Merrimack School District/SAU 26
School Board Meeting
Preliminary Agenda
August 23, 2022 (Tuesday)
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room

6:00 p.m. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – Merrimack TV Training Classroom

- Student Welfare
- Staff Welfare
- Legal

PUBLIC MEETING

7:00 p.m.	**1. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**	Laurie Rothhaus
7:05 p.m.	**2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**	Jenna Hardy
	3. RECOGNITIONS	Jenna Hardy
7:15 p.m.	**4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES**	Jenna Hardy
	a. Superintendent Update	
	b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update	
	c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update	
	d. School Board Update	
	e. Student Representative Update	
7:25 p.m.	**5. OLD BUSINESS**	Jenna Hardy
	a. Student Enrollment Update	Everett Olsen
7:35 p.m.	**6. NEW BUSINESS**	Jenna Hardy
	a. State Assessments Results	Amanda Doyle
	b. Student Handbooks	Everett Olsen
	c. Leadership Retreat	Everett Olsen
	d. Summer Projects	Matt Shevenell
	e. First Meeting in September	Everett Olsen
	f. Other	Jenna Hardy
	7. POLICIES	
8:15 p.m.	**8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**	Jenna Hardy
	a. July 25, 2022 Public	
8:20 p.m.	**9. CONSENT AGENDA**	Amanda Doyle
	a. Educator Resignations	
	b. Educator Nominations	
8:30 p.m.	**10. OTHER**	Jenna Hardy
	a. Committee Reports	
	b. Correspondence	
	c. Comments	
8:45 p.m.	**11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**	Jenna Hardy
9:00 p.m.	**12. ADJOURN**	Jenna Hardy

* These times are estimates and may vary depending on discussion.

State Assessments Results

Spring 2022

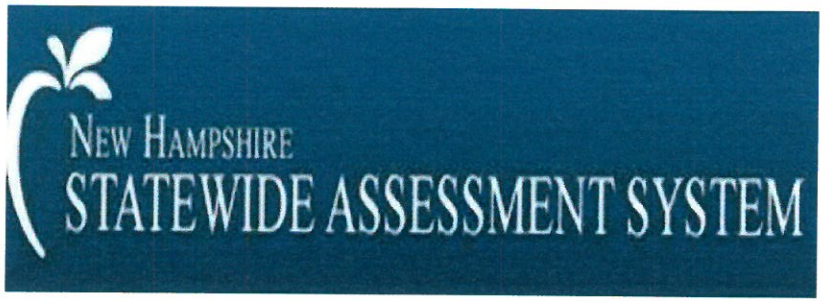
State Assessments

New Hampshire Department of Education

- To comply with state and federal education accountability laws, New Hampshire assesses students each year using several different assessments.
- The type and subject matter of state assessments in New Hampshire depends on a student's grade level. Summative assessments cover English language arts, mathematics, and science.
    a. **ELA and Math** – The New Hampshire Statewide Assessment System (NH SAS) tests students annually from 3rd-8th grade in both English language arts and mathematics. ELA tests will report on student achievement in reading literature, reading Informational text, and writing/language. Grade 3-5 math tests cover operations, algebraic thinking, numbers and operations, measurement, data and geometry. Grade 6-8 math tests cover ratios, proportional relationships, the number system, expressions, equations, geometry, statistics, and probability. Grade 11 students take the SATs that covers English, Reading, and Writing and Math.
    b. **Science** – New Hampshire students in grades 5, 8 and 11 will also take the NH SAS science test. This test is aligned with the NextGen science standards.
    c. **Dynamic Learning Maps** – DLM is an alternate assessment given to students with significant cognitive disabilities as designed in their active individualized education program (IEP). The English language arts and math test are administered in grades 3-8, while the DLM for science is administered in grades 5 and 8 only.

The New Hampshire Statewide Assessment System

- The NH SAS is a comprehensive assessment program designed to provide information about what students know in core academic areas.
- It is currently used for English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science.
- Administered annually in the Spring (not in Spring 2020 due to COVID).



