

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District
School Administrative Unit #26
Monday, February 6, 2017
Merrimack Town Hall - Matthew Thornton Room**

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

Excused: Superintendent Chiafery.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

3. Scaling State Maps

Chair Barnes invited Lara Bryant, Bridey Bellemare, Julie DeLuca, Barbara DeFrancisco and Debra Walter to the table.

Four years ago Educators DeFrancisco and Walter had attended a National Board for Teaching Standards conference in Washington, D.C. Last year as part of a pre-conference session they attended a National Geographic presentation and participated in a map activity. This past September they attended a day session at Keene State College and were trained on a giant map of New Hampshire. This map travels across the state for free.

This has culminated in Thorntons Ferry Elementary School being offered to participate in a research project this year involving the use of a National Geographic Giant Floor Traveling Map of New Hampshire.

As part of the research the two lead teachers are required to respond to a teacher's experience survey. The survey requires school board approval. The Merrimack School District is allowed to keep the map regardless of whether or not the survey is completed. This is because they attended the training in Keene.

Educators DeFrancisco and Walter, under the direction of Principal Bellemare have held two trainings for other district elementary staff to share this opportunity.

Principal Bellemare added that at a recent family dinner at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School the information was further shared through interactive lessons.

Lara Bryant of Keene State College then shared some of the specific components of the map project as well as vetted teaching strategies. Each school gets the oversized map for one week along with a variety of suggested instructional opportunities. Most of the lessons are based on the fourth grade curriculum with a focus on kinesthetic learning and mapping skills.

She used a PowerPoint presentation to share some of the expected student learning outcomes across content areas. The learning progressions are based upon existing tools developed in math *GeoProgressions* by Barrett and Jin, 2014. They align the math and geography skills with a focus on teaching scale. Imbedded in this spatial framework are the egocentric and allocentric thinking skills.

The presentation explored in depth the ways that lessons were developed to address specific learning progressions. A sample curriculum was given to each school board member before the presentation.

The program is still in the pilot phase and the research protocol is evolving.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked why student assent was left out of the process.

Ms. Bryant responded that Merrimack's entrance into the program came about after its initial rollout where assents were obtained from the initial participants.

Board Member Schoenfeld noted the difference between consent and assent and asked if student assent could be added.

Ms. Bryant noted that on the front page of the assessment there is a paragraph that states that student participation is connected to a research project.

Board Member Schoenfeld would like to ensure that student assent is assured before they participate in the research.

Board Member Guagliumi spoke positively about the project. She asked Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin where geography is taught in the grade levels.

Ms. Bryant spoke anecdotally about teachers who have taught these skills in other content areas.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if the idea of teaching math mapping skills is dated and was told that it is very current.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin added that more and more teachers are making cross-disciplinary connections and that this is our future.

Chair Barnes added her agreement to Board Member Schoenfeld's request to obtain student assent on the study.

4. Canine in the Schools

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin made opening remarks that stressed the connection between mental health and substance abuse. He noted the work of Merrimack Safeguard to address the student risk behavior issues and the success of the recent concert/info night and a community forum.

Merrimack Police Chief Mark Doyle thanked the board for the invitation to present once again to them about the value of a trained canine during locker searches in the schools. He referred to a memorandum of understanding that exists between the police department and the school department. Nowhere in the document is it stated that the police must take any action.

Chief Doyle stressed that the first goal is to get the drugs out of the schools and then to get any necessary services a student might need. His comments were echoed by Merrimack High School Assistant Principal Peter Bergeron.

Chair Barnes took a moment to frame the key points of the argument for bringing the canine into the schools. She noted the sobering results of last year's Student Risk Behavior Survey results and students' strong concerns about trust issues that now exist between students and staff being damaged.

Chair Barnes also noted that there are two new board members and a new student representative since last year's presentation.

Board Member Thompson expressed concern about the steps that are taken before arrest and prosecution.

Chief Doyle responded that police discretion is always part of the equation. Removal of the drugs is first, and student safety and health are next. Investigation when deemed necessary follows.

