

**Merrimack School Board Special Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
April 4, 2022**

Present: Chair Guagliumi, Vice-Chair Rothhaus, and Board Member Barnes. Also present were Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Yarlott, Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen, and Student Representative Vadney.

Not Present: Board Member Hardy – Excused

Participating via Telephone: Board Member Peters

Chair Guagliumi stated the meeting proceedings would follow RSA-A:2 which stated that all parties must contemporaneously be able to hear and speak to each other and the meeting should be audible to the public and all persons present must be identified, and all votes would be taken by a roll call vote.

Board Member Peters explained that her attendance at the meeting was not reasonably practicable at the meeting because she was ill. She said she was home and was alone.

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Guagliumi called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Guagliumi pointed out that the School Board would accept public comment via email and to do so, those members of the public could send emails to publiccomment@sau26.org. She noted, however, that this would be the last meeting where the Board would accept public comments via email.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Naomi Halter, 10 Everest Drive, addressed the Board and thanked Board Member Barnes, and Chair Guagliumi for their years of service. She also reminded people that the election would be held on April 12, 2022.

Ms. Joanne Grobecker, 27 Craig Drive (Board Member Barnes read aloud the below email)

I wanted to speak in support of teachers regarding the proposed school calendar. In the district survey, 82% of teachers requested to start before Labor Day. Teachers are the heart of this district, and we should honor their request.

I sincerely want to thank Shannon Barnes for her dedication to our community and our School Board. She has a wealth of knowledge and willingness to follow procedures that I admire and appreciate. I thank you for your time serving our students, staff, and community. I wish you all the best.

Ms. Heather Robataille, 45 Springfield Circle, addressed the Board and said she felt accepting public comments via email should remain an option for the community.

Ms. Cheryl Garrison, 35 Turkey Hill Road (Board Member Barnes read aloud the below email)

Please keep the tradition of starting the school year after Labor Day. It allows the summer to come to a close with the long weekend of rest before school starts.

Ms. Gretchen Ricks, 58 Naticook Road (Board Member Barnes read aloud the below email)

I have three children in the Merrimack schools, one at JMUES, one at the middle school, and one at the high school. I am in favor of school starting after Labor Day as we have done for many years. Families look forward to that extra week of vacation at the end of the summer and many have already made plans for trips and/or staycations. Beyond the obvious joy of having that extra week, there is a practical side to look at as well. It seems to make little sense to have the kids go to school for two days and then immediately have a four-day weekend, and then start the year in earnest on September 6th. That is very disjointed for the kids and the teachers I would suspect. The calendar with the least disruption would be the one that starts after Labor Day.

Ms. Sara Locke, Cota Road (Board Member Barnes read aloud the below email)

I have heard rumblings that it is almost time for emailed public comments to end and wanted to encourage the Board to consider permanently allowing this practice to continue. There are countless reasons that parents and the public may be unable to attend meetings in person, but their voices should still be heard. Ending emailed comments will disproportionately affect community members of limited means, those with non-standard work hours, and single parents struggling with childcare. Regardless of individuals' circumstances, they deserve as much of a voice as others who are able to attend in person.

One more thing, thank you to Cinda and Shannon for your commitment to the community. I appreciate Cinda for her involvement in helping me through a very difficult situation for my daughter's benefit. You will be missed.

3. **RECOGNITIONS**

There were none.

4. **INFORMATIONAL UPDATES**

a. Superintendent Update

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen thanked the staff at the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School for conducting a Sunflower Project where the students created artwork to send peace and hope to the children from Ukraine who were displaced and now living in Poland. He said Joanna Langworthy, a parent, had brought the idea to the school and would pay for all of the artwork to be sent to Poland. He also thanked Ms. Viands, Art Teacher, as well as Ms. Fern Seiden, Director of Student Wellness.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated it was National Assistant Principal's Week and thanked the Assistant Principals in the district for all of their hard work and dedication.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said there were 23 New Hampshire Scholastic Award winners at the high school. He said Josephine Reddings handmade photograph won a National Silver Key. He also said the high school Robotics team had won the prestigious Chairman's Award.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said there were currently 70 students who were earning three free college credits from the New Hampshire Community College and were transferable to any college or university, and 23 students had earned three college credits to the Southern New Hampshire University for \$100.00 and were also transferable to any university.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen thanked Board Member Barnes and Chair Guagliumi for their commitment and dedication to the School Board. Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen presented both Board Member Barnes and Chair Guagliumi with a plaque of appreciation.

b. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Yarlott said the second Visioning Taskforce meeting was held and consisted of 30 participants: including parents, students, School Board members, community members, administrators, and teachers. She said each group was tasked with presenting a survey to their peers and gathered 100 responses but would continue reaching out in an effort to do a broader reach.

c. Assistant Superintendent of Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell provided an update on the status of the concession stand next to the track. He said the old concession stand would be removed and the final permit had been approved. He also said there was a 1,000-gallon holding tank for the gray water just for the sinks. He said the Laura's World Foundation would be holding a fundraising event to help with the cost.

d. School Board Update

There was no update.

e. Student Representative Update

There was no update.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Approval of 2022 – 2023 School Year Calendar

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated he and the Calendar Committee recommended adopting the calendar that began with school starting prior to Labor Day.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to accept adopting the calendar that began with school starting prior to Labor Day. Board Member Barnes seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Board Member Barnes, Board Member Peters, Vice-Chair Rothhaus, & Chair Guagliumi	4
Nay:	0

The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Proposed Eagle Scout Project – Friendship Benches at Reeds Ferry Elementary School

Chase Morin, a senior at Merrimack High School and an Eagle Scout in Troup 401. He said he wanted to construct a Friendship Seating area on the 3rd & 4th-grade playground at the Reeds Ferry Elementary School. He said there would not be any cost to the district as it would be funded through a fundraiser, and he would like to start work on May 1st. He also said there would be a total of three benches and would be 8-feet long, 18-inches wide, 16 – 18 inches tall (above ground), mounted to concrete below the ground, with 4 x 4 supports, pressure-treated wood, with Trex “like” composite material for the top.

Board Member Barnes suggested putting something on the website about the fundraiser so more people would know about it.

MOTION: Board Member Barnes made a motion to approve the proposed Eagle Scout project by Chase Morin, as presented. Vice-Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Board Member Barnes, Board Member Peters, 4
Vice-Chair Rothhaus, & Chair Guagliumi

Nay: 0

The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.

b. Summary of Technology Efforts and Future Projects

Mr. Jason Pelletier, Director of Technology & Learning Systems provided a presentation regarding Ingraining Meaningful use of Technology in the Classroom as summarized below:

Leverage the Existing Resources.

- Create flexible classroom spaces, both physical and digital.
- Build teacher capacity and skillsets to deliver purposeful, immersive, and impactful lessons using the appropriate educational technology resources.

Use Technology to Solve Real Problems & the Problems of the Future

- Students need to be prepared to thrive in a world where technology is always changing and build knowledge by exploring real issues and problems.
 - Foster a model of technology use that promotes problem-solving, critical thinking, collaboration, and creation.
 - Promote connecting with the community to solve problems locally and globally.

How can we Achieve this?

- Investing in teachers by giving them purposeful support and training to prepare students in the best possible ways for their future.
- Leveraging the expertise of Digital Learning Specialists (DLS) and Library Media Specialist positions to help promote skills needed for K-12 to be college and career ready:
 - DLS – critical thinking, problem-solving, digital literacy, creation, and coaching.
 - LMS – critical research skills, increase information literacy, becoming a lifelong learning, community, and world connection.
- Ensure up-to-date technology while also being fiscally responsible for doing so.

Mr. Pelletier said they were working on a four-year plan to ensure that technology was cycled appropriately to make sure it was always up to date. He also said they signed a contract for the following year for all of the connectivity between buildings and increased the internet significantly.

Recorders Note: At approximately 7:50 p.m. Board Member Peters was excused from the meeting.

The Board collectively thanked Mr. Pelletier for the comprehensive presentation and wished him all the best in his new position as Director of Technology & Learning Systems.

c. Curriculum Overview

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Yarlott reviewed the new social studies K – 12 curriculums purchased by the district. She explained that the goals were written collaboratively by the Merrimack School District's teams, and teachers would build specific lesson plans.

d. Approval of Non-Educational Survey, National Youth Tobacco Survey

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School was one of 550 schools selected in the nation to participate in the CDC-sponsored National Youth Tobacco Survey. He said the survey would be administered to a couple of classes in grade 6. He added participating schools would receive a \$500.00 donation. He said he was a little bit ambivalent about it as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey essentially assessed similar information. Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said it would require approval from the School Board as well as parental approval for the student(s) who participated in the survey.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve the National Youth Tobacco Survey. Board Member Barnes seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3 – 0 – 0.