Grade 3 Math & ELA

Grade 3 Math

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
MES	78 students	15 students	19.2%	26 students	33.3%	23 students	29.5%	14 students	17.9%
RFS	89 students	30 students	33.7%	23 students	25.8%	24 students	27.0%	12 students	13.5%
TFS	96 students	19 students	19.8%	25 students	26.0%	29 students	30.2%	23 students	24.0%
Overall District	263 students	64 students	24.3%	74 students	28.1%	76 students	28.9%	49 students	18.6%
Overall State/Region	11,839 students	2,610 students	22.0%	3,379 students	28.5%	2,799 students	23.6%	3,051 students	25.8%

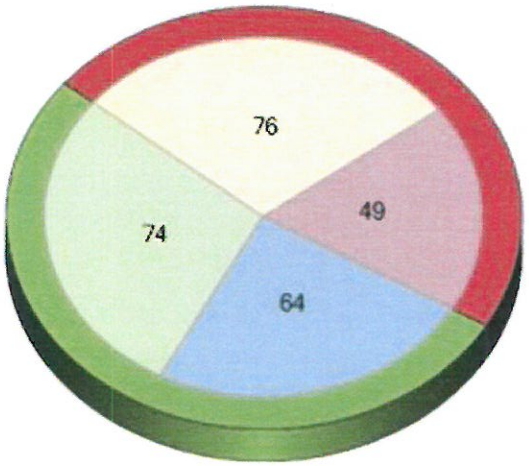
Grade 3 ELA

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
MES	79 students	17 students	21.5%	27 students	34.2%	23 students	29.1%	12 students	15.2%
RFS	89 students	29 students	32.6%	26 students	29.5%	24 students	27.0%	10 students	11.2%
TFS	96 students	16 students	16.7%	31 students	32.3%	21 students	21.9%	28 students	29.2%
Overall District	264 students	62 students	23.5%	84 students	31.8%	68 students	25.8%	50 students	18.9%
Overall State/Region	11,701 students	2,461 students	21.0%	2,863 students	24.5%	2,902 students	24.8%	3,475 students	29.7%

Grade 3 Math

NH SAS - Math - Grade 3 (4/15/2022)
Overall Math Scale Score

52.5% Proficient

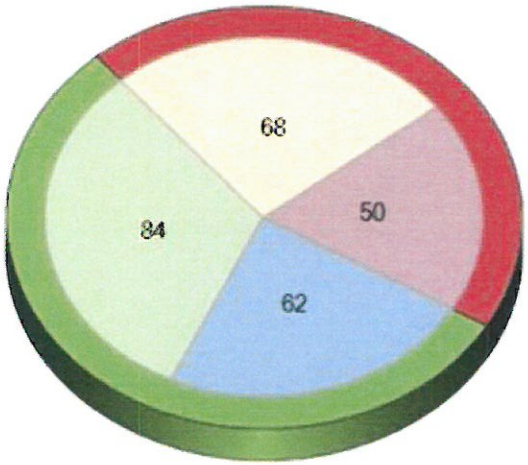


Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	64	24.3%
L3 - Proficient	74	28.1%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	76	28.9%
L1 - Below Proficient	49	18.6%
Total	263	-

Grade 3 ELA

NH SAS - ELA - Grade 3 (4/15/2022)
Overall ELA Scale Score

55.3% Proficient



Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	62	23.5%
L3 - Proficient	84	31.8%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	68	25.8%
L1 - Below Proficient	50	18.9%
Total	264	-

Grade 4 Math & ELA

Grade 4 Math

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
MES	61 students	11 students	18.0%	20 students	32.8%	18 students	29.5%	12 students	19.7%
RFS	77 students	21 students	27.3%	23 students	29.9%	23 students	30.8%	10 students	13.0%
TFS	91 students	14 students	15.4%	23 students	25.3%	28 students	30.8%	26 students	28.6%
Overall District	229 students	46 students	20.1%	66 students	28.8%	69 students	30.1%	48 students	21.0%
Overall State/Region	11,666 students	2,171 students	18.6%	3,436 students	29.5%	3,380 students	29.0%	2,679 students	23.0%

