

**Merrimack School Board Meeting  
Town Hall Meeting Room  
April 4, 2016  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

**Present:** Chairman Ortega, Vice Chair Barnes, Board Members Guagliumi, Schneider and Powell, Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin and Business Administrator Shevenell, (henceforth to be addressed as Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell).

**1. Pledge of Allegiance**

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

Chairman Ortega led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Approval of March 21, 2016 Minutes**

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to approve the minutes of the March 21, 2016 meeting.

Board Member Schneider requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2, line 95 rephrase the question so it is not a double negative.
- Page 8, line 375 change the sentence that begins “He suggested providing...” to “He suggested providing a link to the school district website on the pamphlet.”

Student Representative Marcus requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 4, line 173 change “...texturalism...” to “...textualism...”
- Page 4, line 188 change “...Sheehan.” To “...Shaheen.”
- Page 9, line 439 change “...Superintendents’...” to “...Superintendents...”

Board Member Guagliumi requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2, line 53 change sentence to read “Board Member Powell added that a friend, also in attendance remarked to him about the good behavior of the Merrimack High School fans.”
- Page 3, line 116 change end to sentence to read “...and she recommended conducting them in the future around the calendar and other topics.”
- Page 7, line 303, change “...under the ground...” to “...on the ground, such as ledge...”

Chairman Ortega requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 7, line 330 change “...build a new field costs...” to “...build a new turf field costs...”
- Page 9, line 425 change “...Merrimack School Administration...” to “Merrimack School District Administration...”

The motion passed as amended 5-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

### 3. Public Participation

Davis Powell, School Board Seat Number 3, approached the microphone. On behalf of the Merrimack School Board and the Student Representative, Board Member Powell thanked Chairman Ortega for his six years of service, five of them as the Chair of the School Board, and an additional three years of service on the Budget Committee. Chairman Ortega was then presented a gift of a Merrimack High School jacket.

The large audience rose to give Chairman Ortega a standing ovation.

Chairman Ortega stated that it has been an honor and a privilege to serve on the School Board and with the people he has served with. He expressed his appreciation for the wonderful gift.

Next to the microphone was Michael Thompson of 99 Joppa Road. He spoke of his concern of the PFOA's discovered in the water supply and thanked the School District for being proactive in testing the water at all of the schools. He requested additional clarification of the water source each school is using, town or well.

Mr. Thompson then provided empirical evidence of the results of exposure to PFOA (Perfluorooctanoic Acid) on vaccine effectiveness citing research conducted in 2012 by the Harvard's Chan School of Public Health and asked the School Board to consider changing their position to one of a zero tolerance policy from the current allowable state rate of one hundred parts per trillion in regards to PFOA and other PFC (Perflourinated compounds).

### 4. Consent Agenda

#### a) Educator Retirements

Robert Evon	Merrimack Middle School	Science Teacher
Tracy Wyman	James Mastricola Elementary School	Librarian
Dianne Macon	Reeds Ferry Elementary School	Language Arts Coordinator
JoAnn Wegman	Merrimack High School	Art Teacher
Barbara Steckevez	Merrimack High School	Social Studies Teacher

#### b) Educator and Nurse Resignations

Kimberly Meyer	Merrimack High School	Special Educator
Kim Morgan	Reeds Ferry Elementary School	Nurse

Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Powell) to accept the Consent Agenda as submitted.

Chairman Ortega noted the many years of service and thanked the retiree's and resignee's for their service to the Merrimack School District.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

## 5. Merrimack High School: A Year in Review

Chairman Ortega invited to the table Merrimack High School Principal Johnson and Assistant Principals Zampieri and Bergeron. Assisting the team with their slide show was Educator Mark Merrifield.

Principal Johnson began by thanking the School Board for the opportunity to highlight some of the good things going on at the Merrimack High School in school year 2015-2016. He thanked the community for their support. He also thanked the grade eight parents for their enthusiastic standing room only turnout for a welcoming day at the high school held for students who will be attending next year.

He then shared the school motto and mission of “Believe, go forward and inspire.”

**Believe:** “Merrimack High School, in partnership with families and our community, provides each student with rigorous educational experiences that develop intellectual potential, physical and emotional well-being, and social stewardship. Students graduating from Merrimack High School will be competent, insightful, and creative thinkers able to compete in a diverse, global society.”

