

Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District
School Administrative Unit #26
Tuesday, January 17, 2017
James Mastricola Elementary School – All Purpose Room

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

Student Representative Sernik arrived at 7:10 p.m.

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.

Board Member Thompson participated via a conference call as allowed per RSA 91-A;2.

Board Member Thompson participated from his car as he drove south of Bangor, Maine. He had a co-worker with him in the car.

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. Quarterly Curriculum Review

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the quarterly curriculum update to the board. He spoke about the district initiatives, their purposes, implications, timelines and the contact people for each initiative.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin included additional information about things going on in the schools that tie in to the district initiatives.

The Response to Intervention (RtI) Committee focuses on Tier I instruction, the identification of performance trends, professional development curriculum and instruction related needs. RtI impacts all students and is chaired by Director of Special Education Fabrizio. The RtI Committee meets monthly to review multiple assessments in determining how to meet students' needs.

The Report Card Committee's goal is to develop a pre-K to Grade 6 standards based report card. This work when completed sets the stage for the development and implementation of a revised grades 7-12 standards based report card. Part of this involves a district-wide reorientation around homework/extra credit and grading practices. The end result is a report card that presents

a clearer picture to parents of their students' progress and needs. This committee is comprised of the various elementary school administrators and Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin.

The Communication Committee is newly formed this year. Its purpose is to identify end user concerns and interests relative to district and school communications and to proactively address them consistently throughout the district. Once this work is accomplished the next goal is to identify, develop and implement a long term communications strategy to be employed by all constituents.

An important area to consider is long held educator/administrator attitudes regarding communication with end users, taxpayers and other constituents. Director of Technology and Library Media Services Rose chairs the monthly meetings and when needed, holds additional meetings.

The Learning Management Task Force Committee is also led by Director of Technology and Library Media Services Rose. Its purpose is to identify and implement a comprehensive learning management system. The goal is a consistent application that will support communications and grade reporting. The committee will finish its work during the second semester of 2017.

The Science Committee will be chaired by Assistant Principal Morris and will finish its work in the 2017-2018 school year. The purpose of the committee has been to develop and implement a comprehensive K-12 science curriculum. This curriculum will be RtI supported and be consistent throughout the district with enhanced connections to other content. The College and Career Ready Standards will be met through this new curriculum.

Similar to science, the Math K-12 Committee will additionally identify materials to support curriculum. This committee meets monthly under Principal Marsh McGill, Assistant Principal Nick Coler and Assistant Principal Michelle Romein.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin shared with the board the names of the finalists for the new math program. If a K-8 program is chosen over a K-12 program, then a new search will be conducted for a high school program.

Some elementary school math teachers have volunteered to be exposed to all of the finalist programs. They will teach each program for a few weeks and then vote on what they deem the best for the district. The program will be a part of the math curriculum.

The Physical Education and Health Committee meets monthly. It is chaired by Principal Adam Caragher and works to develop and implement a comprehensive K-12 physical education curriculum. The implications are the same as those in science.

The Mental Health Committee chaired by Assistant Principal Julie DeLuca and Director of Special Services John Fabrizio. They work to identify the dimension of mental health challenges throughout the district and learn about the variety of mental health issues/causes and possible strategies that might be employed. Then a district-wide approach to addressing mental health issues can be developed.

Challenges include both inside and outside of school pre-conceptions about mental health issues. Mental health issues need to be considered as part of a student's overall profile when contemplating interventions to instruction.

Additionally outside well known speakers and forums on understanding mental health issues will be made available to the community.

Vice Chair Schneider complemented Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin on the presentation. He then asked about the impact on the high school budget if the math program is fast-tracked and ready for implementation in 2017-2018.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that existing materials would be used during the two-pronged implementation process. The program is not the curriculum. The program supports the curriculum. Existing materials will suffice for the first year of implementation.

Board Member Guagliumi was also appreciative of the clear presentation and would like to see the document that was referred to by Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin put on the website.

Chair Barnes commented that the Math Committee should use the new Communications Committee to get the information out to the parents.

Chair Barnes commented that having former Chief Justice Broderick come to the district to speak on mental health issues will be a further reaching resource.

4. Board's Final Response to Proposed 2017-2018 School District Budget

Chair Barnes asked the board members if they had any feedback, questions or comments on the proposed budget.

Chair Barnes asked for a motion to accept the budget as presented.

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to move the operating budget for the 2017-2018 year for the Merrimack School District in the amount of \$73,673,057.00 as part of a warrant article and move it on to the budget committee.

Vice Chair Schneider commented that the school board and administration did a lot of due diligence on the budget and the increase is under 2%. Moving certain items onto warrant articles gives the voters more control over the operating budget.

Chair Barnes echoed his comments.

The motion passed as presented.

A roll call vote was taken.

