

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

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

**1. Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

**3. Proposal for a Partnership with Manchester Community College to Establish an Early College Automotive Program for Merrimack High School Students**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin provided background on the proposal and then invited the representatives from Manchester Community College (MCC) to the table. He noted that the retirement of the automotive instructor at Merrimack High School created a situation resulting in an opportunity to re-evaluate the program.

The proposed program titled Maintenance Light Repair, would take place on Wednesday's and Thursday's from 12:45 to 5:00 pm as a 4 credit dual enrollment credit. It would be open to juniors and seniors who are at least 16 years old, have a driver's license and a clean driving record. Potential candidates for the program would also need approval from Merrimack High School.

Upon completion of the 2 year course students would be considered Tech Level D, which is a job ready rating. The program is certified by the Automotive Service Excellence Program (ASEP). As of today there are over 500 job openings in New Hampshire with a beginning salary of \$12 to \$14 dollars an hour.

This comprehensive course would run from late August thru December for two years and is the equivalent of a two-year vocational high school program.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin spoke about a field trip that several potential students and their parents participated in by visiting the facilities at MCC. He followed up with a letter to all students who expressed interest in the automotive program and asked for their feedback by July 31<sup>st</sup> as to if they would be interested in this as an option. Eventually, he could see the program expand to include sophomores.

The cost for the program is projected to be about \$17,000 for 10 students, and for 20 students the projected cost would be about \$35,000. This covers tuition and tools which would be shared by the students. The existing automotive budget has the necessary funds available for this purpose.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the cost would be passed back to the students or absorbed by the district and was told it would be absorbed by the district.

Vice Chair Schneider noted that other districts do ask students to pay for part of the program.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that without this partnership, the automotive program would not exist.

Vice Chair Schneider asked why the program will not be open to the entire high school student body in order to get volume.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that the first interest was to accommodate the students who were already in the automotive program and those who had registered for next year.

Vice Chair Schneider expressed concern about restricting the openings for a program that provides free college credit when that is not the norm now.

Merrimack High School Assistant Principal Peter Bergeron noted that over 40 students have already expressed interest in the automotive program. He is very confident that over 10 students will apply for this program if it is offered.

Board Member Thompson asked what courses are now available for ninth and tenth graders.

Assistant Principal Bergeron responded that there will be no offerings and that the plan is to build this partnership out in the future.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin reiterated that the first goal was to accommodate the juniors and seniors who without some intervention would see their training come to an abrupt end.

Board Member Thompson asked what courses at the high school now offer college credit.

Assistant Principal Bergeron responded that Accounting III, Sports Management and Mandarin IV are dual credit courses offered by Southern New Hampshire University. Some of the senior courses can also be converted depending on student grades.

Board Member Schoenfeld expressed concern about mixing 14 year old students with college students.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that one of the ideas would be to offer a program to sophomores as a pre-cursor or introductory course to gauge interest. The delivery models are still in early discussions.

Board Member Guagliumi noted that the automotive program is part of the core curriculum and sees this proposal as a win-win.

Board Member Thompson expressed his support for the proposal.

Board Member Guagliumi asked for more details about the parent feedback from the field trip to MCC.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded with anecdotal comments that included questions about rigor, lab time, and in one case the automotive program was the reason one student went to school. The students will only be away from the high school campus for less than four hours a week. The district would provide the busing.

Superintendent Chiafery noted that the five affiliations (Audi, Subaru, Ford, Chrysler, and General) impressed the parents. All of the parents many questions were answered thoroughly and very satisfactorily. She noted that the triangle of high school, college and the job market were solved with this proposal.

Vice Chair Schneider asked about liability issues and the fact that these students are minors.

MCC President Huard responded that the students are under the care of the campus they are on at the time. She added that there is even the issue of the proper clothing that needs to be worn in the automotive program.

Board Member Guagliumi suggested that questions should be addressed to the district's insurance carrier.

