

**Merrimack School Board Meeting  
Town Hall Meeting Room  
November 16, 2015  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Vice Chair Barnes, Board Members Guagliumi, Schneider and Powell, Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, Business Administrator Shevenell and Student Representative Marcus.

**Absent:** Chairman Ortega

**1. Pledge of Allegiance**

Vice Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Vice Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Approval of November 2, 2015 Minutes**

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2015 meeting.

Vice Chair Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 5, line 209, change Debbie to Debie
- Page 6, line 272, add to end of sentence "...which would be prohibited once it was acquired under conservation regulations.

The motion passed as amended 4-0-0.

**3. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

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

Business Administrator Shevenell presented a gift from The James Masticola Upper Elementary School Parent Faculty Association to James Masticola Upper Elementary School in the amount of \$1,400.00 for the Enterprise City Program.

Business Administrator Shevenell presented a gift from U. S. FIRST to the Merrimack High School in the amount of \$3,000.00. This gift will be used by the Merrimack High School FIRST Robotics Team to offset costs for equipment, travel, and competition entry fees.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to accept the gifts.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

## **5. Consent Agenda**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented for approval the purchase of a food service transport van for up to \$25,586 from the food service surplus funds.

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

The motion passed 4-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

## **6. Response from HealthTrust Representatives to Board's Query Regarding the School District's Guaranteed Maximum Health Insurance Rate for 2016-2017.**

Vice Chair Barnes invited Mr. Bill Byron and Ms. Debie Clayton from HealthTrust to the table. She explained that the reason the Board had extended the invitation to attend tonight was to better understand what factored into the twelve and a half percent rate increase for next year.

Ms. Clayton opened with some historical background. HealthTrust was established in 1984 to assist New Hampshire local governments in meeting the rising cost of employee benefit care. HealthTrust is a non-profit public sector risk pool established under the RSA 5B. Merrimack is part of a July renewal cycle, which is a two-step process. In the Fall a guaranteed maximum rate (GMR) is set and then re-visited in the Spring. This is done to assist with the budget process.

Ms. Clayton referred to a handout that the Board had received in their packets and gave an overview of how the Merrimack School District's claims compared to the overall July pool over the last three years.

Board Member Schneider noted that in years four and five the rate history showed that Merrimack had a better average than the July Pool and asked what factors might have caused the change.

Ms. Clayton responded that the only trigger would have been our own usage. The July Pool has remained fairly constant over the past ten years.

Board Member Powell asked where the two percent difference that should have been added to the Merrimack School District's rate in 2015 was made up and was told it was shared by the other groups. This was an indicator that claims were rising and that the rate would be going up.

Ms. Clayton then referred to a graph in the packet that compared Merrimack with four surrounding school districts. Surrounding districts were used to capture the people using the same hospitals and physicians. The graph shows that over a seven year period the Merrimack School District showed the lowest GMR, but that it has been rising over the last several years.

Ms. Clayton then reviewed the three-page narrative part of the handout.

Board Member Powell referred to page two of the handout and asked for clarification between letters J (HealthTrust Risk Fee) and L (HealthTrust Administrative Fee) and was told that in letter J (HealthTrust Risk Fee) a reserve fund is included in the amount.

Board Member Guagliumi asked about excessive claims and how they are pooled.

Ms. Clayton responded that for any individual with claims over \$150,000 the costs are pooled.

Vice Chair Barnes asked how many covered lives we have in the Merrimack School District and if this was the number used for a full credibility rating.

Ms. Clayton responded that the credibility rating was based on employees.

Vice Chair Barnes asked about cost containment and for examples on wellness initiatives.

Ms. Clayton responded that most of Merrimack's claims are not lifestyle based.

Mr. Byron spoke about the value of the Smart Shopper Program and that the Merrimack Schools take excellent advantage of HealthTrust resources.

Board Member Schneider asked about the July 2015 re-visit/renewal process and why different calculations were used.

Ms. Clayton and Mr. Byron explained that five months of old claims were replaced with five months of new claims which impacted the trend.

Mr. Byron commented that in the past the Merrimack School District participation in the Health Assessment was in the 70% area and is now in the 55% area. Participation is seen as an indicator that people are looking at their health.

