

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
James Mastricola Upper Elementary School-All Purpose Room
September 6, 2016
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

Present: Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Schneider, Board Members Guagliumi and Schoenfeld, Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell and Student Representative Sernik.

Absent: Board Member Thompson was not present but participated via a conference call per RSA 91-A;2 which states that all parties must contemporaneously be able to hear and speak to each other, the meeting should be audible to the public, all persons present must be identified, and all votes must be taken by roll call vote.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

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

Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

3. Introduction of Student Representative to the School Board

Chair Barnes welcomed Merrimack High School senior Zev Sernik to the School Board and invited him to speak.

Student Representative Sernik is the treasurer of the National Honor Society, Captain of both the Math and Quiz Bowl Teams, a member of Science Olympia and holds memberships in several other organizations.

Student Representative Sernik stated that he is honored to be chosen for this position and is eager to be of assistance to the community in any way he can be.

4. Additional Information Regarding PFOA's

Chair Barnes invited Michael Wimsatt from the Waste Management Division of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services to the table.

Mr. Wimsatt opened his remarks by stating that the Division of Environmental Services (DES) has been actively addressing the problem of PFOA's in the Merrimack drinking water since February of 2016. To date over one thousand private wells have been sampled in a five town area.

The DES has been working closely with the Merrimack Village District and St. Gobain to remedy the PFOA/PFOS contamination. Merrimack Village District's wells four and five have been shut down and St. Gobain has been asked to agree to fund the design, construction and

operation of a treatment system to bring them back on-line. The treatment system will be a large scale granulated activated carbon treatment system. This is the preferred system for removing these particular contaminants from the water.

The remaining issues are the time and cost involved in the process. This is part of the long range solution recommended by the New Hampshire DES.

Currently there is no state standard for drinking water. When notified of the situation the New Hampshire DES quickly moved to adopt the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standard of 70 ppt. for PFOA's/PFOS in groundwater, via an emergency rule. The emergency rule has a temporary six month duration and it gives the New Hampshire DES investigation and remediation authority to ensure that no provider of drinking water provide water when it exceeds these limits. The responsible party must take steps to provide safe drinking water while the problem exists.

During the six month emergency rule the New Hampshire DES has taken steps to establish this as a permanent ruling. This involved addressing public comments and then drafting a final rule to be filed with the state legislature in September of 2016.

Board Member Schoenfeld noted that the PFOA ppt. amount began at 120 then went to 70 and asked if this downward trend is expected to continue.

Mr. Wimsatt responded that the law allows this number to be adjusted as more information becomes available and when the experts that review it recommend a change.

Ambient groundwater standards are fluid and have changed in both directions as new information becomes available.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if trends can be identified through testing.

Mr. Wimsatt responded that the general findings denote very little fluctuations on average. The PFOA issue is being monitored very closely with more frequent testing.

Board Member Guagliumi asked what oversight is being done with the Merrimack Village District and what kinds of reports they have to submit.

Mr. Wimsatt responded that the New Hampshire DES is working daily with the MVD and lab results are provided to both the MVD and the New Hampshire DES almost simultaneously.

Board Member Guagliumi asked Mr. Wimsatt how he would feel living in Merrimack today with this issue.

Mr. Wimsatt responded that no one wants to learn that their water has anything in it that should not be there. PFOA is a synthetic compound that does not exist naturally in nature and has been in use since the 1940's. It is found in water, soil, and in thousands of retail products. He is very familiar with how drinking water standards are created and he believes that when the drinking water standards are met that the water is safe to drink.

Mr. Wimsatt noted that there are other hazards such as arsenic and radon that can also end up in drinking water.

Board Member Guagliumi asked about precautions to be taken in regards to safeguarding children.

Mr. Wimsatt responded that he is not a toxicologist but that to his knowledge the 70 ppt. baseline was based on a pregnant woman, the most sensitive receptor.