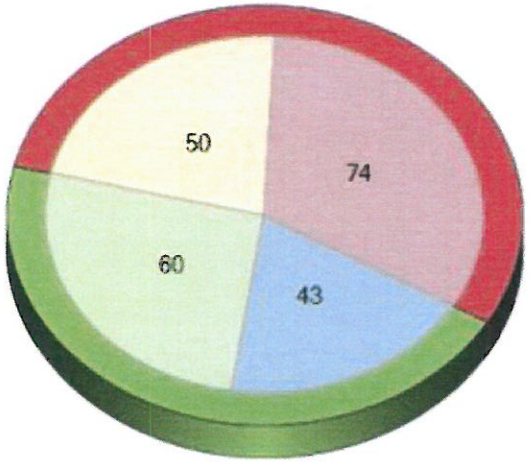
Grade 4 ELA

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
MES	60 students	9 students	15.0%	14 students	23.3%	18 students	30.0%	19 students	31.7%
RFS	77 students	23 students	29.9%	19 students	24.7%	15 students	19.5%	20 students	26.0%
TFS	90 students	11 students	12.2%	27 students	30.0%	17 students	18.9%	35 students	38.9%
Overall District	227 students	43 students	18.9%	60 students	26.4%	50 students	22.0%	74 students	32.6%
Overall State/Region	11,608 students	2,695 students	23.2%	2,859 students	24.6%	2,300 students	19.8%	3,754 students	32.3%

Grade 4 ELA

NH SAS ~ ELA ~ Grade 4 (4/15/2022)
Overall ELA Scale Score

45.4% Proficient

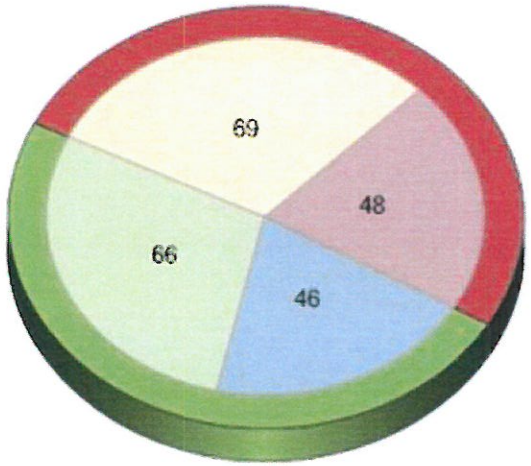


Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	43	18.9%
L3 - Proficient	60	26.4%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	50	22%
L1 - Below Proficient	74	32.6%
Total	227	-

Grade 4 Math

NH SAS - Math - Grade 4 (4/15/2022)
Overall Math Scale Score

48.9% Proficient



Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	46	20.1%
L3 - Proficient	66	28.8%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	69	30.1%
L1 - Below Proficient	48	21%
Total	229	-

Grade 5 Math, ELA, & Science

Grade 5 Math

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
JMUES	237 students	22 students	9.3%	46 students	19.4%	84 students	35.4%	85 students	35.9%
Overall District	237 students	22 students	9.3%	46 students	19.4%	84 students	35.4%	85 students	35.9%
Overall State/Region	11,989 students	2,227 students	18.6%	2,376 students	19.8%	3,670 students	30.6%	3,716 students	31.0%

Grade 5 ELA

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
JMUES	237 students	40 students	16.9%	92 students	38.8%	44 students	18.6%	61 students	25.7%
Overall District	237 students	40 students	16.9%	92 students	38.8%	44 students	18.6%	61 students	25.7%
Overall State/Region	11,951 students	2,137 students	17.9%	4,350 students	36.4%	2,329 students	19.5%	3,135 students	26.2%