Business Administrator Shevenell asked about the more rapid increase in the Matthew Thornton plan as compared to the Blue Choice plan. If the increases continue these two plans will converge.

Ms. Clayton acknowledged this trend and noted that in July 2016 the Matthew Thornton plan will become Access Blue. Participants will then be allowed to choose a primary care provider from any of the six New England states with no referrals required.

Board Member Powell asked what the Stop Loss Insurance is and was told it is catastrophic coverage. It is no longer necessary for HealthTrust to carry it, based on claims.

Vice Chair Barnes closed by thanking the HealthTrust representatives for their insightful presentation and its value during budget deliberations.

## 7. District Mental Health Committee Report

Vice Chair Barnes invited members of the Mental Health Committee to the table.

Julie DeLuca, Assistant Principal at Thorntons Ferry School framed her opening remarks by noting the Mental Health Committee's place on the agenda (between the Healthcare representatives and the curriculum committees); and noted that a student's mental health is essential to learning.

Ms. DeLuca and committee members read from a PowerPoint and a "District Mental Health White Paper" created by committee members. This information was provided to School Board members in their packets prior to the meeting.

Ms. DeLuca then explained the purpose behind the formation of the Mental Health Committee. Last August, Superintendent Chiafery identified the need for a district Mental Health Committee and one was formed with representatives from all six schools. In a previous budget cycle a proposal to hire a mental health worker for the middle school was tabled. It was then recommended that the committee develop a plan to guide their work in evaluating the mental health needs of the school district. The Response to Intervention (RTI), Focus Monitoring and District Logic Model plans will be referenced during the process.

The Mental Health Committee was formed to explore and identify ways to improve the mental health supports provided to students.

Three essential questions were posed as a guide:

- What are the depth and scope of the mental health needs of Merrimack students and what are the strengths and weaknesses of the system of care that are available to them?
- How can we blend district, community, and state efforts to promote a broader continuum of evidence-based practices to support the mental health needs of all students?
- What are the features of an interconnected and systematic framework of care and learning supports that will integrate mental health supports within the Merrimack School District?

The committee plans to create a "System of Care and Learning Supports" that leverages district strengths, based upon a district needs assessment and modeled after research-based state and/or national models. This would require a multi-year implementation plan detailing outcomes, timeframes, resources and action items culminating in the development of a sustainable framework of support. This may or may not include the addition of a mental health worker.

Statistics for the State of New Hampshire and Merrimack were provided to demonstrate the severity of mental health issues and their impact on schools.

State statistics include:

- One in five youth and adolescents between age five and age nineteen have a diagnosable mental health disorder
- 70% lack support from community mental health providers
- New Hampshire's school suspension rates are twice the national rate; students with emotional disabilities are suspended at higher rates than other students

- Only eight out of one hundred seventy-nine New Hampshire school districts have formal linkages between schools and mental health providers
- New Hampshire ranks thirty-eighth in the nation for access to care and rates of mental illness among youth with a scarcity of skilled resources and problems of access throughout New Hampshire
- Eleven thousand New Hampshire adolescents in 2013 had at least one major depressive episode and fifty-three percent did not receive help

Merrimack indicators for the need for a mental health system of supports include:

- The unclear scope and definition of “mental health” across the district
- District data is insufficiently tracked, captured, and shared to improve services
- There is a limited, broad-based understanding of mental health needs in students and insufficient professional development
- Truancy, suspension rates, Special Education referrals, behavioral problems and insufficient professional development
- Increased 504 plans and individual education plans (IEP’s) for mental health needs (35%-40% in the older grades)
- District student service professionals, “helpers”, multi-tasking numerous demands and crises, many of which involve implementing safety/suicide protocols
- Complexity of mental health disorders sometimes exceed the expertise of District “helpers.”
- District system of care and supports fragmented vs. cohesive team of school and community providers coordinating and monitoring evidence-based interventions throughout the district
- Merrimack School District students and families experience multiple transitions sometimes without a well-articulated system to support them
- Disparity of services and supports available for students who go “unidentified.”
- Parents seeking help to navigate limited community and state mental health resources
- More families experiencing increasing hardships such as economic stressors, family stressors and consequences of substance abuse and mental health disorders.

