

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
November 21, 2022**

6:30 p.m. – Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – Merrimack TV Training Classroom

- **Student Welfare**

Present: Chair Laurie Rothhaus, Vice-Chair Lori Peters, Board Member Jenna Hardy, and Board Member Naomi Halter. Also present were Assistant Superintendent for Business Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Amy Doyle, Chief Educational Officer Olsen, and Kaitlyn Vadney, Student Representative.

Not Present: Board Member Ken Martin - 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 participation.

3. RECOGNITIONS

There were no recognitions to share.

4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen shared congratulated Mr. Matthew O'Brien, a teacher at the high school for successfully defending his dissertation for his Ph.D. in Education Leadership and Policy.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen also said the high school guidance department in conjunction with the New Hampshire Higher Education Association sponsored an "I am College Bound Day" for seniors where 58 college applications were submitted.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen shared that the high school food classes made and donated over 50 dozen rolls for the St. James Food Pantry's Thanksgiving Day baskets. He also said the Merrimack Middle School's drama club wrapped up its first performance of the 2022 – 2023 school year in which they performed in the psychological thriller entitled "Trap" and it was very well received.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen shared that the volleyball program at the high school was recognized for their community service efforts in raising \$900.00 for the family of the late Victoria Moynihan, a former Merrimack High School teacher.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the Merrimack Varsity Program was recognized for an overall GPA of 3.98 for the 2021 – 2022 school year.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the Granite State Challenge team gathered at Plymouth Regional High School with other schools from around the state to take part in the qualifying test for the Granite State Challenge. He also pointed out that Cameron Fredette, a senior, competed in the New England High School Cross Country Championship where he placed 84th out of 260 runners. Additionally, he noted that Coach Amber Murphy was voted the Division I Girls Soccer Coach of the Year, and the Chop Shop Robotics Team hosted the Merrimack First Lego League Qualifier.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen thanked Mr. Rich Loftus from the Merrimack Middle School for his willingness to understand that sometimes students need a break in an untraditional setting. He said Mr. Loftus and a student were seen doing some much-needed weeding in front of the school.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen and the entire School Board wished everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said the last Vision of a Learner committee meeting had occurred the prior Tuesday where they spent some time reflecting the time they spent on the research done as they tried to capture the communities' aspirations for all the students across the district. She also said the group consider the next steps which were how they would roll out the Vision to all of the stakeholders. She added a full presentation of a Vision of a Learner would be held at the December 19, 2022, School Board meeting.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell commented that he had been busy working on the Operating Budget. He said there would be some challenges with the budget, such as in technology, maintenance,

Chair Rothhaus said she would like to hear from the Technology Director regarding options regarding 1:1 technology for students.

d. School Board Update

Chair Rothhaus expressed her thanks to the students, parents, teachers, administration, & community members and wished all a Happy Thanksgiving.

e. Student Representative Update

Ms. Vadney reminded folks that if rolls were ordered from Texas Roadhouse they had to be picked up by 3:30 p.m. on Tuesday.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. 2023 – 2024 Budget Priorities

Chief Educational Officer Olsen reviewed the 2023 – 2024 budget priorities as listed below:

- School Safety
- Research-Based Reading Program
- Filling Vacant Teacher & Paraeducator Positions
- Eliminating the Brentwood Building
- Performing Arts Center

- Capital Reserve Fund
- Analysis of Current Appropriations to Assess Possible Savings & Reallocation to Emerging Priorities

Board Member Hardy added she would like to see an Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO) Coordinator for the high school be added to the list. Chief Educational Officer Olsen replied that was already in the works and a job description would be forthcoming.

Chair Rothhaus added that if it were ever possible, a bigger weight room would be a great thing to have.

b. Strategic Plan Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle stated as soon as she had a schedule for the Strategic Plan Committee she would let the Board know.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. Curriculum Review Cycle

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle stated as part of the Merrimack School District and School Board goal-setting meeting, Goal #3 focused on improving learning outcomes by ensuring the instruction was responsive to the varied needs of the student population. She further said that Strategic Objective #3 was to develop a process for an ongoing curriculum that update and revised to include a timeline for each curriculum area. She reviewed a draft Curriculum Review Cycle.

b. Homework Discussion

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said teachers, primarily at the high school, and the middle school level advocating for a change to provide extra support for the completion of independent practice in the form of homework. She said it would require an update of the current Homework Protocol from 2017. She said the proposed update would mean that homework could be graded up to 10% of a student's overall grade. She also said the final goal would be to make the new protocol manageable but also to encourage students to complete the practice. She added that teachers were finding it challenging to move forward with the curriculum when students had not completed the practice they needed to become proficient with the content. She also suggested that the new protocol become effective in January 2023.

c. Other

There was no other new business to discuss.

7. **POLICIES**

a. Pupil Safety and Bullying (JICK) 2nd Reading

Chair Rothhaus commented that she felt there should be a link to the DCYF website included in the policy.

b. Availability & Distribution of Healthy Food (EFA) (1st Reading)

c. Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect (JLF) (1st Reading)

Chair Rothhaus commented that she felt a written report should be made as soon as possible and not more than 24 hours.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no minutes to review.

9. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Educator Resignation
 - Mr. Steven T. Chasin, Health Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- b. Approval of Nurse Job Description
- c. Approval of School Counselor Job Description
- d. Approval of High School Student Support Intervention Counselor Job Description

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.

10. OTHER

- a. Committee Reports

Board Member Hardy commented that she attended the Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Committee meeting where they discussed technology and reviewed Eduplanet 21.

Chair Rothhaus said the Planning and Building Committee had not officially met but they were very excited about an upcoming meeting where they would discuss Capital Improvement Plan.

Board Member Halter commented that she attended the Parks and Recreation Committee meeting where they discussed their budget process. She said the Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting was scheduled for December 4th and that Merrimack was participating in the Southern New Hampshire Tour of Lights and residents could register on the Parks and Recreation website.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said he was a member of the Town Center Committee and Steve Keach, P.E. of Keach-Nordstrom Associates presented the School District Master Plan Redesign of the high school complex. He said a timeline and engineering cost estimate would be presented at the next committee meeting.

Vice-Chair Peters stated that the Professional Development Committee had met and wanted to make note of how hard the members of the Committee worked and thanked them.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said she also attended the Professional Development Committee meeting and said they discussed several service learning projects.

- b. Correspondence

Vice-Chair Peters shared that the entire Board received an email thanking the administration for sharing the “Restraint and Seclusion” report from the Department of Education.

Vice-Chair Peters said she received a request for an update based on what her budget priority was which was the allocation of resources and personnel concerning the district's existing enrollment. She said that would be part of the budget process that was just beginning.

c. Comments

Chair Rothhaus said she felt it was important to thank Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell for all of his long-term service to the district.

Vice-Chair Peters noted that a School Board meeting would be held on December 12, 2022, at the Merrimack High School cafeteria at 7:00 p.m. She noted that a portion of the meeting would be a joint meeting with the School Budget Committee and the public was welcome to join.

11. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were no public comments.

12. ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 8:28 p.m. Board Member Hardy made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.