Assistant Principal Bergeron stated that he and Assistant Principal Zampieri are able to handle most situations without police involvement.

Vice Chair Schneider noted that his perspective has evolved from worry over prosecution to education and safety. He noted his support for the memorandum of understanding and the canine in the schools.

Board Member Guagliumi noted that when the survey results came out that the school board added a second school board member to it.

Student Representative Sernik shared that he is aware of many students who did not take the survey seriously and that skewed the results. He thinks that it would be a positive step to bring the canine into the school.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin commented that the survey is a formal study and the ways the questions are created and assessed takes the validity of student responses into account. School Districts are made mindful of the importance of not making policies based off of the survey results. Districts can develop systems of care based off of the results. He stressed that the goal remains to care for the student.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked about other districts responses to when drugs are found by the canines.

Detective Murray responded that the other districts respond administratively and do not move to prosecution.

Detective Murray then proceeded to share his position on the need to bring a canine into the school. He sees this as an important tool that is needed to combat the selling of drugs at the high school. He agreed with student representative Sernik's comments about student trust.

Vice Chair Schneider asked Detective Prentice for his input on the use of a canine at the middle school.

Detective Prentice's position is that this is a last resort but needed tools to safeguard the students.

Board Member Guagliumi had attended both assemblies last year at the middle and high schools where the canine was introduced. She found them to be very informative and noted that the students were very receptive to the dog.

Board Member Thompson asked if this could be adopted for one year and then re-evaluated.

Chair Barnes responded that usually policies are adopted and changes are made when circumstances change.

Chair Barnes asked Assistant Principal Zampieri to let her know what percentage of lockers are out of sight of security cameras.

Vice Chair Schneider asked about the problem of drugs stashed in places other than the lockers. He would like to see more flexibility to allow the canine to searching classrooms and other areas.

Chair Barnes summed up by stating that the draft agreement between the Merrimack Police Department and the Merrimack School District regarding the introduction of a drug sniffing dog into the Merrimack High School and the Merrimack Middle School will be put on the school district website. Language will be added to note that there will be an annual review at the conclusion of every school year as to the use of this resource.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin asked that after the document, the addition and the memorandum of understanding are reviewed by Attorney Peahl that it then be put on the February 20th school board agenda. At that meeting the superintendent will address Attorney Peahl's comments.

Chair Barnes noted that a vote will be taken at the February 20th meeting with implementation during the 2016-2017 school year.

Chair Barnes asked that any community feedback be emailed to her.

5. Proposed School Calendar for 2017-2018

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin shared the results of the Merrimack Teachers Association (MTA) and the Merrimack Educational Support Staff Association (MESSA) surveys on calendar input.

These results were used to create a draft calendar. The parent survey will be updated and that input will be used to make adjustments to the 2017-2018 calendar.

Last year Survey Monkey was used to disseminate the survey to parents. This year the draft survey will also be posted on the school website.

Board Member Guagliumi asked that the mandatory holidays of Memorial Day, Veteran's Day and contractual obligations be noted on the parent survey. She would also like to see question number six clarified.

Discussion ensued among the board members as to re-wording question number six.

Chair Barnes asked that all responses to question number seven be emailed to her directly.

Chair Barnes read aloud the draft calendar.

It was also noted that this year it would be too premature to expect the newly formed Communications Committee to be available to promote the survey.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin commented that Survey Monkey will not be the vehicle used this year to issue the survey.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell will be responsible for the draft of the calendar being posted to the district website.

6. Board Response to Draft Warrant Articles on the 2017 Warrant

Chair Barnes read aloud each of the proposed warrant articles. Each article was reviewed by the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration and Attorney Pehl.

Warrant Article 1: To elect all necessary school district officers for the ensuing year. (Vote by ballot)

Warrant Article 2: Shall the Merrimack School Board be authorized to accept on behalf of the District, without further action by the voters, gifts, legacies and devises of personal or real property which may become available to the District during the fiscal year?

