

**Merrimack School Board Special Meeting  
Merrimack School District  
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Meeting Room  
August 22, 2013  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Vice Chairman Powell, Board Members Barnes and Schneider and Superintendent Chiafery.

**1. Call To Order**

Vice Chairman Powell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Vice Chairman Powell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Chairman Powell stated that Chairman Ortega and Board Member Markwell were excused from the meeting.

**2. Consideration of an Additional Second Grade Teaching Position at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School**

Superintendent Chiafery provided the School Board with information and data to support her request for one additional second grade teaching position at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School.

Superintendent Chiafery reported the savings in professional staff salaries through attrition as of August 16, 2013 was \$294,617. The salary range for the additional second grade teaching position is estimated to be between \$58,000 to \$66,000 inclusive of health insurance and other benefits.

Superintendent Chiafery asked the board if it were to support the additional second grade teaching position that it not specify a salary amount. She added that at this point there is no candidate in place.

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to authorize Superintendent Chiafery to add an additional position at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School to cover the increase in second grade enrollments.

Board Member Barnes spoke to her motion by stating that the Board has been very consistent in the past relative to its goals for student to teacher ratios. She stated there is a demand for another teacher and the board needs to supply the additional teacher.

Board Member Schneider stated the most important piece of information provided by Superintendent Chiafery was the timing of the need for a second grade teacher.

Superintendent Chiafery is hopeful that a teacher will be in place for the first day of school.

Board Member Schneider acknowledged that moving a teacher from one elementary school to another would affect a large number of students. He asked if there was a strategy in place to increase the second grade class at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School from four to five classrooms.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the principal would call together the assistant principal, the Language Arts coordinator, the school counselor and the behavior specialist to reconfigure the classes. The families involved in the reconfiguration would receive communication from the principal.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the second grade team will work with the new teacher to make sure that teacher is equally prepared to begin the school year.

Board Member Schneider asked if there was an explanation for the increase in students at the end of the summer.

Superintendent Chiafery replied there was a similar increase in the first grade at Reeds Ferry Elementary School in 2009. That increase was due to a new development in the Reeds Ferry Elementary School area.

Board Member Schneider stated that he will support the request due to timing. He suggested having discussions so if an enrollment spike was to occur in the future the district would be better prepared.

Vice Chairman Powell asked Board Member Barnes if she would be willing to amend her motion to include waiving the two week rule. Board member Schneider concurred with his second.

Board Member Barnes highlighted the availability of the monthly student enrollment report.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that during the recession, home sales were down; that has changed recently.

Vice Chairman Powell asked, if the increase in the number of second grade students had been known at the end of June or July, what would have been the outcome.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that second grade enrollment level was not ideal in July and in the beginning of August, but she did not feel it necessary to request an additional teacher at that time. When the student to teacher ratio levels reached 25 and 26 she felt it was important to make the request for an additional second grade teacher.

Vice Chairman Powell questioned if the additional second grade teaching position would follow the class into the third grade next year.

Superintendent Chiafery reported that looping occurs often at the elementary school level.

Vice Chairman Powell questioned if a sixth grade teacher could become a second grade teacher.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that it would be an option. She reported that the recall from a previous reduction in force has resulted in placing a teacher from an elementary school to the upper elementary school.

The amended motion passed 3-0-0.

At 7:14 p.m. Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to adjourn the public meeting.

The motion passed 3-0-0.