**Go Forward: Academic Expectations** “Merrimack students will be engaged 21<sup>st</sup> century learners who actively explore material to acquire and comprehend new knowledge through: critical, creative and inquisitive thinking, decision-making and problem-solving skills, interactive skills that effectively articulate and communicate thoughts and ideas, and visual, technological, and informational literacy.”

**Inspire: Civic and Social Expectations** “Merrimack students will be effective citizens of the world who: exhibit school pride through support of school activities, involvement in community life, and who contribute positively to the global environment.”

Principal Johnson then asked the selected students to line up at the microphone and provide brief summaries of what inspired them or what their future plans are.

Senior Erica Lane plans to further her studies in writing for film and TV noting the impact of Mrs. Wegman’s classes on her decisions. She thanked Mrs. Dutton for the experiences in her Public Speaking class and noted that it gave her the confidence to speak at a Rotary Competition as well as here tonight.

Senior Riley Clark began by thanking the School Board, administration and fellow students for their part in his experiences at Merrimack High School. In the fall of 2016 he will be attending Norwich University on a full Army ROTC scholarship. Riley noted his involvement as a student council member and current president, and as a National Honor Society member as representative of the culture of service fostered at Merrimack High School. He has taken to heart Principal Johnson’s often saying that “Community service is not something that you should be required to do, but something that you want to do.” Riley plans to expand this by eventually serving his country as a member of the armed forces.

Senior Matthew Keeler opened his remarks by thanking the School Board for this opportunity. He spoke about his appreciation for several teachers in the automotive and woodshop classes, Mr. Van de Car, Mr. Pauly, and Mr. Carl. Matthew hopes to become a Merrimack police officer.

Senior Hayden Faust thanked the administration for his being here tonight to share his experiences. He noted that freshman and sophomore years he struggled with school until heard a Navy recruiter come and speak to one of his classes. This experience helped him to shape a vision for the future. Hayden complimented his physics teacher Dr. Oancea for her guidance and is looking forward to attending a military school and study mechanical engineering.

Senior Pheonyx Stopyra began by sharing that he will be attending the United States Naval Academy next school year. His goal is to have a long career in the Navy.

Senior Neel Dhanaraj shared that he has been a student at Merrimack High School for two years. During these two years he learned a lot from his science and math teachers, Mr. Muller and Mr. Davis; and from his Eagle Scout experience about leadership and service. An opportunity to teach at one of the elementary schools left him with the conclusion that teaching first grade is very hard. Neel also had the memorable opportunity to go to Washington D.C. as a representative of the Boy Scouts of America and meet President Obama. He hopes to study engineering in college and eventually return to Merrimack to serve further in some capacity.

Senior Tia Gaumont returned to speak again this year. She also attends Alvirne High School for their Junior ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) program. This year she is the Group Commander, the first time that an out of district student has held this position. Tia planned and executed a four day summer leadership school in collaboration with Spaulding High School and Salem High School, toured Washington, D.C., and soloed in an airplane. She plans to attend the United States Air Force Academy to study aeronautical engineering and eventually commission as a pilot. She expressed her thanks to Merrimack High School for all of the opportunities provided to her. She looks forward to serving her country and then returning to serve in Merrimack.

Freshman Christoffer Frank moved to the district a year ago from Indiana and expressed his pleasure at the variety of opportunities available to him. He had recently participated in the state National History Day project and placed third while the Merrimack School District led all schools in overall wins. Christoffer applauded his history teachers Miss Hartman, Mrs. Porter Cascadden, and hopes to take an English class next year with Mrs. Cloutier. He enjoyed class with Mr. Maniotis and will miss Mr. Evon.

Senior Matt Spettel began by thanking Superintendent Chiafery, Principal Johnson, and the Science Department with a specific nod to Mr. Davis. Last summer he attended an advanced studies at St. Paul's School and was singled out as the single ranking scholar of the program. Matt gave back to the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education program by coaching the middle school math team to the state championship round, pioneering a math club, and this Spring a STEM club at the middle school. Last summer Matt developed the ChemiCube which evolved into a business after winning a state science competition. Matt will continue to pursue his interests in science and math at a four year college he has yet to finalize. He is also this year's valedictorian.

