Merrimack School District
Superintendent's Annual Report
2021-2022

The 2021-2022 school year was a year of transition in many regards. The school board hired an Interim Chief Educational Officer in July 2021. Throughout August a new Merrimack High School Principal was hired and the entire Leadership Team was busy preparing for the opening of the school year while continuing with COVID-19 health and safety precautions. The Health and Safety Task Force was instrumental in guiding the school district through several phases of various mitigating strategies, focusing mostly on mask wearing. We began the school year with students and staff wearing masks. In February, mask wearing became optional based on local COVID data. Finally in May (2022), the recommendation was made to the school board to eliminate the mask policy. The staff, students and parents are to be thanked for their patience during transitions through several mask policies throughout the year.

In September, the school district enrolled 3,623 students. Enrollments over the last ten years have generally exhibited a downward trend, although there have been several years of an increase in enrollment over the previous year. Residential development has increased in Merrimack with over 1,300 units of housing being proposed for construction. The development includes apartments, condominiums, townhouses and single-family homes. It will be important for the school district to watch the role of construction and occupancy carefully to be certain that each school has enough space capacity to accommodate the students enrolling from new residential developments.

Throughout the school year a number of improvements were made to operational documents and procedures. We developed a new school calendar that provided considerable user-friendly information to staff students and parents; student handbooks were completely revised for the first time in over five years; policies and job descriptions were revised and updated; the school board agenda template was streamlined; with the assistance of public safety officials, a school district Safety Committee drafted and updated a Crisis Management Flip Chart for distribution to the entire staff; finally, a new administrator evaluation instrument and process was developed, for implementation in the 2022-2023 school year. An integral part of every school year is the planning and development of the school district budget for the following school year. This process begins with a careful analysis of the needs of our students, staff and district operations.

In June 2022, the school board conducted a day long goals meeting with the school district administration. The meeting was facilitated by two representatives from PRIMEX who kept the meeting focused and engaging. A comprehensive list of goals and objectives was developed which formed the basis for the school board's budget priorities for the 2022-2023 school year. It is important to note that both the School Board and Budget Committee continued to be thorough in their respective reviews of proposed budgets. Additionally, the voters of Merrimack are to be thanked for supporting the school district's students, staff and operations.

The administration's efforts will continue to be focused on making decisions that are in the best interest of students while being cognizant of our obligation to provide taxpayers with an excellent return for their dollars invested in the school district. Thank you for your support!

Respectfully Submitted,

Everett V. Olsen, Jr.
Chief Educational Officer