

**Merrimack School Board Special Meeting  
Merrimack School District, SAU #26  
Merrimack High School - Cafeteria  
February 21, 2022**

---

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

- **Staff Welfare**

**Present:** Chair Guagliumi, Vice-Chair Rothhaus, Board Member Hardy, 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 Peters – Excused

**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 those members of the public could send emails to [publiccomment@sau26.org](mailto:publiccomment@sau26.org).

**2. NEW BUSINESS (TAKEN OUT OF ORDER)**

- a. Discussion with School District Moderator Lynn Christensen in Preparation for Deliberative Session

Ms. Christensen said the Deliberative Session would be held the same as it had been for the past thirty years. She said participants would be asked to wear a mask, however, she pointed out there would be a small section of the room designated for those who could not or would not wear a mask. She added there would be microphones available for both sections.

Ms. Christensen said the School Deliberative Session would be held on March 8<sup>th</sup> and the Town’s Deliberative Session would be held on March 9<sup>th</sup> both beginning at 7:00 p.m.

- b. Preparation for Warrant Presentations for Deliberative Sessions

Chair Guagliumi suggested the following people move and second the motions on the floor.

Gifts & Property:	Motion: Board Member Hardy	Second: Board Member Peters
MTA Contract:	Motion: Board Member Barnes	Second: Vice-Chair Rothhaus
MTA Contract Trailer:	Motion: Board Member Barnes	Second: Board Member Hardy
Market Adjustment:	Motion: Vice-Chair Rothhaus	Second: Chair Guagliumi
Thorntons Ferry Roof:	Motion: Chair Guagliumi	Second: Board Member Peters
Year-end Unassigned General Funds:	Motion: Board Member Peters	Second: Board Member Hardy

c. Competency Assessment and Grading Discussion

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Yarlott stated the standards-based grading scale used a points method rather than the traditional grading scale, a percentage method. She said the points ranged from 1 through 4 with points 3 and 4 indicating the student had met the necessary competency.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Yarlott said using a competency-based grading system students were expected to master competencies aligned to college and career-ready standards with clear, transferable learning objectives, and students could access customized support to ensure mastery. She said grades would reflect the degree of mastery of competencies instead of students having to re-take an entire course when they were struggling. She added they would have the opportunity to re-learn specific competencies.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Yarlott said a Steering Committee would be identified for the continuation of the work in the coming summer.

d. First Reading of Revised Student Conduct, Discipline, and Due Process Policy (JICD)

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the proposed revision had been recommended by Attorney Dean Eggert, Merrimack's Civil Rights Counsel, and was pursuant to RSA 193:13.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the policy would be posted on the district's website.

The Board unanimously agreed to waive the first reading of the Revised Student Conduct, Discipline, and Due Process Policy (JICD). The twelve-page policy is available for review on the District's web page.

e. Other

Board Member Barnes noted that she felt it was alarming that the district lost 10% of the grade 12 class since the beginning of the school year. She requested the administration to provide further information.

**3. RECOGNITIONS**

There were no recognitions.

**4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Ms. Heather Robitaille, 45 Springfield Circle, addressed the Board and thanked Ms. Fern Seiden for their efforts surrounding Social and Emotional Learning. Ms. Robitaille also thanked the Unified Art Teachers at the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School.

Ms. Sherry Quirion, 5 Portside Drive (Board Member Barnes read the following email into the record)

I want to say thank you for the SEL work that the district is doing in our schools. It makes me chuckle when my kindergartner tells me she has a big feeling, and it is called frustration and we can talk through it. Then she explains some of the strategies she has learned to help her process these feelings. Thank you for the many tantrums we have been able to avoid due to this wonderful and important teaching that you have incorporated into the student's education. These skills are invaluable and will build a healthy and strong emotional foundation for many years to come. Also, please make it a priority to start paying the teachers more. Teachers are the backbone of our student's education, and we need to make sure we are getting and retaining the best teachers because it all trickles down from there. This is so important right now and they are wearing so many hats to try to support our students through these challenging years.

Ms. Naomi Halter, 10 Everest Drive, addressed the Board and she was also grateful that the district was paying attention to the social and emotional well-being of the students, especially coming out of the pandemic.

Mr. Robbie Reisman, Iris Drive, addressed the Board and reiterated his gratitude to the staff for incorporating social and emotional wellness into the curriculum.