Board Member Thompson via conference call asked if RSA 45-C6 is the statute that allows the state to adopt the federal guideline when no state guideline exists.

Mr. Wimsatt responded yes.

Board Member Thompson asked if a standard is set based on cancer risk based on one person per million and if this is factored into the 70 ppt.

Mr. Wimsatt responded the standard is not set on cancer risk. The available data on potential cancer risk was based on testicular cancer and that the receptor for this was not the most sensitive. The 70 ppt. is five times more protective, or one person per five million people.

Board Member Thompson asked if the level is based on any other data than the cancer risk.

Mr. Wimsatt responded that any health endpoints data was factored into the decision to set the level at 70 ppt.

Board Member Thompson asked that the website link be provided to the superintendent's office,

Mr. Wimsatt responded that he would do so and that all of the data is public information that was released in May.

Board Member Thompson asked if the guidelines for private wells have been updated since 2011.

Mr. Wimsatt responded that he would get that information and forward it to the superintendent's office.

Vice Chair Schneider expressed concern about contamination to private wells due to legal and illegal dumping. He asked what the New Hampshire DES is doing about landfill contamination due to sources other than St. Gobain.

Mr. Wimsatt responded that the Merrimack Transfer Station was tested and the only well with an elevated level of PFOA's was at the transfer station itself. The private wells in the area that were sampled were safe.

The longer disposal site sampling revealed elevated levels of PFOA's but it is still unclear that these levels represent impacts from the disposal facility. Work on evaluating this data is ongoing.

Chair Barnes noted that she lives on the road near the transfer station and that she was pleased with the quick response by the New Hampshire DES in testing her well and that it had no contamination by PFOA's.

Chair Barnes asked about rainfall and in the case of a prolonged rainfall, what steps will be taken to protect the water supply. She noted that the current drought might be keeping the numbers down.

Mr. Wimsatt responded that there are still unknowns as things relate to future rainfall and that the New Hampshire DES will continue to monitor the situation.

Board Member Thompson asked for clarification on Mr. Wimsatt's response.

Mr. Wimsatt responded that he does not think that rainfall tomorrow will result in an immediate spike in the readings. More sight investigation is needed.

Board Member Thompson noted that the New Hampshire DES guidelines recommend testing after heavy rainfall. He asked if the New Hampshire DES is doing anything to further the study of PFOA's in groundwater or are they only going to go by federal EPA guidelines.

Mr. Wimsatt responded that the New Hampshire DES does rely on federal experts and resources. These studies are very expensive and time consuming and most states cannot afford to undertake their own long-term health affect studies.

Board Member Thompson asked if the New Hampshire DES reached out to Vermont, New York or New Jersey to ask why they adopted stronger guidelines than those recommended by the federal EPA.

Mr. Wimsatt responded that early in this situation, the New Hampshire DES reached out to their counterparts in Vermont and after reviewing their data, then chose to accept the federal guidelines.

Chair Barnes thanked Mr. Wimsatt for his time and information and for attending the meeting.

Superintendent Chiafery noted for the record that she also received advice from local physician Dr. Mark Timmerman who directed her to Department of Health and Human Services representative Jeff Parent. She noted also that state epidemiologist Dr. Chan is very interested in this issue.

Board Member Guagliumi noted that Dr. Chan had come to Merrimack previously to speak on this issue and that anyone interested can access the speech through Merrimack TV.

5. Proposed Plan for District System of Care and Support

Chair Barnes invited Director of Special Education John Fabrizio, Assistant Principal Julie DeLuca and members of the District Mental Health Committee to the table.

Before presenting the Action Plan to the School Board, Assistant Principal DeLuca asked the members of the committee to introduce themselves. Those in attendance were Deborah Barker, Guidance Director at Merrimack High School; Stacy Conty, Out-of-District Coordinator; Lauren Dorrow, School Psychologist; Karen Hammes, Nurse at Merrimack High School; Kate Harrington, School Counselor at James Mastricola Elementary School; Kathleen Hoppa, School Counselor at Reeds Ferry Elementary School; Laurie Livie, Behavior Specialist at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School; and Fern Seiden, School Counselor at Thorntons Ferry School.