Senior Sara Mason was Matt Spettel's lab partner and will attend the national competition with him in Arizona this summer. She has a long term goal of attaining a PhD in chemistry and then become a teacher. This goal was inspired by teachers Mr. Davis, Mr. Muller, and Dr. Oancea. She participated in SADD as an officer this year and is also a member of the National Honor Society. She is very thankful for her experiences.

Senior Jake Marcus, spoke about the history department and how his interest in politics began in Mrs. Richard's 5<sup>th</sup> grade class. He appreciated all the support he has received throughout his years from educators Mr. Havener, Mrs. DeNutte, Mr. Knight, Mr. Wojewoda, Mr. Huckins, Mr. Maniotis and Dr. Oancea. These teachers helped him to formulate his thoughts and opinions in regards to history, politics and civics. Jake plans to attend a four year college to study politics and economics and return to New Hampshire to serve. He finished by thanking the School Board members for their tireless work and the insights he has garnered as the Student Representative on the School Board this year.

Principal Johnson thanked the students for coming out and sharing their stories.

Principal Johnson then spoke about a new endeavor begun this year named "Reaching Out." Two prior Merrimack High School graduates responded and shared how their high school experiences shaped their interests and goals for their futures.

He finished by highlighting the academic rigor in the various departments and the accomplishments and outside opportunities students participated in with great success. Due to the depth and breadth of the lists only a few of the specific events in each department could be expanded upon.

The presentation began with academic rigor. One hundred and forty-five Merrimack High School seniors are members of the New Hampshire Scholars Program (75 NH scholars traditional, 25 NH scholars with an emphasis in the Arts and 45 NH scholars with an emphasis in STEM). In addition, the Advanced Placement courses continue to expand resulting in the district receiving a Sixth Annual AP Honor Roll Award (one of only 3 districts in state to do so).

Principal Johnson then showed slides of the top ten scholars. They are valedictorian Matthew Spettel, Salutatorian Emily Duval, Shravani Balaji, Sarah House, Cameron Collins, Sara Mason, Owen Bailey, Noah Baygelman, Callie Dwyer and Phoenix Stopyra.

The Science Department highlights included a third place finish for the Science Olympiad and third and fifth place finishes at the Soils competition. Two new interdisciplinary courses were added to the curriculum this year; The Art of Science and Project Earth.

Educator Muller mentored Matt Spettel and Sara Mason for their ChemiCube which won first place in the engineering category at the New Hampshire Science and Engineering Expo.

Mr. Davis worked with senior Neel Dhanaraj on an independent study called Elementary School Instruction that culminated with Neel teaching science lessons to students in grades one, two and three.

Educator Campbell coached the Quiz Bowl team in the Granite State Challenge in a very successful season.

In the Math Department 2011 alumni Ben Greenier hosted an in-school field trip so that students could meet with Microsoft engineers and discuss computer programming as a potential career.

Thirty seven students passed the AB Calculus AP test. Seven students passed the BC Calculus AP test. Twenty-seven students passed the Statistics AP test. Thirty students participated in Math Team.

The Business Department added Accounting III to the dual enrollment program through Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) and continued Introduction of Sport and Event Management. Marketing II is now offered as a Running Start Program through New Hampshire Community College.

Senior John Bory was offered a permanent position with Granite State Credit Union, due to his work in the Academy of Finance. Senior Rachel Easley was elected New Hampshire State DECA Officer for the 2016-2017 school year. Individual series events winners were Emily Duval (3<sup>rd</sup> place in Human Resource Management), Rachel Easley (1<sup>st</sup> place in Restaurant and Food Service), Robert Defelice (3<sup>rd</sup> place in Principles of Business), Tiffany Knowles (1<sup>st</sup> place in Principles of Finance) and Abby Yuan (3<sup>rd</sup> place in Principles of Marketing).

New Interdisciplinary courses added to the English/Social Studies curriculum were Foundations in World Culture, The American Experience, AP Language and Composition and Culture Shock: Social Science and Literature.