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the warrant article as presented.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Warrant Article 3: Shall the district raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Ninety-Six Thousand One Hundred Seventy-Four Dollars (196,174) for the purpose of pavement reconstruction at Merrimack High School to include the bus loop around the school building and the front entrance?

Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to accept the warrant article as presented.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Warrant Article 4: Shall the District raise and appropriate the sum of Three Hundred Ten Thousand Dollars (\$310,000) for the purpose of removal and replacement of asbestos floor tiles on the first and second floor of Merrimack High School and the removal and replacement of cabinets and countertops located in the Family Consumer Science classrooms at Merrimack High School?

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Thompson) to accept the warrant article as presented.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Warrant Article 5: Shall the District raise and appropriate an amount up to Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000), said sum not to exceed Ten percent (10%) of the unencumbered surplus funds remaining at the end of the fiscal year 2016-2017 and to transfer that amount to the School District Repair Capital Reserve Fund, for the purpose of providing unanticipated and/or emergency repairs to all school district facilities?

Board Member Schoenfeld moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the warrant article as presented.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Warrant Article 6: Shall the District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$73,673,057? (Should this article be defeated, the operating budget shall be \$73,738,838 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the District or by law, or the governing body may hold one special meeting in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only?)

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Thompson) to accept the warrant article as presented.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

Vice Chair Schneider asked that the school board have the opportunity to review the voter's guide before it is mailed out to the public.

7. Approval of January 10, 2017 Minutes and January 17, 2017 Minutes

Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to accept the January 10, 2017 minutes.

The motion passed as proposed 5-0-0.

Board Member Schoenfeld moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the January 17, 2017 minutes.

The motion passed as proposed 4-0-1.

Board Member Thompson abstained as he was only available for two thirds of the meeting.

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

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell presented the following gifts/grants to the district.

The Thorntons Ferry Elementary School was the recipient of \$2,000.00 given by Fidelity Foundation Matching Gifts to Education Program and Charles and Barbara Trudeau. The funds are discretionary.

The Merrimack High School was the recipient of \$500.00 given by Shaw's Supermarkets. The funds are to be used for the hockey program.

The Merrimack School District via the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee, was the recipient of \$2,000.00 given by HealthTrust. The funds will be used for worksite health and safety activities to benefit district employees.

9. Other

a) Correspondence

Board Member Guagliumi was contacted by a resident interested in participating as a community liaison on the Communications Committee.

Board Member Thompson had a resident reach out to him favorably in regards to the canine in the schools.

Chair Barnes received correspondence from a resident concerned about the condition of varsity baseball fields for the upcoming season.

b) Comments

There were no comments.

10. New Business

Chair Barnes noted that she had given each board member a copy of the NHSBA legislative updates for January 27th and February 3rd.

She asked the board members to review the updates and decide on two of the items to ask about when Legislator Christensen attends the March school board meeting.

Board Member Thompson asked to have the legislative updates posted on the district website so that the public would have the opportunity to provide feedback.

11. Committee Reports

Board Member Schoenfeld has been attending budget meetings the past few weeks. She also attended the New Hampshire School Boards Association (NHSBA) meeting and shared some of the discussions and presentations she experienced.

Board Member Thompson attended the Professional Development Committee and commended all those who further their education for the purposes of their teaching.

Board Member Thompson also attended the Parks and Recreation Committee meeting where the need for additional fields was discussed.

Board Member Guagliumi attended the NHSBA as an alternate delegate and was given a broad overview of their workings.

Board Member Guagliumi attended the Merrimack Safeguard meeting where the canine, mental health and the A-OK (Ask for help, Offer help and Keep it going) program were discussed. The next meeting is scheduled for March 9th.

Vice Chair Schneider spoke on the Merrimack Safeguard forum that was held on January 19th.

SERESC and Planning and Building Committee did not meet in December.

Chair Barnes attended the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee and the first annual Wellness Fair. She read aloud the local businesses that supported the Wellness Fair.

12. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

13. Manifest

The board signed the manifest.

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Thompson) to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.

The motion passed 5-0-0.