

**Merrimack School Board Meeting  
Merrimack School District, SAU #26  
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room  
May 3, 2021**

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**Present:** Chair Guagliumi, Vice Chair Barnes, Board Members Rothhaus, Hardy, and Peters. Also present Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell, and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio.

**Excused:** Superintendent McLaughlin

**1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance**

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

Chair Guagliumi led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Guagliumi welcomed new Student Representative Kaitlyn Vadney.

**2. Guidelines for Public Participation for Remote Meeting**

Chair Guagliumi stated public comments could be sent to [publiccomment@sau26.org](mailto: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.

**3. Public Participation**

Chair Guagliumi read aloud from the following email as noted below:

Ms. Rosemarie Rung, 21 Ministerial Drive

I viewed the replay of the last School Board meeting and I was taken back by the comments that Shannon Barnes made during the nomination of Laurie Rothhaus to the position of Vice Chair. It reeked of disrespect for the years of service Mrs. Rothhaus has given to the Merrimack School District as a teacher, coach, Planning & Building Committee member, and more. If Mrs. Barnes had these concerns, she should have discussed them directly with Mrs. Rothhaus at the outset and not waiting to compile them as a character assassination during a public meeting where Mrs. Rothhaus was unprepared to defend herself. The Merrimack community expects a higher level of professionalism during these meetings. Please enter this into the public record at the next School Board meeting as I cannot be there personally to read them during public participation.

**4. Preliminary Information on High School Graduation and End of Year Activities**

Ms. Sharon Putney, Principal, and Mr. Peter Bergeron, Assistant Principal of Merrimack High School reviewed the end of year activities as summarized as follows:

- May 14<sup>th</sup> – Senior Semi Formal from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- May 20<sup>th</sup> – National Honor Society Induction
- May 22<sup>nd</sup> – Senior Sign Distribution
- May 26 – Senior/Underclassmen Awards Night
- June 4<sup>th</sup> – Last Day for Seniors
- June 7<sup>th</sup> – Movie Night
- Week of June 8<sup>th</sup> – Senior Service Day
- June 9<sup>th</sup> – Cap & Gown Distribution
- June 9<sup>th</sup> – Hawk Walk
- June 11<sup>th</sup> – Graduation Practice
- June 12<sup>th</sup> – Graduation

Ms. Putney commented that the Drama Club was working on a virtual production called “Much Ado About Nothing” and would be aired on Merrimack T.V. She also said Spirit Week would be held from May 17<sup>th</sup> through May 21<sup>st</sup>, and the National Honor Society students would hold a “Teddy Bear Picnic” on May 27<sup>th</sup> or May 28<sup>th</sup> depending on the weather. Ms. Putney also shared there would be a Senior Top 10 Event which would be held on May 27<sup>th</sup>, and she pointed out the last day for underclassmen would be on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

## **5. Update on Superintendent Search**

Chair Guagliumi shared that the School Board recently had presentations by three Superintendent search companies. She said one was the New Hampshire School Board Association, Ray & Associates, McPhearson and Jacobson. She added the presentations were given to the Board on April 22, 2021, in a non-public session so that they could vet both pros and cons without it affecting the potential negative business reputation if it were a matter of public record.

Chair Guagliumi stated the cost to conduct such a search would be approximately \$20,000, regardless of which firm was selected. She said in order to perform the search most efficiently it would take several months and the pool of candidates would be most optimal in the late fall of 2022. She added the Board, the Merrimack School District, as well as the community had two choices; to immediately begin the Superintendent search despite some timing concerns or to appoint an Interim Superintendent. Chair Guagliumi explained that the New Hampshire School Board Association provided support for interim candidates at no charge because the Merrimack School District was a member of the Association. She said the other two firms could provide support in that area as well if they were chosen.

Chair Guagliumi said on April 22<sup>nd</sup> the School Board heard a presentation from 2Revolutions. She said 2Revolutions was a company that worked with forward-thinking school districts and communities to help them define and begin working towards their future of learning. She said she felt the Board would like to have the organization attend an upcoming Board meeting to give a public presentation. Further, Chair Guagliumi said the idea was to potentially work with 2Revolutions slightly ahead of the Superintendent search to develop a shared vision with the community as they embraced the opportunity for transformation.

Board Member Barnes noted that as of July 1<sup>st</sup> the District would not have a Superintendent and felt the topic of a timeline should be added to the next meeting’s agenda. For full disclosure, Board Member Barnes pointed out that 2Revolutions came to the School Board and that Chair Guagliumi had a personal relationship with the founder.