The English Department Public Speaking class saw Hillary Clinton speak in Concord. They along with the Journalism class instituted podcasts which are published on the Merrimack High School website. The student newspaper The Hawk was redesigned and relaunched as a quarterly magazine.

The American Experience interdisciplinary students researched and presented a recreation of the Chicago 1893 World's Fair which was visited by fifth and sixth grade Merrimack students.

Junior Kaley Jean won the local, district and state levels of the Voice of Democracy speech contest sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. She then competed at the national level in Washington D.C.

In the English Department the Rotary Speech Contest received tremendous accolades this year. Erica Lane was awarded first place for her speech on stigmas of mental illness, tied for second were Jessie Londona and Ingrid Havron and Jack Steines was awarded the fourth place prize.

The Social Studies Department added or revamped AP Economics, AP American Government & Politics, World Studies, Sociology and Contemporary Issues. The three new inter-disciplinary courses are The American Experience, Foundations in World Culture: World Civilizations & Literature and Culture Shock: Social Science & Literature.

Over two dozen Merrimack High School students attended the state meet for National History Day, competing in nine different categories. Abigail Schaefer won 1<sup>st</sup> place for her research paper, Sarah Heimberg won 1<sup>st</sup> place for her individual performance, Yanna Koudrlashova and Olivia Wood won 3<sup>rd</sup> place for a group performance, Sophi Kim won 1<sup>st</sup> place for her individual

website, Emily Eckert and Allison Chouinard won 1<sup>st</sup> place for their group website, Anna Dobens and Carly LeClaire won 3<sup>rd</sup> place for their group exhibit, Nathan Livie won a National Archives Award for an individual documentary, Nick Marcus and Martin Lyons won a 2<sup>nd</sup> place for their group documentary, McKenzy Miller and Eliza Gustafson won a 3<sup>rd</sup> place and National Archives Award for their group documentary, Sydney Duval won a 2<sup>nd</sup> place for an individual exhibit and Chirstoffer Frank won a 3<sup>rd</sup> place for an individual exhibit.

In Technology Education Educator Carle hosted the Granite State Woodworkers for a hands on lathe turning experience.

Chop Shop 166 awarded the 2016 Chairman's Award to the Merrimack High School FIRST Robotics Team. This is the most prestigious award of the competition, given to the team that best represents a model for other teams to emulate and best embodies the purpose and goals of FIRST.

The Merrimack High School Theater presented Our Town and Evening Acts and participated in the New England Educational Theater Guild and Regionals.

In the Music Department the Concert Band received an "A" rating from all four adjudicators at the New Hampshire Large Group Band competition. Eleven music students were selected for the several All-State music ensembles. Thirty-six entries performed at the NH Solo & Ensemble Festival with 92% receiving "A" ratings. The Marching Band performed at four football games, two parades, and the Salem Marching Band Invitational. The Jazz Band performed at the University of New Hampshire Jazz Festival and three concerts.

The Art Department continues to enhance the Cat Walk at the High School with student created stained glass windows, under the direction of Educator Rordam.

The Guidance Department held another successful College Fair, continued its Tuesday evening programs for parents on college planning, financial aid, etc. The hosted a breakfast for military representatives as an opportunity to be kept up to date with recruiting policies.

Challenge Days were held for freshmen, sophomore and junior classes with a special graduation challenge day for seniors. Principal Johnson was approached by several seniors all emphasizing the importance of creating a challenge day for incoming freshmen.

The Athletics Department sent twenty-five student athletes to a banquet in Concord hosted by Governor Maggie Hassan. The football team performed over 600 hours of community service in the last eleven months and had two players named to the NH All-Scholastic Football Team and two players named to the ALL-USA New Hampshire Football 1<sup>st</sup> Team.

This year the game against Exeter was played in memory of alumni Timothy Gibson who lost his life overseas while serving in the military. The winning field goal in the closing seconds against the reigning state champs was the highlight of the season.

In girls soccer seven seniors received New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) All Academic Awards, Soccer Coach Farnsworth and Hockey Coach Davis were named coaches of the year in their respective sports.

Girls' basketball advanced to the play-offs and won the first round. Sophomore Sabrina Johnson was awarded an All-State Honorable Mention and Jackson Gutekunst, Lauren Dubois and Caline Pitten were named to the NHIAA Scholars All-American Team.