Laurie Livie, Behavior Specialist at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, with assistance from Fern Seiden, School Counselor at Thorntons Ferry School, provided a demonstration of how minor issues (represented by putting stuffed animals into a backpack) add up to cause stresses on a student to negatively impact the ability to focus on learning.

Stage One of the multi-year plan (2015-2016) will include the following steps:

- Expand the District Mental Health Committee to include a school nurse and Program for Educational and Student Success (PASS) Teacher
- Establish a monthly meeting schedule
- Conduct a needs assessment, environmental scan, resource mapping, gap analysis, readiness checklist, etc.
- Connect with community and state partners and identify community stakeholders
- Identify and organize professional development and training opportunities for the committee and educators as appropriate
- Garner broad-based support and buy-in throughout the District
- Adopt written, multi-year plan (all stages outlined) by the Merrimack School District Leadership and School Board

Resources needed for implementation of Stage One

- Funds for potential contracted services and supports, summer committee work and professional development
- Ongoing consultation with the Merrimack School Leadership for the development of a needs assessment tool and data collection system
- Time for establishing connections with community and state partners and resources

Director of Special Education John Fabrizio spoke about the District RTI model and the interventions and extensions, noting that everyone needs something either academic, behavioral, or social/emotional.

Ms. DeLuca noted that the process will be at least three years before completion and reiterated that the process might result in not hiring a mental health care worker.

Board Member Schneider and Student Representative Marcus recommended including parents of current and graduated students, and high school students in data gathering.

Superintendent Chiafery commended the committee on their work since the summer and noted that this first presentation was a culmination of that work. She applauded their deliberate manner of approaching the issue because they did not just recommend hiring a mental health worker.

Superintendent Chiafery noted that plans guide us and that they are an important input in the District Logic Model.

Board Members individually stated their support and appreciation for the presentation and the importance of a mental health committee.

Vice Chair Barnes noted that when Lynn Lyons has come to speak on topics such as anxiety that the audience is very large, indicating parental interest and concern about their children's mental health issues.

Vice Chair Barnes asked about grant funding and Ms. DeLuca responded that she and Director Fabrizio will be meeting with the Department of Education to begin a conversation around what resources are already available.

Vice Chair Barnes thanked the members of the Mental Health Committee for their presentation.

## **8. Quarterly Curriculum Report: A Review of Physical Education/Health, Mathematics, Science and Language Arts**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin welcomed all of the committee members to the meeting and stressed that K-12 collaboration is a hallmark of the way the Merrimack School District works.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin then invited the Physical Education and Health Committee members to the table to present their quarterly report and introduced the chairman, Middle

School Principal Adam Caragher who then introduced committee members Rick Urda of Merrimack High School, Amy Larkin-Perez of Merrimack High School, Linda Murgio of Merrimack Middle School, Maggie Croteau of Merrimack Middle School, Rick Greenier of James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, Shawn Croteau of James Mastricola Elementary School and Jen Parthum of Thorntons Ferry School.

The Physical Education and Health Committee began its work in June of 2014 and has continued to work throughout the school year. Their work is guided by the Understanding By Design (UBD) model and the creation of the three essential questions.

Principal Caragher began by displaying a chart of the growing obesity rates by state since 1990. He noted that the curriculums for physical education and health have not been revised since the 1990's.

The adoption of a big idea came from the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) and states:

The goal of physical education is to develop physically literate individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and competence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity.  
(SHAPE America, 2014)

Committee member Parthum referred to a handout that had been provided to School Board Members in packets mailed out before the meeting. The handout demonstrated the progress the committee has made. Using the national standards goal and the newly updated standards, a scope and sequence chart has been mapped for Standard One for grades K-12. Work is progressing on Standards Two through Five. The Physical Education and Health Committee is working to be a leader for New Hampshire by revising their state standards.

The road to a lifetime of physical activity was explained as a lifelong journey:

- Elementary school is a time to learn foundational skills, knowledge and values.
- Middle school is a time to apply these skills, knowledge and values.
- High school is a time to practice lifetime activities, skills, knowledge and values.
- College/career ready students enjoy a physically active lifestyle.
- (SHAPE America, 2013)

The big idea in Health Education is:

- We study health to acquire the knowledge and skills to make smart, safe, and healthy decisions that reduce risk-taking behavior and promote overall well-being.

