

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack High School Cafeteria
June 6, 2011**

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Vaillancourt, Vice Chairman Ortega, Board Members Barnes, Markwell and Thornton, Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin. Business Administrator Shevenell and Student Representative McLavey were excused from the meeting.

1. Call To Order

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

Chairman Vaillancourt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Vaillancourt announced that Student Representative McLavey was participating in the girls' lacrosse championship game this evening; therefore, would not be in attendance. She noted that Business Administrator Shevenell was attending another meeting for the school district and would not be in attendance.

2. James Mastricola Elementary School, Reeds Ferry Elementary School, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School: A Year in Review

Elementary school principals John Fabrizio, Bridey Bellemare, Kim Yarlott and Marsha McGill and assistant principals Emilie Carter, Sharon Putney, Tim O'Connell and William (Bill) Morris were present.

JAMES MASTRICOLA UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Technology)

Principal Marsha McGill from James Mastricola Elementary School spoke about the implementation of technology in the school, citing portfolios, web pages, technology in daily teaching, blogs, and Skype. She introduced Sharon Silva, Library/Media specialist and Helen Fitzgerald, Technology Integration Specialist, Adam Goodman, Computer Technology Educator and students Rebecca Moser and Michael Casseris, both grade six students.

Technology Coordinator Helen Fitzgerald spoke about student digital portfolios. These portfolios encompass word processing, desktop publishing, data collection, and multi-media in research.

Adam Goodman, Computer Technology Educator, spoke about what the students accomplished during the year as well as the skills they learned.

Student Rebecca Moser presented an informational brochure on Columbia.

Student Michael Casseres shared his Power Point presentation on Enterprise City. He further explained how Power Point was used for book reports.

Librarian Sharon Silva demonstrated the document reader that allows students to access the on line encyclopedias at home and school. She also mentioned other vehicles used by the students in their Language Arts assignments. Blogging about books will be done by the Language Arts Coordinators in all the schools during the summer months.

Assistant Principal Bill Morris demonstrated Mimio which is a product used for interactive lessons, software applications and internet resources. Clickers allow students to enter answers to multiple-choice questions, which provide immediate.

THORNTONS FERRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Math)

Principal Bridey Bellemare introduced Math Facilitator Laura Antonucci, and named other teachers who were not in attendance.

Assistant Principal Sharon Putney spoke about the Math efforts among the four elementary schools this past school year. The goal is that all students make continuous progress in math achievement. She spoke about Family Math Night for parents and children in the elementary schools.

Laura Antonucci added that Math Night was a chance for students and parents to experience math activities together, including measurement, data and chance, numbers and operations, algebra and geometry.

Sharon Putney spoke about the fifteen minutes of Basic Math Fact Practice as part of the school day. She continued to speak about work with the math consultants on the elementary level reaching two important goals – increase in writing through math and accessing additional resources through the Everyday math program in order to further differentiate instructions for the students.

REEDS FERRY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Reading)

Assistant Principal Tim O’Connell spoke about the Language Arts initiatives at the elementary schools.

Principal Kim Yarlott spoke about the Collaborative Assessment Project (CAP). She recognized teachers not in attendance. Consultants Nancy Gerzon and Kim Bothroyd worked with teacher leaders toward their literacy program goal, which was to improve reading instruction and instructional practices. At each of the elementary schools, PLT’s (grade level professional learning teams) are part of the every day culture.

Assistant Principal Tim O’Connell spoke about Jane Levassio, who is the author/creator of the Cassie and Bella book series, and the national writing contest for third through fifth graders based on this series. He announced that a Reeds Ferry Elementary student wrote Cassie and Bella Face Their First Bully and was the winner of the contest, being selected out of over one thousand submissions. She will have her book published in the fall with a book signing at Barnes and Noble.

JAMES MASTRICOLA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Climate Initiatives)

Principal John Fabrizio spoke about the learning environment. He highlighted events that are common to all the elementary schools, including food drives, sneaker drives, penny drives, Toys for Tots, and supporting local families in need during the holidays.

Assistant Principal Emilie Carter spoke about activities and celebrations that are unique at each school. James Mastricola Upper Elementary School ran a food and clothing drive and sponsored a read-a-thon and students participated in Destination Imagination. At Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, activities included a reading buddy program, school spirit week, and the middle school job shadow visit. Several teachers participated in the Challenge Day at Merrimack High School. At Reeds Ferry Elementary School, first grade students participated in an intervention that teaches students to become problem

solvers. A caring tree was created to foster respect, responsibility and caring school wide. At James Mastricola Elementary School a positive climate celebrated students' good deeds. Students now participate in morning announcements with staff members.

Principal John Fabrizio introduced Music Teacher Chris Saunders and the James Mastricola Elementary School Chorus. The chorus performed for the board.

