

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack Town Hall Meeting Room
May 7, 2012**

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Ortega, Board Members Barnes, Markwell and Schneider, Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, Business Administrator Shevenell and Student Representative Yates. Vice Chairman Powell was excused from the meeting.

1. Call To Order

Chairman Ortega called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Chairman Ortega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Approval of April 30, 2012 Minutes

Board Member Markwell moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to approve the minutes of the April 30, 2012 meeting.

Student Representative Yates requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 5 of 7, section 9, paragraph 2, second sentence should read, “The association had chosen not to work with the school board to come up with criteria even though there is a section of the Master Agreement, then the law takes precedence.”

Board Member Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2 of 7, section 3, change Board Member Powell to Vice Chair Powell and Board Member Schneider. Also make the same changes in the last sentence of that section.
- Page 3 of 7, paragraph 4 from the bottom, change “One Challenge Day” to “The third Challenge Day”.
- Page 3 of 7, paragraph 2 from the bottom, change Board Member Powell to Vice Chairman Powell.
- Page 4 of 7, paragraph 2 from the bottom, should read “Hannah Brunelle highlighted the upcoming Lego summer camp and the Mayhem in Merrimack Competition that will be held on June 2nd.”
- Page 5 of 7, paragraph 2, last sentence should read, “She thanked the school district for including academic competition funding in this year’s budget.”
- Page 5 of 7, section 9, paragraph 1, sentence three, replace “determinate to “determinant”.
- Page 6 of 7, section 13, paragraph 2, Finlay Rothhaus should be change to Town Council Vice Chair.

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4 of 7, paragraph 6 should read, “Board Member Schneider stated that the ultimate goal is to have all freshmen go through the program. He added that we are in a “catch up mode”. The number of students wanting to participate will diminish in time because the number of students having participated will increase in time.”
- Page 4 of 7, paragraph 8, should read “Chairman Ortega noted that his children had positive personal experiences with the Challenge Day and he hopes to participate in the future.

- Page 4 of 7, paragraph 8, last sentence, “provide” should be changed to “provided”.
- Page 5 of 7, for Vice Chairman Powell, section 9, paragraph 5, last sentence should read “There would need to be an error in how the arbitrator applied the law in order to appeal”.
- Page 7 of 7, under Manifest, should read “Vice Chair Powell” and “Board Member Powell”.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

3. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

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

Business Administrator Shevenell presented the following item for approval:

- The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society to Reeds Ferry Elementary School for \$50.00 for a pizza party for students who participated in the “Pennies for Patients” fund-raiser.

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Markwell) to accept the gifts/grants under \$5,000.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

5. Consent Agenda

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following item for approval:

- Teacher Retirement/Resignations
-Joan Leonard, Kindergarten Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School

Board member Markwell moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

6. Merrimack Middle School: A Year in Review

Principal Debbie Woelflein and Assistant Principal Adam Caragher introduced staff members present at the meeting who would discuss the Logic Model in the Merrimack Middle School. Areas to be discussed were Social Studies, Special Education, Science, Art, Family and Consumer Science, Music, Guidance and Behavior.

Principal Woelflein explained that the mission is for the curriculum to become more student centered.

Assistant Principal Caragher noted the five goals for the next five to seven years:

- Common language and instructional approaches are used by all staff to build consistency for students and parents
- Comprehensive Data Systems are implemented in order to track student progress and identify learning goals for each student

- Each student's learning needs are used to determine appropriate instructional goals, strategies and interventions
- Technology is regularly utilized and applied in the process of teaching and learning
- Schools have consistent data-driven behavioral programs in place that provide safe learning environments for students

Principal Woelflein explained that a year ago, a plan was developed to accommodate the changing population of the middle school over the next five years. This year there was a teaching team (704) and this team will fluctuate between the two grades to meet student population needs going forward.

Principal Woelflein continued to explain that there was a focus on Language Arts, Science, Organizational Skills and Math Intervention.

Principal Woelflein spoke about SCALES, which stands for Strategies for Collaboration and Learning Essential Standards. Every single content area at the middle school is engaged in important work relating to identification of key standards. She added that they are the bridge between the elementary level and the high school.

Principal Woelflein explained that the process has shifted and that the focus is on important curriculum standards which are going to insure that students have certain learning opportunities that will give a framework for assessment.

Assistant Principal Caragher explained the use of the Mimeo Board in the Middle School. It is a white board display device along with a tablet that is synchronized to the computer and allows the teacher to move around in the classroom to see what students are working on. He added that the staff and students love the technology, which is very visual in nature.