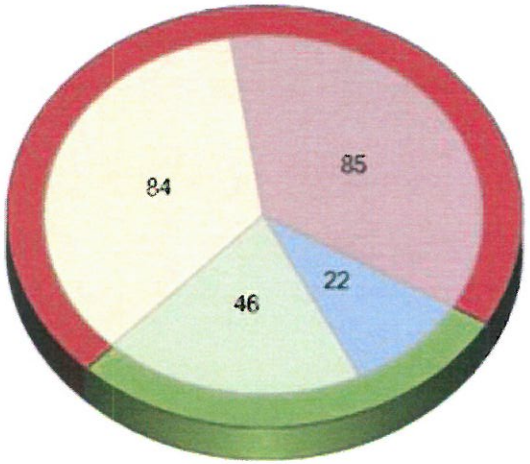
Grade 5 Science

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
JMUES	236 students	22 students	9.3%	47 students	19.9%	60 students	25.4%	107 students	45.3%
Overall District	236 students	22 students	9.3%	47 students	19.9%	60 students	25.4%	107 students	45.3%
Overall State/Region	11,643 students	1,662 students	14.3%	2,746 students	23.6%	2,705 students	23.2%	4,530 students	38.9%

Grade 5 Math

NH SAS – Math – Grade 5 (4/15/2022)
Overall Math Scale Score

28.7% Proficient

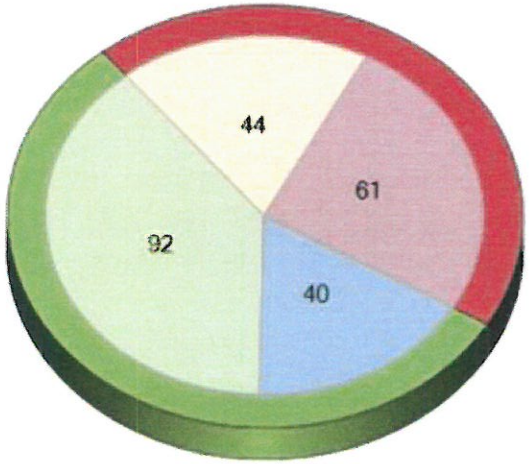


Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	22	9.3%
L3 - Proficient	46	19.4%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	84	35.4%
L1 - Below Proficient	85	35.9%
Total	237	-

Grade 5 ELA

NH SAS - ELA - Grade 5 (4/15/2022)
Overall ELA Scale Score

55.7% Proficient

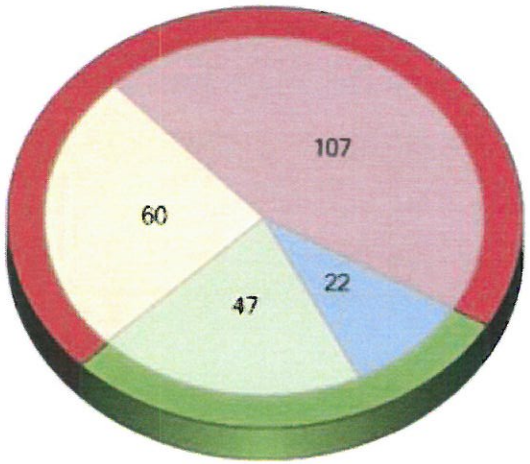


Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	40	16.9%
L3 - Proficient	92	38.8%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	44	18.6%
L1 - Below Proficient	61	25.7%
Total	237	-

Grade 5 Science

NH SAS - Science - Grade 5 (4/15/2022)
Overall Science Scale Score

29.2% Proficient



Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	22	9.3%
L3 - Proficient	47	19.9%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	60	25.4%
L1 - Below Proficient	107	45.3%
Total	236	-

Grade 6 Math & ELA

Grade 6 Math

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
JMUES	254 students	41 students	16.1%	77 students	30.3%	72 students	28.3%	64 students	25.2%
Overall District	254 students	41 students	16.1%	77 students	30.3%	72 students	28.3%	64 students	25.2%
Overall State/Region	11,606 students	1,810 students	15.6%	2,751 students	23.7%	3,589 students	30.9%	3,456 students	29.8%