Board Member Thornton thanked the staff for the interaction and information presentations.

Vice Chairman Ortega asked for a clarification with regards to writing in math.

Laura Antonucci responded that students explain, through writing, how they get their math answers.

Vice Chairman Ortega noted the honor of Merrimack School District having the librarian of year, the elementary school of the year, and the young author from Reeds Ferry Elementary School.

Superintendent Chiafery added that the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School was awarded the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Award, which is a new "EDies" award this year.

Chairman Vaillancourt expressed her appreciation for the sheet that Principal Kim Yarlott distributed that contained definitions of commonly used acronyms in the school district. She also complimented all the participants on their exceptional projects.

3. James Mastricola Upper Elementary and Merrimack Middle School Destination Imagination Teams: Global Competition Experience

Chairman Vaillancourt introduced James Mastricola Upper Elementary School and Merrimack Middle School Destination Imagination Teams to share their experience at the Global Competition in Tennessee. Beth Eckert and Sue Correia are the managers of the team. Students in attendance were Ian Finken, Alyssa Jobin, Andrew Trimper, Emily Eckert, Kimberly Ortega, and Anna Correia.

A brief description of Destination Imagination was given by Ian Finken, followed by presentations by students from James Mastricola Upper Elementary School and Merrimack Middle School about their experiences at the competition.

Beth Eckert clarified that Destination Imagination is student led. There are specific rules regarding adult participation, noting that adults could only answer the questions of the students, not offer any guidance.

Sue Correia spoke about the students' solutions to their problems and how they created the scenery for their challenge.

Board Member Thornton commended the students on their challenge.

Board Member Barnes added that her children, who attend Reeds Ferry Elementary School, participated in Destination Imagination held in Nashua. She noted that the spirit of Destination Imagination is camaraderie. She thanked the teams for representing Merrimack.

Chairman Vaillancourt applauded everyone for their participation in Destination Imagination, including the students, managers and parents.

4. New Hampshire School Boards Association (NHSBA) Scholarship Presentation

Jody Vaillancourt introduced Executive Director Theodore Comstock from the New Hampshire School Boards Association. He explained that the Board of Directors of the New Hampshire School Boards Association created a scholarship program for students who have a direct link to a school board member. Five scholarships are given. He presented a New Hampshire School Boards Association Award and a \$1,000 book award scholarship to Caitlin Ortega.

Chairman Vaillancourt noted that Caitlin Ortega was the student representative to the school board prior to Vice Chairman Ortega's election to the board. Caitlin Ortega was the only student representative to serve for two years.

Caitlin Ortega said a few words of thanks.

5. Public Participation

Mrs. Jeanine Notter of 19 Whittier Place Road spoke about the bus schedule. She claimed the average bus ride in the district is thirty minutes compared to her neighborhood bus ride of sixty minutes. She requested a shorter bus ride for her neighborhood for the 2011-2012 school year. She submitted a petition with signatures.

Chairman Vaillancourt will ask Business Administrator Shevenell to address her request.

6. Review of Proposed James Mastricola Elementary School Library Project to be Submitted to the Trustees of the Trust Funds

Nancy Rose, Director of Library and Media Services and Principal John Fabrizio from James Mastricola Elementary School were present.

Superintendent Chiafery spoke about the presentation from the Trustees of the Trust Funds at the October 18, 2010 meeting. The funds that the Trustees of the Trust Funds oversees include the public library, fire department, cemetery upkeep and schools. She noted that the half-time Mandarin teacher position at the high school will be funded by the Trust Funds. Director Rose sent a request to Superintendent Chiafery for an upgrade to the James Mastricola Elementary School Library in the amount of \$60,600.00. The request is before the school board prior to going to the Trustees of the Trust Funds.

Chairman Vaillancourt noted that a formal vote is not needed by the school board.

Principal Fabrizio stated that they are looking for funds to purchase a new rug for the library as well funds to paint and clean the area. In visitations to other schools, common themes were seen in these new or refurbished libraries such as open environments, mobile furniture and multiple uses for a single room. The project does meet the needs of the Trust Funds. Principal Fabrizio noted that the current design of the library is not conducive to servicing all the students and reviewed details of what the project includes to make the library more student friendly, especially for the younger students.

Nancy Rose spoke about adding four computer sets in the library and four more for staff and circulation. Other upgrades would include a data projector and mobile book shelving. She is looking for the library to become a model for the teachers in the school to include technology in their classrooms.

Board Member Thornton asked if the new computers would be PCs or Macs.

Nancy Rose responded that the new computers would be personal computers.

Vice Chairman Ortega commended them on the plan. He asked about estimates for the cost of the computers. He noted that the figures for the budget for the computers and the figures for the Trust Fund money are different.

Nancy Rose responded that in order to keep the cost down, they would obtain “cluster computers” which work off of a single server. The computers work in groups of four.

