

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
November 7, 2016
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

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

Absent: Student Representative Sernik.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

3. Quarterly Curriculum Review

Focus on Math

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin prefaced the Math Curriculum Committee members' reports by reminding the board that other committee work is ongoing. He then introduced Marsha McGill, principal of James Mastricola Upper Elementary School.

In attendance were several members of the Math Curriculum Committee and math educators.

Principal McGill opened with an historical perspective of the committee's work. The four major focus areas of the Math Action Plan align with the District Logic Model for math which is: "Students demonstrate growth in math achievement."

The four major focus areas:

1. Increase overall knowledge of the pedagogy of teaching and instructional practices as they relate to the Standards for College and Career Readiness and the Standards for Mathematical Practices.
2. Increase collaboration among Pre K-12 educators to ensure Merrimack students are provided with a continuum of learning in the area of mathematics.
3. Review the Merrimack School District K-12 Mathematics Curriculum and its alignment to the Standards for College and Career Readiness.
4. Explore and identify research-based math resources to be used in the delivery of instruction in Merrimack.

Throughout the past year the Math Curriculum Committee developed a set of “givens” to guide their work. These “givens” are that the Merrimack School District math curriculum be aligned with the College and Career Standards for mathematics, students will be provided with common and rigorous expectations for learning, and common assessments will determine what students should know and be able to demonstrate.

The committee also collaborated to create a vision statement that was reflective of the best practices involved in the teaching of mathematics. It states: We will provide 21st Century Learners rigorous opportunities to develop into creative, inquisitive mathematicians who recognize and persevere in understanding mathematical situations.

Educators K-12 met for a collaboration day where the focus was to increase the overall knowledge of the pedagogy of teaching of mathematics and increasing instructional practices for teachers.

The Understanding by Design (UBD) model was used to guide the day with a central focus on the enduring understanding of essential learning concepts.

The committee has continued the successful practice of all K-12 educators reading “What’s Math Got To Do With It?” This book makes math connections to everyday life.

As a part of the Math Action Plan two books were chosen for professional development. They are “Implementing Standards for Mathematical Practices” and “Guided Math in Action.”

Another outcome of the committee work to date is a series of posters that support the mathematical standards.

The committee during its work realized that math builds on the prior year’s understanding and a common vocabulary is important. At each level an essential question will be developed for each grade level standard.

The final focus was to explore and identify research based math resources to be used in the delivery of math instruction.

The review process included the development of a rubric for each program. Cross grade level teams are currently working to evaluate these programs.

As it moves forward the committee will continue to align its work with the District Logic Model as it relates to math. A goal is to narrow the focus in each program.

Board Member Thompson asked if parent feedback was heard during the process and was told that in these early stages the process involved educators and as it continues to narrow then parent feedback will be invited. The committee was mindful to include the parent perspective in the rubric.

Board Member Guagliumi asked about the status of everyday math teaching.

Principal McGill responded that it continues to be used as a resource.

Vice Chair Schneider complimented the Math Curriculum Committee on their approach to including everyday math in their overall teaching. He appreciates the transparency from the committee.

Chair Barnes asked how everyday math factors in the programs that the committee is considering for the Merrimack School District.

Principal McGill responded that the span varies among the different programs.

Chair Barnes asked if there is a parent component to the new program.

Principal McGill thought that the parent component would be a strategy within the program.

Chair Barnes asked about the impact of the new program on students in the middle of the existing program and how they would transition.

Principal McGill responded that strategic planning would guide the transition.

Board Member Schoenfeld complimented the work of the committee to date.

4. Board's Response to Prioritizing Maintenance Items for the 2017-2018 Budget

Chair Barnes read aloud from the list of maintenance items and asked the board to decide what will go into the operating budget and what might go on a warrant article.

The first item, the Merrimack High School cafeteria/HVAC unit is estimated to cost \$539,827.00. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell shared that the heat wheel bracket is now broken and a new one is being welded in-house. The impact of the broken bracket is that the cafeteria is without an exhaust system. The board agreed that this item should be in the operating budget.

The second item, the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School roof is estimated to cost \$612,825.00. It is already ten years out of warranty and would be replaced by a roof with a thirty-five year warranty. The board agreed that this item should be in the operating budget.

The third item, the sidewalk replacement at the Merrimack Middle School is estimated to cost \$98,660.00. Going forward all sidewalks will be sealed every five years to prolong their use. The board agreed that this item should be in the operating budget.

The fourth item, the sidewalk repair at the Merrimack High School is estimated to cost \$55,000.00. The board agreed that this item should be in the operating budget.

The fifth item, the paving at Merrimack High School is estimated to cost \$234,174.00 for the bus loop, \$186,844.00 for the O'Gara Drive section, and \$88,850.00 for a new sidewalk on O'Gara Drive. After discussion, it was agreed that the new sidewalk should be removed from consideration, \$38,000 for safety repairs be included in the budget, and the remainder needed for the bus loop (\$196,000.00) and O'Gara Drive (\$186,844.00) be on a warrant article.

