

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Monday, July 13, 2020
Remote Meeting**

Due to the state of emergency declared by Governor Sununu regarding the COVID-19 outbreak, and the subsequent Emergency Order #12, Chair Barnes determined that the physical presence of a quorum within the time required for School Board action was not reasonably practical, and therefore, the members of the School Board participated remotely.

Present: Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Guagliumi, Board Members Schneider, Nunez, and Rothhaus. Also present were Superintendent McLaughlin, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio, and Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell.

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Introduction of New School Board Member

Chair Barnes introduced Ms. Laurie Rothhaus as a new member of the School Board who was seated in place of Ms. Naomi Schoenfeld, who did not run for another term.

Ms. Rothhaus commented that she very much looked forward to serving on the School Board as well as serving the community.

3. School Board Reorganization

Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to nominate Vice Chair Guagliumi as Chair of the School Board.

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0 by a roll call vote.

Ms. Guagliumi assumed her role as Chair of the School Board.

Board Member Nunez moved (seconded by Chair Guagliumi) to nominate Ms. Barnes as Vice Chair of the School Board.

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0 by a roll call vote.

Ms. Barnes assumed her role as Vice Chair of the School Board.

4. Commitment to Board Code of Ethics

The members of the Board read the Merrimack School Board Code of Ethics into the record respectively, as summarized below:

As a member of the Merrimack School Board, I shall promote the best interests of the District by adhering to the following ethical standards, and affix my signature to the same:

Trustworthy in Responsibilities

- ◆ I will always remember that my first and greatest concern will be the educational welfare of the students in the Merrimack School District.
- ◆ I will be accountable to the public by accurately representing District policies, programs, priorities, and progress.
- ◆ I will be responsive to the community by seeking its involvement in district affairs and by communicating its priorities and concerns.
- ◆ I will work to ensure prudent and accountable use of district resources and never lose sight of the fiscal responsibility owed to the taxpayers of the district.
- ◆ I will make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise my performance or my responsibilities or those of my fellow Board members.
- ◆ I will avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using my board position for personal or partisan gain.

Honor in Conduct

- ◆ I will be honest, fair, just, and impartial in all my decisions and actions.
- ◆ I will encourage and respect open dialogue and listen with an open mind while working for consensus.
- ◆ I will respect the majority decision as the decision of the Board.

Integrity of Character

- ◆ I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies, and district procedures.
- ◆ I will not disclose information that is confidential by law or that will undermine the district.

Commitment to Service

- ◆ I will focus my attention on fulfilling the Board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation.
- ◆ I will diligently prepare for and attend Board meetings.
- ◆ I will avoid personal involvement in activities the Board has delegated to the Superintendent.
- ◆ I will inform myself about relevant educational issues.

Chair Guagliumi asked all of the members of the School Board to sign the above form and return it to the central office at their earliest convenience.

5. Public Participation Guidelines for Remote Meetings

Chair Guagliumi stated public comments could be sent to publiccomment@sau26.org or by going to sau26.org where a meeting link was provided. She said all comments would be read and written into the record but noted the name and address of the speaker had to be provided.

6. Merrimack School District Initial School Re-Opening Recommendations for Fall 2020

Superintendent McLaughlin pointed out there was a task force called the Dual/On-Location and Remote Learning Taskforce which was chaired by Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio. He added a subset of that committee focused on content areas; pointing out there was an ELA (English Language Arts) team chaired by Ms. Michelle Romein, Principal, James Masticola Elementary School and Ms. Sharon Putney, Principal, Merrimack High School. He added there was a math team which was chaired by Ms. Bonnie Painchaud, Assistant Principal, Reeds Ferry Elementary School; and a Unified Arts team chaired by Ms. Michaela Champlin, Assistant Principal, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School. Additionally, Superintendent McLaughlin said there was a Science team chaired by Mr. Bill Morris, Assistant Principal, James Masticola Upper Elementary School, and a Social Studies team chaired by Ms. Shawna D'Amour, Assistant Principal, Merrimack Middle School.

Superintendent McLaughlin pointed out that there was also a Schedule Consideration Subcommittee taskforce chaired by Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio. He explained whatever plan they had there would be scheduling implications and they needed to be prepared.

Superintendent McLaughlin stated there was a Special Education and Title I taskforce which was chaired by Heather Barker, Director of Student Services. He said special education was one of the more complicated areas to address because so many of the students required very specialized attention, which in many cases literally required one-on-one contact which made remote learning difficult to do. He added in his opinion there was inconsistent communication from the state regarding the issue and had been a daunting task at best. He pointed out that the Special Education and Title I taskforce had orchestrated itself around the idea of how they could maintain fidelity to IEP's (Individualized Education Plans) and the faith they had with the special education students while still following the laws, the regulations from the state, and to do so in a way that protected student safety and wellness.