Board Member Schoenfeld noted that there are different regulations for high school students and college students in regards to special education.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin thanked the presenters for attending, presenting, and responding the questions. He suggested this as a model for how districts might work together going forward.

Chair Barnes noted that the MCC automotive facility is state of the art and the equipment within is provided by major car manufacturers. She noted the timing of this opportunity coinciding with the recent resignation of the automotive teacher at Merrimack High School.

#### **4. Report on Communication Committee's Progress for 2016-2017 and Visioning for Technology Needs for 2018-2019**

Chair Barnes invited Nancy Rose, Director of Library, Technology and Media to the table. She first reported on the status of technology in the school district and then provided an update on the Communications Committee that was formed last September.

Director Rose shared that laptop carts continue to be added to every school. That now puts the number of carts at three for each elementary school, four at the upper elementary school, five at the middle school and six at the high school. These carts do not include those in the computer labs.

The network cabling has been enhanced in the upper elementary school bringing the network to 90% capacity. The wide area network (WAN) and phone service provider has been changed to First Light. At the end of the payments the district has the opportunity to own the fiber now being built out and run it.

Director Rose worked with Director of Special Services John Fabrizio to purchase sound field systems where a teacher wears a lanyard that ties into an integrated system that is very helpful to students with hearing challenges. The system allows everything said to be captured and was recently implemented in the middle and high schools.

Summer projects include replacing the computer labs in the K-6 schools, some machines in the Technology Education Department, and installing updated computers in the classrooms that teach Computer-Aided Design (CAD) courses. Staff computer replacement is ongoing. By September all staff computers will be six years old or newer. Wireless access points that are now in the hallways will be moved into classrooms alternating with the installation of new wireless access points.

In July the PowerSchool Learning system was installed and training begun. Six high school students were hired this summer to clean-up, refresh, install, and inventory computers and replace filters in the projectors. The students are also looking forward to assisting with the newly created drop-in training sessions for teachers. These sessions are being offered to assist teachers with familiarizing themselves with PowerSchool Learning, Office 365 and the new PowerSchool grade book. Director Rose gave high marks to the students for their work and their enthusiasm.

Moving forward into the 2018-2019 school year the four year old laptop carts in the elementary schools will be replaced and the middle school building will be refreshed, as will the high school labs.

Director Rose would also like to take a more comprehensive look at computer science education and create a cohesive path for students resulting in a career ready graduate. She would like to see a shift at the elementary level that moves tech educators from skill instructors to integrators, offering courses such as coding that involve problem solving and sequential thinking.

She is also working on expanding the For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) programs in robotics and Lego's. These programs now rely heavily on outside parent volunteers.

Professional Development will continue to be a focus. With PowerSchool, the train the trainer model will be offered. More curriculum will shift to a digital environment, an example being the new math program. To support this shift, mobile devices will continue to be added to the schools. As of this year the ratio of students to devices is about one to five. More staff to support these devices will be needed. Currently the ratio of Information Technology (IT) staff to devices is one-to-one thousand when the norm is one-to-three hundred.

Lastly, Director Rose sees value in continuing to seek out community partnerships such as the one just presented by MCC. She would like to provide students more real world experiences.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if Director Rose is looking to formalize the robotics program. He would be in favor of doing this and making room in the budget to do so.

Director Rose responded that currently she is learning about what robotics opportunities now exist in the district. There is a robotics course now offered at the high school.

Both Director Rose and Vice Chair Schneider saw the importance of a robotics offering that includes special needs students.

Superintendent Chiafery added that para-professionals would be able to assist special needs students in participating in this endeavor.

Board Member Thompson asked how the device to student ratio in Merrimack compares with neighboring districts.

Director Rose responded that some are one-to-one and many are similar to Merrimack.

Vice Chair Schneider shared that in one district Chrome Books are used to lower costs.

Board Member Thompson expressed the concern for students who now participate in robotics because there is no grade.

