

**Merrimack School Board Special Meeting  
Merrimack School District, SAU #26  
Merrimack Town Hall – Memorial Room  
July 25, 2022**

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**6:00 p.m. – NON-PUBLIC SESSION IN ACCORDANCE WITH RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – MEMORIAL ROOM**

1. **Staff Welfare**
2. **Legal**

**Present:** Chair Rothhaus, Vice-Chair Peters, Board Member Halter, and Board Member Martin. Also present were Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Doyle, and Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen.

**Not Present:** Board Member Hardy – Excused  
Student Representative Vadney - Excused

**1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

**2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public comment.

**3. RECOGNITIONS**

There were none.

**4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATE**

- a. Superintendent Update

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen welcomed Ms. Amanda Doyle as the new Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the enrollments looked particularly good and the class sizes were reasonable.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the student handbooks were finished being reviewed and rewritten by legal counsel and he would share them with the Board at a future meeting. He also said he had recently received a mock-up of the new “Crisis Management” flip chart and noted they would be distributed just prior to the beginning of the school year.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the two-day leadership retreat would be held the following week.

b. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said she and staff continued to work on the curriculum and would be conducting an audit of the instructional practices and would then look at assessments.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said multiple capital improvement projects were not yet complete due to the supply chain issue. He also said they continued to work with Honeywell on the unit ventilator project.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the playground at the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School was moving along as the site work had been completed and some of the equipment had already been installed. He also said the Thorntons Ferry roof project was also coming along nicely.

d. School Board Update

Chair Rothhaus said all five School Board members, Planning Board members, and Budget Committee members participated in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade.

Chair Rothhaus said a goals meeting was held between the School Board and the administration of the School District. She said it was a very intense meeting, but a lot of results came from it including establishing short-term & long-term goals, needed to move the district forward with its Vision of a Graduate, aligning goals with the district's strategic plan, and working together as a team.

Vice-Chair Peters said the goals for the next 12 to 24 months included:

1. To continue developing a culture of trust and respect.
2. Create multiple pathways to graduation that included robust course offerings, responsive programming and intervention, and an engaging learning experience for all students.
3. To improve learning outcomes by ensuring the instruction is responsive to the varied needs of the district's population.
4. To have facilities and equipment that are safe, secure, clean, healthy, current, and appropriate for meeting the educational needs of all students and staff.
5. To have up-to-date policies and practices with an ongoing review of existing policies to ensure they were compliant and in alignment with district practices.

Board Member Martin said the next steps included:

- School District staff will work together to develop action plans for accomplishing the goals and objectives over the next few months.
- The action plans will outline who would be responsible, how the goals and objectives would be met, and the timelines for said accomplishments.

Vice-Chair Peters said the Board was partnering with the administration and recognized they were working towards a Strategic Plan, and it was a community project in addition to being a School Board and administration project.

Board Member Halter said she felt it was an incredible meeting and was happy to have been a part of it.

e. Student Representative Update

There was no update.

**5. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to discuss.

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

a. High School Student Highlights

Mr. Stephen Claire, Principal, Merrimack High School addressed the Board and said he had hoped to introduce Ms. Jill Hanlon, the new Assistant Principal, but she could not attend the meeting. Mr. Richard Zampieri, Assistant Principal, was also present.

Mr. Claire reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted students' projects and achievements in social studies, art, science, English, math, technical education, world language, health & physical education, business, music, videography, Students for Student Advocacy, First Robotics, Quiz Bowl & Granite State Challenge, theater, Senior Service Day, Field Day.

b. High School NEASC Visit Summary

Mr. Claire reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that described the initial observations of the team who visited the high school:

- The visit took place from May 16<sup>th</sup> through May 18<sup>th</sup>.
- They review the high school's NEASC documents: teacher evidence, NEASC survey results, and decennial summary report.
- The visiting team summarized their findings to the Steering Committee, and the staff, framing their comment in terms of conceptual understanding, commitment to growth, competency, and capacity.

Priority Area 1: Vision of a Graduate (Meets Standard)

- The Vision of a Graduate was so new that teachers and students were not acquainted with it yet.
- Need to continue to engage staff and students to adopt the Vision of a Graduate.
- Develop tools to measure students' progress toward meeting their Vision of a Graduate.
- Roll out the Vision of a Graduate to families and engage the community.

Priority Area 2: Developing a School Growth Plan (Meets Standard)

- The growth plan was laid out well and provided a good foundation.
- The plan continues with UDL (Universal Design for Learning)
- The team was very complimentary of the Torchbearer mentor program.

- The team was impressed by the collaborative relationship between department heads and building administration.
- One area of concern was whether the school had the capacity in terms of collaborative time to implement the plan.

Priority Area 3: Curriculum (Did not Meet Standard)

- The team was pleased to hear that the curriculum work involved teachers K-12 and pulled district initiatives together.
- They liked that they had EduPlanet to help get the curricula into a consistent format.
- They were hopeful that EduPlanet would help improve consistency in instruction and assessment.
- The team repeatedly stressed the need for staff professional development and collaboration time to do the work.

Priority Area 4: Social & Emotional Learning (Meets Standard)

- The team praised our many opportunities for students to access services.
- They highlighted the Student Support Team referral process.
- They noted that students have positive relationships with staff members.
- Students voiced concerns about student and staff mental health.