Assistant Principal DeLuca also noted the work of Tim McMahon, PASS teacher at Merrimack High School. Christina Lopez, School Counselor at Merrimack Middle School is also a member of the committee.

In trying to define what a district mental health system of care and learning supports might look like, the committee when they first met asked themselves these three essential questions.

1. What are the depth and scope of the mental health needs of the district?
2. How do we blend district, state and community practices to provide a continuum of care?
3. What do features of an interconnected and systematic framework look like?

Director of Special Education Fabrizio explained the purpose of the committee and their attendance at this meeting.

The process to define the purpose of the committee began by examining the research, frameworks and resources already available within the community and the state. The next step was to align this with academics and the district response to instruction (RTI) model. The long range plan is to deepen understanding of the needs and time for problem identification. This continuum leads to the development of a system of care and learning supports for students with mental health needs.

Year One began in the 2015-2016 school year. The committee expanded, conducted a needs assessment, created a multi-year Action Plan, met with community and state partners, sent representatives to state and local committees to share and bring back information and attended various professional development opportunities.

The mental health data that was gathered was then sorted based on the RTI three tiered system. Considerable time was spent tracking the social emotional interventions for students to provide a picture of how health providers were utilizing their time.

Tier One interventions are those offered to a classroom, team or whole school. Tier Two interventions build on this and are offered to groups or individuals. Tier Three is provided for a very small percentage of students, those experiencing a crisis requiring immediate attention.

Five months of data collecting revealed that 80% of time was spent in reactionary situations. Because of this 20% of students did not get the skills they need to cope with potential mental health challenges. The goal is to develop an integrated system of care that supports 100% of the students.

In regards to the annual Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) which is administered state-wide during extended home room periods, the committee looked at the mental health responses noting the most serious issues of depression and suicide ideation and attempts.

The data collection and needs assessment for 2015-2016 revealed that one in four days was spent on tier three, about 200 students considered suicide last year and safety protocols were completed for only about 51 K-8 students during the school year.

Other observations from the data include the need for better communication between schools, special services students are suspended less than non-identified students, there is a mismatch

between district needs and resources, contract employees provide essential tier two and three interventions and are rarely with the student through their entire academic career.

Continuing on, special education students experienced different transitional and communication supports than non-identified students. There is also a population of unidentified students who have mental health needs that are not being serviced. Lastly, middle school and high school schedules also limit access to providing these supports.

This data was used to create an Action Plan with the goal of developing an integrated multi-tiered system of care that develops the capacity for educators to address mental health concerns that are barriers to learning and achievement and to increase the resiliency of all students.

As part of the Action Plan district systems, protocols and procedures and the six main content areas were examined utilizing the adapted *Student and Learning Supports: Developing a Unified, Comprehensive, and Equitable System* created by UCLA in 2015.

The Merrimack School District system of care and support is comprised of six components:

1. Classroom based learning supports (Tier 1)
2. Student and Family Special Assistance (Tiers 2 and 3)
3. Crises assistance and prevention (Tiers 1, 2, 3)
4. Community outreach and collaborative engagement (Tiers 1, 2, 3)
5. Home involvement, engagement, and re-engagement in schooling (Tiers 1, 2, 3)
6. Supports for transitions (Tiers 1, 2, 3)

In Year Two (2016-2017) of the Action Plan, the work will be to study and revise current transition practices between schools. This will include focus groups for parents and students, workshops for families and community, and further research on family engagement and family continuum of services.

Year Two Tier One professional development will involve training in mental health first aid and learning supports that align with elementary competencies. This will include universal screening tools and definitions of the tiers within the district.