Director Rose responded that the current robotics course is a mix of students from both situations. She noted that the Science Olympiad is another example of a course added for students participating on the team-based extra-curricular.

Chair Barnes added that the robotics credit would be across the breadth of design, marketing, community and public relations, fundraising and several other areas.

Vice Chair Schneider stressed the importance of the district taking leadership of the program and not to continue to rely so heavily on volunteers, as qualified as they are. Program continuity is important.

Director Rose moved on to discussing the Communications Committee. In the Fall of 2016, a parent survey was taken and the results used to drive the first agenda.

This summer the committee will work on providing parents more information on the various district information systems on the website. These include PowerSchool, on-line registration, PowerSchool Learning, School Messenger, the lunch system and Office 365.

The various district acronyms will be spelled out and new offerings such as the Comprehensive Program at the high school, competency and standards-based grading, Professional Learning Teams, and other additional supports for student learning will be explained.

A review of various policies that impact technology will be ongoing.

Recommendations on PowerSchool grading practices and progress reports were sent to Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin for review.

PowerSchool will address parent requests for a more stream-lined, consistent access to what is going on in the classroom that will span all grade levels.

Another area to address is promoting the good things going on in the schools. Tools that push out notifications to various social media accounts will be reviewed. Inconsistent messaging from the different buildings will also be addressed with a goal of a more consistent format.

Parent-teacher conference experiences differ from elementary school to high school. This will be investigated as to how communication affects this experience.

Board Member Guagliumi, Chair Barnes and Director Rose all agreed that the way conferences are scheduled, total number of students a teacher has, and team vs. individual teacher conference set-ups all impact the parent experience.

Another area of interest to the Communications Committee is parent-student handbooks. They would like to see the handbooks offered in an electronic format and printed as needed.

New school year transitions for parents and students was discussed and will be addressed over the summer.

Added value to addressing these needs is that people moving into the community would be able to avail themselves of this information as well as real estate agents and employers.

Board Members Guagliumi and Thompson are also members of the Communications Committee and agreed that Director Rose was the right person to undertake the formation of this committee and guide its agenda. She was commended for the quality of her work.

Chair Barnes thanked Director Rose for taking on this work. She noted that this committee will only grow and its work will drive the district forward on all fronts.

##### **5. School Lunch Increase for 2017-2018 Based on Federal Paid Lunch Equity Calculations and Visioning for Technology Needs for 2018-2019**

Chair Barnes invited Director of Food Services Dave Dziki to the table.

Director Dziki addressed the need to raise the price of the school meals for next year. This is based on the paid lunch equity that was put in place by the federal government's 2010 Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act. This is a form filled out at the beginning of each school year when applying for the national school lunch program. The district must ensure that what is charged for a paid meal is equal to or greater to that charged for the free meal.

The increase of ten cents would be absorbed by raising the price at the upper elementary school and high school by twenty-five cents. The elementary and middle schools would remain unchanged. The weighted average for the school year 2017-2018 would be \$2.82.

Chair Barnes asked about the high school special.

Director Dziki responded that the special is an enhanced offering option such as specialty pizzas or a larger portion of the standard offering.

Vice Chair Schneider asked why the district is still on the federal lunch program. He asked if Director Dziki has information on area districts that have moved off the program.

Director Dziki responded that to move off the program would mean a loss of surplus commodity foods costing sixty-five to seventy-five thousand dollars. Reimbursement for students in the free and reduced program would also be lost.

The suggested price increase would be in line with neighboring districts.

Director Dziki had no information on other New Hampshire districts that had moved off the federal program.

Chair Barnes asked when this information will be posted on the website and was told it would be soon. My School Bucks account holders should also be notified.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell commented that School Messenger reaches all parents and a push notification could be sent out. My School Bucks will already push out a notification via email when balances get low.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if My School Bucks includes an option for text notifications.

Director Dziki will investigate this possibility.

Director Dziki reviewed the new meal charging procedure list. It included raising the charge limit to \$20.00, eliminating the alternate meal, and parent notifications.

