

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District
School Administrative Unit #26
June 5, 2017
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room**

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

Absent: Vice Chair Schneider was excused due to business travel. Student Representative Sernik's tenure on the board has expired.

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Participation

There was no public participation.

3. Focus on Student Voice and Inquiry at Merrimack Middle School (MMS)

Chair Barnes invited Principal Adam Caragher, educators and staff to the table.

Principal Caragher and Assistant Principal D'Amour highlighted some of the various events and activities that took place at the middle school. They included a presentation from youth motivational speaker Jeff Yalden, participation in the first annual Youth Opioid Summit, Pantene Beautiful Links, and various sports championships.

There are a variety of new and continuing clubs that provide enrichment outside of the classroom. They include a sewing club, science Olympiad, art club, STEM club, Lego League Club, Chess Club, rock climbing club, ski/snowboard club, Quizbowl, Student Council Intramural, Destination Imagination, Drama Club, and joint field trips with Merrimack High School.

Seventh grade student Jillian Dorf won the Lions Club poster award for the school district and for the state of New Hampshire. Her artwork was displayed in Washington D. C.

Two other points of interest are the Parent Teacher Group (PTG) recently reached their fundraising goal, a first for the organization; and the introduction of five carts of laptop computers for classrooms to share.

Students were then invited to speak about their student led interdisciplinary work.

Grade seven students explained their work on learning about aqueducts while Principal Caragher showed a corresponding PowerPoint presentation. Students took turns sharing the various challenges of the assignment beginning with trying to decide how their teams would be organized and operate and if they would have leaders or not.

The students learned about slope in math, the water cycle and problems with stagnant water in science, poetry in Language Arts, and structure in Tech Ed.

Student take-aways included learning the value of working with a team, time management, independent thinking and problem solving, appreciating other people's opinions, learning how to communicate with your group, and how groups work when there is no leader assigned.

Grade eight students were then invited to share their work on Westward Expansion in which they imagined themselves living during that time period. This interdisciplinary work involved the four core content areas. Students wrote letters and journal entries, used math skills to create scale drawings of things they might have seen, created maps of where they might have traveled, and incorporated weather and climate data of that time in their work.

Student testimonies highlighted skills such as time management, communicating with peers, and conducting research. This culminated in an understanding of the real world workplace.

Principal Caragher noted that both of these projects came out of August Academy teacher experiences.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if these assignments were unique to these units.

Principal Caragher responded yes, but that similar collaborative work was done in other teams.

Board Member Guagliumi asked the grade seven students what they might do differently to improve the project.

Student responses included changing from using cardboard rolls to plastic water bottles to avoid leaks, more early interaction with other groups, lengthening the time frame for the project, and having only one theme for the aesthetics.

Board Member Guagliumi asked the grade eight students the same question.

One response was to have story drafts pre-written.

Board Member Thompson thanked all of the students and noted his appreciation for interdisciplinary learning.

Chair Barnes applauded the students for the quality of their presentations.

4. Focus on Student Voice at Merrimack High School (MHS)

Chair Barnes invited Principal Johnson, administrators, and students to the table.

Principal Johnson began by complimenting the middle school students on their presentations. He then expressed the ongoing mission at the high school of moving from a teacher-centered environment to a student-centered learning center. Various selected students presented on how they share their student voices.

Testimonies began with 2017 valedictorian Tiffany Knowles who shared how she expresses her voice through academic rigor and business classes. Outside of her classes she was involved in the Academy of Finance, DECA and was a member of the 300 Team.

Other outstanding examples of student voice included portrait photography that led to opening a business, writing that continues to bring various types of validation, speech that empowered a previously quiet and private personality, instrumental and lyrical music that allows for expression without using words, art in a variety of mediums that allowed a student to articulate feelings and perspectives, woodshop that provided the opportunity to win first place in the New England Student Woodturning Design Contest. In additional shop classes students learned engineering that prepared them to immediately enter the workforce as machinists and welders. Two presenters shared how they shared their student voice through theater where they learned confidence, leadership skills and how to channel their feelings into a performance. The final presenters shared their voices through Student Council and service organizations such as Merrimack Cares; where leadership perceptions were challenged and matured through understanding and addressing needs in the community.

