

**Merrimack School Board Meeting  
Merrimack School District  
School Administrative District Unit #26  
December 4, 2017  
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room  
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

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

Student Representative Puzzo was excused from the meeting.

**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. Second Discussion Regarding the Request to Conduct a National Youth Tobacco Survey at Merrimack Middle School**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin began by responding to questions raised by school board members at the prior meeting. Middle School Principal Caragher reached out to his contact for the Centers for Disease Control survey, Pat McComb-Podmostko of ICF International, Rockville, MD for answers to the questions.

To the question: “Who will be surveyed?” The response was: “We will be surveying one 7<sup>th</sup> and one 8<sup>th</sup> grade class. The survey will take place in the Health classes for the two classes that will be taking the survey.”

To the question: “When will the survey be administered?” The response was: “We will be sending a data collector to your school on Tuesday, March 20, 2018 to facilitate the administration of the National Youth Tobacco Survey.”

To the question: “As this is an opt-in survey, is there a minimum number of students needed for the survey to take place?” The response was: “Even if only two students opt-in to take the survey, the survey will still be administered.”

Additional information provided was that this is a paper/pencil survey, the data collector will bring the questionnaire booklets and sharpened pencils, the test takes about 40-45 minutes to complete, and the school will receive a \$500.00 reward for participating.

Vice Chair Schneider asked how the classes will be picked to participate.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that the CDC leaves that decision to the principal.

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Thompson) to allow the district to work with the CDC to move forward with the Youth Tobacco Survey activity to happen at the Merrimack Middle School.

The motion carried 5-0-0.

#### **4. Compiled Research Related to the Homework Protocol**

School Board Member Schoenfeld provided abstracts related to research on the educational impacts of homework. She read aloud and summed up the findings of this research for fellow board members.

Before sharing her results she pointed out that every child is different, parents are the best for knowing their own child, and that this research looks at large groups.

She looked for research that addressed specific questions that had arisen at the previous meeting.

Question #1: “Is homework, in general, supportive of student success?”

Research supports the district position that all homework is important.

Question #2:” “Does grading homework, specifically for completion, as opposed to feedback on quality, affect student mastery?”

College level students in mechanics courses spent more time on graded homework than those given just study questions. However, there was no difference in test outcomes.

College level students who received credit for the accuracy of their homework tested better than their peers who had received homework credit for the amount of homework they had completed.

High school level studies found that grading homework for completion alone did not associate with the amount of homework done.

Board Member Schoenfeld observed “The results of the three studies indicate that while homework is associated with achievement gains, these positive effects are not captured by the “time on homework” measure.”

Middle school studies across content areas found no correlation between completion of homework and achievement.

An elementary school study found no connection between completion of homework and achievement. Engaging in homework did lead to achievement.

Question #3: “Does student self-management and self-efficacy in regard to homework affect student mastery?”

Research results from three studies all show a strong connection between self-regulation as a practice throughout the school years impacts student subject mastery.

Board Member Schoenfeld noted that the research spans several decades and that the role and value of homework is not a new discussion.

Vice Chair Schneider asked that a pdf version of this research be made available on the school website.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if any research looked at the difference between turning in homework for completion versus turning it in to be graded for correctness; and the impact on GPA’s.

Board Member Schoenfeld responded that in her research the results are minimal.

Board Members individually thanked Board Member Schoenfeld for this research.

Board Member Schoenfeld noted that the research can be accessed through the Merrimack Public Library databases.

## **5. 2017 State Assessment Results and Update**

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin opened his remarks with a brief history of the evolution of testing standards since the 2001 passage of the No Child Left Behind Act. From 2005 through 2014 New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont and Maine worked under the NECAP New England Common Assessment Project Consortium to create standards for students and assessments in certain content areas and grade levels.

In 2015 the Common Core and the creation of the college and career ready standards were implemented in New Hampshire. The Smarter Balanced Assessment tool was used to assess student performance and understanding.

