

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District
School Administrative Unit #26
April 2, 2018
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 for Curriculum McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell and Student Representative Puzzo.

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. Business Industry Association (BIA) of NH Workforce Accelerator 2025

Chair Barnes invited BIA representative Sara Colson to the table.

Ms. Colson narrated a PowerPoint presentation the focus of which was preparing for the future New Hampshire workforce needs. Her extensive conversations with the business community have made her aware of their concerns in regards to the effects of changes in school administration on school/business partnerships and what they see as necessary skills and experience for the future workforce.

Ms. Colson shared the 65 x 25 goal which was based on a Georgetown University study. It was adopted by the community college system, then the business community. By the year 2025 65% of the state's 25-64 year old population will hold a high-quality postsecondary credential or degree.

The Workforce Accelerator 2025 is a partnership between the Business & Industry Association and the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. It is a three year commitment whose purpose is to create sustainable solutions to the need for skilled workers. The two parts of the initiative are the 65 x 25 facilitation and the school to career pathways.

Work has begun on the school to career pathways. Examples include: classroom speakers, school job/career fairs, job shadows, business tours, mentoring from business leaders, professional development and externships for teachers, extended learning opportunities, career and technical education support, business involvement in after school programming, and collaborating on curriculum development.

Challenges New Hampshire faces include an aging population, lower expectations for immigration, slower overall growth in population, declining K-12 enrollments, changes in the K-12 socio-economic profile and the likelihood to pursue postsecondary education, substance abuse, lack of soft skills, and residents who leave the state for better job opportunities.

The current needs of the New Hampshire business community include workers with needed skills and an ample supply of skilled workers so that businesses can grow.

Strategies to meet these challenges include aligned curriculum in grades K-12, career exploration at all levels, expanding dual enrollment and dual admission programs, and linking students to work-based learning opportunities.

Suggestions on how school boards can help are by embracing and encouraging a district-wide philosophy regarding work-based learning opportunities, implementing district policies for these opportunities, conversations within the community, engaging parents and others, and reaching out to local businesses regarding partnership opportunities.

Ms. Colson closed by asking the board to look at what challenges the district faces and to think about how to build on current strengths and successes.

Board Member Thompson asked if thought has been given to asking businesses to fund this initiative.

Ms. Colson responded that a community in the Lakes Region has partnered with their business community to fund the position for a person who works out of the school guidance department. The school district does contribute to funding the position.

There are charitable organizations that provide mini-grants and Ms. Colson can provide this information to the district.

Board Member Thompson asked how the partnership works with the community college system.

Ms. Colson responded that this is a big piece of her outreach work.

Vice Chair Schneider asked how the BIA encourages the community college partnerships with school districts.

Ms. Colson responded that she has a point person within the community college system that she works with closely. The data is tracked annually.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if Running Start can be used to focus on workforce needs.

Ms. Colson will investigate this possibility.

Board Member Thompson asked to have soft skills explained for the audience.

Ms. Colson responded that these include things such as punctuality, cell phone etiquette, working on a team, communication skills, basic math and English skills, and e-mail etiquette. Today many young people put off getting their first job until after college and have not developed these skills.

Board Member Thompson expressed concern about some of the language on the BIA website where it is stated that they support legislation that would allow them to target educational aid.

Ms. Colson responded that she would refer the question to someone in her office who works on policy.

Chair Barnes thanked Ms. Colson for her presentation.

4. Update on District Mental Health Committee with a Focus on Social Emotional Learning Skills Curriculum

Chair Barnes invited Thorntons Ferry Elementary School Assistant Principal Julie DeLuca and Director of Student Services John Fabrizio to the table.

Director Fabrizio began by stating that the committee is now at stage three, implementation. The Project Grow grant has been implemented and sub-committees have been established.

Continued accomplishments include the creation of August Academy and its keynote speaker, two K-12 Collaboration Days with a third Collaboration Day planned for this May, Parent Outreach (Screenagers on April 17, NAMI Mental Health Parent Support Group is in development, parent speaker forum on technology and social media, presence at Merrimack Safeguard and parent transition events), continued Merrimack School District Leadership training, refining the Suicide and Self-Harm Protocol and Parent Guide for all schools, Staff Development and Program Development (problem solving book study, mental health awareness at staff meetings, social and emotional learning training), and collaborations with state, regional and local partners.

Assistant Principal DeLuca began by stating that the committee also works to develop the soft skills students need to be successful throughout life. She noted that the work of the committee is imbedded in the science curriculum now.