Varsity volleyball player Jo Coffey was named New Hampshire player of the year and garnered several other notable awards and recognitions among them the Gatorade Player of the Year. She broke the all-time state assist record. Elise Jolly was named to the NH 2<sup>nd</sup> team All-state and was named a Top American Phenom, Katie Flynn earned a NH Honorable mention and Lianna Klinger was named to the Nashua Telegraph 2<sup>nd</sup> Team.

The ice hockey team went into the semi-finals with a 13-3-2 record. Ryan Downie and Klye Feeney made 1<sup>st</sup> team NH Division Two All-State. Jeff Gerhard made 2<sup>nd</sup> team NH Division Two All-State.

Girls' Cross Country finished fifth at the division championships for the second straight year. Bailey Carrillo's 22<sup>nd</sup> place finish earned her a trip to the New England Championships. Her time of 19:06.1 was the fastest time a runner from the girl's team has run on this course.

Boys' basketball made the state finals and stayed hopeful up to the buzzer. They will be most remembered for their character and grace in accepting the heartbreaking decision. The boys' indoor track finished third at the division meet, enabling twelve members to advance to the New England meet. Senior Chase Sweeney was declared state champion in the 600 meter race and was selected by the coaches to the All-State team.

Girls' winter track and field 4x800 relay team members Callie Dwyer, Erica Lane, Bailey Carrillo and Grace Corbett took first place at the Division One meet and set a new school record. The 4x400 team of Siaoli Wright, Erica Lane, Callie Dwyer, and Ashley Murray finished in fourth place. Siaoli Wright finished 5<sup>th</sup> in the 300 meter dash and 6<sup>h</sup> in the 55 meter hurdles. Charlotte Perry placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the long jump, Bailey Carrillo placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the 1500 meter run, and Callie Dwyer placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the 600 meter run.

Merrimack Cares is a service-learning club at Merrimack High School whose goal is to provide assistance and/or opportunities to others. It was launched last year and this year is working this year to raise enough funds to enable ten Merrimack residents who are WWII veterans to take part in the Honor Flight program. The program escorts veterans to Washington, D.C. to visit the WWII memorial for the day. The cost is \$450.00 per veteran. Three fundraisers scheduled are a Family Fun Night a Courtyard Dance and a Go Fund Me Page.

Merrimack Cares members have also organized a food drive to support the NH Food Bank and attended the annual AmeriCorps/Vista meeting. Junior David Vaccaro recently traveled to Malawi to assist in building a school. He hopes to return with other members to continue the work.

The Empty Bowls project continues to raise impressive funds to feed the hungry. This year over \$3,000.00 was raised for the Merrimack Food Pantry.

About 130 South Korean students from the Gimhac Foreign Language School again visited Merrimack High School as part of their Ivy League College tour.



Educators will lead student trips to China, Dublin, London and Paris.

Principal Johnson then spoke about two prior Merrimack High School graduates who have shared how their high school experiences shaped their interests and goals for their futures.

Looking ahead, by 2020 a new comprehensive course level will be introduced. The purpose is to challenge the middle of the road student. There will no longer be a “certificate of completion” awarded to any student. Only diplomas will be awarded to qualified students. Graduation is set for June 11, 2016.

Vice Chair Barnes stated that every year she is impressed by the presentation from the Merrimack High School Principal. As a parent of an eighth grader she noted that the Summer Institute is more about intervention but not extension as it relates to moving students to the next academic level. She also stressed the importance of successful communication with parents.

Board Member Powell shared that this is always his favorite time of year when the schools come to present. He applauded the students who spoke and the fact that they have their goals already planned out.

Board Member Powell asked about the 2020 requirement and how it would impact a current high school student who does not complete the educational requirements before 2020.

Principal Johnson stated the Academy and the Summer Institute offer options for struggling students.

Board Member Guagliumi expressed her thanks and noted that the students make the school and the community proud.

Chairman Ortega echoed those comments and noted the two of the objectives of the Logic Model (student directed learning and the creation of life-long learners), were in evidence tonight. He noted that the students in attendance are fantastic role models and wished them success in their futures endeavors.