In the Spring of 2018 the American Institutes for Research (AIR) will replace Smarter Balanced and no longer includes performance tasks.

These changes have made it difficult to create long-term trend lines. A three year cycle is needed to establish a new trend line.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin read aloud the results of the 2016 and 2017 assessments. He noted the overarching area where students need improvement is in the area of inquiry.

Board Member Guagliumi asked who made the change to move to a new assessment model and was told the change was made by the New Hampshire Department of Education.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if there is a way to measure where the district stands in relation to other schools in the state.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that the trend he has noticed in math is that there has been a consistent downward trajectory as students move into high school. Students statewide have been challenged by non-concrete questions.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked if there will now be less time spent on testing with the new model.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that grade levels three, four, five, six, seven and eight in ELA and math, but with only the AIR assessment.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked if the AIR assessment will de-emphasize inquiry and was told yes.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked what standards the AIR assessment is aligned to and was told that the hope is that it will be aligned to the college and career ready standards.

Board Member Thompson asked if the data the district receives pertains only to the district and the state. He would like to see regional data and sub-categories.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that districts can choose or not choose to share their results. This data has never been made available.

Chair Barnes asked what the expectations will be for student performance until a new trend line is developed.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin responded that the district developed and continues to refine, a battery of assessments that are used to inform instruction. Fontas & Pinnell and Star 360 will see the addition of the new math program assessments to create a multi-dimensional picture for each student.

Board Member Guagliumi expressed her appreciation for the various assessments.

## **6. Update on Remediation of Bat Residue at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School**

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell provided a detailed presentation for the board members on the issue of bat residue found at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School. He was initially notified by Director of Facilities Touseau of the problem. An immediate site evaluation located the problem area and Marvel Glass was hired to remove the window and Honeywell to remove the unit ventilator out of the classroom. Bat residue was removed and the area was given an initial cleanup.

Students and staff have been temporarily removed from eight classrooms and the entire side of the building has been sealed off. Outside contractors have been called in to conduct testing and resolve the problem. One classroom tested positive for a bat spores that can cause health issues. The Town Health Inspector and the state DOE have been contacted and are kept up to date on the process of the clean-up.

The top six or seven rows of brick on the south side of the school will be removed. A visual inspection will then be done. If bat droppings are discovered, then the bottom six or seven rows will be cut to allow for further inspection. If needed the entire brick wall could be removed.

The contractor RPF will test approximately fifteen different areas including stairwells for the bat spores.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if this clean-up is covered by insurance and was told no.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that he expects this work to be completed sometime in January. This will be followed up with inspections of the other schools.

Board Member Thompson asked if the other schools could be checked for similar problems and if night vision technology could be put around the schools.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded that this is already going to be part of a future discussion involving roofing projects.

Superintendent Chiafery stated that Honeywell is now in the process of doing an analysis of the air quality in the schools. This baseline data will be helpful in prioritizing the areas highest areas of need.

Vice Chair Schneider noted that this could be a learning experience for the state as it is a naturally occurring problem.

Chair Barnes noted the importance the district has always placed on maintaining its facilities and that this is an unfortunate occurrence.

## **7. Overview of Proposed 2018-2019 School District Budget**

Superintendent Chiafery began by noting her appreciation for the administrative staff for their input on the budget proposal.

A main accomplishment that needs to happen now are the collective bargaining agreement with the support staff.

Possible warrant article items are full-day kindergarten, the consolidation of the central office and the Student Services offices, paving the lower lot and circle in front of Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, bleacher replacement in the Smith Gym, a Capital Reserve Fund, and the retention of surplus funds at year end to even out the tax rate.

Maintenance items include roof replacement at Reeds Ferry Elementary School, replacing a section of the outside bleachers at Merrimack High School, water filtration system to remove all PFOA's in all schools, exterior and interior cameras at the middle and high schools. Additional projects are replacement art room cabinets, replacement cafeteria tables, and replacement classroom cabinet/sinks at the upper elementary school.

