh explained that her group wrote a play about being polite in public. The script was Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) based. Her group read a story, learned dialogue tips, created a script and performed a skit for the class.

Behavioral Specialist Laura Livie added the students collaboratively wrote the skit using the PBIS themes of respect, responsibility and safety. The students created props and backgrounds, and rehearsed acting.

Student Julia reported the skit addressed overcoming fears and worries. She learned how to write a script using dialogue.

Assistant Principal William Morris highlighted Curriculum Integrated Activities (CIA). Curriculum Integrated Activities included chess, sign language and coding. The Curriculum Integrated Activities were scheduled at the same time as band and chorus which allowed all students the opportunity to participate in band and chorus.

Student Justin reported he enjoyed participating in the coding and tapestry weaving activities.

Student Trevor reported he participated in three different CIA activities. They were sign language, seven habits of highly effective people and band.

Principal McGill reported the following successes of Response to Instruction and Curriculum Integrated Activities:

- Incorporated time for RTI and CIA while maintaining the academic subjects.
- Continued to analyze assessment data to determine if a student needs interventions or extension activities.
- Refined the process for small group instruction to meet individual student needs.

Chairman Ortega thanked the students for their presentations.

Board Member Schneider asked if all students participate in the first period of the day and if so, how is it structured.

Principal McGill replied it was a challenge and all staff were utilized.

Board Member Schneider asked if there will be improvement or changes for next year after a year of implementation.

Principal McGill responded two bells were added to the schedule. She is considering whether or not to swap the RTI and CIA with the afternoon Intervention and Extension program.

Board Member Guagliumi acknowledged the coordination and organization required for the new schedule. She asked if other activities or the activity selection process would be reconsidered for next year.

Principal McGill responded next year's program will be very similar in size. There could be a few different Curriculum Integrated Activities offered to students.

Board Member Powell expressed his appreciation to Principal McGill and Assistant Principal Morris for challenging the staff and students. He also expressed his appreciation to the entire staff at James Masticola Upper Elementary School for their effort and cooperation. He acknowledged the importance of the activities that the students are being exposed to at a young age.

Vice Chair Barnes asked how the supply and demand for the smaller CIAs has been handled.

Principal McGill responded one solution would be to repeat popular activities the following quarter to a different group of students.

Vice Chair Barnes noted parents can be confused with the many different acronyms. She suggested parents be given a resource such as a book mark that defines the various acronyms.

Chairman Ortega noted the student engagement, team work and conflict resolution in the CIAs. He thanked the students for sharing their experiences.

3. Approval of June 1, 2015 Minutes

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2015 meeting.

Vice Chair Barnes requested the following change to the minutes:

- Page 5, line 238 add “and documentation of the restraint forms” to the end of the sentence.

Chairman Ortega requested the following change to the minutes:

- Page 4, line 175, change the word “reviewed” to “review”.
- Page 6, line 278, change “option 1” to “option 2”.
- Page 9, add a line between lines 417 and 418.

The motion passed as amended 4-0-1 with Board Member Schneider abstaining.

4. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

5. Acceptance of Gifts/Grants under \$5,000

Business Administrator Shevenell presented a gift from the HealthTrust to Merrimack School District for \$200 to be used for health and safety activities. He also presented a gift from Vance and Julie Wallace for \$2,400 to cover expenses for some Merrimack High School student to attend National History Day in Washington DC.

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the gifts from the Lions Club of Merrimack and Fidelity Charitable with sincere thanks.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

6. Consent Agenda

- a) Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following teacher nominations.
 - Emily Isaac, Music Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
 - Kimberly Meyer, Special Education Teacher, Merrimack High School
- b) Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following teacher resignations.
 - Sandra Wyatt, Fifth Grade Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
 - Keith Conley, Special Education Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School

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

The motion passed 5-0-0.

7. HealthTrust Application and Membership Agreement

- a) Response to Board's Questions

Chairman Ortega introduced HealthTrust Benefits Specialist Debie Clayton.

Ms. Clayton provided answers to questions asked by Board members during the last meeting relative to the HealthTrust Application and Membership Agreement.

Question: Was there any change to the benefits the District is able to offer to its employees by signing this new contract?