Superintendent McLaughlin said there was a Student Wellness taskforce which focused on student mental health and wellness. He said many of the parents who responded to the parent survey commented that they had a great concern regarding the social and emotional wellness of their children during this period of isolation. He further said that it was a tough situation and many schools found themselves between a rock and a hard place. Superintendent McLaughlin said the System of Care and Learning Supports (SOCAL) Committee had been working for years on the very issue of student mental health and wellness. He said it was within the school's purview to not only deal with students who came to school with empty bellies but also to address those students with social and emotional challenges. Further, he said it was up to the schools to provide the students the means to manage those challenges. Superintendent McLaughlin said the SOCAL team proposed a position of a System of Care Coordinator whose sole function would be to deal with the social and emotional needs of the students. The position was approved by the Merrimack community in their most recent vote. He said Ms. Fern Seiden, who was formally a School Counselor at Thornton's Ferry Elementary School was now the System of Care Coordinator.

Superintendent McLaughlin commented there was an Infrastructure taskforce which was chaired by Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell. He said that taskforce was instrumental in evaluating the infrastructure needs of the district to ensure that in whatever form was taken relative to the schools re-opening there would be processes, tools, and, equipment in place to do as much as they could for the employees and as a custodian for the students when they had them in the schools to be as safe as they could.

Superintendent McLaughlin said the collective number of hours that the members of the taskforces worked was in the thousands in the month of June alone.

Superintendent McLaughlin said the Food Service and Food Delivery taskforces were chaired by Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell along with Mr. Dave Dziki, Food Services Director, who worked on all of the issues related to that very challenging component of the district's operations.

Superintendent McLaughlin also commented that there was a Transportation Committee taskforce which was chaired by Assistant Superintendent for Business

Shevenell along with Mr. Rich Desmond, Transportation Coordinator. He said everything from schedules to safety, and sanitation on the busses had to be addressed.

Further, Superintendent McLaughlin said there was an Athletics and Co-Curricular taskforce which was chaired by Mr. Mike Soucy, Athletic Director, as well as others whose goal was to work with NHIAA (New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association) to be sure that they were in alignment with that organization and to develop their own recommendations. He said Mr. Soucy and his team were waiting for further guidance from the NHIAA but they were working very closely together and would have a lot more information at the School Board's August meeting with regard to where they stood relative to athletics and co-curricular activities.

Superintendent McLaughlin stated there was a Health and Hygiene taskforce which was comprised of the district's school nurses.

Additionally, Superintendent McLaughlin said there was a Professional Development taskforce which was chaired by Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio and was laser-focused on the unique needs of the teachers as they began to recognize a variety of professional development needs from accessing learning platforms to instruction, whether it was live or remote.

Superintendent McLaughlin said he was proud to have served as chair of the School District Parent taskforce which represented a cross-section of parents who represented various components in the workforce, age groups, personal experiences with remote learning, and personal experiences with the COVID-19 virus itself. He said the parents provided a tremendous amount of input to him. He provided that input to the taskforces.

After an explanation of the taskforces that were put in place, Superintendent McLaughlin shared a PowerPoint Presentation with regard to the 2020 – 2021 school re-opening plan which included an overview of the process, and parent survey results.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio shared a PowerPoint Presentation with regard to the Dual on Location/Remote Learning Taskforce.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell shared a PowerPoint Presentation with regard to the Infrastructure Taskforce.

7. Approval of Minutes

- **June 15, 2020 – Public School Board Minutes**

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to approve the June 15, 2020, public minutes as presented.

The motion passed 3 – 0 – 2 by a roll call vote. (Abstained – Nunez & Rothhaus)

8. Consent Agenda

Educator Resignations

- Ms. Danielle Pelletier, Special Education Teacher, Merrimack High School

Educator Nominations

- Ms. Anissa Cote, Special Education Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School
- Ms. Nicole Eline, Grade 1 Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School
- Ms. Colby Wygant, Preschool Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School
- Ms. Paige Webster, English Teacher, Merrimack High School
- Ms. Terri Trompak, Grade 5 Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- Mr. Douglass Bonnema, School Counselor, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
- Ms. Andrea Hatch, Grade 1 Teacher (one-year only) James Mastricola Elementary School
- Mr. Scott Riddell, Special Ed. Coordinator, Merrimack High School

Board Member Schneider moved (seconded by Board Member Nunez) to accept the Consent Agenda as presented.

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0 by a roll call vote.

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

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell announced the Lion's Club of Merrimack, NH gifted \$1,000 to the Merrimack High School to be put towards purchasing a refrigerator for the Family Consumer Science area as well as some accompanying furniture.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell also announced that the Lion's Club of Merrimack, NH and J. Monroe and R. Gagne gifted a total of \$300.00 to help defray the cost of the summer meals that were provided.

Board Member Rothhaus moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to accept the gifts from the Lion's Club with the School Board's sincere appreciation.

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0 by a roll call vote.

10. Other

- a) Correspondence

There was no correspondence to come before the Board.

b) Comments

Board Member Schneider requested that a School Board meeting be scheduled prior to mid-August in an effort to check-in with the administration to see what progress had been made. Chair Guagliumi stated she agreed with Board Member Schneider and noted she would poll the Board to see what the best date would be to add a meeting.

11. New Business

There was no new business.

12. Committee Reports

There were no updates on committee reports.

13. Public Comments on Agenda Items

There were no public comments.

At 10:47 p.m. Vice Chair Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Schneider) to adjourn.

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0 by a roll call vote.