Every student testimony noted the importance of teachers in discovering and channeling their student voices.

Board Member Thompson commended the students on their presentations.

Board Member Schoenfeld was impressed with students' willingness to step out of their comfort zones to share their voices.

Chair Barnes appreciated that students take advantage of the myriad opportunities afforded them by the Merrimack School District and was impressed with their presentations.

5. Focus on the Importance of Cameras at MMS and MHS

Chair Barnes invited the administrators of both schools to the table.

Merrimack High School Assistant Principal Bergeron provided historical background on the presence of cameras at both schools. Cameras have been utilized for six years and have helped in deterring students from making poor decisions. He noted the number and placement of the various cameras.

Merrimack Middle School Principal Caragher echoed the value of the cameras in deterring negative behavior. He also noted the number and placement of the various cameras.

Merrimack High School Assistant Principal Zampieri noted that the cameras limit the need to interview students about incidents, and provide an actual picture of situation results in more fair decisions.

Merrimack High School Principal Johnson noted that students and staff are reminded that everyone is on camera and that this is part of life as cameras are more commonly used in society.

Superintendent Chiafery asked the administrators to vision forward and project what additional cameras they would hope for in future budgets.

Administrator responses included the need for additional cameras in the hallways, and in exterior areas such as the lower field and the parking lot. Additionally some of the cameras need to be upgraded to a better quality with remote access.

It was noted that Mr. Touseau has been readily available to switching out camera angles and locations when called upon to do so.

Board Member Guagliumi recommended that the cameras be put in the budgets now. She had questions around pricing and vendors and would like to make sure that the district gets the best deal.

Board Member Thompson asked if all of the schools have outside cameras.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that every school has five to seven cameras outside and one inside. He shared the historical data of the cameras. When they were first installed, the available funds only allowed for the purchase of analog cameras. As they are upgraded and replaced they are switched to better quality internet protocol (IP) cameras. The zoom function on these allows one to see something one hundred yards away. Before the cameras were installed there was a rash of vandalism at various schools. This has ceased with the installation of the cameras.

Chair Barnes noted that the middle school is used as a polling place and that this be kept in mind when adding more cameras. She asked if the existing system has reached capacity and was told that the system is scalable.

6. Proposed New Board Policy and Elimination of the Current Policy

Chair Barnes invited the following representatives from the District Wellness Committee to the table; Bridey Bellemare, Principal at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, Rick Greenier, physical education teacher at James Masticola Upper Elementary School, Cathy Cibotti grade one teacher at Reeds Ferry Elementary School, and Food Services Director Dave Dziki.

Principal Bellemare noted the work of the committee to develop a more comprehensive integrative resource intended to better communicate and articulate their goals and initiatives across the community. Two ideas that were discussed are a newsletter and the posting of their minutes on the district website.

In addition, Director Dziki had just completed an administrative review conducted by the Bureau of Nutrition Services through the Department of Education. One of the recommendations made was to reassess the tenets of the wellness policy. This review culminated in a revised wellness policy that covers students, staff and community members. It was then reviewed by the Leadership Team.

Principal Bellemare and Educator Greenier read the proposed new Wellness Policy into the record:

Merrimack School Board Policy

JLCF

Wellness

The District is committed to providing positive, safe, and healthy learning communities at every level to ensure that staff and students have the opportunity to achieve overall well-being.

The District recognizes the importance of delivering high quality wellness education. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that the District:

- *Offers access to healthy foods that are aligned with the USDA Guidelines, as well as quality nutrition education that helps develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors.*
- *Provides physical education and physical activity programs.*
- *Provides instruction in the areas of social, emotional and mental health intended to nurture overall well-being*
- *Establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.*

Nutrition Guidelines and Education

The School District's nutritional standards are based upon standards established by the USDA and New Hampshire Healthy School Coalition/Best Practices. These nutrition guidelines apply to all foods available to students on school grounds during the day, including but not limited to the school lunch, breakfast program, and foods and beverages sold in student vending machines/school stores.

The District aims to teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating habits. Schools will provide educational programming that will provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health.