Priority Area 5: Technology (Meets Standard)

- The team found that everyone could access the wi-fi, but coverage was not even throughout the building.
- They had concerns about issues with pairing Microsoft tools with Google Chromebooks for student use.
- The team was concerned about possible inequity in students' access to software at home.
- They recommended continuing to support professional development around technology.

Mr. Claire said they would not receive the final report until it was approved by the Commissioner and once received, he would report back to the Board.

Vice-Chair Peters asked how Mr. Claire planned to address the item that stated: "The team repeatedly stressed the need for staff professional development and collaboration time to do the work." Mr. Claire replied he would like to address it at the August academy, and he hoped to know what their professional development plan would be for the year. He said one of the things he would like to reimplement was collaboration days which were put on hold because of COVID-19.

Chair Rothhaus commented that she felt they should talk about adding funds to the next budget to allow for teachers to get some of the work done after school hours because there was too much work to get it done during the time dedicated to professional development.

c. Visioning Task Force

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said the Visioning Taskforce began in December of 2021 and a committee was formed in February of 2022 and that group met once or twice per month. She added in June the group broke into two short-term committees, one was looking at the drafting language of the Vision of a Learner, and the other group was the Visuals team who was working with Cookson Communications. She said the group would meet all together again on August 19<sup>th</sup> and she would update the Board after that meeting.

d. Discussion of Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen's Performance

Vice-Chair Peters commented that Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen's self-reflection and self-evaluation were available on the website, and it had been presented to the School Board as well. She said the Board would finalize their report for the public record in August. She added the Board was very pleased with his reflection report and his performance.

Chair Rothhaus added some highlights of the Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen's report including:

- He empowered leadership throughout the district.
- He builds trust.
- He is visible.
- He is reliable and caring.

Chair Rothhaus said she felt the district valued Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen's work.

e. Request for a Secondary Student Support Interventionist Position at Merrimack High School

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen explained that during the fiscal 2023 budget process there was conversation surrounding the importance of social & emotional learning, and being able to provide services and, if necessary, to staff regarding mental health issues, and crisis that may arise. He said there was money in the Contracted Services Account, and he said he was requesting that a certain amount of money be transferred from the Contracted Services Account to the Salaries Account to hire a Student Support Interventionist at the Merrimack High School.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen added that the qualifications of the position would be upgraded to ensure it was reflective of the actual nature of the work.

**MOTION:** Board Member Halter made a motion to transfer monies from the Contracted Services Account into the Salaries Account to hire a Secondary Student Support Interventionist at the Merrimack High School. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

**The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.**

f. Student Enrollment Update

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen commented that he was very happy with the student-to-teacher ratio. He noted there might be more registrations in the month of August which was typical.

g. Other

Chair Rothhaus requested a meeting between the School Board and the Budget Committee to discuss associated costs regarding school safety and to discuss issues raised during the goals meeting.

**7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. June 6, 2022 – Public Meetings

**MOTION:** Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 6, 2022, meeting, as presented. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

**The motion passed 3 – 0 – 1. (Abstained – Board Member Martin)**

b. June 20, 2022 – Public and Non-Public Meetings

**MOTION:** Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2022, public and non-public meetings, as presented. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

**The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.**

**8. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND GRANTS UNDER \$5,000**

a. Merrimack Lions Club to Merrimack High School for \$1,000.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the Lion’s Club gave a gift to the Merrimack High School on a yearly basis and he thanked them very much for their support. He further said this year the gift would be awarded to Mr. Michael Valinski, Technology Education Teacher for the upgrade and purchase of safety sets for the welding classroom and automotive shop.

**MOTION:** Board Member Martin made a motion to accept the gift from the Lion’s Club in the amount of \$1,000, with the School Board’s sincere appreciation. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

**The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.**

**9. CONSENT AGENDA**

a. Educator Resignations

- Ms. Nichole Iacuzio O’Brien, Assistant Principal, Merrimack Middle School

b. Educator Nominations

- Ms. Lori Vigeant, Preschool Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
- Ms. Jessica Provencher, Physical Education Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- Ms. Beatrice Choiniere, Math Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- Ms. Brianna Durand, Language Arts Coordinator

- Mr. Lindsey Tuttle, Music Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- Ms. Maryam Doscocil, Grade 6 Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- Ms. Meagan Everitt, Special Education Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School.

**MOTION:** Chair Rothhaus made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, as presented. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

**The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.**

## **10. OTHER**

### a. Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports to share.

### b. Correspondence

Chair Rothhaus said she received a piece of correspondence from a woman who worked with UNH (University of New Hampshire) on EPECS (Education Performance and Evaluation Committee) and wanted the Board to know that she was very impressed with the discussion surrounding the Student Discipline Policy.

Vice-Chair Peters commented that she received one piece of follow-up correspondence reiterating a concern surrounding athletics at the high school.

### c. Comments

Vice-Chair Peters commented that she enjoyed collaborating with the School Board members as well as with the administration.

Board Member Martin commented that he agreed with Vice-Chair Peter's comment.

## **11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no public comments.

## **12. ADJOURN**

**MOTION:** At approximately 8:06 p.m. Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

**The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.**