The Health Education team began by reviewing content from the New Hampshire Health Curriculum Frameworks where they pulled out the content, what students should know, such as knowledge about alcohol and other drugs, addiction, mental health issues, and interpersonal communications.

They then focused on the skills imbedded in the eight health standards: accessing valid information, being able to analyze influences, making decisions, goal setting and advocacy for their own health, their families and the community.

Connections to the UBD model and August Academy were added to the inputs that guided their work.

Principal Caragher summed up by stating that the revisions of the standards will continue and collaborative time opportunities will be increased.

Student Representative Marcus noted that by high school some students are difficult to motivate in regards to participating in physical education and asked how teachers would inspire these students.

The responses centered on the concept of encouraging students to measure their own personal growth or improvement and to not compare themselves to others. It was stressed that a goal is to get students to understand why they are being asked to do something and the connection to lifelong health.

Vice Chair Barnes suggested inviting input from students.

Board Member Guagliumi asked about inter-disciplinary connections and examples given were journaling, stress management, yoga and a literacy/math lesson on reading labels.

The next presenters were the District Math Committee. Members in attendance were Chair Marsha McGill, Ron Delude, Shawna D'Amour, Adam Caragher, Helen Fitzgerald, William Morris, Michelle Romein, Julie DeLuca and Nick Coler. Not present were Nancy Romero, Cheryl Smith, Jill Smith, Sherry Rosswaag, Kimberly Yarlott and Laura Antonucci.

Since the last District Math Committee presentation two years ago there has been a transition from grade Level Expectations and Grade Span Expectations to Standards for College and Career readiness.

Members gave brief updates on their progress by grade levels. The high school level continues to work on competencies and aligning the math offerings with the College and Career Readiness Standards. A redesigned scope and sequence, reinforcement of students' need to explain their reasoning, and the designing of possible new courses reflect this work.

The middle school level continues with Strategies for Collaboration and Learning of Essential Standards (SCALES) through a realigned Grade 7 Pre-Algebra curriculum, refined common formative assessments and the pilot in the Title I area of a new assessment tool.

At the elementary level educators have been working with a Math Framework for Instruction, a Curriculum Crosswalk with the Standards, Math Fact Fluency and writing to explain math. Many elementary educators participated in the INTEL math training to deepen their own math understanding. The STAR math assessment was implemented to inform instruction.



The vision for the committee is aligned with the District Logic Model Impact of “Students Demonstrate Growth in Math Achievement,” which consists of a three year action plan that focuses on four major areas.

First-Increase overall knowledge of the pedagogy of teaching and instructional practices as they relate to College and Career Readiness Standards and the Standards for Mathematical Practices.

Second-Increase collaboration among educators PreK-12 to ensure Merrimack students are provided with a continuum of learning in the area of mathematics.

Third-Review the Merrimack School District K-12 Mathematics Curriculum and its alignment to the Standards for College and Career Readiness.

Fourth-Explore and identify research-based math resources to be used in the delivery of instruction in Merrimack.

Strategies to be implemented in Year One include:

1. Book study groups at each level that will focus on developing a greater understanding and deeper working knowledge of the Eight Standards for Mathematical Practice. Examples include: making sense of problems and persevering in solving them, constructing viable arguments and critiquing and reasoning of others arguments and modeling with mathematics.
2. Elementary level unpacking of the standards and development of student learning goals and assessments
3. Exploration of research-based math resources to be used in the delivery of instruction.

Board Member Schneider asked how the School Board might be supportive of this work monetarily and advised committee members to approach the Board with funding needs.

Vice Chair Barnes noted the August Academy impact on the question of “What’s the why?”

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin noted the purposeful and deliberative work and the complicated dual issues of learning facts and knowledge and the ability to apply this understanding.

The District Science Committee was invited to the table. Chair Bill Morris introduced Allison MacGuire of Reeds Ferry School, Rebecca Vandenberg of Thorntons Ferry School, Ashley Meehan of James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, Jeff Caron of Merrimack Middle School, Keith Tanner of James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, Joan McMahan of Merrimack Middle School and Jamie Cordeiro of James Mastricola Elementary School. Not present was Pat Scott of Merrimack High School.