Schools shall encourage the integration of balanced food options during celebrations and events.

Physical Education and Activity

The District recognizes that the integration of healthy physical education and physical activity are a communal responsibility intended to minimize health risks created by extended periods of inactivity, childhood obesity, and other related health problems. The District encourages students and staff to participate in developmentally appropriate physical activity and exercise for 60 minutes each day as a way to minimize these health risks.

Schools will work to integrate health and physical activity across the school curriculum as well as to encourage the integration of physical activity before, during, and after school hours.

Mental Wellness

The Merrimack School District is committed to supporting the social/emotional welfare and behavioral needs of all students in the educational process. The District recognizes that social and emotional wellbeing is critical for academic achievement and success. Collaboration with students, parents/guardians, staff and the community will be an integral part of this commitment to enhance our students' emotional, mental and physical health.

Implementation and Evaluation

A district-wide wellness advisory committee has been established with the purpose of assessing the nutrition and physical activity environment throughout the district and making recommendations to the School Board for a comprehensive wellness program. The committee consists of representation from parents, students, the school district's food service program, the School Board, administration, and an educator from each school. The Policy will be monitored and progress evaluated, with an annual report to the School Board.

As needed the Wellness Committee will request that the Superintendent notify the Merrimack School Board regarding any changes that have occurred in federal and state nutrition guidelines that need to be reflected in this Policy.

At least once every three years, the District will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy.

Legal Reference:

*RSA 189:11-a, Food and Nutrition Programs
Section 204 of Public Law 108-265, Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization
Act 2004 NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 303.01 (g),
Substantive Duties of School Boards NH Code of Administrative Rules,
Section Ed. 303.11, Food & Nutrition Services
NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 303.40, Health Education Program
NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 303.41, Physical Education Program*

1st Reading: June 5, 2017

2nd Reading:

Adoption:

Board Member Thompson thanked the members of the committee for the scope of the revisions.

Board Member Schoenfeld echoed the above sentiments.

Chair Barnes noted that the board appears to be in agreement with the merits of the policy.

Board Member Guagliumi questioned a point in the policy and asked if pizza parties would be impacted by this revision.

Food Services Director Dziki and Educator Greenier responded that the goal is that people make good choices but that exceptions should be allowed.

Board Member Thompson thought that food guidelines for events might be suggested by the committee but that they do not need to be in the policy.

Principal Bellemare noted that elementary school parent handbooks does address this issue.

A second reading of the proposed policy will take place at the June 17, 2017 meeting.

7. Outcome from Learning Forward Academy

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented educator Helen Fitzgerald to the board. He stated that she is one who always goes above and beyond and has been very generous with her contributions to the school district. When the opportunity presented itself to sponsor a staff member to participate in The Learning Forward Academy, that she was the first person considered by the district.

Educator Fitzgerald provided background on the program via a PowerPoint presentation. Learning Forward Academy immerses participants in a model of inquiry and problem-based learning. Educator Fitzgerald focused on math, specifically in three areas.

Upon returning from the experience she has worked to increase the professional development for teachers in understanding and practicing the eight Standards for Mathematical Practices, facilitated math fact fluency practice and math writing prompt practice for all grade five and six students, and professional development for teachers to enhance student problem solving skills. She provided details of how this was presented to faculty and students.

The experience lasted for 2 ½ years, involved 12 face-to-face learning days as well as phone and on-line sessions and culminated with a formal graduation at the annual conference.

Educator Fitzgerald finished with an overview of how this experience has prompted her to move her professional development binder into an online environment. She worked with various district personnel to accomplish this. This will serve as a model for the district.

Chair Barnes appreciated the comprehensive presentation. She asked what happens going forward.

Educator Fitzgerald responded that quite a bit of professional development has already taken place but that putting the professional development binder online creates a more efficient tool for teachers and administrators.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin commented that educator Fitzgerald’s work has been transformational in the district.

Board Member Guagliumi appreciated educator Fitzgerald’s enthusiasm.

Chair Barnes thanked her for her work.

8. Response to Board’s Request Regarding Historical Insurance Rates

Chair Barnes invited Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell to respond to the request.