Involvement and partnerships with state and community groups will continue.

The goal for Year Three (2017-2018) is a full rollout with the implementation of a universal screening tool, curriculum alignment in middle school and classroom supports

Year Three (2017-2018) will look at transition protocols between and within schools. The creation of a parent-communication plan and the development of a district-wide resource guide for families and students in conjunction with parent workshops will help to make these transitions easier.

In Year Four (2018-2019) a focus will be on training new staff, analyzing the new screening tools, a review of the social/emotional instruction at Merrimack High School, implementation of peer-to-peer support models and a scope and sequence for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) preschool through grade twelve students.

At this time a parent voice will be added to the committee.

Director of Special Education Fabrizio closed the presentation by highlighting the budgetary implications. The bulk of the costs will be for hiring substitutes to allow teachers to attend professional development workshops.

Chair Barnes opened the floor to board member questions.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if the committee would be able to provide their budgetary needs in time for the budget meetings.

Director Fabrizio and Assistant Principal DeLuca both responded that they are still developing their overall plan and that the dollar amounts needed will be provided in time for budget meetings.

Vice Chair Schneider asked why the plan builds up from the lower grades and not down from the high school when the data shows serious mental health needs at the high school.

Merrimack High School guidance counselor Deborah Barker responded that the committee felt it was more important to focus on the beginning years and grow upward.

Board Member Guagliumi thanked the committee for their methodical approach to the issue of student mental health. She expressed concern over the YRSB results and would like to see more immediate support at the high school level.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked what members see as the most important challenges the committee faces.

Assistant Principal DeLuca responded that the barriers are not financial. They are district issues that are solvable such as scheduling, classroom guidance, and the importance of all staff working together.

Director of Special Education Fabrizio agreed and added that the building of community partnerships is a piece of the overall picture that needs to be worked on.

Chair Barnes noted the importance of methodical collection, distribution, training and follow-up study and the time needed for this to be done effectively. She stated that the School Board needs to recognize and allow for this to ensure student privacy.

Chair Barnes also saw the importance of parent workshops in tackling the mental health concerns.

Chair Barnes asked about the Tier One interventions at the high school.

Merrimack High School guidance counselor Barker responded that aside from the guidance counselors teaching guidance curriculum to all freshman classes, they are also taught within the disciplines.

Chair Barnes noted the goal of the school district is to get students' college and career ready and that their emotional and mental health is a key part of this.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin noted that part of tier one is to redefine the mindset of the teachers and other adults who interact with students on a daily basis.

6. 2016 District Assessment Results for Smarter Balanced, SAT and NECAP Science

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin shared the results of the tests noting that they are to be seen as a data point to be added to other data points in order to develop an individual student profile.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin then spoke from a handout, copies of which he provided to the board members. Two years of Smarter Balanced testing results were shared and it was noted that they are one data point in a student's profile.

In the past, students were able to opt in or out of SAT tests in grade 11. Last year the Merrimack School District covered the cost for all students to participate in the essay component of the test. The state funded the rest of the test. Preliminary results revealed that the Evidence based reading and writing (ERA) score was 529 out of 800. The math mean score was 518 out of 800. Forty five percent of Merrimack students exceeded the district benchmark and thirty-nine percent exceeded the state benchmark.

On the SAT essay out of a mean score of eight, test results revealed an average of five for reading, three for analysis, and five for writing. There is still work to be done in the area of analysis.

Student Representative Sernik thanked the district for paying for the essay test. He then stated that he did not see the results as an accurate reflection of the academic abilities of his classmates based on his own observations during the test.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin commented that the main reason for moving to the SAT was that it was thought students would take the test more seriously.

Vice Chair Schneider asked about data sharing and student confidentiality.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that security of student data is taken very seriously. Individual student results are mailed directly from the College Board to the student's residence. He noted his own difficulty in getting the data to present at this meeting.

