

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
Monday, May 6, 2019**

PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES

6:00 P.M. – PUBLIC SESSION

Present: Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Guagliumi, Board Members Schneider, Schoenfeld and Nunez. Also in attendance were Superintendent Chiafery, Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin and Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell.

Excused: Student Representative Puzzo.

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. Legislative Update

There was no legislative update.

4. Focus on Implementation of the Full-Day Kindergarten Program at the James Mastricola Elementary School, the Reeds Ferry Elementary School and the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

(Administrators, Educators and Students)

Ms. Kimberly Yarlott, Principal, Reeds Ferry Elementary School, addressed the Board and stated that the kindergarten teachers from each of the elementary schools were present to discuss how pleased they were with the implementation of full-day kindergarten.

Ms. Hillary Burkush, grade K teacher; Ms. Corinne Starling, Special Education Teacher; Ms. Barbara Burns, grade K teacher; Ms. Ashley Phaneuf, grade K teacher; Ms. Kaela Daly, grade K teacher; Ms. Lisa Lamontagne, KIA (Kindergarten Instructional Assistant) and

Ms. Mary Martinelli, a paraprofessional was present representing the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School.

Ms. Burkush, addressed the Board and stated some students from the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School were going to speak about their daily schedule and how the large instructional blocks of time allowed the teachers to integrate multi-sensory learning, small group centers, STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) as well as play.

Ms. Starling stated that the full-day kindergarten schedule allowed for flexible grouping of students that met the diverse needs of all learners.

Ms. Burns commented that small group centers provided children with the opportunity to get to know each other and practice skills related to social and emotional learning.

Ms. Phaneuf said the centers also allowed time for creativity, problem-solving, peer cooperation while integrating academic goals.

Ms. Anna Boghigian from the James Masticola Elementary School, addressed the Board and stated the typical kindergarten day usually consisted of guided reading where Literacy Footprints was used as one of the tools which helped the students learn to read.

Ms. Deborah Fournier, grade K teacher, James Masticola Elementary School shared that they did a variety of word study activities which helped the students turn letters into words and learn to read. She said they had noticed a great increase in the amount of words the students spelled correctly in their writing.

Ms. Fournier commented they also played a variety of games to help the students learn sight words. She also commented they did multi-sensory activities which included writing words in shaving cream, in sand or using sandpaper.

Ms. Fournier pointed out the instructional assistants and paraeducators played an important role in the small group work and throughout the day they also provided intervention and extension activities.

Ms. Fournier commented the additional time full-day kindergarten provided them allowed them multiple opportunities to provide small group instruction.

Ms. Kim Buldoc, grade K teacher, James Masticola Elementary School, stated they had one unit of study for science which was "My Five Senses" and they spent much of the year

smelling, tasting and touching things. She also stated they completed four STEAM activities per month.

Ms. Buldoc noted the focus with regard to social studies was “Me and My Community.” She said they used the Let’s Find Out Scholastic magazine every week and the children were exposed to different holidays, community members as well as social and emotional learning.

Ms. Sherry Rosswaag, grade K teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School, addressed the Board and stated other teachers in attendance were Ms. Laurie Bavaro, Ms. Cathy Cibotti, Ms. Stacy Papp and Ms. Kristine Thibault. She said they were all very happy with full-day kindergarten and it had really helped with the Envision Math Program in terms of having the time to teach all of the aspects involved with the program. She also said having the full school day to teach the students provided them with an opportunity to provide students with more individualized attention.

Ms. Cibotti, grade K teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School, stated they were very excited to be able to include Unified Arts or “specials” as part of the full-day curriculum. She said the specials taught were art, computer, library, music and physical education.

Chair Barnes and the Board members thanked the teachers and students for coming and commended them on a job well done!