The sixth and final item, the asbestos removal at Merrimack High School is estimated to cost \$265,000.00. The board agreed to place this item on a warrant article.

5. Memorandum of Agreement Between the Merrimack School Board and Merrimack Teachers Association Regarding Educator Title Change

The Director of Guidance at the high school realized at the beginning of school year 2016-2017 that her title had not changed during the collective bargaining process. She desired to have the title “School Counseling Director” to be in sync with her endorsement and to match other school counselors throughout the district.

Superintendent Chiafery brought the matter to the board for amendment.

Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to amend the position title as follows: The title for the Director of Guidance position will change to School Counseling Director, per Code of Endorsement by the New Hampshire Department of Education.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

6. Guaranteed Maximum Rate for Health Insurance

The actual rate is set in the spring. The estimated rate is 9%. The rate is difficult to estimate due to a variety of plan changes employees will make throughout the school year.

7. First Reading of New School Board Policy

Service Animals

The administration took turns reading aloud the proposed policy. It reads:

SERVICE ANIMALS

Purpose

This policy addresses the use of service animals within the school buildings and on school grounds. As established and defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and its accompanying regulations, individuals with disabilities shall be permitted to bring their service animals in school buildings or on school grounds in accordance with this policy. Conditions relative to pets and non-service animals within the school building and on school grounds are found in Board Policy IMG.

“Service Animal” Defined

In accordance with 28 CFR 35.104 (effective March 15, 2011) a “service animal” is defined as:

Any dog that is individually trained to do or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Other species of animals, whether wild or domestic, trained or untrained, are not service animals for the purpose of this definition. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be

directly related to the handler's disability. Examples of work or tasks include, but are not limited to, assisting individuals who are blind or who have low vision with navigation and other tasks, alerting individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing to the presence of people or sounds, providing non-violent protection or rescue work, pulling a wheelchair, assisting an individual during a seizure, alerting individuals to the presence of allergens, retrieving items such as medicine or telephone, providing physical support and assistance with balance and stability to individuals with mobility disabilities, and helping persons with psychiatric and neurological disabilities by preventing or interrupting impulsive or destructive behaviors. The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship do not constitute work or task for the purpose of this definition.

This definition shall be construed to include a "hearing ear dog", guide dog" or "service dog", as those terms are currently defined in NH RSA 167-D:3.

Permissible Inquires

The District will not make the inquiry about the nature or extent of an individual's disability in determining whether to allow a service animal in a school building or on school grounds. When it is not patently obvious as to the role of the service animal, the District may ask whether the animal is required because of a disability and what work or task the animal has been trained to perform.

When a student or employee's disability requires the presence of a service animal in a school building or on school grounds during the school day, the District shall also require annual submission of proof of current vaccinations and immunizations of the service animal and a current veterinary health certificate.

Access to the School Building and Grounds

In accord with federal regulations, individuals with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by their service animal in all areas of District schools, where members of the public, participants in services, programs, or invitees, as relevant, are allowed to go.

Animals for Children with Educational Disabilities or a Section 504 Plan

If a student with an educational disability or a Section 504 Plan seeks to bring an animal on a school campus that is not a service animal, the request shall be referred to the IEP or Section 504 Team to determine whether the animal is necessary for the student to receive a free and appropriate education (FAPE).

Management of Service Animals

Service animals must be under control of their handlers. A service animal shall have a harness, leash, or other tether, unless either the handler is unable because of a disability to use a harness, leash, or other tether, or the use of a harness, leash, or tether would interfere with the service animal's safe, effective performance of work or tasks, in which case the service animal must be otherwise under the handler's control (e.g. voice control, signals, or other effective means).

Care of and Responsibility for Service Animals

The District is not responsible for the care or supervision of a service animal. The owner or handler of the service animal shall be solely responsible for:

- Supervision and care of the animal, including feeding, exercising, clean-up and stain removal;
- Restraint of the animal at all times;
- Damages to the school buildings, property and vehicles caused by the animal;
- Injuries to students, employees, volunteers, and visitors caused by the animal; and
- Annual submission of documentation of vaccinations and immunizations.

Animals for Employees

Use of a service animal by a qualified employee with a disability will be allowed when such use is necessary to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of his/her position or to enjoy the benefits of employment in a manner comparable to those similarly situated non-disabled employees.

Circumstances Under Which a Service Animal Will be Prohibited from Campus

The Superintendent or other designee may ask an individual with a disability to remove a service animal from the campus or school event, or may even deny a request for use of a service animal on campus or at a school event if:

- The animal is out of control and the animal's handler does not take effective action to control it;
- The animal is not housebroken;
- The presence of the animal will require a fundamental alternation of the program or will significantly disrupt or interfere with the educational process;
- When the animal is to be used regularly during the school day or at school events, the handler fails to submit proof of current vaccinations and immunizations of the service animal and a current veterinary health certificate;
- To the extent applicable, the handler fails to comply with NH RSA 167-D.