## **5. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES**

### **a. Superintendent Update**

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said they had completed one week of optional masking and thanked the students, teachers, and parents for making it work as seamlessly as it did.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen shared that the leadership team had an extremely successful school safety training session conducted by Detective Bill Vandersyde from the Merrimack Police Department and two members of the Merrimack Fire Department. He said the Crisis Management Teams would continue training over the next month and would plan to train with the staff and students as they approached the following school year.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the School Calendar Committee was working very aggressively to put together the new School Calendar. He added he would be providing the staff with a guide to Religious and Cultural Celebrations of significance. He said he felt it would bring their awareness to a higher level in terms of tests, major assignments, projects, and scheduling events at night.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen shared that the Girl's Swim Team was the Division I state runner-up, freshman, Sylvia, state's all-around gymnastics champion, senior Evan, was the Division II state wrestling in his weight class, sophomore Anthony, was the Division II state wrestling runner-up in his weight class, and sophomore Mitchell, Division II state wrestling runner-up in his weight class.

### **b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update**

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Yarlott said the first Visioning Taskforce had taken place with Mr. Bill Wilmot as well as 30 other participants.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Yarlott also said they had their first working session with EduPlanet 21, the company hired to help populate the curriculum software they purchased.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Yarlott said they would be working with paraeducators and professional staff on understanding restorative practices on the early release day in March.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell reiterated that the emergency training received was invaluable.

d. School Board Update

Chair Guagliumi reiterated that the School Deliberative Session would be held on March 8, 2022, at the James Masticola Upper Elementary School beginning at 7:00 p.m.

e. Student Representative Update

Student Representative Vadney stated that the student council had started planning for the prom and details would be forthcoming. She congratulated the Girls' Varsity Swim Team for winning 2<sup>nd</sup> place at the Division I State Championships.

## **6. OLD BUSINESS**

a. Social and Emotional Learning Strategies for Success in School and Beyond

Ms. Fern Seiden, System of Care Coordinator, stated the goal of the presentation was for the community to have a better understanding of what SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) was and how it was leveraged to support student wellness and development, and why it was an integral part of teaching and learning.

Ms. Rebecca Lessard, 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade teacher, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School, and Ms. Jamie Cordeiro, teacher, James Masticola Elementary School, addressed the Board and said one of the biggest parts of SEL was that it prioritized positive educator and student relationships, noting it was not a trade-off with time teaching academics.

Ms. Lessard said SEL was helping students develop necessary skills for success in the workplace and not a mental health assessment or data collection or counseling.

Ms. Lessard showed a short video presentation that would be available on the school district's website.

Ms. Seiden said SEL prepared students for success beyond school, as well as in school as learners.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus stated she felt social and emotional learning was a critical component of the school system and was evidence-based.

Board Member Barnes commented she felt the students had better academic output due to the inclusion of social and emotional learning.

Board Member Hardy said she felt the presentation was excellent and also felt it was very important to continue to be transparent as to what social and emotional learning actually was.

Chair Guagliumi stated she felt it was a great presentation and thanked all involved for their continued efforts.

## **7. POLICIES**

- a. Second Review of Revised Drug-Free Workplace/Drug-Free School Policy (GBEC)
- b. Second Review of Employment References & Verification (Prohibiting the Aiding & Abetting of Sexual Abuse Prohibiting) Policy (GADA)

Chair Guagliumi asked if members of the Board had any comments or edits regarding the policies. There were none.

Chair Guagliumi said the above two policies would be placed on the next meeting's Consent Agenda.

## **8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. February 7, 2022, Public & Non-Public Minutes (6:30 p.m.)

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

**The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.**

## **9. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Approval of Investment Policy (DFA)

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the policy had been in place since 2008, and it was a document that testified that the School District invested in stable commodities.

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

**The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.**

## **10. OTHER**

- a. Committee Reports

Board Member Barnes stated the Professional Development Committee had met and said they discussed the IPDP (Independent Professional Development Plans) to make sure they were up to date.

Board Member Barnes also said the Grater Woods Sub-Committee met and said it was important for a School Board member to continue to be a liaison as she was not running for re-election for a seat on the School Board.

Board Member Hardy said the CIA (Curriculum, Assessment, & Instruction) Committee had met and evaluated two new educational tools and they were in the process of vetting the cost of the software.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus commented that the previous week she was in Orlando, FL, representing the Region I National Federation of High School Sports Rules Committee. She said the focus was on decreasing the number of concussions.

b. Comments

Board Member Barnes thanked the teachers and parents for attending and contributing to the meeting.

c. Correspondence

There was none.

**11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

There were none.

At approximately 9:22 p.m. Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Barnes seconded the motion.

**The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.**