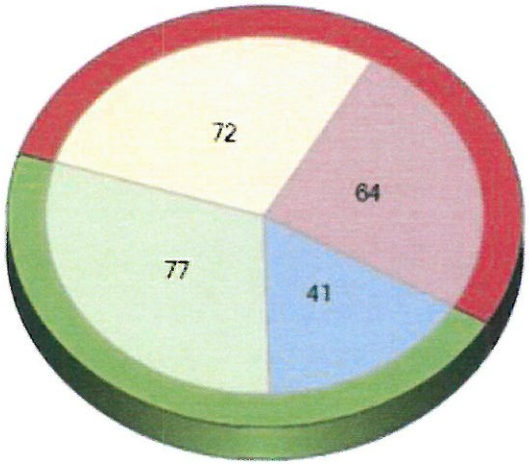
Grade 6 ELA

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
JMUES	254 students	43 students	16.9%	101 students	39.8%	65 students	25.6%	45 students	17.7%
Overall District	254 students	43 students	16.9%	101 students	39.8%	65 students	25.6%	45 students	17.7%
Overall State/Region	11,567 students	1,769 students	15.3%	4,384 students	37.9%	3,102 students	26.8%	2,311 students	20.0%

Grade 6 Math

NH SAS ~ Math ~ Grade 6 (4/15/2022)
Overall Math Scale Score

46.5% Proficient

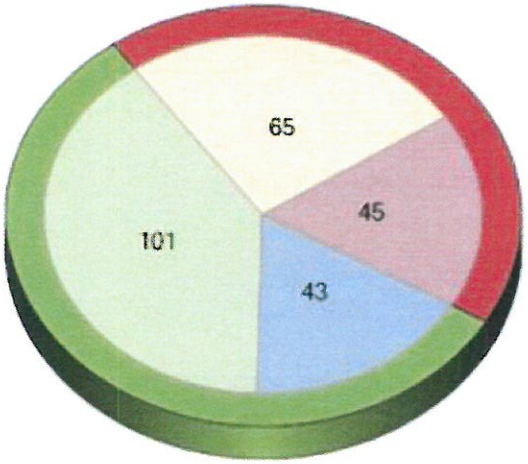


Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	41	16.1%
L3 - Proficient	77	30.3%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	72	28.3%
L1 - Below Proficient	64	25.2%
Total	254	-

Grade 6 ELA

NH SAS - ELA - Grade 6 (4/15/2022)
Overall ELA Scale Score

56.7% Proficient



Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	43	16.9%
L3 - Proficient	101	39.8%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	65	25.6%
L1 - Below Proficient	45	17.7%
Total	254	-

Grade 7 Math & ELA

Grade 7 Math

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
JMUES	33 students	2 students	6.1%	10 students	30.3%	10 students	30.3%	11 students	33.3%
MMS	219 students	18 students	8.2%	49 students	22.4%	76 students	34.7%	76 students	34.7%
Overall District	252 students	20 students	7.9%	59 students	23.4%	86 students	34.1%	87 students	34.5%
Overall State/Region	11,913 students	1,971 students	16.5%	2,502 students	21.0%	3,738 students	31.4%	3,702 students	31.1%

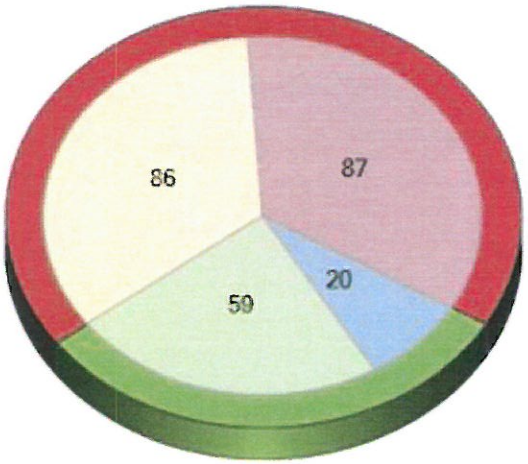
Grade 7 ELA

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
JMUES	33 students	2 students	6.1%	15 students	45.5%	6 students	18.2%	10 students	30.3%
MMS	220 students	11 students	5.0%	93 students	42.3%	65 students	29.5%	51 students	23.2%
Overall District	253 students	13 students	5.1%	108 students	42.7%	71 students	28.1%	61 students	24.1%
Overall State/Region	11,858 students	1,173 students	9.9%	4,671 students	39.4%	3,104 students	26.2%	2,909 students	24.5%