Assistant Principal Caragher explained that formative assessment is a tool used by teachers to help determine the learning needs of individual students. The pad allows teachers to use different tools for formal assessments.

Board Member Schneider asked if the work skills program was open to all students, including students with an individual education plan (IEP).

Principal Woelflein responded that the program is open to all students.

Board Member Schneider asked if the grade alternating teaching team starts from scratch and if there are lesson plans in place that they can leverage within each grade level.

Principal Woelflein answered that teams will build on what they presently have.

Board Member Schneider asked how pervasive the mimeo boards are in the middle school.

Principal Woelflein responded that there is currently one system in place and that hopefully there will be more in the future.

Board Member Schneider asked if there is any cross-pollination of curriculum development with any other school districts.

Principal Woelflein responded that they tried to find other schools that are engaged in the same work in New Hampshire, but there were none. She has spoken with other principals outside of New Hampshire.

Board Member Barnes asked about interdisciplinary work. She questioned if it was among the teams or within the teams across the subject matters.

Principal Woelflein responded that at this time, it is within the teams.

Chairman Ortega thanked all the participants for their presentations. He stressed that the key is consistency in the experience, in the evaluation and in the communication for students and teachers regardless of who is instructing the class.

Principal Woelflein introduced Mrs. Thompson and Mrs. Warhola from the middle school to discuss the Career Exploration Day. The purpose was to connect with what the students will do when they get older and bring in members of the community. Points made were:

- The program was designed for eighth grade students.
- All eighth grade students completed online Career Matchmaker Survey.
- Coordinators compiled a list of the top career choices of the entire eighth grade.
- Sixteen presenters were confirmed to participate in the Career Exploration Day on April 4, 2012.
- Students were given the opportunity to sign up for four 25-minute presentations of their choice.
- The goal of the sessions was to educate students about the connection between their education and their future career path.
- Follow up panel discussions showed that students really enjoyed the program and learned from it. They learned that it is really important to like what you do. They also learned that it is important to look at career choices early in their education instead of waiting until high school or college. Presenters are looking forward to participating next year.

Board Member Schneider asked why there were no high-tech industry career presenters.

Ms. Warhola explained that the career presenter list was based on the students' interest lists. She added that perhaps next year high-tech careers would be included if the students showed an interest.

Board Member Schneider asked why careers such as teachers were not included on the list.

Ms. Warhola explained that there was an interest in pre-school education and that is why a presenter from a preschool was included. This presenter was the owner/teacher of the preschool.

7. Merrimack Safeguard Update

Principal Woelflein gave a brief history of Merrimack Safeguard. She explained that an application for the Federal Drug Free Community Grant was submitted and Merrimack was granted \$125,000 per year for five years. The Merrimack Drug Advisory Council became Merrimack Safeguard.

Officer Prentice is the School Resource Officer at Merrimack Middle School and Juvenile Officer of the Merrimack Police Department and is also being used in the elementary schools and upper elementary school. He explained that the coalition is made up of people representing 12 sectors of the community, including parents, business owners, member of the faith community, etc.

Some of their programs of the Merrimack Safeguard include:

- Merrimack Teens in Action became the program to get eighth grade girls involved. There are currently eight eighth grade girls who meet every month.
- Red Ribbon Week is a drug awareness week held in October. Red tulips are planted in every school, town hall and the police department among other activities.
- The Safe Homes program is one in which parents take a pledge to not have alcohol or drugs in their homes when other students are present.
- The Drug Take Back Program collected 122 lbs. of prescription drugs this year.
- Cyber bullying is also an issue that is addressed. Funding comes from the parent teachers group as well as the student council.
- At the high school a mock driving while intoxicated accident was held and included a pledge for students to take that states that they will join the 75% of Merrimack students who have pledged to not get into a car with kids who have been drinking.
- Merrimack Safeguard is also involved in a local television show, "Operation Positive" that features students and covers a wide variety of teen topics.
- In the media, columns are written by students every month in the Nashua Telegraph and the Merrimack Journal.
- The Teens in Action have a float at the July 4th parade every year.
- Moving forward into the fourth year, another five-year grant is being pursued.

Principal Woelflein explained that Merrimack Safeguard has to show evidence that a change is being made in the community.

Board Member Schneider asked how Merrimack Safeguard relates to the past program with the same name, which consisted of a day of workshops and information.