He provided a five-year history of the Workers Compensation and Property & Liability Insurance rate increases. They are as seen below:

Type of Insurance	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Workers Compensation:	8%	8%	8%	16%	10%
Property and Liability:	3%	7%	7%	10%	3%

Board Member Thompson stated this his interest was in the cost of insurance in comparison to what was available on the open market.

Chair Barnes added that one of the reasons the district chose Primex was to limit risk because it is a controlled risk pool.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell noted that during the presentation it was stated by the representative from Primex that the statute states that the maximum exposure is \$275,000.00 when in a controlled risk pool.

Board Member Thompson asked for the yearly costs of this insurance.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that the costs are about \$140,000.00 for Workers Compensation and about \$180,000.00 for Property and Liability.

Chair Barnes asked if the board was ready to move forward on this issue.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to accept the three-year rate caps for Primex Insurance.

Board Member Schoenfeld stated that the advantages are very clear.

Board Member Thompson stated that in the future he would like more information brought to the board before a decision is made.

Chair Barnes stated that this is an opportunity to control costs in a volatile market and that the board should take advantage of this opportunity.

The motion carried 4-0-0.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell commented that agreeing to this does not preclude the district from investigating options going forward. This agreement is only for three years.

9. Request to Hire at Will

Superintendent Chiafery as in past years, requested the board's authority to offer conditional contracts to candidates for professional staff openings. She noted that there is only one board meeting in July and one in August.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Thompson) to allow the District Administration and the Superintendent to hire at will.

The motion carried 4-0-0.

10. Establish Summer School Board Meeting Dates

Chair Barnes stated that the summer meeting dates are July 17 and August 14 of 2017.

11. Approval of May 15 and May 22, 2017 Minutes

Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to accept the minutes of the May 15 and May 22, 2017 minutes.

Board Member Guagliumi requested the following change to the May 22, 2017 minutes:

Page 6, line 232: change "...would like to see..." to "...would like to understand..."

The motion carried as amended 4-0-0.

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

- **Girl Scout Troop 20113 to James Masticola Upper Elementary School for \$1,400**

The Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains Troop 20113 presented a gift in the amount of \$1,400.00 to the James Masticola Upper Elementary School to purchase a water bottle filling station.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Thompson) to accept the gift with gratitude.

The motion carried 4-0-0.

13. Consent Agenda

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin presented the consent agenda.

a) Educator Nominations

- Ashley Gamache, Language Arts teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- Harley Hall, Social Studies teacher, Merrimack High School
- Morgan Ireland, Grade 2 teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School
- Jamie Lawrence, World Language teacher, Merrimack High School
- Tabitha Pariseau, Language Arts teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- Ryan Piper, Special Education teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- Catherine Rousseau, Grade 3 teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School

b) Educator Resignations

- Michael Jackson, Special Education teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School

Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to accept the consent agenda as presented.

The motion carried 4-0-0.

14. Other

a) Correspondence

Board Member Guagliumi had been asked by a parent why the school district calendar did not extend the school days by minutes and she provided an acceptable response to the parent.

Board Member Guagliumi had a parent reach out to her in regards to a review of the school dress code.

b) Comments

Superintendent Chiafery shared that at the June 19th school board meeting the Reeds Ferry Elementary School will present on their student voice. Principal Yarlott will be acknowledged as the New Hampshire Elementary Principal of the Year. High School Principal Johnson will speak about the evaluation of the comprehensive course. Math textbook selection, and the prospective initiation of full day kindergarten will also be on the agenda.

15. New Business

There was no new business.

16. Committee Reports

Board Member Guagliumi had attended a District Parents Group meeting at which a year-end recap was provided.

Board Member Guagliumi had attended a Merrimack Safeguard meeting. Chair Woelflein has stepped down and the new acting chair is Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin.

Chair Barnes had attended the Grater Woods sub-committee meeting. There is an upcoming Eagle Scout project to redo the outdoor classroom. The Bambi Lane Bridge was repaired and the maps will be updated utilizing GPS.

17. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

18. Manifest

The board signed the manifest at 9:57 p.m.

Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to adjourn the meeting.

The motion carried 4-0-0.