5. Formal Signing of the Master Agreement between the Merrimack Teacher’s Association the Merrimack School Board

(Mr. Don Chisholm, Mr. Bill Maniotis, Chair Barnes and Superintendent Chiafery)

Mr. Don Chisholm, President, Merrimack Teacher’s Association and Mr. Bill Maniotis, Lead Negotiator, Merrimack Teachers Association were in attendance. Superintendent Chiafery and Chair Barnes signed the Master Agreement between the Merrimack Teachers Association and the Merrimack School Board.

Chair Barnes read aloud a letter from the Merrimack Teachers Association addressed to the School Board and members of the Merrimack community, as summarized below:

We wanted to thank all of you sincerely for continually supporting the education of our students in Merrimack. We feel very fortunate to work in a town where residents have consistently shown that they value education. Thank you for your support in the passing of both our school budgets and teacher contracts throughout the past decades. This is something that we do not take for granted. Please be assured that the students are and will continue to be the top priority for our teaching staff.

6. Revised School Board Policy

(Superintendent Chiafery, Elementary School Principals)

- First Reading of Early Admission to Kindergarten and Grade One

Superintendent Chiafery read aloud from the revised School Board Policy as summarized below:

EARLY ADMISSION TO KINDERGARTEN AND GRADE ONE

Effective January 4, 1999, a child must have attained the age of six by September 30 in order to attend first-grade in the Merrimack School District. This is in accordance with RSA:193:1 II Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil (Effective January 1, 1998).

Any child, however, whose sixth birthday falls on or between October 1st and December 31st may be eligible for first-grade entrance. Such a determination of eligibility will be made by the Superintendent in consultation with the building Principal.

Any child whose fifth birthday falls on or between October 1st and October 31st may be eligible for kindergarten entrance. Such a determination of eligibility will be made by the Superintendent in consultation with the building Principal.

Superintendent Chiafery noted the policy would be in place for the 2019 – 2020 school year.

Ms. Kimberly Yarlott, Principal, Reeds Ferry Elementary School, stated the policy referenced both kindergarten and first-grade early entrance and the only distinguishing difference between the two was the child's birthdates. She said the administrators at all three elementary schools strongly believed that all students experienced developmentally appropriate early learning schooling. She further said a developmental gap existed between a child turning five in September and a child turning six in September.

Chair Barnes stated there would be a second reading of the policy at the May 20, 2019 meeting and it would be on the Consent Agenda at the first meeting in June.

Chair Barnes stated Ms. Bridey Bellemare, Principal, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, had accepted a position as the Executive Director of the New Hampshire Schools Principals Association and would begin her new position on July 1, 2019. Chair Barnes wished Ms. Bellemare congratulations and thanked her for her service.

7. Recognition of Ms. Maryanne Sabat, Teacher, the James Mastricola Elementary School

(Ms. Michelle Romein and Mr. John Fabrizio)

Mr. John Fabrizio, Director of Student Services, stated he was pleased to announce that Ms. Maryanne Sabat, Special Education teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School was named the Elementary Special Education Teacher of the Year by the New Hampshire Council of Exceptional Children (CEC).

Ms. Michelle Romein, Principal, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, addressed the Board and stated Ms. Sabat had taught in the Merrimack School District for 22 years and was both a classroom and special education teacher. She said countless students had their lives enhanced and she and many others had become better educators because of her.

Ms. Romein stated that one of the letters of recommendation received from a former student, as part of the nomination process, was from Dr. Kevin Geffe, who was a student of Ms. Sabat's in 1986 at the James Mastricola Elementary School. She read aloud from his letter as summarized below:

Maryanne Sabat is more than a woman who went to school, got an education and became a teacher. Maryanne Sabat is a perfect example of a woman who embraced the true meaning of an educator and by doing so has exemplified what it means to honor one's occupation. She has never minimized the responsibility that her occupation has given her to shape the minds of young children. Mrs. Sabat has literally helped me take care of tens of thousands of people, save hundreds of lives and raise two young men through her limitless dedication to me, my education and constant reminder of my undefined potential.