Principal Johnson closed by noting that Chairman Ortega’s leadership on the School Board has been exemplary and called Chairman Ortega one of the true treasures of the community.

## **6. Legislative Update**

Chairman Ortega invited State Representatives Jack Balcom and Chris Christensen. They addressed several bills that related to education that are pending or recently enacted.

Representative Christensen shared that a recently defeated insurance bill will be resurrected in some format and could result in higher premiums to the school districts.

Representative Balcom began by stating that the Education Committee has been very busy with fifty-four bills introduced on the House side and thirty bills on the Senate side. Senate Bill 312 relates to epinephrine administration in independent schools.

Senate Bill 370 establishes a committee to study real time threat notification systems to link schools with law enforcement when schools are under direct threat. Chairman Ortega noted that the Merrimack School District has approved the COPSYNC 911 program and that it has already been rolled out in the schools.

Senate Bill 371 establishes requirements for implementing a school lunch meal payment policy. Board Member Guagliumi asked if the child's balance is zero if they would be denied even a cheese sandwich.

Representative Balcom responded that the bill shifts the onus off of the student and onto the parents.

Student Representative Marcus asked if the bill stipulates the actions to take to collect payment and was told no, that it is up to the staff at the school to contact parents.

House Bill 1372 permitting a child with a disability to use audio or video recording devices in the classrooms was challenged by Vice Chair Barnes. She was concerned that the language in the bill in regards to parents opting in or opting out was confusing, contradictory and burdensome. She advocated an opt-out only option.

Superintendent Chiafery shared that the original intent of the bill was to preclude recordings being used in teacher evaluations. Recordings for IEP purposes, students out on long-term illness and using SKYPE and student teachers needing to show themselves being video-taped are examples of the kinds of uses still needed would be compromised by this bill.

Representative Balcom noted that the amended bill caused the language change.

House Bill 1457 establishes a code of professional ethics for New Hampshire teachers.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that the final result of this bill could change from being a valuable tool to being too restrictive to be helpful. The Professional Standards Board, whose Chairman is Merrimack Special Education Director Fabrizio, is already looking at the code of ethics. She thought that the best overseers would be the local School Board.

Representative Balcom stated that the intent was not to interfere with what is going on at the local level if it is working and that the bill might possibly be killed in committee.

Board Member Powell reiterated Vice Chair Barnes' concerns about the need for parents to opt in before any survey can be sent out and that it is burdensome.

Vice Chair Barnes asked if the research had been done to see if teacher code of conduct handbooks had been checked to see if they were lacking. There appears to be insufficient data to validate the bill. She is confident that there are already policies and procedures in place in the district and she recommended that the bill be dropped.

House Bill 1644 establishes a reading specialist in the Department of Education to provide support and resources to school districts for identifying and assisting students with dyslexia and related disorders, dyscalculia, and dysgraphia and their families. This bill came about as a response to low reading scores across the state.

Board Member Powell thanked Representative Balcom for introducing this bill.

Vice Chair Barnes questioned the fluctuating funding rates included in the bill.

Representative Balcom responded that the fiscal note is inserted by another branch of the legislative services and he has no input into this section.

Senate Bill 157-FN requiring high school students to pass a competency assessment of the United States and New Hampshire government and civics passed and become effective on March 16, 2016. It now must be implemented in schools beginning with the 2016-2017 school year.

Senate Bill 152 requires the state police to disclose the results of a criminal records check to school officials. It states that information relating to any crime committed by a school employee or a designated school volunteer may be used in a hiring decision.

Chairman Ortega asked Superintendent Chiafery if this would prove to be more costly to the school district.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that she is not sure about the costs but that the results would only go to the superintendents.

Senate Bill 320 relates to non-academic surveys administered by a public school to its students. This bill provides that no student shall be required to volunteer or submit to a non-academic survey or questionnaire without written consent of a parent or legal guardian. The bill also creates an exception to this requirement for the youth risk behavior survey developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This bill was prompted by inappropriate surveys conducted in some Manchester schools that contained suggestive questions about drug use.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that in the Merrimack School District, all surveys are brought before the School Board for prior approval. She also noted that the Merrimack Safeguard grant requires surveys and that the grant would fall apart if surveys were not allowed.