Vice Chair Schneider stated that traditionally, SAT results were sent to the student, the high school and colleges the student requested get the scores. He asked if the test results are treated similarly to the Smarter Balanced test results in regards to student confidentiality and was told yes.

Chair Barnes asked what percentage of students took the SAT prior to it being made mandatory.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin will provide that data.

Superintendent Chiafery spoke about the process. Last year, the first year of Smarter Balanced testing, was computer based and this year the grade eleven students had to use paper and pencil for the SAT and they were not prepared for this change.

7. First Reading of New Board Policy

• Student Members of the School Board

After consultation with Merrimack High School Principal Johnson, Superintendent Chiafery read aloud a policy to be newly adopted. It states:

STUDENT-MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD

The Board may choose to add one or more student members from the District high school. Student-members will serve one-year terms. Student-members will not have the right to vote. Student-members will be excluded from all non-public sessions the Board enters.

Student-members will be chosen by a vote of the Student Council.

Student-members are expected to:

1. Attend all school board meetings;
2. Represent all high school students within the District;
3. Present to the school board specific proposals and ideas from the high school student body;
4. Serve as a liaison between students, District staff, and the Board; and
5. Keep the student body informed of Board business and actions;
6. Comply with all Board policies relative to students and Board members, when applicable.

The Board reserves the right to discontinue the addition of student-members at any time.

Legal References:

RSA 189: 1-C, School Board Student Member

RSA 194: 23-f, High School Student as a Board Member

The second paragraph is different than that in the RSA's which refer to a vote taken by the entire student body. This modification is allowed under the statutes.

Board Member Guagliumi asked to re-phrase the first responsibility as it relates to attendance to make it more accommodating to student schedules.

Superintendent Chiafery will re-work the language. She has already spoken about this point with new student representative Sernik.

Board Member Thompson asked if the student member represented the district or just the high school.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that when it was crafted by the legislature the intent was to create a connection to high school courses in social studies and government and is specifically for high school.

Student Representative Sernik responded that he would not feel comfortable representing students outside of the high school because he would not understand their issues and needs.

Chair Barnes noted the value of the connection between the school board and the high school via the student representative.

8. Review of August Academy and the First Day of School

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin began by stating the August Academy built on last year's theme of establishing a "habit of mind" around inquiry. This year the theme was on creating and re-creating the conditions in the classroom to allow this to occur. Tier One instruction, content integration, was the focus of discussions around creating these situations.

Keynote speaker Ty Gagne of Primex New Hampshire, a risk management firm; provided teachers with a language for considering what might be an acceptable risk in their profession. His speech empowered teachers to take acceptable risks for their students.

Elementary teachers then gathered by district grade level and high school teachers gathered by department. They discussed how to build sustainable units and later shared their work with the staff as a whole. Each group had to define their work in three words and creatively demonstrate what that meant.

The K-12 music teachers' break-out session was led by Dr. John Feierabend Professor Emeritus of Music Education at the Hartt School of the University. Dr. Feierabend spoke about teaching music as if it was a language.

Professor of Kinesiology from the University of Southern Mississippi Robert Doan provided the K-12 health and physical education teachers a greater understanding of their content standards.

The K-12 art educators participated in an on-line workshop.

The mental health staff learned about conditions that create trauma for students from Dr. Yackley from the State of New Hampshire.

The para-educators spent their time at August Academy meeting with Carol Kosnitsky learning about how to create conditions for comprehensive tier one instruction and support.

9. Approval of August 15, 2016 Minutes

Board Member Schoenfeld moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2016 meeting.

Board Member Thompson requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 5, line 222: remove the name "...Mike Metfield." Add medical and other resources that can represent information in the field.
- Page 9, line 404: After "...on the cusp students..." change the sentence ending to "...an opportunity to gain trial acceptance to the honors program."

A roll call vote was taken.

Chair Barnes voted In Favor.

Vice Chair Schneider voted In Favor.