Grade 7 Math

NH SAS – Math – Grade 7 (4/15/2022)
Overall Math Scale Score

31.3% Proficient

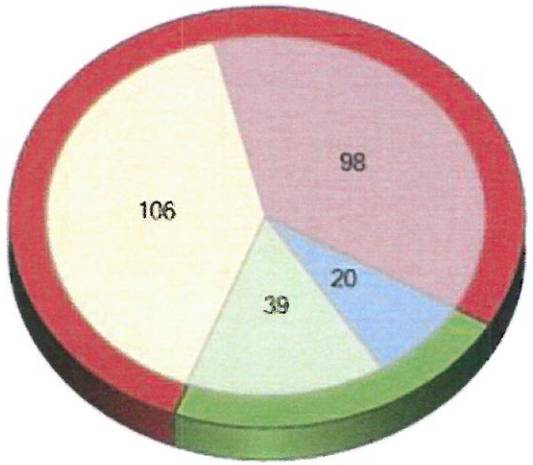


Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	20	7.9%
L3 - Proficient	59	23.4%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	86	34.1%
L1 - Below Proficient	87	34.5%
Total	252	-

Grade 8 Math

NH SAS - Math - Grade 8 (4/15/2022)
Overall Math Scale Score

22.4% Proficient

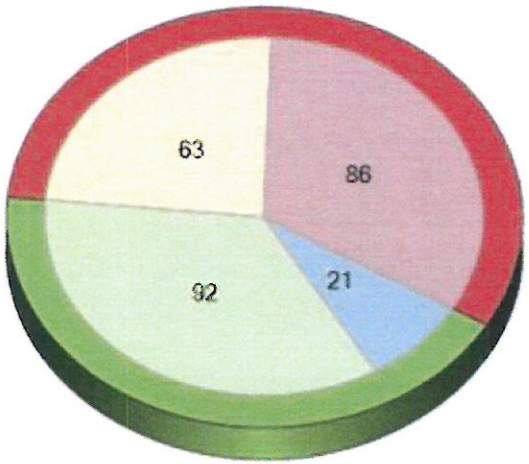


Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	20	7.6%
L3 - Proficient	39	14.8%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	106	40.3%
L1 - Below Proficient	98	37.3%
Total	263	-

Grade 8 ELA

NH SAS - ELA - Grade 8 (4/15/2022)
Overall ELA Scale Score

43.1% Proficient

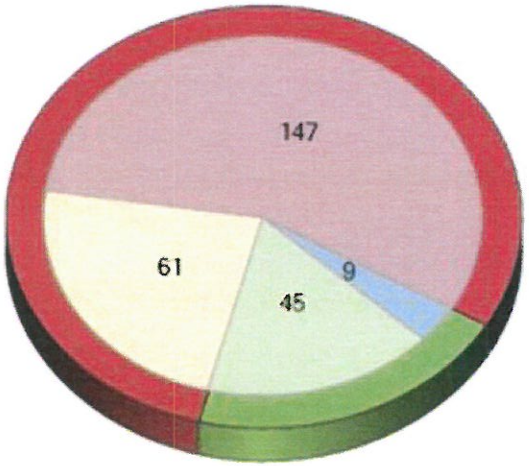


Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	21	8%
L3 - Proficient	92	35.1%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	63	24%
L1 - Below Proficient	86	32.8%
Total	262	-

Grade 8 Science

NH SAS - Science - Grade 8 (4/15/2022)
Overall Science Scale Score

20.6% Proficient

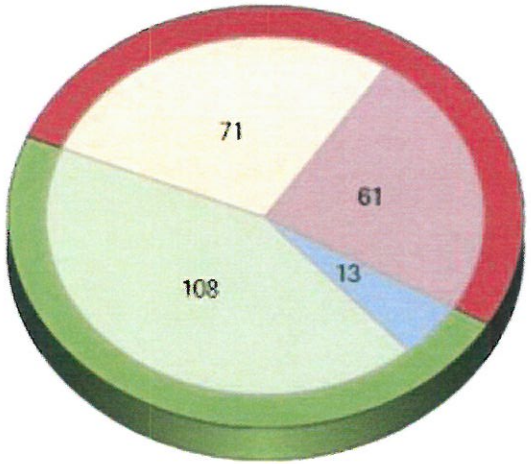


Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	9	3.4%
L3 - Proficient	45	17.2%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	61	23.3%
L1 - Below Proficient	147	56.1%
Total	262	-