Principal Woelflein responded that the name for the grant became Community Safeguard in 2008.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin added that it is very important to reiterate that this is a broad based community initiative, not school district or police project. The amount of yearly allocation is prescribed that there is a way the grant money must be spent and a way that it cannot be spent. There are some things we would like to do but are not allowed because of the restrictions in the grant.

Board Member Markwell asked how the money from the grant is spent. He also asked how much is spent annually and if the grant is part of the general operating budget.

Business Administrator Shevenell explained that the grant, which is in the amount of \$125,000 per year, is used for training, materials and Officer Prentice's salary and much more. He explained that the money is spent by the district and then is reimbursed from the Federal grant.

Board Member Barnes, who attended the last meeting of the Merrimack Safeguard, stated that the meetings have to be documented as well and that in-kind contributions have to be quantified. She added that the value of this grant is how much is prevented by having this program.

Chairman Ortega echoed the importance of Merrimack Safeguard in this community. He asked how the community could support the program.

Principal Woelflein responded that at the meetings there needs to be more participation and input so that the strengths and weaknesses can be assessed. An action plan has been put in place for next year. The National Guard is going to the next meeting to assess the progress of the grant.

Chairman Ortega asked how people could get involved in Merrimack Safeguard.

Officer Prentice responded that he could be contacted through the Merrimack Middle School or the Merrimack Police Department.

8. Presentation of Professional Development Master Plan 2012-2017

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin gave a brief history of the development of the Master Plan. He added that Merrimack's plan stands out in the state and that the plan has been used as a template for other communities. The document itself is about 100 pages, which articulates the rules and protocols.

Chris Rheault, Vice Chair of the Professional Development Committee, Helen Fitzgerald and Shelly Lefebvre noted the changes that have been made:

- There is no change in the make up of the function and composition of the committee.
- The subcommittees on research and program have been combined into one committee that meets bi-monthly. The functions of the subcommittees remain the same, but the structure is changed.
- The mission, which has not changed, is to build a community of lifelong learners.
- Some of the language in the job related enrichment travel has been refined and clarified. Travel must be related to educators' professional development. Individuals will only be reimburses up to \$800 for travel.
- \$2,400 has been assigned for graduate courses.
- Documentation of professional learning has been refined.
- A web page has been developed for teachers to collaborate with other educators. Resources are there for teachers. The message board has been developed for teachers who have attended workshops.

Board Member Schneider asked Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin if there is more focus on continued education, given the new focus on educational development as part of the future work-force reduction.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin replied that continued education is not in the Master Plan. However, the district has a connection with Southern New Hampshire University, which allows teachers to attend the University for continuing education.

Chairman Ortega thanked the members of the Professional Development Master Plan Committee. He stated that the Master Plan would be on the next school board agenda under the consent agenda. He added that anyone who is interested in reviewing the entire plan should contact him.

9. Representative for the School Board on the Town Center Committee

Chairman Ortega stated that the school board has a representative on this committee. For the last two years this has been Tracy Bull. He stated that she has done a great job, raising important issues and bringing them before the board for approval. He stated that he was looking for a continuation of Ms. Bull's participation on this committee as a liaison to the school board. It was noted that there has been an alternative in addition to Ms. Bull on this committee and that will continue.

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to re-nominate Tracy Bull to represent the school board on the Town Center Committee.

Board Member Barnes spoke to the motion, stating that Ms. Bull has done a very good job.

The motion passed 4-0-0.

10. Other

a) Correspondence

Chairman Ortega noted an e-mail received by school board members regarding a student's absences.

b) Comments

Student Representative Yates made the following comments regarding upcoming events at the high school:

- The music program is holding scholarship auditions for summer camp on May 12th and 13th.
- May 15th is Community Service Day when students will be doing jobs for senior citizens
- Science Olympiad teams will go to Orlando for finals May 15th through 20th.
- A Night at the Improv will be held at the high school on May 23rd at 7:00 p.m.
- The Music Department Spring Concert will be held on May 24th at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman Ortega thanked the board members for their responses regarding preferred committees.

11. New Business

There was no new business to report.

12. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

13. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Tracy Bull, 5 Independence Drive, is the Safe Routes to School Travel Plan Task Force chairman. She stated that the grant application has been submitted to Concord. The grant process is under way. She also stated that she is working on setting up the next sub committee meeting with a representative from NH Department of Transportation Safe Routes Program in attendance.

14. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 9:20 p.m. Board Member Markwell moved (seconded by Board Member Barnes) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 4-0-0.