

**Merrimack School Board Special Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
October 17, 2022**

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

6:00 p.m. – Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) & (c) – Merrimack TV Training Classroom

- Staff Welfare

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

Mr. Chuck Mower, 4 Depot Street, addressed the Board and said he was the Vice-President of the Historical Society and now that the new facility was up and running, he would like to invite the School Board to hold a meeting at the new facility.

Mr. Mower also stated that they were prepared to enter into Extended Learning Opportunities for the student body at all levels. He said currently they were working on a fourth grade program that would introduce students to the Native Americans that lived in Merrimack, NH.

Mr. Mower said he was also the Chairman of the School Board Budget Committee and continued to be very supportive of extended learning opportunities and competency assessment learning. He said the Budget Committee was fully supportive of providing specific instructional support for the staff to come together and learn and develop competencies and how they could be consistently applied throughout the district.

3. RECOGNITIONS

There were none.

4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

- a. Superintendent Update

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen explained that he intentionally left ten minutes between Public Participation and Informational Updates as per state statute, 30 minutes would be allowed if needed.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the Merrimack Fire Department had begun fire inspections of the buildings.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen noted that the first South Central Superintendent's meeting would be held on Friday, October 21st in Litchfield, NH.

In speaking with Town Moderator Ms. Lynn Christensen, Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the mid-term elections would be held on November 8th and there would be no parking or political campaign materials allowed at the polling locations between 6:00 p.m. on November 7th and 6:00 a.m. on November 8th.

b. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle shared that they had a full day of professional development on October 7th. She said the elementary, middle school, and Unified Arts teachers participated in a one-day responsive classroom training. She said the high school spent much of the day unpacking the NEASC (New England Association of Schools & Colleges) report and looking at their Vision of a Graduate.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said the Title I Tutors participated in differentiated opportunities based on their Language Arts Coordinator.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said as of October 15th, the district had completed all of the bus evacuation drills.

d. School Board Update

Chair Rothhaus commented that she, Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen, and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle had a great conversation regarding the vision of developing competencies.

Chair Rothhaus stated the Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen was no longer "Interim" and the School Board was in negotiations for a two-year contract with him.

e. Student Representative Update

Student Representative Vadney said elections were held for the executive positions on the Student Council. She said Julia Thibault was voted in as President, Kaitlyn Vadney was voted in as the Vice-President, Megan Hansson was voted in as the Secretary, and Jack Pikora was voted in as Treasurer.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. School Safety Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen updated the School Board regarding school safety as summarized below:

- Established a District Crisis Team
- Updated and Published a New Crisis Management Plan
- Re-Introduced Safety Training to Staff and Students (Age Appropriate)

- Drafted Safety Drill Schedules for all Schools
- Conducted School Security Audits
- Applied for and Received a Grant for Security Upgrade

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. Investing in Social Emotional Learning and Wellbeing

Ms. Fern Seiden, Director of Student Wellness, shared a PowerPoint presentation regarding “Investing in Social Emotional Learning and Well-Being” as summarized below:

Ms. Seiden said that two of the School Board’s goals were to “Create an engaged, inclusive, and collaborative district culture built on mutual trust, and respect & “Invest in the social and emotional development and well-being of staff, students, and their families. She said there were four areas of focus:

- System of Care Framework
 - Develop Leadership and School System of Care Multi-Tiered System of Support
 - Install Data-Informed Decision-Making Processes.
 - Create Systems to Improve Pathways for Accessing Student Supports
 - Align with System of Care for Children’s Mental Health LAW (RSA 135F)
 - Consult with MTSS-B Consultant from the Department of Education Office of Student Wellness
- Student Social Emotional Learning and Wellness
- Professional Development and Committee Work (Districtwide)
 - Executive Functioning
 - Responsive Classroom
 - Suicide Prevention
 - Mandated Reporting
 - Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI)
 - Fidelity to Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Programming and Integration
- Create District Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)/Wellness Professional Learning Team (PLT) K-12 Alignment
 - Drive Goals Related to the Needs of the Student Support Team
 - Targeted Professional Development Based on Identified Needs – i.e., SEL Mindset, Collaborative Problem Solving
- Formation of Committees for System Improvement
 - Bullying Prevention
 - Middle School SEL Advisory Program
 - New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) SEL Focus at High School

- Community & Family Engagement
 - Respond to Community Needs Based on Data-Collected through Survey
 - Maintain System of Care Family and Advisory Work Group
 - Provide Resources and Programming
 - Sustain and Expand Community Partnerships
 - Improve Communication through Website Resources

Board Member Hardy commented that everyone who interacted with students should have some training regarding how the district dealt with students and were onboard in ways that aligned with the district's values. Ms. Seiden said there was a free "One Trusted Adult" training program for parents and educators.