Board Member Peters commented that she agreed it was important to have a firm timeline for the Interim Superintendent position at a minimum. She also commented that she felt it was important for the community to hear from 2Revolutions as the community was going to have significant input in the future of the District.

Board Member Hardy said she would like the Board to have more time to discuss the pros and the cons. Chair Guagliumi replied she would schedule an additional non-public session which would allow the Board the opportunity to have further discussion.

Vice Chair Rothhaus stated she looked forward to the presentation that 2Revolutions would give and felt it would provide them with a fresh vision on where the District might go.

After some discussion, the Board collectively decided they would pursue an Interim Superintendent.

## **6. Approval of School Board Minutes**

- **April 19, 2021**

### **Edits:**

- The words “roll call vote” were removed in all instances. – Chair Guagliumi

Vice Chair Rothhaus moved (seconded by Board Member Peters) to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2021 meeting, as amended.

**The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0.**

## **7. Consent Agenda**

- **Educator Resignations**

Ms. Kathleen Theriault, Grade 3 Teacher, James Masticola Elementary School

Ms. Stephanie Womersley, Special Education Teacher, James Masticola Elementary School

Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Hardy) to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

**The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0.**

## **8. Other**

- a. Correspondence

Chair Guagliumi shared she received an email from a parent regarding a recent District email and wording about the mask mandate. Chair Guagliumi said she forwarded the email to Superintendent McLaughlin who replied that “the administration nor the Board at this time is considering requiring students or staff to have vaccinations to attend school.”

Chair Guagliumi said she received another communication from a parent who had a question regarding an athletic concern and she directed the parent to discuss her concerns with the coach in greater detail.

Chair Guagliumi stated she received additional communication from a parent who was concerned that she/he was not on the list to take part in surveys.

Chair Guagliumi shared that Board Member Hardy and herself received a communication from a parent who was concerned that she received an email versus a phone call if her child would need to quarantine from a sports team.

Chair Guagliumi also mentioned that she received an anonymous letter from “Aristotle in Ancient Greece” who was concerned regarding their Tomahawk mascot.

b. Comments

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio said the previous week a letter was sent out to the parents/community regarding the REAL (Remote Education Academy for Learning) Program. He said the plan was to have the REAL Program available to all Merrimack Students in the 2021 – 2022 school year. He said based on parent and student feedback the administration felt it was important to have the REAL Program as a choice. He added the District would be sending out a survey that would ask parents what their intentions were for the following year and if they might be interested in the REAL Program. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Fabrizio also said a FAQ (frequently asked questions) document would accompany the survey and if parents had questions they should email Mr. Bill Morris, REAL Coordinator at [William.morris@sau26.org](mailto:William.morris@sau26.org).

Vice Chair Rothhaus said she had some concerns with the REAL Program continuing as some teachers struggled with the instruction of teaching to the computer at the same time as teaching to the classroom. She said most students were looking forward to teaching students in the classroom.

Board Member Peters commented that she also had a concern that students might lose their AP (Advanced Placement) and Honors classes and felt it was important to communicate whether or not that would happen prior to parent/students deciding to opt for the REAL Program. She also asked about the legality of public funds paying for a homeschool option when other school choice options were currently not funded by taxpayers.

Board Member Barnes commented regarding the public comment made at the beginning of the meeting as follows:

“All of the concerns I discussed on my dissenting vote at the last meeting were shared as they were happening in a timely manner with the Chair and in her capacity as Chair, in addition to being a close, personal friend and neighbor assured me she would address the concerns. I was told it would be communicated. My comments were the only opportunity to make a case to adjust the vote and not get a majority, but with the will of the Board in favor of that vote I will work under the structure as hard as I have worked the entire 11 years that I have served to date.”

**9. New Business**

Vice Chair Rothhaus requested that Attorney Diana Fenton, who was a lawyer with the Department of Education to May 17, 2021, School Board meeting agenda and present laws pertaining to certification and other educational laws.

**10. Committee Reports**

There were no reports given.

**11. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

Chair Guagliumi asked if there were members of the public who were present that had questions or comments. There were none.

At approximately 7:48 p.m. Board Member Barnes moved (seconded by Board Member Hardy) to go into a non-public session pursuant to RSA-91-A:3(II) (c).

- Student Welfare

**The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0.**

At approximately 8:14 p.m. Board member Barnes moved (seconded by Board member Hardy) to adjourn the public meeting.

**The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0.**