Ms. Romein read aloud from another letter of recommendation from a former student, Ms. Lindsay Mumbach, who was presently a third-grade teacher, as summarized below:

Decades after having Mrs. Sabat, I can still so clearly recall the passion and enthusiasm that she exhibited toward her students. Her classroom was a warm and colorful environment where students felt comfortable expressing themselves. The flexibility and differentiation that Mrs. Sabat exhibited while teaching was far ahead of her time. Maryanne Sabat is a gifted and dedicated educator. She gives of herself daily to support all students and staff.

Ms. Romein noted that Ms. Deborah Fournier, an educator at the James Mastricola Elementary School, stated "Maryanne's influence has made me a better parent, teacher and

friend. I cannot think of a more deserving special education teacher to receive such a prestigious award than Maryanne Sabat. I am truly grateful to be one of the educators who has been made better by my working with Maryanne.”

Ms. Romein presented Ms. Sabat with the New Hampshire Special Education Elementary School Teacher of the Year award.

Chair Barnes congratulated Ms. Sabat on her achievement. Ms. Sabat commented it was an honor to teach in Merrimack.

8. Status of Future Agenda Item Regarding Homework Protocol

(Chair Barnes)

Chair Barnes read aloud a message from Legal Counsel as follows:

At the April 15, 2019, organizational meeting of the Board, I mentioned we would place the subject of the District’s homework grading protocol and the advisory Warrant Article regarding the grading of homework on the agenda for an upcoming meeting. On April 16, 2019, Mr. Robert Bevill initiated litigation against the District and this Board, filing a Petition for a Writ of Mandamus, seeking an Order that the Board be directed to change Policy IKB, the District’s homework policy. It remains the position of this Board that it is the role, responsibility and function of the Board to set policy for the District and that the Warrant Article regarding IKB is advisory in nature. In light of the now pending litigation and a Motion to Dismiss filed by our legal counsel, we will defer from further addressing the matter until the litigation has been resolved.

9. Receipt of Notification that the Districts Public School Infrastructure Request was Approved

(Superintendent Chiafery and Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell)

Superintendent Chiafery stated she received a letter from Commissioner Edelblut, State of New Hampshire Department of Education, stating that the security cameras for the Reeds Ferry Elementary School and the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School were approved. She said the proposed expenditure was applied for through the Public Infrastructure Fund grant. Superintendent Chiafery pointed out the award reflected 80% of the project cost which was a not-to-exceed amount of \$50,702.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that he would meet with the principals from both schools to determine where the areas of concern were and the security cameras would be installed over the summer.

Chair Barnes asked what budget year it would fall in. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied it would be July 1st.

10. Affirmation of School Board Committee Assignments

(Chair Barnes)

Chair Barnes mentioned that each of the Board members had a copy of the 2019-2020 Board Assignments. She stated a copy of the assignments would be on file at the district’s office.

Chair Barnes reviewed the assignments as below:

Planning & Building Committee	Board Member Schneider
Budget Committee	Board Member Schneider
Program Evaluation & Review Committee (PERC)	Board Member Schoenfeld
Program Evaluation & Review Committee (PERC)	Vice Chair Guagliumi
Communications Committee	Vice Chair Guagliumi
Communications Committee	Board Member Nunez
District Parent Group	Vice Chair Guagliumi
District Parent Group Alternate	Board Member Nunez
Professional Development Committee	Chair Barnes
Health Care Cost Containment Committee	Board Member Nunez

11. Approval of School Board Minutes

(Chair Barnes)

- April 15, 2019, Public & Non-Public Minutes

Chair Barnes asked if there were members of the Board who had any edits or questions.

Page 2, Line #62 – “14 Kitteridge Lane” was changed to “14 Kittridge Lane” – Guagliumi

Page 3, Line #85 – “\$33,000 which was almost the...” should be changed to “\$33,000 in legal fees which was almost the...” – Guagliumi

Board Member Schneider made a motion (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to approve the April 15, 2019, minutes, as amended.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

- April 22, 2019, Public & Non-Public Minutes

Chair Barnes asked if the Board members had edits. There were no edits.