Ms. Clayton responded no.

Question: What are the District's options if the District does not renew the membership agreement?

Ms. Clayton explained if the District did not renew the membership agreement it would be in violation of the HealthTrust Bylaws and the District would lose eligibility to be a HealthTrust member.

Question: What are the dates of the term in the agreement? Will the dates fall at the same time as the Cadillac taxes?

Ms. Clayton explained that the agreement does not list end dates. The District will not be locked into the agreement by a date in the future what so ever.

Ms. Clayton explained the HealthTrust is a nonprofit public sector risk pool governed by Chapter 5b, Pool Risk Management Programs. In order for a group to participate standard organizations of operation must be governed by a set of Bylaws. The HealthTrust Bylaws state in order to participate as a member of HealthTrust the District must complete an application and participation agreement. Members must maintain flexibility with benefit choices and provide a 60-day notice for non-renewal of membership. The Agreement is not binding in terms of the types of benefit choices the District offers employees.

Ms. Clayton further explained the Merrimack School District is considered a July renewal. July renewals consist of a two-step process. A rate letter identifying the guaranteed maximum rate is determined in the fall. The HealthTrust Board revisits rates in the spring and then issues another rate letter with the actual rate. The District signs a transmittal which is the District's contract year to year

or even month to month if there is a desire to change plans throughout the year. The Affordable Care Act requires a 30-day advanced notice for groups that want to make plan changes after the anniversary date and a 60-day advanced notice if the change is made off the anniversary date.

Question: How would HealthTrust offer plan options to address the District's financial exposure relative to the Affordable Care Act as it continues to be implemented over the next three years?

Ms. Clayton responded the HealthTrust offers a wide variety of medical plan choices consisting of a wide range of prices. She noted the HealthTrust developed a Cadillac tax calculator tool that can estimate a group's potential exposure. She noted the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee's ongoing work has helped to contain healthcare costs for the District. She report if there were to be a 5% insurance rate increase, the average rate increase for the last seven years, the District's current Matthew Thornton Blue HMO benefit, as it exists today, without any benefit changes would avoid the Cadillac tax. She stated there is time to make adjustments to benefit plans in effort to avoid the Cadillac tax if it is implemented in the year 2018.

Ms. Clayton clarified the Board's signature on the Application and Membership Agreement simply affirms the Merrimack School District wants to be a member of the HealthTrust and everything it offers and will follow the Bylaws.

Chairman Ortega asked if there would be a Cadillac tax impact for the point of service plan and the indemnity plan known as JY.

Ms. Clayton replied the point of service plan and the indemnity plan would be impacted by the Cadillac tax. All indemnity plans will be impacted by the Cadillac tax. Changes to the point of service plan such as copay and prescription drug coverage may help to lower the exposure to the Cadillac tax.

b) Board Action on the Membership Agreement

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) that the Board authorize the chairman on behalf of the Merrimack School District to sign the HealthTrust Application and Membership Agreement.

Board Member Powell emphasized that the agreement does not lock the District into any financial obligations; it is simply a membership agreement.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

8. Second Reading of Use of Restraint/Seclusion Policy

Chairman Ortega introduced Special Education Director Fabrizio.

Director Fabrizio explained that the policy will have procedures to address forms, process, record tracking, etc.

Director Fabrizio noted the policy was in place last year. The policy is being reintroduced to the Board because the law now includes seclusion which resulted in changes to the policy.

Director Fabrizio provided responses to the questions asked by Board members during the last meeting.

Director Fabrizio reported currently the District has sixteen individuals trained to teach the nonviolent crisis intervention program (CPI); two hundred individuals have been trained in CPI.

Board Member Guagliumi thanked Director Fabrizio for being thorough with his answers to the Board's questions. She asked if the staff knows which individuals in their building are trained in CPI.

Director Fabrizio responded each building has a response team. Each response team has personnel trained in CPI. He expressed a desire to create and maintain a list of individuals trained in CPI that would be available to all personnel within the District.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the Board should prepare for an increase in CPI training for the 2016-2017 budget.

Director Fabrizio responded training relative to seclusion will be required because it is new to the policy. He explained specialized training has always been part of his budget; however, he may request additional funds in the 2016-2017 budget to purchase CPI books and the cost for substitutes. He reported that professional development funds have traditionally paid for the cost of the trainer.