Recorder's Note: A roll call vote was not taken as Board Member Peters, who was participating via telephone, had been excused from the meeting.

e. Merrimack High School Senior Withdrawals

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that between September 1, 2021, and March 25, 2022, 34 seniors had withdrawn from Merrimack High School.

- 3 - Students moved (8.8%)
- 2 - Students successfully completed their HiSet (High School Equivalency) (5.9%)
- 1 - Special Education Student had aged out (2.9%)
- 4 - Students will pursue HiSet on their own (11.8%)
- 8 - Students successfully completed the requirement to earn their diploma (23.5%)
- 9 - Students discontinue working on HiSet and chose to quit (26.5%)
- 7 - Students dropped out (20.6%)

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said they were looking at adding an Alternative Education Program at Merrimack High School.

f. Other

There were no other items to discuss.

7. POLICIES

- a. Administration of Federal Grant Funds Policy (DAF) (2nd Reading)

Chair Guagliumi noted the policy would be placed on the next meeting's Consent Agenda.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. March 7, 2022 – Non-Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Barnes made a motion to approve the non-public minutes from the March 7, 2022, meeting, as presented. Vice-Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3 – 0 – 0.

- b. March 21, 2022 – Public & Non-Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Barnes made a motion to approve the minutes from the March 21, 2022, meeting, as presented. Vice-Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3 – 0 – 0.

9. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Educator Retirement
- Ms. Betsy Fowler, Special Education Coordinator, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
 - Ms. Barbara Burns, Kindergarten Teacher, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
 - Ms. Deborah Walter, Grade 4 Teacher, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
 - Ms. Marcelle Pope, Art Teacher, Merrimack High School

- b. Educator Resignations
 - Ms. Amanda Woodward, Kindergarten Teacher, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
 - Mr. Paul Drone, Health/PE Teacher, Merrimack High School
 - Ms. Jenna Tanquay, Science Teacher, Merrimack High School
 - Ms. Sarah Croteau, Library Media Specialist, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
- c. Educator Nomination
 - Ms. Nicole Rheault, Principal, James Masticola Upper Elementary School
- d. Approval of Vision of a High School Graduate

MOTION: Board Member Barnes made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, as presented. Vice-Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3 – 0 – 0.

11. OTHER

- a. Committee Reports

Board Member Barnes stated that the New Hampshire School Boards Association Board of Directors had met on March 23rd, and she explained that the State of New Hampshire was joining COSBA (Consortium of State School Boards Association) based on the fact that a lot of School Board Association withdrew membership, as New Hampshire did, from the National School Boards Association. She said the smaller Association would help with advocacy, training, and updates on governance at the federal level.

- b. Correspondence

Chair Guagliumi said the Board received correspondence from a resident who stated some concern regarding starting school before Labor Day. She said she also received various emails that concerned individual situations and she said she forwarded them to the appropriate administrators.

- c. Comments

Vice-Chair Rothhaus said she had sat in on a recent job interview with the HR Department and thanked the HR Director as the entire process was extremely organized.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus thanked Chair Guagliumi and Board Member Barnes as this was their last School Board meeting.

Board Member Barnes thanked the community of Merrimack for putting their trust in her for the past 12 years. She thanked her family for all of their support through the years

Chair Guagliumi also thank the community and said she thoroughly enjoyed working with all of her colleagues. She also thanked her family for their support throughout the years.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Robbie Reisman, Iris Drive, addressed the Board and said he was excited about the idea of the alternative education program, and he thanked both Chair Guagliumi and Board Member Barnes for their years of service.

Ms. Rosemary Rung, 21 Ministerial Drive, thanked both Chair Guagliumi and Board Member Barnes for their long service on the Board and wished them well.

MOTION: At approximately 8:45 p.m. Board Member Barnes made a motion to adjourn. Vice-Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3 – 0 – 0