The District Science Committee meets bi-monthly to work on revising the science curriculum. The review committee focuses on academic rigor across life, physical and earth/space sciences. Members follow current national and state level trends to inform their work. Additionally

interdisciplinary learning is already in effect in many classrooms. An example is a fourth grade human body unit that includes wellness and making healthy choices. Additional areas for integration are under examination.

Common language was used across the K-12 science curriculum and across grade levels. Performance indicator terms such as recall and identify were balanced with terms such as research and generate so as not to overburden any grade level. Feedback from teachers is elicited on a regular basis.

At the middle school level, unit templates and common assessments have been developed by the teachers. These will show a student's enduring understanding of the seventh grade life science and eighth grade earth/space science curriculums. Curriculum documents will be developed by the committee based on this work.

At the high school level, December collaboration days will be used to review the middle school work and develop new competencies for the high school curriculum. The goal is to produce a more seamless and integrated K-12 program.

Student Representative Marcus spoke about his NECAP scores and noted that the earth/space curriculum is underemphasized in the curriculum.

Mr. Morris noted that the committee discovered during their work that there were gaps that need to be closed. The committee is working to ensure that all three science areas are represented at each grade level.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin lauded the committee for their work and stated that they serve as a best practices model. They have set a standard for how committee work should be done.

The Language Arts Coordinators were next invited to the table to give their presentation. Members present were Dianne Macon of Reeds Ferry School, Sarah Croteau of James Mastricola Elementary School, Nicole Rheault of James Mastricola Upper Elementary School. Sydney Conti of Thorntons Ferry School was unable to attend.

Ms. Macon provided a brief history of the committee's work to date and information on current work.

Ms. Rheault began by showing a PowerPoint showcasing the work of the committee to date. Over the summer K-6 teachers, language arts coordinators and elementary administrators met to examine the documents and tools available to teachers to assist them in presenting material in more authentic ways in order to provide more meaningful experiences for students. They reviewed research that showed that students' best learn English in context with reading and writing.

Conferring with students to set goals in their writing, mini-lessons of 10-15 minutes that allow teachers to assess progress, mid-level teaching points that occur during writing blocks and small group instruction of three to five students all occur during a writing block.

Ms. Croteau spoke about word study, an approach to teaching spelling, phonics and vocabulary alongside authentic reading and writing experiences. The developmental model being used is Words Their Way, an approach in which instead of memorization, inquiry is emphasized.

Out of this work came the decision to utilize the STAR 360 computer based assessment tool, published by Renaissance Learning. It provides teachers with quick reliable data in the areas of early literacy, reading and math. Reading and math were piloted in grades two through grade six this year and will be expanded to include grade one during the mid-year assessment time. STAR 360 is also being piloted with a small group of students at the Merrimack Middle School.

STAR 360 fulfills the need for a universal screening tool, is computer-adaptive, which compliments the Smarter Balanced state assessment, provides teachers with reliable and valid data so that teachers can differentiate instruction, and allows teachers to create customizable formative assessments.

Student Representative Marcus noted that he has learned more about English grammar in Spanish class and was concerned about the grammar deficiency in the Language Arts curriculum.

Ms. Rheault acknowledged the lack of a grammar component in the English curriculum but that it is taught in other content areas. The committee has identified the grammar weakness and is investigating ways to mitigate this concern possibly beginning with professional development.

Board Member Powell asked for clarification on the screening component of the STAR 360 assessments.

Ms. Croteau responded that the questions would become more or less difficult but the score is a percentile relevant to what the norm is for that level.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin noted that the computer adaptive test provides feedback to be used to inform instruction and is not to a pass/fail environment.

Vice Chair Barnes suggested these results be used in parent/teacher conferences and thought a standards-based tool should also be used in the high school.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin complimented the committee for their dedication to literacy and spoke of their transformative work.

Board Member Guagliumi expressed her appreciation to Dr. McLaughlin and all the committees for the behind the scenes look.