Grade 7 ELA

NH SAS ~ ELA ~ Grade 7 (4/15/2022)
Overall ELA Scale Score

47.8% Proficient



Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	13	5.1%
L3 - Proficient	108	42.7%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	71	28.1%
L1 - Below Proficient	61	24.1%
Total	253	-

Grade 8 Math, ELA, & Science

Grade 8 Math

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
MMS	263 students	20 students	7.6%	39 students	14.8%	106 students	40.3%	98 students	37.3%
Overall District	263 students	20 students	7.6%	39 students	14.8%	106 students	40.3%	98 students	37.3%
Overall State/Region	12,082 students	2,065 students	17.1%	1,961 students	16.2%	3,526 students	29.2%	4,529 students	37.5%

Grade 8 ELA

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
MMS	262 students	21 students	8.0%	92 students	35.1%	63 students	24.0%	86 students	32.8%
Overall District	262 students	21 students	8.0%	92 students	35.1%	63 students	24.0%	86 students	32.8%
Overall State/Region	12,063 students	1,525 students	12.6%	4,016 students	33.3%	2,983 students	24.7%	3,539 students	29.3%

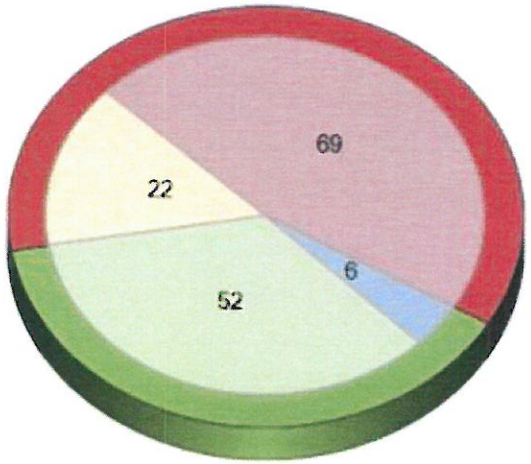
Grade 8 Science

	Total Students	Level 4: Above Proficiency		Level 3: Proficient		Level 2: Approaching Proficiency		Level 1: Below Proficiency	
		Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
MMS	262 students	9 students	3.4%	45 students	17.2%	61 students	23.3%	147 students	56.1%
Overall District	262 students	9 students	3.4%	45 students	17.2%	61 students	23.3%	147 students	56.1%
Overall State/Region	11,812 students	1,063 students	9.0%	2,807 students	23.8%	2,268 students	19.2%	5,674 students	48.0%

Grade 11 Science

NH SAS - Science - Grade 11 (4/15/2022)
Overall Science Scale Score

38.9% Proficient



Proficiency Level	# of Students	% of Students
L4 - Above Proficient	6	4%
L3 - Proficient	52	34.9%
L2 - Approaching Proficient	22	14.8%
L1 - Below Proficient	69	46.3%
Total	149	-