Chairman Ortega asked Director Fabrizio to consider changing the word "direction" to "discretion" in the first sentence of the Training section on page 6 of the policy. His proposed sentence would read "In the Merrimack School District, under the discretion of the Superintendent and Director of Special Services and Principals, key personnel will be trained in the use of physical restraint procedures and seclusion."

Vice Chair Barnes suggested changing the sentence to read "In the Merrimack School District the Superintendent and Director of Special Services and Principals will elect the key personnel to be trained in the use of physical restraint procedures and seclusion."

Superintendent Chiafery suggested rewording the sentence to read "In the Merrimack School District, as designated by the Superintendent and Director of Special Services and Principals, key personnel will be trained in the use of physical restraint procedures and seclusion."

Chairman Ortega thanked Director Fabrizio for his effort and thorough work on the policy.

Superintendent Chiafery clarified that the Use of Physical Restraint/Seclusion Policy will appear as a separate agenda item rather than under the Consent Agenda at the July 13 meeting.

9. Request for Additional Preschool Staff and Furniture

a) Legal Counsel's Response to Utilizing a Designated Capital Reserve Fund to Address Request

Superintendent Chiafery reported legal counsel's opinion is that the Capital Reserve Fund can be used for additional preschool staff and to purchase furniture for an additional special education preschool classroom.

Legal counsel's response explained the Capital Reserve Fund was established in the year 2000 for the purpose of needing any unanticipated expenses of educating educationally disabled children. The District has seen an unanticipated increase in the number of preschool children who have been identified as having educational disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As a result, there is insufficient space in the classes offered in the existing special education preschool

program and it is necessary to add an additional classroom for the 2015-2016 school year. Therefore, this expenditure is an unanticipated special education expense and the funds from the Capital Reserve can be used to hire the staff and purchase the necessary furniture.

Board Member Powell questioned if it was appropriate to use the Capital Reserve Fund knowing the preschool class will consist of typical students.

Superintendent Chiafery reported legal counsel's response to Board Member Powell's question was in order for the preschool program to exist, typical children are required to be in the same setting. Therefore, it is a bona fide expenditure.

b) Board Action on the Request

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Chairman Ortega) to expend \$53,869.50 from the Capital Reserve Fund established in the year 2000 created for unanticipated expenses of educating educationally disabled children for the purpose of hiring preschool staff and acquiring the furniture necessary to equip a preschool classroom to educate additional unanticipated preschool children with disabilities.

Vice Chair Barnes stated her motion supports option 2 that was presented to the Board at the last meeting. It also provides half the resources needed for a preschool program at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School and offers an additional morning preschool class which is preferred by parents.

Board Member Schneider suggested that the Board reduce the Capital Reserve fund by the amount of revenue from the tuition received from the families of the typical students for the one additional class.

Business Administration Shevenell responded a four-day program could generate \$13,600 assuming full attendance for all four days during that time period.

Director Fabrizio explained parents of typical students have the option to enroll their child for two days, three days or four days.

Board Member Schneider clarified his intent to recognize the revenue from the additional preschool class.

Business Administrator Shevenell and Director Fabrizio agreed that \$6,500 would be a more realistic amount for the anticipated revenue for the one preschool class.

Director Fabrizio clarified that it is unreasonable to expect full attendance from three-year-old preschool students.

Board Member Powell and Board Member Guagliumi both agreed with Board Member Schneider's intent to recognize the revenue from the preschool program.

Board Member Guagliumi asked Vice Chair Barnes if she would be willing to decrease her motion by \$6,500 and if Chairman Ortega would be willing to second the motion again.

Chairman Ortega clarified that the Capital Reserve Fund can be replenished by a future Warrant Article.

Chairman Ortega questioned if it would be more fiscally responsible to take the amount out of the Capital Reserve Fund knowing the actual revenues then follow up with a future Warrant Article to replace that amount or more in the Capital Reserve Fund.

Board Member Schneider noted that voters could reject a future Warrant Article intended to return the preschool revenue to the Capital Reserve Fund.