**9. Update on Board's Request to Seek Intervenor Status from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)**

Superintendent Chiafery contacted Town Manager Eileen Cabanel for assistance in contacting the town council's environmental attorney, Joanna Tourangeau from Drummond Woodson. Attorney Tourangeau has experience writing letters for intervenor status. Attorney Tourangeau checked with her in house ethics committee to ensure that she could write the letter without creating a conflict of interest as she is already working with the town council. She has approval to write the letter.

On Thursday evening, November 19, 2015 the Town Council has on its agenda the topic of an intervenor letter on behalf of the town council, school district, and conservation committee. Once the town council takes a position on whether to proceed with intervenor status Attorney Tourangeau will be contacted to proceed with the letter.

The letter would then be on the December 7, 2015 School Board agenda.

**10. Board's Response to Draft Letter to Kinder Morgan Regarding Land Surveys**

Vice Chair Barnes read the following draft letter into the minutes:

Mr. Allen Fore  
Kinder Morgan  
Public Affairs

Dear Mr. Fore,

The Merrimack School Board recognizes that Kinder Morgan/Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company might be interested in surveying property along the route of the proposed Northeast Energy Direct Pipeline owned by the Merrimack School District.

The Merrimack School Board is willing to cooperate with you in this regard but wanted to proactively let you know the following conditions we have for granting approval to survey.

- The lands owned by the Merrimack School District were purchased and (are) maintained through taxpayer funding. As such, they belong to the people of Merrimack.
- The Merrimack School Board acts as a custodian of these properties on behalf of the public and that public has a right to know about uses, development, and activities on these properties.

As such, the Merrimack School Board is willing to grant Kinder Morgan access to survey Merrimack School District property(ies) under the following conditions:

- A request to survey the property in question must be scheduled by requesting such of the Merrimack School District, 36 McElwain St., Merrimack, NH 03054 9603) 424-6200.

- Written permission given to Kinder Morgan in writing by the Merrimack School District designating the date and time off the survey.
- Surveys will originate at the Merrimack School District Central Office at the address listed above.
- Surveys will be attended by at least 2 members of the Merrimack School District and 2 Merrimack School Board Members.
- Any information that comes as a result of the survey is public knowledge, as these are the public's lands. As such, the following are required:
  - Merrimack School District staff and board members are free to discuss these surveys publicly.
  - Merrimack School District staff and board members are free to record (audio and video) these surveys and share publicly

No access to Merrimack School District properties, developed or undeveloped, will be granted without these conditions being met. Physical access by Kinder Morgan or its associates on the property without having met these conditions will be considered trespassing.

Respectfully,

Merrimack School Board  
Christopher S. Ortega, Chairman  
Shannon Barnes, Vice-Chair  
Davis Powell, Board Member  
Andy Schneider, Board Member  
Cinda Guagliumi, Board Member

Board Member Powell made a motion (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the letter as presented.

Board Member Powell made a motion (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) asking for an adjustment to the first bullet point to say "...purchased and are maintained..."

The motion passed 4-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

Discussion ensued among the board members in regards to the third bullet point and inserting ten or fourteen days as a timeframe. The sentence would then read "... must be sent by certified mail requesting access to the property no less than ten business days upon receipt of the letter at a time convenient to the district."

Board Member Powell made a motion (no second) to approve the change of the third bullet point.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

Board Member Guagliumi made a motion (seconded by Board Member Powell) to add to the second paragraph "...granting approval to survey the Merrimack School District land.

Discussion ensued among the board members.

Superintendent Chiafery suggested that the board members send her their thoughts and changes so that she could then create a second draft for consideration.

Board Member Schneider asked that bullet point six be changed from "...at least 2 members of the Merrimack School District and 2 Merrimack School Board Members..." to "...2 members of the Merrimack School District and up to 2 Merrimack School Board Members ..."

Vice Chair Barnes asked that instead of the number "2" that the word "assigned" be used.

More discussion ensued on how stringent the terminology in the letter should be.

Board Member Powell suggested that once the letter is drafted that it be approved by legal counsel.

Superintendent Chiafery will present a second draft for the December 7, 2015 School Board meeting.

#### **11. Smarter Balanced Assessment Results: Establishing a Baseline and Context for Use**

Board Member Schneider noted the late hour and made the motion (seconded by Board Member Powell) that this item be tabled until the December 7, 2015 School Board meeting.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

Superintendent Chiafery will re-schedule this agenda item as one of the leading topics.