The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) enrollment figures are comprehensive. There is an expected overall decrease of 62 students for 2018-2019 which will lead to the elimination of 1.5 teaching positions at the elementary level. Also, there will be the elimination of one science and one social studies position and the expansion of the .05 math and .05 ELA coordinators to full-time at the middle school. There will be no changes at the high school. There is a request for a district-wide computer technician.

The teachers and administrators contracts are already in place.

Board Member Thompson asked if contracts are approved by the taxpayers why they are in the budget.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that everything being presented is for consideration.

Superintendent Chiafery noted the guaranteed maximum health rate for 2018-2019 is 3.5% which is an increase of \$76,000.00 from last year.

New Hampshire retirement for professional staff rate remains at 17.36% for this year.

In regards to classroom instructional focus the high school math program texts and accounting texts for the dual enrollment program.

Further items include furniture requests, mobile laptop carts, a K-12 robotics program, transportation increases and vendor changes, and related services cost increases and vendor changes.

The proposed 2018-2019 budget is \$74,833,856.00.

The approved 2017-2018 budget was \$74,254,231.00.

The 2018-2019 default budget is \$75,153,005.00.

The proposed budget is \$319,149.00 less than the default budget.

Chair Barnes extolled the board to prepare questions for the administration to provide details on budget items.

**8. School Board Budget Hearing Dates**

Superintendent Chiafery suggested the following times, dates, locations and presenters for budget meetings.

December 18 (Monday)	Town Hall Matthew Thornton Room	7:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food Service</li> <li>• Maintenance</li> </ul>
January 2 (Tuesday)	Town Hall Memorial Room	7:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MUES</li> <li>• Technology/Library Media</li> <li>• Special Services</li> </ul>
January 4 (Thursday)	Town Hall Memorial Room	7:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MES/RFS/TFS</li> <li>• Middle School</li> <li>• High School</li> <li>• District</li> </ul>
January 9 (Tuesday)	Town Hall Matthew Thornton Room	7:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional meetings with departments if necessary</li> <li>• Warrant Article Discussion</li> </ul>

Superintendent Chiafery requested board members forward their questions to her by December 19<sup>th</sup>. Supplemental questions are requested by January 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The meeting for January 4<sup>th</sup> will be rescheduled as Chair Barnes and Vice Chair Schneider will both be unavailable.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if there is a date that the budget needs to go to the budget committee.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the budget committee is expected to start meeting on Tuesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **9. Approval of December 4, 2017 Minutes**

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to accept the minutes of the December 4, 2017 meeting.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

### **10. Acceptance of Gifts/Grants under \$5,000**

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell presented a gift from the Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers to Merrimack High School in the amount of \$1,514.93. The funds are to be used to expand the lathe turning curriculum specifically in the areas of hollow form and spindle turning.

The Guild requests that a press release to local news outlets showcasing Merrimack High School woodworking students' newly acquired skills and achievements. The Guild will also publish an article showcasing Merrimack High School students' with student use in ten woodworking classes. Maintenance work costs are estimated at \$55.00 per academic year for drive belt and general maintenance.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to accept the gift with gratitude.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

### **11. Consent Agenda**

#### **• Educator Resignation**

Mary-Alice Corliss    Merrimack High School                                  Science Teacher

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

The motion passed 5-0-0.

**12. Other**

**a) Correspondence**

Board Member Thompson had a discussion with multiple constituents in regards to the homework policy.

Board Member Schoenfeld had a similar conversation.

**b) Comments**

There were no comments.

**13. New Business**

There was no new business.

**14. Committee Reports**

Board Member Schoenfeld attended budget committee meetings and noted that there is an open position for a community member.

Chair Barnes attended the Grater Woods sub-committee meeting and she will be working with the forest creatures this Saturday morning.

**15. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

There were no public comments on agenda items

**16. Manifest**

The Board signed the manifest.

At 9:13 p.m. Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to enter non-public session per RSA A 91-A: 3, II, (a)(e).

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

At 10:01 p.m. Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) to adjourn the public meeting.