

**Merrimack School Board Special Meeting  
Merrimack School District, SAU #26  
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room  
May 16, 2022**

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**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 Yarlott, Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen, and Student Representative Vadney.

**Not Present:** Board Member Hardy - Excused

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

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

**2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ms. Heather Robitaille, 45 Springfield Circle, addressed the Board and asked the Board to reconsider accepting public comments via email.

Mr. Chuck Mower, 4 Depot Street, addressed the Board and said as Chairman of the School Board Budget Committee, he looked forward to forging a closer relationship with the Board. He encouraged the School Board to focus their charge and find the items most important to start with and avoid unnecessary entanglements.

**3. RECOGNITIONS**

a. High School Robotics Team

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the Chop Shop 166 Robotics Team had competed in Houston for the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science & Technology) World Championship. Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen and Chair Rothhaus presented each member of the team with a certificate of recognition.

**4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATE**

a. Superintendent Update

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said on Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, four members of the Merrimack Middle School concert band and one member of the chorus participated in the New Hampshire Music Education Association South Central District Honor Band and Chorus Festival. He congratulated those students who participated.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the previous Saturday the Granite State Challenge team faced off with Portsmouth and said the Merrimack came up just a little bit short and did an outstanding job. He said on Sunday some of the same students participated in the New Hampshire Quiz Bowl league and they were undefeated.

Ms. Bunny Saranita, Music Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, had been awarded the 2022 Outstanding Band Director Award by the New Hampshire Band Director's Association.

b. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Yarlott said the Science Committee had met to work on revising the Science Committee including the Next Generation Science Standards, identifying central learning competencies, and following that they would develop performance tasks that would be a common assessment for all students. She also said the Social Studies Committee was making great progress with its curriculum.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said on May 9<sup>th</sup> they had a meeting with the district's Planning & Building Committee and reviewed a preliminary schematic of the high school redesign of the master plan. He also said they would do a full survey the following summer.

d. School Board Update

Chair Rothhaus said the School Board's first goals meeting would be held on June 28<sup>th</sup> at Buckley's Steakhouse. She also thanked all teachers and staff who were retiring.

e. Student Representative Update

Student Representative Vadney said the prom was a very successful event with over 400 students in attendance. She thanked all of the teachers who chaperoned.

**5. OLD BUSINESS**

Board Member Martin suggested that the Board discuss the recently passed Discipline Policy at its goals meeting, particularly in the area of parental appeal.

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

a. Summer School Highlights

Ms. Heather Barker, Director of Student Services; and Ms. Fern Seiden, Director of Student Wellness reviewed the activities designed for the summer as summarized below:

- Summer Learning Program for grades K - 4 – Focus on Reading & Math – RFS Reeds Ferry Elementary School (July 5<sup>th</sup> through July 28<sup>th</sup>) Tuesday – Thursday In-person instruction.

- Title I Digital Reading Academy for grades 5 through 8 – Customized Reading Skills (July 5<sup>th</sup> – August 11<sup>th</sup>) Remote instruction with flexible scheduling.
- High School 8.5 – Available to any incoming ninth grade who would like to participate. To prepare students for their time at the high school. (July 5<sup>th</sup> – August 11<sup>th</sup>) Monday – Thursday. In-person instruction.
- Credit Recovery Program – Earn up to 1 credit for courses previously failed. Two 130-minute classes each day. (July 5<sup>th</sup> through August 11<sup>th</sup>) Monday through Thursday. In-person instruction.
- ESY Program – Pre-K through grade 6 at the James Mastricola Elementary School & the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School – For students who had experienced substantial regression during school breaks, and disruptive learning due to the pandemic. Practice & maintain previously learned skills. IEP is required and transportation is available.
- ESY Program – Grades 7 through 12
- Summer PASS Program for grades 5 through 7 who received specially designed services and instruction already in their IEP's. (July 5<sup>th</sup> through August 4<sup>th</sup>) In-person instruction.

b. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Presentation

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Yarlott introduced Mr. Bill Wilmot, UDL Implementation Specialist at CAST (Center for Applied Special Technology) who was running the team of educators throughout the district on various stages of implementation of UDL (Universal Design for Learning) practices. Along with Mr. Wilmot, the following people provided an update on the progress.