Prior practice of halting charging of meals a week before the last day of school was eliminated. Overall, this was a positive decision.

Charge balances have continued to rise over the past four years. Communication changes are expected to help curb this problem.

Vice Chair Schneider was in agreement with allowing charging of meals through the end of the school year but asked how much of the meal charges were paid off and was told that most were paid.

Board Member Thompson asked about hand stamps and was told that is not done.

Chair Barnes expressed concern about cashier's telling students verbally about low balances.

Director Dziki responded that the cashiers only tell students what their balance is and never tell them when it is negative.

Chair Barnes suggested that the charge limit be changed to equal the cost of two weeks of lunches or raised to \$30.00.

Director Dziki responded that the twenty dollar limit works but it can be re-visited.

Board Member Guagliumi asked Director Dziki to consider alternate paths such as withholding report cards when dealing with unpaid balances.

Board Member Guagliumi asked Director Dziki to ensure that the alternate meal has been eliminated and that no child will be given a cheese sandwich.

Board Member Guagliumi asked Director Dziki to change the language on his final copy of the Meals Charging Policy. In paragraph two strike the last part of the second sentence that refers to the alternate meal.

Superintendent Chiafery asked that the policy as it is now printed be put on the consent agenda for the August 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **6. Outcome from Water Testing for Six Schools**

Chair Barnes invited Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell to speak on the results.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell referred to a comprehensive report each member had in front of them as he spoke.

He noted that at a prior school board meeting it was asked that the water be re-tested at the beginning of the summer months. All six schools were re-tested by RPF Environmental Testing and Consulting Services. The results show that the presence of coliform, E.coli, arsenic, uranium, chloride, nitrate, radon, and Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA's) are well within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and/or New Hampshire guidelines. The presence of trihalomethanes was the only substance found outside of the guidelines.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked for more information about the trihalomethanes and was told it is the combination of chlorine and water mixed with organic materials.

Board Member Thompson expressed concern over the rates of trihalomethanes and would like additional information.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that was his intention to deliver these results to the Merrimack Village District after this meeting and ask for feedback.

Vice Chair Schneider read aloud the results for PFOA's for the viewers at home.

Chair Barnes read aloud the results of PFOA's for each school.

Board Member Guagliumi noted that the district is well below the EPA standard for PFOA's.

Vice Chair Schneider added that they are also well below the Vermont standard.



**7. Request to Conduct as Architectural Review of the Feasibility of Putting on an Addition to the High School for SAU/Special Services Office**

Chair Barnes invited Superintendent Chiafery and Assistant Superintendent Shevenell to speak on the issue.

Superintendent Chiafery began by sharing the Planning Board's recommendation that "All options should be considered for the Consolidation of Special Services/SAU Offices, including consideration of an addition to the high school in place of the current building..."

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell followed with the administration's proposal to obtain the services of an architect familiar with the district to provide guidance on how to proceed.

Board Member Thompson asked the cost of the study.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that he could get most of the work done pro bono and the rest of the work for the study would cost about three to four thousand dollars.

Board Member Thompson questioned the practicality of retrofitting the high school.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that the existing Superintendent's Office (greenhouse) would need to be leveled and the addition would be attached to the part of the high school built in 2000.

The study would include a complete review of the entire infrastructure.

Board Member Thompson asked if the Town Building Department has a list of all of the potential costs involved in a retrofitted building.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell will investigate this possibility.

Vice Chair Schneider shared that he was in attendance at the Planning Board meeting and that there is a need to understand the cost of a consolidated SAU/SPED area built to the same standards as all of the other buildings. It does not mean that the study will result in building this addition.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if the Planning Board request has been brought before the Planning and Building Committee yet.

Vice Chair Schneider responded yes and while they are not in agreement with this approach, they agree that it must be done.

Board Member Thompson noted in last year's budget that \$1,200.00 for soccer goals was removed from the budget and he cannot support this request.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that the study would include the design, materials costs, and other valuable information.