Vice Chairman Ortega asked if the cluster configuration could be used in the future.

Principal John Fabrizio responded that the cluster configuration cannot be used in the classrooms.

Nancy Rose added that it is an economical way to concentrate a few machines in one space.

Vice Chairman Ortega responded that we can and should use these as computer lab replacement machines.

Board Member Markwell asked if there would be any furniture or lighting changes.

Principal Fabrizio responded that there would be no lighting changes, since the natural light and current light will be adequate.

Board Member Barnes commended Principal Fabrizio and Nancy Rose on being proactive and finding an “out of the box” way of funding the project. She added that it looks like it will be the most efficient library in the district, even though it is the smallest library. She also noted how the plan closely adheres to the District Logic Model.

Chairman Vaillancourt stated that the project meets many of the district’s goals. She asked that the school board be informed of the outcome with the Trustees.

7. Results from the On Site Special Education Review by the Department of Education Bureau of Special Education

Special Education Director David St. Jean explained the Federal Special Education progress data, which includes fourteen indicators of success. Last year Indicator 13 was explained as “the percent of youth age sixteen and above with an IEP (Individual Education Plan) that includes transition services that will reasonably enable the student to reach their post secondary goals.” He then introduced Sherry Goldberg.

Sherry Goldberg spoke about the onsite review for Indicator 13. In April, Merrimack School District was found to be in 100% compliance. She stated that it is still a work in progress.

Vice Chairman Ortega congratulated them for the fine work.

Chairman Vaillancourt cited a letter from the Department of Education noting the 100% compliance, with no findings on non-compliance. She congratulated and thanked David St. Jean and Sherry Goldberg for their effort.

8. Revision of District Special Education Manual

Chairman Vaillancourt explained that the information received would not be voted on during this meeting. Board members should address questions to Director St. Jean. If Superintendent Chiafery does not hear from any school board member regarding the manual, it will appear on the consent agenda for the June 20, 2011 meeting.

Director St. Jean explained that Federal and State laws must be followed before any money can be received from the government. The manual is a compilation of the New Hampshire state rules and the Federal regulations. Director St. Jean asked for adoption of the manual.

Vice Chairman Ortega asked about the process of putting the manual together.

Director St. Jean answered that in using the “boiler plate” to produce the manual, he compared it with the Federal law and State law and added the 2010 revisions. He explained that it is a fairly standard document that has to meet the required statutes.

Board Member Barnes asked about the changes between the 2010 and 2011 manuals.

Director St. Jean responded that the basic change in December, 2010 was that parents were given the authority to revoke their child’s IEP which would be acknowledged by the Special Education Department. For example, if a parent requests that a child’s IEP not be implemented, there is nothing that can be done as a school district. Prior to that, the school department would work in “the child’s best interest” and require services be given.

Board Member Barnes thanked Director St. Jean for his work.

Board Member Markwell noted how aggressive the district has to be in identifying a child with an IEP and the funding of the program.

Director St. Jean responded that there is a Federal program called Child Find. The district has the responsibility to evaluate any children who may have disabilities. All children’s IEP must be funded, even if they attend a private school.

Board Member Markwell asked if the extended school year education and transportation were still the responsibility of the district.

Director St. Jean answered that it is Federal and State law to provide this. Prior to this, there was a state law that used a “regression format” stating that students would be eligible for extended school year if it could be proven that there could be regression over the summer. The standard has been raised, making more students eligible.

9. Approval of May 16, 2011 Minutes

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Thornton) to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2011 meeting.

Board Member Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes.

- Page 4 of 7, paragraph 5, replace “questioned” with “discussed”
- Page 5 of 7, last paragraph delete “and is a greater need than maintenance on the building”

Board Member Thornton requested the following changes to the minutes.

- Page 2 of 7, section 5, paragraph 2, change the word “impacted” to “impact”
- Page 3 of 7, paragraph 2 from bottom should read “...the proposed new high school football field...”
- Page 4 of 7, first paragraph, change “the playing field” to “Student Memorial Field”

Vice Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes.

- Page 4 of 7, paragraph 6, change the sentence to read “Vice Chairman Ortega asked about the mechanism for speeding up, slowing down or stopping of the construction based on progress or lack thereof to build out”
- Page 5 of 7, paragraph 2, correct the spelling of Business Administrator Shevenell’s name
- Page 5 of 7, after paragraph 5, add a sentence that reads “Business Administrator Shevenell stated that “Perhaps we can work out something with the magnetic locking system where you could only get through those sets of doors from the inside to the outside in the event of an emergency, much like the magnetic fire doors in the hallways.”
- Page 7 of 7, correct the spelling of Sharon Silva’s name

Chairman Vaillancourt requested the following changes to the minutes

- Page 5 of 7, paragraph 6, rewrite the paragraph to read: “Chairman Vaillancourt explained that the money for the project is in the budget. If the project were to move forward, it would mean we would have in reserve 1.3 million dollars instead of 1.5 million dollars in anticipated loss of revenue.”
- Page 6 of 7, section 9, paragraph 4, change “she” to Superintendent Chiafery

The motion passed 5-0-0.