If an animal is properly removed or prohibited from the premises, the District will continue to give the individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in District services, programs, or activities without having the service animal on the premises.

A decision to remove or prohibit a service animal from District schools may be appealed to the Superintendent of Schools.

Legal References

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act – 29 U.S.C. 794
Americans with Disabilities Act – 42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.
Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability, Title 28 CFR Part 35, Part 36
NH RSA 167-D

Superintendent Chiafery noted a typo and asked that the line above Permissible Inquires be changed from "...167-D:3." To "...167-D:1." She also noted that on page two the word Buildings in the title be capitalized.

Vice Chair Schneider asked how the proposed policy would apply to parents and visitors.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the policy would apply to parents and visitors.

Vice Chair Schneider thought the policy should be worded to include parents and visitors.

Superintendent Chiafery will re-work the language.

Board Member Guagliumi asked should the board consider if an animal owner be required to provide a card so as to minimize the delivery of potentially sensitive information.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that documentation and vaccination proof would be required before the permission was granted.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the district would be allowed to provide anything to the animal such as water. Superintendent Chiafery responded the building administrators will have discretion and that it shouldn't be included in the policy. It should not be so tight that it cannot be administered.

Board Member Thompson asked about a designated bathroom area and that each school is unique and the decisions will vary.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked if there needed to be language that would allow for the student to leave the class to attend to the needs of the animal.

Superintendent Chiafery acknowledged the thought and stated that she will bring the questions back to the Leadership Team. She noted that the more specific a policy the more difficult it becomes for the administration.

Chair Barnes asked about those students who are allergic to dogs.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that this would be a procedural response by the building principal.

8. Approval of October 17, 2016 Minutes

Board Member Schoenfeld moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the minutes of the October 17, 2016 meeting.

Board Member Thompson requested the following change to the minutes: "...page 4, line 194, change "...anything else under warranty..." to "...anything else not under warranty..."

Chair Barnes requested the following change to the minutes: change the date in the header to say October 17.

Board Member Guagliumi stated that she likes the placement of the minutes in the agenda.

The motion carried as amended 5-0-0.

9. Consent Agenda

a) Teacher Nominations

Joseph Flis, English Teacher, Merrimack High School

Michael Grant, Education Technology Integrator, James Mastricola Elementary School

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

The motion passed 5-0-0.

10. Other

a) Correspondence

There was no correspondence.

a) Comments

There were no comments.

11. New Business

There was no new business.

12. Committee Reports

Vice Chair Schneider attended the November 3rd meeting of Merrimack Safeguard along with Board Member Guagliumi. The “Moving Forward” program explores the five top actions schools can take to reduce youth alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse.

Red Ribbon Week activities included a drug take back day in which 221 pounds of drugs taken back in Merrimack.

The board members along with Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin and Police Chief Doyle discussed the issue of the service dog in the schools as part of a broader program. This requires the community to become more aware and involved in the issue of drug abuse in the schools. The Merrimack Safeguard Team will work to broker a discussion among various community partners to bring a broader awareness of the issues.

Vice Chair Schneider spoke about the SERESC Board of Directors meetings. A variety of managerial and financial changes have occurred over the past year resulting in an interim director and outside financial consulting services company splitting the responsibilities. Due to financial instability SERESC is looking to sell one of their buildings. Meetings are monthly or more often as the transition takes place.

The Merrimack School District relies on certain services provided by SERESC. If SERESC disbands, these services would still need to be provided and would cost more than they do now.

Board Members Guagliumi and Thompson attended the Communications Committee meeting on October 25th. This was the first meeting that included the broader committee.

The committee began with an overview of the main communications concerns. They are:

- Consistent communication that is relevant, streamlined and timely
- Levels of communication such as teacher-student, teacher-parent, parent-district, district-community

One of the first goals is to put out a parent survey and feedback is needed by November 21st to have it ready for the November 30th Communications Committee meeting.

Superintendent Chiafery will make the Parent Survey an agenda item for the next meeting.

Board Member Guagliumi will communicate with Nancy Rose to ascertain her availability to attend the next school board meeting.

Chair Barnes attended the Grater Woods sub-committee meeting on October 18th. They have added signage to the trails to make it clearer to users what uses are permitted on each trail. The Nashua Regional Planning Commission is working on mapping all of the outdoor spaces in Merrimack.

Chair Barnes attended the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee on November 2nd. Scott Weden, Wellness Coordinator for HealthTrust reviewed the various programs and resources available to members. There will be a wellness fair on January 19th for the Merrimack School District employees.

Board Member Thompson attended the Parks and Recreation Committee meeting. Upcoming activities and the budget were discussed.

13. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

14. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Thompson) to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m.

The motion passed 5-0-0.