Board Member Thompson voted in favor.
Board Member Schoenfeld voted in favor.
Board Member Guagliumi voted in favor.
Vice Chair Schneider voted in favor.

Chair Barnes voted in favor.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Vice Chair Schneider commented that he had heard from two different voters that they appreciated the pictorial on the capital improvement projects.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell appreciated the comment and stated that this practice will continue with future projects.

Board Member Guagliumi noted that constituents still have time to learn more about the budget as it continues to move through the budget process.

5. Review Budget Committee Hearing Dates and Deliberative Session Date

Chair Barnes referred members to information that had been provided by the superintendent.

The budget committee hearing dates are scheduled for Tuesday, January 24 and 31st and on Thursday, February 2nd if a snow date is needed.

The deliberative session is scheduled for Wednesday, March 8th with a backup date of Thursday, March 9th.

Members were polled as to their availability.

Board Member Schoenfeld might have a conflict with March 8th. She will notify the superintendent's office tomorrow as to her availability.

Superintendent Chiafery noted that legal counsel needs to be at the meeting and March 8th is her preferred date.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the deliberative session could be better publicized by the town. She asked if the flashing signs could be put out by the town.

Chair Barnes stated that the meeting will be tentatively scheduled for March 8th.

Board Member Thompson left the conference call at this time.

6. First Review: New Policies

• Admission of Resident Students

Superintendent Chiafery read the proposed policy, crafted by legal counsel Kathy Pehl, into the minutes. It states:

Admission of Resident Students

A student's residence for purpose of school enrollment is determined by the residence of the parent or legal guardian, as set forth in RSA 193:12, II. If the student's parents are divorced, residence will be determined pursuant to the divorce decree or parenting plan. See Policy JFAB.

All parents/legal guardians seeking to enroll a child for the first time in Merrimack must register at the school where they will be enrolled prior to the first day of school or prior to the first day of

attendance if entering after the school year has begun. All new students must have proof of a physical examination completed within the past 12 months, immunization records and a copy of the student's birth certificate.

All parents/legal guardians seeking to enroll a student in the Merrimack School District must provide proof of residency satisfactory to the Superintendent or his/her designee. If questions regarding a new or previously enrolled student's legal residence arise, the Superintendent may require a parent or guardian to complete an Affidavit of Residency attesting to the student's legal residence in Merrimack. If the Superintendent determines that a student has been attending school in Merrimack whose legal residence is not in Merrimack, the matter may be referred to the School Board and the parents or legal guardians may be charged tuition in accordance with Policy JF AB (Admission of Tuition and Non-Resident Students) for the period of such attendance.

Principals or their designees will meet with new children and parents to explain school programs.

The Superintendent is authorized to develop procedures consistent with this Policy.

Legal References:

RSA 193:1, Duty of Parent, Compulsory Attendance by Pupil
RSA 193:12, Legal Residence Required

Cross Reference:

Policy JF AB Admission of Tuition and Non-Resident Students

Upon completion of the reading, Superintendent Chiafery highlighted the wording in the third paragraph that says "...Affidavit of Residency..." noting that the wording was crafted by Attorney Peahl. It is designed to show seriousness of purpose relative to residency.

Board Member Guagliumi noted that some other districts put the tuition cost on their websites and asked for feedback on if it would be appropriate to put the tuition cost in an accessible place such as on the Merrimack School District website.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that she would need to check with legal counsel as the tuition changes on an annual basis. She has a conversation with every parent on an individual basis and was concerned that if they saw an amount beforehand they might be put off, thinking they were responsible for the entire amount, when often this is not the case.

Chair Barnes asked that the end of paragraph three be moved to the end of paragraph one as it is the same. It states: (Admission of Tuition and Non-Resident Students) for the period of such attendance.

Chair Barnes asked if the district had access to a notary for parents to avail themselves of when completing the paperwork.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that there are two notaries in the superintendent's office.

- **Admission of Tuition and Non-Resident Students**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin and Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell shared reading the proposed policy into the minutes. It states:

Admission of Tuition and Non-Resident Students

Non-resident students may only attend District schools when their attendance has been approved by the Board. If the Board agrees to enroll a non-resident student, the District will either charge tuition to the parent or, alternately, the Superintendent may seek to enter into an agreement for the payment of tuition with the school district in which the student resides.

If the student's parents are divorced, the student's legal residence is that of the parent who is awarded sole or primary physical custody. If the parents are awarded joint or equal custody, then the student's legal residence for school attendance will be as set forth in the divorce decree or the parenting plan. Each parent shall furnish a copy of the divorce decree or parenting plan, and any revisions or amendments thereto, to the school district in which the parent resides. Students enrolled pursuant to a divorce decree or parenting plan will not be charged tuition.