Vice Chair Barnes expressed concern about the opt-in and opt-out problem and recommended that the bill be shot down or changed to opt-out only.

Chairman Ortega noted that it appeared that the language in the bill was contradictory and suggested that it be re-written in clearer language.

Senate Bill 369 requires public schools to include drug and alcohol education as part of their health education curriculum.

Representative Balcom held up a tee shirt with the words END ADDICTION and recommended that everyone watch the online video called "Chasing the Dragon" and noted that a person a day dies in New Hampshire due to drugs.

Representative Christensen asked to speak a little more on the issue of background checks. He noted the speed with which gun background checks are conducted versus the \$25 per person that is paid to the state before the check proceeds. New Hampshire is looking into moving to the same system utilized in Massachusetts that is more efficient and free.

Board Member Powell asked Superintendent Chiafery if the electronic system now in use is instantaneous and was told no, that it takes time for the results to come back.

Chairman Ortega thanked the representatives for attending and explaining the bills and answering questions.

Representative Balcom thanked Chairman Ortega for his leadership. He then reminded the members that the representatives are fully accessible.

## **7. Quarterly Curriculum Review**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin began by referring to the high school student presentations heard earlier in the evening and stressed that the students' successes are the culmination of the work of the entire school district and community culture. He then shared the status of curriculum development.

The Math focus began at the August Academy in 2014 with the formulation of a K-12 Math Committee. They began work on a three year K-12 Action Plan whose goal was to provide research to the leadership team about the elementary math program and its relationship to the middle school and high school math programs. The plan also included a K-12 book study of mathematical practices and a soon to be held day-long meeting made up of the K-12 Math Committee and high school math teachers. The goal next year will be to identify resources suitable for grades K-8 to be tested and then put in place.

The Literacy curriculum primary goal at the high school has been development of college and career ready standards for the interdisciplinary courses. The collaborative assessments given to students in grades K-8 has provided data to teachers that has helped shape instruction. The Literacy Team is focusing on the needs of the reader rather than focusing on teaching the standards.

The Physical Education and Health Curriculum Team meets monthly. Their focus is on aligning the national K-12 standards for physical education to the Merrimack Understanding by Design protocol. This process requires lengthy dialogue. The Health Curriculum standards are completed for the middle school levels and work is now ongoing for the elementary level. The health curriculum deals with sensitive material and a challenge is to create an open dialog without being too graphic.

The Science Curriculum Team is in the process of editing the K-8 document while the high school portion of the team has been working on the competencies. They will meet over the summer to work on linking these together to avoid drops as students' transition from middle school to high school.

The Technology and Library Team has been working on a comprehensive curriculum.

The Response to Intervention Initiative consists of building based teams and a district steering committee. The research shows that RTI can reduce the number of students designated as special education. Students without IEP's will now be able to get the assistance of special education teachers when necessary.

Chairman Ortega thanked Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin for the presentation.

Board Member Schneider found the level of feedback very helpful.

Board Member Guagliumi expressed appreciation for the update and all the work that goes on behind the scenes.

## **8. Board's Response to a Charge for the Planning and Building Committee**

At the last meeting the School Board discussed three possible charges it was considering to propose to the Planning and Building Committee.

Charge #1: regarding the funding of an artificial turf field at the high school

Vice Chair Barnes recommended that a separate appendix be prepared that contained a policy governing sponsorships.

Charge #2: regarding the location of future fields

Board Member Schneider did not want to restrict the charge to the two already identified properties and suggested a language change to any unused property.

Charge #3: possible future uses for the district owned land on O'Gara Drive

Vice Chair Barnes noted that after hours use by the community was not addressed in the charge.

Chairman Ortega stated that this would depend on how the land will be used in the future.

Board Member Guagliumi asked that the first bullet include the greater community in it.

Board Member Schneider asked that the first bullet be changed to ask what needs exist within the district and the greater Merrimack community.

Vice Chair Barnes stated that due to the longevity of the second and third charges she would like quarterly updates and to include this in the charge.

Board Member Powell stated that the primary responsibility of the School Board is the district and that other usage that benefits the town would be an added benefit.

Board Member Powell wanted a determination on the liability of the skateboard park and that the charge include research into if it should stay or go away.