10. Consent Agenda

a) Teacher Resignations

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin announced the following teacher resignations.

- Angela Clark, Music Teacher at Reeds Ferry Elementary School
- Anne Wallace, Math Teacher at Merrimack Middle School
- Susan Chiocca, Grade Four Teacher at James Masticola Elementary School

b) Teacher Nominations

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin announced the following teacher nominations.

- Dawn Kerrigan, Physical Education Teacher at Merrimack Middle School
- Kathleen McCall-Ortega, Grade Four Teacher at James Masticola Elementary School
- Michelle Romein, Language Arts Coordinator at James Masticola Elementary School
- Michael Soucy, Guidance Counselor at Merrimack High School

c) Approval of the Memo of Understanding with the Merrimack Police Department

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Thornton) to approve the consent agenda.

The motion passed 4-0-1 with Vice Chairman Ortega abstaining.

11. Review of Student Enrollment at K-4 Schools and Accompanying Modifications

Superintendent Chiafery distributed a revision to the May 31, 2011 projected enrollments for elementary schools.

Superintendent Chiafery reported that she and the kindergarten through grade four principals reviewed the elementary school enrollments. She announced that she would like to make the following changes that will provide equity across the three elementary schools.

- Reduce the number of kindergarten teaching positions at James Masticola Elementary School from 2 to 1.5 teachers (ratio becomes 16:1)
- Reduce the number of first grade teaching positions at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School from 6 to 5 teachers (ratio becomes 16:1)
- Increase the number of third grade teaching positions at Reeds Ferry Elementary School from 5 to 6 teachers (ratio becomes 20:1)

Chairman Vaillancourt noted changes like this have been done in previous years. Superintendent Chiafery presented this information as a courtesy and there is no action to be taken by the board.

12. Other

a) Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

b) Comments

Superintendent Chiafery passed around the 18th annual “ED”ies booklet noting the three awards Merrimack received.

Board Member Barnes noted that Business Administrator Shevenell is attending the Conservation Commission meeting tonight presenting the Grater Woods plan, which could now be presented at the joint meeting this summer.

13. New Business

Superintendent Chiafery asked the board if it would consider meeting at 7:00 p.m. on June 20th. She asked the board members if they would be available to view the pay for performance portfolios between 6:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. that same evening.

Chairman Vaillancourt noted that the 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. review period was in response to a request from the board last year.

14. Committee Reports

Board Member Thornton reported that on May 26th Merrimack Safeguard met. They discussed the new mascot, Max the Moose. There was a discussion about the pros and cons of a drug-sniffing dog at the high school.

Board Member Thornton reported that on May 31st the District Parent Group met. Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the NECAP results, explaining that each student's results are reflected on their transcripts in their junior year.

Vice Chairman Ortega reported that on May 17th the Budget Committee met for the second time this year. The committee discussed the two open positions as a result of Board Member Markwell's vacancy and Bill Boyd's resignation. Any member of the public who are interested in serving on the Budget Committee should send a letter of interest to Andy Schneider at the administration office. The replacement decision making process will be made at the June 14th meeting. There are no summer meetings scheduled. There was discussion about using the town hall meeting room for future meetings of the committee and of the school board. In response to the committee's question, he gave them a brief report on what action the school board has taken regarding the projected budget shortfall.

Board Member Markwell reported on the Planning and Building Committee, which met on May 23rd. Traffic patterns at Reeds Ferry Elementary School were discussed. At the committee meeting he suggested corporate sponsorship to donate money or help with building a combined central office and special services building. He requested discussion of this matter be put on the agenda for the June 20th school board meeting.

Board Member Markwell reported the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee met on the June 1st. Highlights of the committee's accomplishments this school year included a \$4,000 WELL Dollar Grant from the Local Government, health care screenings, an increased in the Personal Health Assessment Survey participation rate, provided a workshop entitled "Understanding Your Health" and promoted wellness.

Chairman Vaillancourt reported that the Master Plan Steering Committee met. The committee is still in its infancy. Nothing specific was decided or discussed. She thanked the committee for including the school board on this committee. The next meeting will be June 21st.

15. Public Comments on Agenda Items:

There were no public comments.

16. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 9:30 p.m. Board Member Markwell moved (seconded by Board Member Barnes) to recess to non-public session per RSA 91-A:3,II (a), (b), (c).

The motion passed 5-0-0 on a roll call vote.

At 10:21 p.m., Board Member Thornton moved (seconded by Board Member Barnes) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.