Vice Chair Barnes stated that the Board has been budgeting for worst case scenario in sensitive areas such as special education. She expressed concern that furniture costs may be higher than estimated and staff may be difficult to find and result in a higher salary. She felt confident that the reasoning behind her motion could be relayed to the voters; therefore, she stood by her motion.

Board Member Powell noted that if the furniture were to cost more and if staff were hired at a higher salary the Board would have the option to make a motion to access additional funds from the Capital Reserve Fund.

Board Member Schneider noted, in the past, the District has used the general fund for these types of decisions. He reminded the Board that it created the 2015-2016 budget in a way such that it is not an option. He stated he still prefers his intent to remove the funds needed from the Capital Reserve Fund and to recognize the estimated revenue amount.

The motion passed 3-2-0 with Board Members Powell and Schneider in opposition.

10. Board Member Authorization to Sign Fiscal Documents

Chairman Ortega explained at the end of each meeting the Board signs a manifest. The manifest is a fiscal document authorizing expenditures of the District. Other fiscal documents require a more timely authorization, such as in the summer when the Board meets once in July and once in August. He explained that the School Board can take advantage of the provisions of RSA 197:23-a by electronically scanning or faxing of documents.

RSA 197:23-a reads as follows, “The treasurer shall have custody of all moneys belonging to the District and shall pay out the same only upon orders of the School Board or upon orders of the two or more members of the School Board empowered by the School Board as a whole to authorize payments.”

Chairman Ortega moved (seconded by Board Member Powell) to appoint Vice Chair Barnes and Board Member Guagliumi to be empowered by the School Board to authorize payments in the signing of the accounts payable and payroll manifests for the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

Business Administrator Shevenell clarified that the change will begin with the 2015-2016 fiscal year.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the motion would allow for an alternate signature if the appointed Board Member(s) were not available to sign.

Business Administrator stated that the Board can appoint an alternate Board Member with signature authorization in addition to the two primary signers.

Chairman Ortega amended his motion to accommodate an alternate signature. The amended motion reads Chairman Ortega moved (seconded by Board Member Powell) to appoint Vice Chair Barnes and Board Member Guagliumi to be empowered by the School Board to authorize payments in the signing of the accounts payable and payroll manifests for the 2015-2016 fiscal year with Board Members Schneider and Powell and Chairman Ortega as alternates.

The motion passed as amended 5-0-0.

11. Title III Onsite Review Final Report

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated Title III is a Federal grant that supports ESOL (English for Students of Other Languages) education. He explained a requirement of accepting Federal funds is a Title III onsite review every three years per the New Hampshire Department of Education.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin reported the following items were provided to the New Hampshire Department of Education prior to the day long onsite visit.

- Self-assessment check list including evidence, when required
- Equipment inventory
- Title III monitoring rubric
- Compliance plan
- Example of student work and assessments
- Example of an updated homeland survey
- ESOL referral procedures
- Parent notification forms
- Parent communication templates
- ESOL discharge and follow up procedures
- Instructional schedules of staff
- ESOL job descriptions

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin explained the Title III onsite visit consisted of meetings with each ESOL educator, selected students, observations of educators with students, a meeting with the Assistant Superintendent and a review of files followed by dialogue.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin reported the District's Title III Onsite Review Report contained a specific commendation for maintaining airtight Title III records of financial management of the grant. The report also commended the three ESOL educators Sigita Clifford, Maryna Gurova and Jessica Field for the knowledge and expertise they bring to the program striving to meet the individual needs of their limited English proficient students every day.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin reported the Title III Onsite Review Report contained one compliance issue and three recommendations. The compliance issue was to update the District's Local Service Plan to reflect current ESOL programming and services. The three recommendations were to engage in an annual review of the ESOL program, add English language fluency to the current ESOL teacher job description, and consider adding an ESOL webpage/tab within the District's website to include information for parents, students and the school community about the ESOL program.

Vice Chair Barnes questioned when the requirement to update Local Plans every three to five years was put in to place.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin noted that the District's Local Plan has been updated since 1996; however, it has not been submitted to the New Hampshire Department of Education.