Chairman Ortega suggested that the changes be made and the Charge be readied for the next Consent Agenda.

Superintendent Chiafery suggested that the Planning and Building Committee be invited to the next School Board meeting and the Charges presented then.

Board Member Schneider preferred putting the Charge on the Consent Agenda and making it an agenda item as well.

### **9. Report on School Statewide Telephony Emergency Preparedness Project (S.T.E.P.)**

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell referred to the School Statewide Telephony Emergency Preparedness Project report on the Merrimack School District's compliance issues. An audit was conducted to ensure that correct address and location information is being reported during 9-1-1 emergency calls. The areas of non-compliance are now being addressed and the Merrimack School District will be in full compliance by the end of the summer.

Board Member Schneider asked how this overlaps with the COPSYNC.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that COPSYNC is an online scenario and that S.T.E.P. is a telephone option.

Board Member Powell asked if all of the district buildings were tested and was told yes.

### **10. Board's Response to Change the Title of the Business Administrator**

Superintendent Chiafery noted that she took under advisement the recommendation from the Board at the previous meeting about the title change. She requested a title change from Business Administrator to Assistant Superintendent of Business.

Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to change the title to Assistant Superintendent of Business.

Board Member Guagliumi thanked Business Administrator for all he does.

Business Administrator took the opportunity to voice his appreciation for the position.

Chairman Ortega noted that the title change is appropriate.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Student Representative Marcus voted In Favor.

### **11. Actual Health Insurance Rate for 2016-2017**

In his first action under the new title, Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell brought the good news that the anticipated rate increase of 12.3% has changed to an actual rate increase of 4.8% resulting in a savings of about \$182, 843.00 in the operating budget.

Board Member Powell asked why the rate was off so much.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell explained that an 18 month range of claims is considered and when the rate is set the oldest six months are eliminated from the rate calculation.

## **12. Other**

### **a) Correspondence**

Board Member Schneider received correspondence from a person in the district who asked about the process of facility naming.

Vice Chair Barnes received feedback about communication in regard to the eighth grade parent night and the course of studies. She shared this with the principal of the middle school.

Chairman Ortega received correspondence from a parent in regards to the water testing.

### **b) Comments**

Board Member Schneider raised the issue of the tainted water due to the issues at the St. Gobain company and asked if the topic should be discussed at a future School Board meeting in order to formulate a proactive response.

Chairman Ortega thanked the School Board for the recognition he received at the beginning of the meeting. He expressed his pleasure at serving with all of the current and previous members. He reflected on some of the accomplishments he has witnessed during his years on the Board it was with pride. His strongest memories will be those that involved students directly. He then reminded the community to remember to vote on Tuesday, April 12, 2016 and to support the budget recommended by the School Board.

## **13. New Business**

Superintendent Chiafery shared that some of the staff members at the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School have raised the issue of air quality. An outside company has been hired to address the issue. The first step was for the affected staff members to complete a survey.

## **14. Committee Reports**

Student Representative Marcus shared that two Merrimack High School students received National Archives Awards for outstanding use of primary sources and ten other students received recognition at the National History Day event.

He also shared that the Theater Company placed fourth in the New Hampshire Theater Festival affording them second alternate status for the regional festival. Additionally a best personal performance was awarded to sophomore Luke Modlinsky.

Student Representative Marcus chose to thank Chairman Ortega for his service and how noted the disappointment expressed by many students at his resignation.

Chairman Ortega stated that he and Board Member Schneider had attended a Business meeting at SERESC.

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

Michael Thompson of 99 Joppa Road stated that PFC's are manmade chemicals and that they cannot reside in natural water.

He then shared that his son's experience with Police and Children PAC opened a dialogue about the dangers of marijuana.

## **16. Manifest**

The Board signed the manifest.

At 10:37 p.m. Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to enter non-public session per RSA A 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c).

A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Board Member Guagliumi voted In Favor.

Board Member Schneider voted In Favor.

Board Member Powell voted In Favor.

Vice Chair Barnes voted In Favor.

Chairman Ortega voted In Favor.

At 11:25 p.m. Board Member Powell moved (seconded by Vice Chair Barnes) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.