Board Member Guagliumi voted In Favor.

Board Member Thompson, via conference call, voted In Favor.

Board Member Schoenfeld voted In Favor.

The motion carried as amended 5-0-0.

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

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell presented three gifts for the board's acceptance.

The first gift is from LifeTouch National School Studios to James Mastricola Upper Elementary School in the amount of \$1,064.00. The funds are to be used to support the Enterprise City economics unit for grade six social studies.

The second gift is from the Lions Club of Merrimack to the Merrimack High School in the amount of \$1,000.00. The funds are to be used to purchase the symbio virtual lab kit and lab kits for physical science.

The third gift is from the Merrimack High School Striker Club to Merrimack High School in the amount of \$2,300.00. This gift is to help pay for the soccer goals at the high school.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to accept the gifts with gratitude.

A roll call vote was taken.

Chair Barnes voted In Favor.

Vice Chair Schneider voted In Favor.

Board Member Guagliumi voted In Favor.

Board Member Thompson, via conference call, voted In Favor.

Board Member Schoenfeld voted In Favor.

The motion carried as presented 5-0-0.

Chair Barnes thanked the Merrimack High School Striker Club for purchasing the soccer goals.

11. Consent Agenda

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the following for consent:

a) Educator Nominations

Marion Allen, Part-Time World Language Teacher, Merrimack Middle School

Sophie Fowler, Part-Time Preschool Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School

Aurelie Humes, Grade 4 Teacher, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

Brianne Ledoux, School Counselor, Merrimack High School

b) Approval of Board Officers Policy

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin requested approval of the Board Officers Policy.

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the consent agenda as read.

A roll call vote was taken.

Chair Barnes voted In Favor.

Vice Chair Schneider voted In Favor.

Board Member Guagliumi voted In Favor.

Board Member Thompson, via conference call, voted In Favor.

Board Member Schoenfeld voted In Favor.

The motion carried as presented 5-0-0.

12. Other

a) Correspondence

Chair Barnes shared that she had received correspondence from the Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) signifying that Director of Library, Media and Technology Nancy Rose has “mastered the knowledge and skills needed to bring 21st century technology to our K-12 school systems.” She has earned the Certified Education Technology Leader (CETL) designation by passing a rigorous certification exam.

Chair Barnes congratulation Director Rose and thanked her for her hard work.

b) Comments

There were no comments.

13. New Business

Chair Barnes asked board members to e-mail questions to her in regards to the upcoming budget by September 19, 2016. She will compile the information and present a consistent vision from the board at the October 3, 2016 school board meeting.

14. Committee Reports

Vice Chair Schneider attended the SERESC meeting on August 25, 2016 where the new director Mark Conrad presided. Budgets and programs were discussed. The committee will move to monthly meetings.

Vice Chair Schneider reminded the board that Superintendent Chiafery and Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell, will be attending the Planning and Building Committee on Monday, September 12, 2016 to share the capital improvement projects as they relate to the budget plan.

Board Member Guagliumi attended the Merrimack Safeguard Committee meeting the prior week and listened to a presentation by the Good Grief program that focused on helping youth and families make positive choices.

She also learned that the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) take-back day is scheduled for October 22, 2016 at the Merrimack Police Station.

Chair Barnes shared that the Grater Woods sub-committee met on August 16, 2016 and planned trail work for this coming weekend.

Board Member Thompson attended the Parks and Recreation meeting where he learned that plans for the dog park will proceed. Summer Camp sessions were sold out for seven of eight sessions. A memorial is scheduled for 9-11 victims at Abby Griffin Park.

15. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

16. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m.

A roll call vote was taken.

Chair Barnes voted In Favor.

Vice Chair Schneider voted In Favor.

Board Member Guagliumi voted In Favor.

Board Member Thompson, via conference call, voted In Favor.

Board Member Schoenfeld voted In Favor.

The motion passed 5-0-0.