The biggest insight the data revealed was the lack of tier one instruction for social/emotional learning. Eighty percent of helpers time was focused on tiers two and three student concerns and issues. This led to a lack of consistent, explicit instruction across the district.

A program was piloted in grades K-4 at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School with positive results.

A social/emotional learning evaluation proposal and implementation plan for leadership approval was developed and is expected to be presented to the school board in May 2019. The major

components of the plan are the evaluation and piloting of two research-based programs, teacher training, and hosting Social Emotional Learning (SEL) vendors.

Merrimack continues to be a leader in the state in regards to social skills instruction and participates in a cohort with the Hudson, Londonderry, and Salem school districts to improve the existing systems of mental health care for all students.

Board Member Guagliumi appreciated the deliberateness of the committee in addressing the mental health concerns in the school district. She asked about the status of the state grant.

Assistant Principal DeLuca responded the district as part of the steering committee is shaping the direction of the work, has free access to Dr. Cassie Yackley and other experts in the field, and access to \$50,000 from the DOE.

Board Member Schoenfeld commended the committee's work in addressing the tier one needs and asked the curriculum will be chosen.

Board Member Thompson asked how the tier one skills are aligned.

Assistant Principal DeLuca responded that the skills are developmentally aligned.

Board Member Guagliumi noted that the more pro-active the district can become in delivering tier one instruction, the less reactive it will need to be in tiers two and three allowing for the ability for our resources to support more kids.

Chair Barnes asked if some of the existing print resources can be made available on the website and was told yes.

Vice Chair Schneider suggested that the district control the resources that each building provides. The Project Safeguard website is not as frequently updated as it once was.

Board Member Schoenfeld asked if some of the publications were developed to be used as a tool in a private discussion and not for general dissemination.

Chair Barnes asked if the appropriate resources were available for emergency situations on the district website.

Superintendent Chiafery lauded both Assistant Principal DeLuca and Director Fabrizio for the yeoman's work they have done and the initiative they have shown in creating regional partnerships; leading the way for the entire state.

5. Request to Conduct Teacher Survey Related to Students' Social Emotional Learning Skills and Their Reading Performance

Chair Barnes invited Thorntons Ferry Elementary School Principal Bridey Bellemare and Special Education Teacher Cristy Jenkins to the table.

Educator Jenkins asked the board to consider her request to conduct a student survey as a part of her Master's Degree program. The focus of the survey is in the area of reading.

Samples of the survey (Devereux Student Strengths Assessment), parent letter, permission slip, and the research proposal were provide to the board members.

Board Member Schoenfeld stated that the request needed to be separated into two areas; permission to administer a survey and permission to conduct research. The complications are in the research piece as there is a variety of student identifying information.

Educator Jenkins and Board Member Schoenfeld conversed on how to resolve the research piece so that it could go forward.

The data set can be removed from the assignment and not shared as part of the formal presentation.

Vice Chair Schneider expressed concern that the parents might be concerned about the information that will be revealed about their student.

Board Member Schoenfeld would prefer that the survey be administered more broadly to protect student privacies.

Board Member Thompson does not see the need for this survey.

Superintendent Chiaferi commented that this is considered a survey and the board is currently working on a revised policy in regards to surveys, so it was deemed important that it be brought before the board. She would like to see a resolution that allows the educator to complete her coursework.

Board Member Guagliumi noted that data collection goes on daily within the district and she would like to support the work of the educators and their continued learning and education. If parents opt-in to the survey and the research issues are sorted out then she will support this request.

Principal Bellemare suggested that she and educator Jenkins meet with the college advisor to make revisions that would address the board members concerns in regards to student privacy.

Board Member Schoenfeld moved (seconded by Board Member Guagliumi) that the material presented to the board should be considered as an assessment rather than a survey and should be handled at the school building level.

The motion passed 4-1-0.

Board Member Thompson voted in opposition.

6. Second Review of New Policy

- **Non-Educational Surveys and Questionnaires**

Superintendent Chiafery highlighted the changes that were made to the policy after consultation with NHSBA Attorney Will Phillips.

She then asked that the revised policy be put on the next consent agenda.

Board Member Thompson asked what the impact would be of these changes.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if removing the Miscellaneous Provisions section were removed would then make these provisions opt-in.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that going forward almost everything will be opt-in.

Board Member Thompson if everything is opt-in what is the impact on the district and suggested going to back to the state representatives to show them the additional burden.