#### **12. First Review of New Policy: Animals in School**

Superintendent Chiafery brought before a policy for a first reading. It reads as follows:

The Board recognizes that under the proper conditions, animals can be an effective teaching aid. In order to protect both children and animals, the following guidelines are adopted for use in all schools in the district.

1. The bringing of animals into the classroom must not violate city/state/federal ordinances.
2. The only animals and animal products (e.g., owl feces for dissection) allowed in a classroom must be for a specific and appropriate educational purpose and shall be allowed for the amount of time necessary to achieve the educational goal.
3. Precautions should be taken to minimize transmission of all diseases and injuries (e.g., Salmonella, rabies, ringworm, bites, scratches, etc.)

4. All animals must be in good physical condition and vaccinated against transmittable diseases. Dogs, cats, and ferrets require proof of current rabies vaccination. Animals are to be kept clean and free of intestinal parasites, fleas, ticks, mites and lice.
5. Certain groups of people may be more susceptible to diseases, including infants, children, pregnant women and those with weakened immune systems. Consult with parents to determine special considerations needed for children who are immunocompromised, who have allergies or who have asthma.
6. The teacher will be responsible for the proper control of animals brought to school for instructional purposes including the effective protection of children when animals are in the school. This will include keeping the animal in an appropriate cage or container, supervising human-animal contact and handling fecal material in a sanitary manner.
7. No animals are to be allowed to run freely in the classrooms, food areas or activity areas.
8. Areas should be designated for animal contact. Such areas should be properly cleaned regularly and after animal contact. Food or drink should not be consumed in these areas.
9. All fecal material must be cleaned from the cage of any mammal or bird on an as needed basis (at a minimum of one time per week) and appropriate sanitizer used. Reptiles, fish and insects must be cared for in a manner to minimize odor and maintain health. Persons cleaning cages must wear gloves, masks and glasses or goggles. Cleaning should be performed by people older than five years and under the supervision of an adult. Ideally, cleaning should be performed when other children are not in the room.
10. Wash hands after contact with animals, animal products or their environment. Hand hygiene should be stressed, using verbal and written educational materials.
11. Certain animals pose additional risks and contact should not be permitted with young children.
12. Wild or exotic animals are not permitted in classrooms, unless under the control of a professional.

It will be the responsibility of the teacher to provide for a plan of care for classroom housed animals in the event of an emergency school closing which might cause disruption of the routine care of the animals. In each school where these animals are housed, there should be a plan whereby the staff member who visits the school daily during the emergency closing will be aware of the animals' presence and see to their care. If no staff member visits the school daily in such circumstances, the teacher is responsible for the daily care of the animal(s).

Teachers must be contacted prior to having animals in their classroom. No animal shall be at school unless the teacher involved is familiar with the appropriate care, feeding and handling of that animal and of any potential dangers caused by that animal. It shall be the responsibility of the teacher to become familiar with each animal as it relates to the well-being of the individual students in that particular classroom.

The principal shall be advised of any animals to be housed in the classroom. At the principal's discretion, permission to keep the animal may be denied based on these considerations: (1) the purpose for the animal's presence, (2) the ability of the teacher to control the animal and/or (3) the past practice in the classroom.

### **Unauthorized Animals on School Grounds**

Unauthorized animals are not allowed in school buildings or on school grounds. Children and staff will be instructed to keep their own animals off school grounds. The appropriate town official will be called and requested to impound all animals taken into custody by school personnel.

#### **Legal Reference:**

- National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians, Inc., Compendium of measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, 2006.

The need for this policy was prompted by a request from Reeds Ferry Elementary School to collaborate with the Merrimack Public Library on a project to bring their reading dog, Ruby to the school library to provide an opportunity for a group of students to read to the dog.

Board Member Powell noted that service dogs were not addressed in the policy and was told that there is a separate policy for service dogs. He would like to see that policy brought before the board at a later time.

Board Member Powell asked for a language change under point number (1) to change city to town.

Board Member Powell was concerned about the language "...unauthorized animals on school grounds." He noted that many residents bring their animals to soccer fields.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that this section could be removed.