Board Member Schoenfeld made a motion (seconded by Board Member Nunez) to approve the April 22, 2019, minutes.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

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

(Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell)

- Anonymous Donation to the Merrimack School District for \$100.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated there was an anonymous gift to the Merrimack School District in the amount of \$100.00 and the donor requested that they please use the donation to help some of the less fortunate children in the Merrimack School District.

Board Member Schneider made a motion (seconded by Board Member Nunez) to accept the anonymous donation of \$100.00 with the School Board's sincere gratitude.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

14. Consent Agenda

(Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin)

Educator Resignations

- Ms. Rachel Steadman, first-grade teacher, the James Masticola Elementary School
- Ms. Sarah Lamare, sixth-grade teacher, the James Masticola Upper Elementary School

Educator Retirements

- Ms. Karen Eagan, Special Education Coordinator, the Thorntons Ferry School

Vice Chair Guagliumi made a motion (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to accept the consent agenda as presented.

The motion passed 5-0-0.

15. Other

a) Correspondence

Board Member Nunez commented that she received an e-mail relative to the change in bussing due to the bridge work and she forwarded the e-mail to Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell and the matter was successfully addressed.

b) Comments

Superintendent Chiafery commented that May 1st was the celebration of mental health in the State of New Hampshire. She said the Merrimack School District was notified by the New Hampshire Children's Behavioral Health Collaborative that they were the only school district in the state to receive the award. She further said that Mrs. Valerie Sununo presented the award which read:

Children's Mental Health Matters

In recognition of prioritizing children's mental health, this award is presented to the Merrimack School Districts Mental Health Committee for dedication and service to children in New Hampshire.

New Hampshire's Children's Behavioral Mental Health Collaborative, May 1, 2019

Board Member Schneider asked if the last day of school would be June 18th. Superintendent Chiafery replied it was and further, on May 20th she would notify the School Board as to whether it would be a full-day or a half-day.

Chair Barnes noted that since the first day of the school the district had added 24 students.

Board Member Nunez asked if the Mental Health Award and Ms. Sabat's recognition could be posted on the website as well as their Facebook page. Superintendent Chiafery replied they would put the Mental Health Award up immediately but Ms. Sabat would not receive her formal notification until June 8th but would put that up after she received the award.

16. New Business

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin commented the James Masticola Upper Elementary School and the Merrimack Middle School were involved with an organization called CAST (Center for Applied Special Technology) which specifically focused on Universal Design for

Learning (UDL) which was an extension of work they had already been doing; working to create academic environments for the students that served the needs of all students. Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin said staff had attended conferences and trainers had worked with the teachers in the district to understand the principles.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin stated that the UDL network had identified a particular teacher at the middle school who they believed exemplified the qualities that made for an excellent teacher in light of the initiative. He further stated they had asked if they could videotape the teacher in practice so they could use that video for training purposes for other people working in the field.

Assistant Superintendent McLaughlin pointed out that they would have to seek permission from the parents of any students that might be videotaped.

17. Committee Reports

Chair Barnes noted that the Parks & Recreation Committee met on April 24th and they were still accepting enrollments for the summer camp programs.

Chair Barnes commented that over 450 kids participated in the Easter Egg Hunt.

Chair Barnes said she asked about the camera which would be located at the skate park at the last joint meeting. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated a meeting was held at the park and it was decided to use a wireless camera attached to the pole facing the skate park. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell also stated the town had agreed to pay their portion of it which was approximately \$8,000. He noted they wanted to do a mesh network so in the future, if there were to be cameras placed in the parking lot, they would blend together and that was an additional \$2,000 charge and the school district would pay for that.

18. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Mr. Rick Foote, 129 Indian Rock Road, addressed the Board and stated that the Merrimack Interactive Club was supposed to keep the Woodbury Street area clean and indicated they were falling behind in keeping it clean.

19. Manifest

The Board signed the manifest.

20. Adjournment

At 7:28 p.m. Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Schoenfeld) to adjourn the public session.

The motion passed 5-0-0.