Chair Barnes noted that the legal reference that pertains to Miscellaneous Provisions needs to be removed.

Superintendent Chiafery will have the changes made and an updated copy prepared for board members.

The policy will go on the next consent agenda.

7. Update on Tentative Last Day of School Based on Count of Instructional Hours

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum McLaughlin stated that the tentative last day of school is June 22, 2018. This calculation is based on instructional hours, not the 180 day calendar. Kindergarteners will attend up to four full days of school.

Board Member Guagliumi asked if there was any negative feedback last year on having kindergarteners attend full days the last few days of school and was told no. Parent feedback was very positive.

Vice Chair Schneider asked if there are further delays in this school year will the last day of school change and was told yes.

The possibility of requesting a waiver would then be considered.

Vice Chair Schneider commented that the Bedford School District will be counting hours next year and that Merrimack should watch how this unfolds.

Superintendent Chiafery noted that many area districts begin school in August and that gives them more options.

Chair Barnes noted that the parent survey revealed a very high percentage of parents wanting school to begin after Labor Day.

Vice Chair Schneider brought up the issue of teachable hours being used more often going forward and that this might need to be considered when teacher contracts are under review.

8. Guaranteed Health Insurance Rate for 2018-2019

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that the guaranteed maximum rate is 3.5%. There has been no change from the budgeted amount.

9. Approval of March 19, 2018 Minutes

Vice Chair Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2018 meeting.

Board Member Thompson requested the following changes to the minutes:

- Page 2, line 83: after "...fiscal year..." add "... and not a calendar year..."

The motion passed as amended 5-0-0.

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

- a) Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Bull to Merrimack High School for \$2,000
- b) Health Trust to Merrimack High School District for \$3,200

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell presented two gifts.

The first gift is from Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Bull to the Merrimack High School U.S. First Robotics Team #166 in the amount of \$2,000. The funds are to be used support the program.

The second gift is from HealthTrust, Inc. in the amount of \$3,200. It was received by the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee and will be used for worksite health and safety activities to benefit district employees through the District Wellness Committee. Six designated Health and Safety Coordinators for the District attended a full-day training session.

Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Board Member Thompson) to accept the gifts and grants with gratitude.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

11. Consent Agenda

- **Educator Retirements/Resignations**

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum McLaughlin presented the following for consent:

Jane Austin-Evans, Speech and Language Pathologist, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
Robert C. Girardi, Physical Education Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
Margaret Irwin, Grade 3 Teacher, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
Dawn Kerrigan, Physical Education Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
Teresa Porter Cascadden, Social Studies Teacher, Merrimack Middle School

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

The motion passed 5-0-0.

12. Other

a) Correspondence

Chair Barnes received correspondence from the state of New Hampshire Department Of Education in regards to a future widening of the Rte. 3 corridor abutting Merrimack. There will be a series of public information meetings, one in Merrimack on May 1st in the high school cafeteria at 7:00 p.m.

Chair Barnes received a letter from the New Hampshire Art Educator's Association recognizing the contributions of Reeds Ferry Elementary School art teacher Mary Beth Donovan-Olson to the organization and lauded her various volunteer efforts on its behalf.

Chair Barnes received correspondence asking which school board members will be on the next ballot for voting.

Chair Barnes was asked about eliminating April vacation going forward and also about adding minutes to the school day.

Board Member Thompson was asked about the water filtration system.

Student Representative Puzzo was asked by students if finals could be waived for students with an A in the class.

Superintendent Chiafery responded that the protocol would be to approach Principal Johnson.

b) Comments

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum McLaughlin shared information on the upcoming Merrimack Safeguard event at the O'Leary Center. The video will be unveiled.

13. New Business

Superintendent Chiafery noted a change on end of the year school presentations that are done in May and June.

14. Committee Reports

Student Representative Puzzo shared that the U.S. Robotics First Team medaled in a competition held at University of New Hampshire this past weekend. They have the potential to attend the world championship.

Student Representative Puzzo shared that the Cavalcade of Bands is scheduled for this Thursday.

Board Member Guagliumi attended the recent Parents' Night and heard about all of the fundraising being done in the district.

Chair Barnes had attended the NHSBA board of directors and met with the Washington representatives.

15. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

16. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

At 9:12 p.m. Board Member Thompson moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to go into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3,II(b).

The motion passed 5-0-0 with a roll call vote.

At 9:40 p.m. Board Member Guagliumi moved (seconded by Vice Chair Schneider) to adjourn the public meeting.