Superintendent Chiafery spoke about the importance of supporting the Planning and Building Committee and avoiding barriers that might arise going forward.

Board Member Thompson reiterated his request that the Planning Board accept a list of potential costs in lieu of a study that would cost three to four thousand dollars.

Board Member Schoenfeld suggested looking for a middle ground by providing information on what needs to be brought up to code and the costs involved.

Superintendent Chiafery suggested a request to the chair of that committee to come before the School Board to discuss their expectations in regards to costs.

Board Member Guagliumi suggested a two-step process of learning the costs to upgrade areas to code and then obtain general information on the options.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that the high school keeps the fire codes up to date by working with the Fire Department. The design of the existing building does not allow for an addition in certain areas. He expressed concern with an incomplete study.

Chair Barnes reminded the board that all construction needs to go through the Planning Board. While there is a need to respect their request, any pro bono work would be appreciated.

Chair Barnes noted that many in the past have noted the needs of special education students and that there are often occasions when they are better served outside of the school building.

Vice Chair Schneider stressed the importance of showing the cost of a retrofit versus the cost of building new. He thinks a square foot cost could be an acceptable alternative.

## **8. Approval of June 19, 2017 Minutes**

Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to accept the minutes.

Chair Barnes requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 6, line 270: Add to the end of the sentence "...that the district is developing to support areas of curriculum not supported by the new program."
- Page 10, line 457: Change "Town Meeting" to "Town Council"

The motion carried 4-0-1.

Board Member Guagliumi abstained.

## **9. Consent Agenda**

### **a) Educator Resignations**

Alejandra Costas Armada, Merrimack High School, World Language Teacher  
Cathy Stone, Merrimack High School, Science Teacher

### **b) Educator Nominations**

Ronald Beck, Merrimack High School, Music Teacher  
Emilie Carter, Merrimack High School, World Language Teacher  
Monica Coler, Merrimack High School, Science Teacher  
Lisa Hargreaves, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, Special Education Teacher  
Cecilia Lasyone, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, Library Media Specialist  
Lindsey McElhinney, Merrimack Middle School, Special Education Teacher  
Stacy Papp, Reeds Ferry Elementary School, Part-Time Kindergarten Teacher  
Susan Stubbs, Reeds Ferry Elementary School, Part-Time Pre-School Teacher

### **c) Approval of 2017 Wellness Policy and Removal of 2012 Wellness Policy**

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to accept the consent agenda as read including the approval of the new wellness policy and the removal of the old one.

The motion carried 5-0-0.

## **10. Other**

### **a) Correspondence**

Chair Barnes noted that all of the board members were in receipt of correspondence from a trade school. She directed their correspondence to the administration.

Chair Barnes received communication from a parent asking about the two Lego teams at the middle school.

### **b) Comments**

Vice Chair Schneider expressed concern about his hard questions to the guests from Manchester Community College (MCC) in regards to the automotive program. He did not want them to be taken as not in support of this endeavor.

## **11. New Business**

There was no new business.

## **12. Committee Reports**

Vice Chair Schneider noted that the Planning and Building Committee tried to hold a June meeting but could not reach a quorum.

Board Member Thompson attended the Parks and Recreation Committee where Chair Chris Christensen's tenure was noted and he was thanked for his service. Additionally the property at the end of Baboosic Lake Road was discussed and deemed acceptable for the development of two high school regulation soccer fields.

### **13. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

There were no public comments.

### **14. Manifest**

The Board signed the manifest.

At 9:42 p.m. Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to enter non-public session per RSA 91-A: 3, II, (c) (e).

A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Board Member Schoenfeld voted In Favor.

Board Member Thompson voted In Favor.

Board Member Guagliumi voted In Favor.

Vice Chair Schneider voted In Favor.

Chair Barnes voted In Favor.

At 10:10 p.m. Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to adjourn the public meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.