Upon the admission of a non-resident student to the District, the Superintendent or designee will immediately notify the student's school district of residence of the student's name, date of birth, address, and grade assignment of the student. This notification shall also be made at the beginning of each school year for which the student is enrolled.

The Board acknowledges the provisions of RSA 193:3 which state that the district in which the student resides shall retain all responsibility for the provision of special education and related services pursuant to RSA 186-C.

The Board's decision on whether to enroll a non-resident student will not be based, in whole or in part, on whether that student is a student with a disability, as defined by applicable state or federal law.

Tuition rates will be charged at a rate set by the Board and billed quarterly in advance to the district of residence or parent responsible for payment. If there is an agreement for the payment of tuition by a district of residence, approval of the tuition rate must be obtained from that district's school board.

Under normal circumstances, the District will not provide transportation at District expense to and from school or beyond the designated attendance areas for the school to which the student is assigned, for non-resident and tuition students. However, the District may assist parents in finding and procuring transportation services for their children. The Superintendent or designee will make all determinations as to whether transportation will be provided and the Superintendent or designee's decision will be final.

The School Board may make exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis, at its discretion, pursuant to separate contracts, agreements and other binding arrangements.

Legal Reference:

RSA 186-C:13, Special Education: Liability for Expenses
RSA 193:3, Change of School or Assignment

RSA 193:12, Legal Residence Required

Cross Reference:

Policy JFAA Admission of Resident Students

Board Member Guagliumi asked for a change to the first sentence in paragraph two so that it would read: "... parents are divorced, or are not living in the same residence..."

Superintendent Chiafery responded that she would inquire but thought the wording came directly from the RSA.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked for clarification on language in paragraph four in regards to accepting a special education student into the district and the financial responsibilities.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the language meant that a special education student cannot be precluded from entering the district. The responsibilities would become a collaborative effort between the two school systems.

Vice Chair Schneider expressed concern about the language in paragraph two. He asked if the paragraph meant that each parent needed to furnish a copy of the divorce decree to the district in which they resided.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that yes, both parents submit the divorce decree to the school districts in which they reside. This does sometimes result in more communication between districts in regards to particular students.

Vice Chair Schneider asked the superintendent to clarify this paragraph with Attorney Peahl so that the language is more clearly stated to both parents that they notify the school districts in which they live about the divorce decree or parenting plan.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the parenting plan always specifies which school district a student will attend.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that this is a possibility and is handled by the school district on a case-by-case basis. Sometimes plans are readjusted by the court.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if additional language such as that the district handles the situations on a case-by-case basis should be included in this paragraph.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that she and Attorney Peahl had spent considerable time on this and she would prefer the language remain more global at this time. This proposed policy addresses the issues the district is dealing with currently. If it is deemed that the policy is not helping, then at some future time she might return to the school board and ask for modifications.

Chair Barnes noted the last sentence in paragraph three which reads: "This notification shall also be made at the beginning of each school year for which the student is enrolled." She would like to add to this sentence language that includes that if at any time any modification is made to the parenting or custodial plan, that the school district be notified.

Chair Barnes asked the board members to email Superintendent Chiafery with any additional questions or comments they might have on either policy.

The policies will appear on the next agenda for second readings.

7. Approval of January 2, 2017 Minutes and January 5, 2017 Minutes

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to accept the January 2, 2017 minutes.

The motion passed as proposed 4-0-0.

Board Member Schoenfeld moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the January 5, 2017 minutes.

The motion passed as proposed 4-0-0.

8. Other

a) Correspondence

Chair Barnes received correspondence regarding construction work in the fall on the Bedford Road Bridge over Baboosic Brook. The work might impact school transportation.

b) Comments

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin reminded the board that on Thursday, January 19th, Merrimack Safeguard will be hosting a community forum at the O'Leary Center. The purpose is to inform the community and parents of the different ways various district helpers support and promote a healthy drug free community. The event will take place from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Youth and parents are welcome.

Chair Barnes notified the board that Reeds Ferry Elementary School Principal Kimberly Yarlott has been named the New Hampshire Elementary School Principal of 2017. She will be honored with distinction at the EDDIE awards that will be held in June 2017.

Superintendent Chiafery added that in October 2017 Principal Yarlott will travel to Washington D.C. for further honors.

9. New Business

There was no new business.

10. Committee Reports

Vice Chair Schneider had attended a SERESC Board of Directors meeting the previous Thursday. Topics discussed included the handling of the catering of events and the financial and building status of SERESC.

Board Member Guagliumi had attended the Communications Committee meeting where the survey results were discussed. They also brainstormed the topic of what communication looks like.

Board Member Guagliumi had attended a PERC (Program Evaluation and Review Committee) meeting where they discussed adding an algebra class for struggling freshmen. This was approved by PERC for one school year and went into effect this school year.

11. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

12. Manifest

The board signed the manifest.

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

The motion passed 4-0-0.