Vice-Chair Peters asked when the last time the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum was updated at the elementary school level was. Ms. Seiden replied that it had not been updated and that they were still using Second Step, but all of the updates would be digital going forward. She added they had also included formative and summative assessments.

Vice-Chair Peters clarified that the district's teachers were not engaged in mental health assessments and relied on a team that made referrals out to their partners. Ms. Seiden replied that social and emotional learning was not equivalent to mental health. She said social and emotional learning pertained to the skills students needed to be successful in life.

b. Discuss Extended Learning Opportunities/Work Skills, Ed 702.06 High School Credit

Chair Rothhaus commented that "Ed 702.06" was a New Hampshire law that provided high school students opportunities to gain credit outside of the classroom. She said the typical model was that the student would create a timeline and then would provide a presentation that demonstrated evidence that they understood the competencies of the extended learning opportunity. Chair Rothhaus said the Board would like to develop a policy stating the district accepted extended learning opportunities and work skills would be a part of it.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen commented that extended learning opportunities were for everyone and not just a certain group of students.

Board Member Martin commented he felt it was very important for students to participate in taking ownership of their education.

Board Member Hardy commented that she felt providing extended learning opportunities would help to improve the graduation rate.

c. Security Action for Education (SAFE) Grant Application

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated the district applied for a SAFE (Security Action for Education) grant for \$120,000 through the Department of Homeland Security and they gained early acceptance. He said the money would go towards a safety mechanism that would inhibit unwanted intrusions into the buildings.

d. Other

- Public Vote to Change "Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen to "Chief Educational Officer Olsen"

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to change Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen's title to Chief Educational Officer Olsen. Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0.

- Teacher Performance Evaluation

Chair Rothhaus said the Board would be looking at the evaluation system and possibly streamline it to increase walkthroughs.

7. POLICIES

Chief Educational Officer Olsen noted all of the policies had been reviewed by legal counsel and no public comments were made.

- a. Use of Physical Restraint/Seclusion (JKAA) – 2nd Reading

The policy was sent back for further review by legal counsel.

- b. Public Participation at Board Meetings (BEDH) – 2nd Reading

MOTION: Board Member Halter made a motion to adopt the language as part of policy (BEDH) to include "*members of the public may offer comments on agenda items or upon any other matter of public concern directly relating to the district's school policies, programs, and operations.*" Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0.

Policy (BEDH) to appear on a future agenda to include the adoption of the language.

MOTION: Board Member Halter made a motion that the School Board consider accepting written public comments.

The motion failed due to the lack of a second.

- c. Review of Student Records and Access (JRA) – 2nd Reading

Vice-Chair Peters stated that pages 6, 7, & 8 specifically clarified who could request the records.

Policy JRA to appear on a future agenda for acceptance.

- d. Review Change of Class or School Assignment on the Basis of Best Interest or Manifest Educational Hardship (JCA) – 3rd Reading

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept policy JCA – Change of Class or School Assignment on the Basis of Best Interest or Manifest Educational Hardship. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. October 3, 2022 – Non-Public Minutes

MOTION: Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve the non-public minutes of the October 3, 2022, meeting, as amended. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

Edits:

The motion should read 4 – 1 – 0. (Made by Chair Rothhaus)

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0.

9. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Job Descriptions

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle job descriptions for an In-School Interventionalist, classroom and Unified Arts teacher, Technology Coordinator (grades 9 through 12), and the Social and Emotional Learning Support Specialist were provided to the Board at the October 3, 2022, meeting.

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

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0.

10. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

Board Member Martin said he had met with the Healthcare Cost Containment Committee and the Wellness Committee. He said the HealthTrust representative provided a preview of insurance options. He also said the guaranteed maximum rate was going to increase by 8%.

b. Correspondence

Chair Rothhaus said she received correspondence regarding the NHIAA (New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletics Association)

c. Comments

There were none.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Chuck Mower, 4 Depot Street, addressed the Board and said he looked forward to working with the district regarding extended learning opportunities.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At approximately 8:48 p.m. Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0.