Board Member Schneider noted that allergies are only addressed in point number (5). He would like to add that if a person is allergic that they have another place to be in the school during the animal's visit.

Superintendent Chiafery noted that practices now in place in classrooms that have guinea pigs or other small animals are in line with this proposed policy. This new policy would be beneficial for partnerships with outside groups like the public library.

Student Representative Marcus noted that under point (2) "feces" should be changed to "pellets".

Vice Chair Barnes noted that in the second to last paragraph the second sentence should read "No animal shall be in school..."

The second draft will be presented at the December 7, 2015 School Board meeting.

### **13. Other**

#### **a) Correspondence**

There was no correspondence.



## **b) Comments**

Board Member Schneider complimented Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin for the quality of the curriculum reports but asked if they could be spread out so that they are not all on the same night or on a night with a lighter agenda.

Board Member Guagliumi agreed, noting that tabling the Smarter Balanced report until the next meeting will enable Chairman Ortega to be in attendance.

Vice Chair Barnes asked Superintendent Chiafery if any additional progress has been made on the scheduling of a joint meeting between the School Board and the Town Council and was informed that a decision will be made at the November 19, 2015 Town Council meeting.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin noted an opportunity in the delay of the Smarter Balanced report. Board Members were requested to send him advance questions so that he could gather responses and present them along with the Smarter Balance report at the next meeting.

## **14. New Business**

Superintendent Chiafery notified the School Board that District Technology Director Nancy Rose would like to attend the December 7<sup>th</sup> meeting to seek approval about a technology survey called Speak Up. This is a nationwide survey of all community stakeholders about their use of and thoughts about technology. This could hopefully be conducted via School Messenger and a link would be made available to the School Board members so that they may view the survey prior to making a decision on whether or not to approve the survey.

## **15. Committee Reports**

Student Representative Marcus shared information about the Middle School Lego Robotics Team and the Middle School Quiz Bowl Team that were created and are mentored by high school students.

Simple programming and scientific research are combined in the Middle School Lego Robotics Team and culminate in themed competitions, such as recycling. In the most recent competition one of the co-captains of the High School First Robotics Team mentored the group; and four other members played the National Anthem as a trombone quartet.

The Quiz Bowl/Trivia Team meets weekly to test their skills. Last year this group participated in the Granite State Challenge and made it into the semi-finals. Social Studies teacher Mrs. DeNutte and the captain of the high school team attend the club weekly meetings.

Board Member Guagliumi shared information from the most recent PERC meeting. Two new course offerings are being considered.

1. AP Studio Art class which would allow students to create art portfolios for credit. This is a class for students looking to go further in art.

2. In order to comply with federal regulations, a course entitled English as a Second Language (ESL) would allow students to earn credit as they learn basic English and American social skills.

Board Member Schneider attended the District Wellness Committee meeting on Monday afternoon, November 9<sup>th</sup> to plan the 2015-2016 activities. Rick Greenier will be attending an upcoming School Board meeting to discuss district wellness. The committee also discussed the creation of the Tick Education Panel.

Board Member Schneider attended the Planning and Building Committee meeting on Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup> in the evening. The School Board's changes to the Capital Improvement Plan were reviewed and an offer was made to do to research on the track to assist the School Board.

Board Member Powell shared information from the School District Budget Committee meeting that was held on Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. The 2014-2015 budget was reviewed. Re-organization was tabled until a larger quorum is in attendance. One resignation was announced creating a vacancy in a three year term.

Vice Chair Barnes attended the Merrimack Safeguard Meeting on behalf of Board Member Schneider. Youth surveys done in the middle school and advertising at the movie theaters were discussed. A presentation on high-risk behavior in youth by the Beyond Influence representative focused on how to talk to your children.

Vice Chair Barnes attended the New Hampshire School Board of Directors meeting on Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>. As a delegate she will bring resolutions forward to the Merrimack School Board in the upcoming meetings.

Vice Chair Barnes will be presented as a nominee for the position of Second Vice President of the New Hampshire School Board Association at the January 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

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

There were no public comments.

## **17. Manifest**

The Board signed the manifest.

At 10:58 p.m. Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to enter no- public session per RSA A 91-A: 3, II, (a), (b), (c).

A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 4-0-0.

At 12:05 a.m. Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to adjourn the public meeting.