Ms. Marissa Ricard, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School  
Ms. Holly Lubelczyk, Language Arts Coordinator, James Mastricola Elementary School  
Ms. Julie DeLuca, Principal, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School  
Ms. Jane Calnan, Language Arts Coordinator, Thornton Ferry Elementary School  
Ms. Barbara DeFrancisco, Grades 3 & 4, Multiage Teacher, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School  
Ms. Laura Livie, Assistant Principal, Reeds Ferry Elementary School  
Ms. Jeanette Cote, Language Arts Coordinator, Reeds Ferry Elementary School  
Ms. Nicole Rheault, Assistant Principal, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School  
Ms. Laura Piccolo, Language Arts Coordinator, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School  
Ms. Bethany Taylor, Digital Learning Specialist, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School  
Ms. Nicole Diggins, Language Arts Coordinator, Merrimack Middle School  
Ms. Kristen Peterson, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies Teacher, Merrimack Middle School  
Ms. Christine Reinart, Department Head, Special Education, Merrimack High School  
Ms. Naomi Halvorson, Department Head, English, Merrimack High School

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Yarlott shared that the presentation, in its entirety, was available on the district's website.

c. Merrimack Hawks Request

Ms. Shannon Rand, Board Member at Large for the Merrimack Hawks and Ms. Shannon Herrmann, Program Administrator for the Merrimack Hawks were both present to request that their organization could become an allied organization to ensure equal opportunity for the youth of Merrimack. Ms. Rand said their previous request to use the gym space had been denied and had to find alternative places for 106 athletes which could be costly for a non-profit organization. She requested access to the gym at the Merrimack Middle School Monday through Friday between the hours of 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. from September 1st through November 30<sup>th</sup>.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said many years ago the school district had agreed with the Merrimack Youth Association (MYA) to partner with them to provide them with alternatives to physical education programs. He said the MYA took care of Merrimack kids exclusively and the School Board decided to give them preference because there was a partnership. He said for the short-term, the middle school gym could be available to them but there would be times when there could be school volleyball games and basketball games and the gym would not be available.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell asked if the intent was to work with the existing school sports schedule at the middle school. Ms. Rand replied in the affirmative.

Vice-Chair Peters said they would take the matter into consideration and would place it on a future agenda.

d. Goal Setting Meeting

To be held on June 28. Plans were being made with Primex to arrange for a facilitator.

e. Other

There was none.

**7. POLICIES**

a. Use of Masks by Students and Staff Policy (EBCVM)

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated he had met with the school nurses regarding the mask policy and pointed out that they felt there was no further need for a mask policy and that it should be rescinded with the stipulation that if in the future there was a resurgence of a variant of COVID-19 that could cause health concerns it may be reinstated.

**MOTION:** Board Member Martin made a motion to rescind policy (EBCVM) Use of Masks by Students and Staff. Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

**Discussion:**

Board Member Halter asked if it made sense to have an affirmative policy protecting the ability to wear masks. Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen replied wearing a mask was completely optional for each individual and that masks were welcome.

**The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.**

## **8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- a. May 2, 2022 – Public & Non-Public Minutes

**MOTION:** Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve the public and non-public minutes from May 2, 2022, as presented. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

**The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.**

## **9. CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Teacher Nominations

- Ms. Marina Nickerson, Special Education Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- Ms. Emily Jacy, Grade 4 Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School
- Mr. Jaxon Dillard, Special Education Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- Ms. Megan Shevenell, Guidance Counselor, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
- Ms. Tamara O'Neil, Special Education Teacher, Merrimack High School
- Ms. Patricia Zink, Special Education Teacher, Merrimack High School
- Ms. Amy Fine, Special Education Coordinator, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
- Ms. Savannah Robert, Grade 4 Teacher, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

- b. Educator Resignations

- Ms. Stephanie Brann, Speech Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- Ms. Carissa Carrier, Grade 4 Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School
- Ms. Alisha Chapman, Physical Education Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- Ms. Morgan Ireland, Grade 2 Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School

**MOTION:** Board Member Martin 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

There were no Committee Reports.

- b. Correspondence

Chair Rothhaus said she received correspondence regarding supporting the contract with the MYA. (Merrimack Youth Association)

Board Member Martin said he received correspondence regarding the discipline policy.

c. Comments

Board Member Martin commented the following Thursday at 6:30 p.m. would be the final concert for Ms. Pat Cunningham who had been teaching in the district for 36 years.

**11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. Paul Goodridge, 68 Wire Road, stated he founded the MYA 50 years ago and served on the School Board for nine years. He said he recommended that the School Board not become involved in scheduling individual activities of the MYA.

Mr. Chuck Mower, 4 Depot Street, addressed the Board and said he needed to defend the district's budget, and while he appreciated the great demand for all of the facilities in Merrimack but felt they needed to guard the conduct of the business in the school district to not be engaged in unanticipated difficulties.

Ms. Shannon Rand addressed the Board and said she was requesting again, to become an allied partner.

**12. NON-PUBLIC SESSION**

**MOTION:** At 10:05 p.m. Board Member Martin made a motion to go into a non-public session. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

- Staff Welfare
- Student Welfare
- Legal

**The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.**

**MOTION:** At 10:26 p.m. Chair Rothhaus made a motion to adjourn the non-public session and return to the public session where the meeting was adjourned. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

**The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.**