Vice Chair Barnes asked if the Local Plan would be submitted as it is updated or submitted every three to five years.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded an updated Local Plan will be submitted to the New Hampshire Department of Education by September 1, 2015. He assured the Board that the Local Plan had been updated since 1996.

Board Member Powell asked how many ESOL students are in the District.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded there are approximately 85 to 90 ESOL students in grades K-12.

Board Member Powell asked how much money the District received from Title III.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded between \$15,000 and \$18,000 annually.

Board Member Powell questioned how much money it cost the District to be Title III compliant.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin clarified that the three ESOL educators are each responsible for two schools.

Board Member Schneider noted the salaries for the three ESOL educators is included in the District's budget.

Vice Chair Barnes felt that the District would provide support to the ESOL students even if the Title III funds were not available. She viewed the Title III money as a partial offset to the cost of supporting ESOL students.

12. Request to Hire At Will

Superintendent Chiafery asked the School Board to grant the administration the ability to offer professional staff with conditional contracts during the summer months. She noted there are approximately fifteen professional staff to hire.

Vice Chair Barnes commented that the hire at will would only pertain to budgeted positions rather than additional positions.

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to grant administrators permission to offer conditional contracts to candidates for professional staff openings during the summer months.

Vice Chair Barnes clarified the teacher nominations will continue to appear on the consent agenda during the summer Board meetings.

Board Member Schneider asked Superintendent Chiafery how the fifteen open professional staff positions compared to the number of openings in previous years.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that it is about the same.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

13. Other

a) Correspondence

Board Member Guagliumi reported she received contact from a constituent expressing support to allow a specific student to walk at the graduation ceremony.

Board Member Guagliumi reported she received letters from two students from James Mastricola Elementary School. Student Sam wrote he enjoys playing math games. Student Gavin explained his mascot is a dragon and he is learning multiplication.

Chairman Ortega reported he received an email and a phone call from WMUR requesting comment about a situation relative to the graduation ceremony.

b) Comments

Superintendent Chiafery announced there will be an active shooter drill at Merrimack High School on June 26 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. The drill will include the Merrimack Police Department, Merrimack Fire Department and the assistance of the New Hampshire Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. An Alert Now message will be activated. Students would not be participating in the drill.

Board Member Guagliumi referenced the Use of Restraint/Seclusion Policy and the fact that it needs to be review annually. She questioned what other policies need periodic review and suggested a matrix of the policies and plans containing review requirements and date of the last review. She felt a matrix would allow the Board to be proactive rather than reactive to policies.

Vice Chair Barnes stated that she accessed the policies from the District's web page in order to reference the last review dates. She noted some policies have not been updated since 2003. She suggested that the Board review the policies to ensure they are all up to date.

Vice Chair Barnes suggested the District's policies be compared to the list of policies required by the New Hampshire School Board's Association.

14. New Business

Board Member Schneider asked if the Board meetings could begin at 7:00 p.m. for the summer meetings.

The Board agreed to meet at 7:00 p.m. for the July and August meetings and to revisit the meeting start time in September.

15. Committee Reports

Board Member Powell reported the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee met on June 3. He highlighted the HealthTrust Smart Shopper program. He noted usage of the Smart Shopper program directly reduces the cost of claims which impacts the insurance rates. In quarter one, the potential savings to the District could have been \$180,322 if everyone who shopped for a procedure went to a lower cost facility. He estimated an annual savings of \$720,000. The actual savings to the District in quarter one was \$26,603.

Board Member Guagliumi reported the Parks and Recreation Committee met on June 10. The first round of voting for Bark for the Park ended last week. Merrimack is one of four final candidates for the \$100,000 for a dog park. She encouraged individuals to visit the website www.petsafe.net between June 17 to July 22 and vote for Merrimack.

Board Member Guagliumi announced Camp Naticook is accepting registrations.

Board Member Guagliumi announced the summer concert series will begin on Wednesday. The schedule is posted on the parks and rec web site.

Vice Chair Barnes highlighted the summer reading program at the Merrimack Public Library.

16. Public Participation on Agenda Items

There were no public comments on agenda items.

17. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 9:23 p.m. Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to go to non-public session per RSA 91-A:3,II (a) (b) (c) with a roll call vote.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

At 9:45 p.m. Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.