District Comparisons - Math

District	Subject	District	School	Grade	Subgroup	Total FAY Students	Level 1%	Level 2%	Level 3%	Level 4%	Above Pro (L 3&4)	Participate%
Merrimack	Math	Merrimack	District Data	All grades	All students	1,510 - 1,515	28	36	25	11	36	83
Amherst	Math	Amherst	District Data	All grades	All students	630 - 635	19	31	27	23	51	74
Bedford	Math	Bedford	District Data	All grades	All students	2,205 - 2,210	< 10 %	23	33	37	70	94
Bow	Math	Bow	District Data	All grades	All students	810 - 815	23	33	28	16	44	91
Hollis/Brookline	Math	Hollis/Brookline	District Data	All grades	All students	510 - 515	10	29	33	28	61	88
Concord	Math	Concord	District Data	All grades	All students	1,640 - 1,645	40	33	19	< 10 %	27	81
Derry	Math	Derry Cooperative	District Data	All grades	All students	1,825 - 1,830	35	32	19	14	33	87
Litchfield	Math	Litchfield	District Data	All grades	All students	550 - 555	24	38	27	11	39	90
Londonderry	Math	Londonderry	District Data	All grades	All students	1,725 - 1,730	23	34	26	16	42	81
Milford	Math	Milford	District Data	All grades	All students	825 - 830	32	33	27	< 10 %	35	75
Nashua	Math	Nashua	District Data	All grades	All students	2,685 - 2,690	46	27	17	10	28	52
Salem	Math	Salem	District Data	All grades	All students	1,670 - 1,675	23	31	29	17	47	91
Windham	Math	Windham	District Data	All grades	All students	1,425 - 1,430	11	25	33	31	64	92
Goffstown	Math	Goffstown	District Data	All grades	All students	1,250 - 1,255	23	35	27	15	42	88

District Comparisons - Reading

District	Subject	District	School	Grade	Subgroup	Total FAY Students	Level 1%	Level 2%	Level 3%	Level 4%	Above Pro (L 3&4)	Participate%
Merrimack	Reading	Merrimack	District Data	All grades	All students	1,510 - 1,515	19	25	39	16	55	83
Amherst	Reading	Amherst	District Data	All grades	All students	630 - 635	16	25	36	23	59	74
Bedford	Reading	Bedford	District Data	All grades	All students	2,205 - 2,210	< 10 %	14	42	36	78	94
Bow	Reading	Bow	District Data	All grades	All students	810 - 815	16	20	42	23	65	91
Hollis/Brookline	Reading	Hollis/Brookline	District Data	All grades	All students	510 - 515	< 10 %	16	50	25	76	88
Concord	Reading	Concord	District Data	All grades	All students	1,650 - 1,655	30	23	35	12	47	82
Derry	Reading	Derry Cooperative	District Data	All grades	All students	1,830 - 1,835	27	26	34	13	46	87
Litchfield	Reading	Litchfield	District Data	All grades	All students	550 - 555	17	27	43	13	56	90
Londonderry	Reading	Londonderry	District Data	All grades	All students	1,740 - 1,745	18	24	40	19	58	81
Milford	Reading	Milford	District Data	All grades	All students	825 - 830	26	25	40	10	50	75
Nashua	Reading	Nashua	District Data	All grades	All students	2,655 - 2,660	38	22	28	12	41	51
Salem	Reading	Salem	District Data	All grades	All students	1,665 - 1,670	20	24	38	18	56	91
Windham	Reading	Windham	District Data	All grades	All students	1,430 - 1,435	< 10 %	16	42	32	74	92
Goffstown	Reading	Goffstown	District Data	All grades	All students	1,245 - 1,250	19	20	42	20	62	88

District Comparison - Science

District	Subject	District	School	Grade	Subgroup	Total FAY Students	Level 1%	Level 2%	Level 3%	Level 4%	Above Pro (L 3&4)	Participate%
Merrimack	Sci	Merrimack	District Data	All grades	All students	535 - 540	42	24	28	< 10 %	34	65
Amherst	Sci	Amherst	District Data	All grades	All students	190 - 195	26	25	33	16	49	66
Bedford	Sci	Bedford	District Data	All grades	All students	890 - 895	20	23	42	15	58	82
Bow	Sci	Bow	District Data	All grades	All students	360 - 365	32	21	37	10	46	87
Hollis/Brookline	Sci	Hollis/Brookline	District Data	All grades	All students	310 - 315	31	23	38	< 10 %	46	74
Concord	Sci	Concord	District Data	All grades	All students	715 - 720	43	24	29	< 10 %	34	77
Derry	Sci	Derry Cooperative	District Data	All grades	All students	630 - 635	43	26	24	< 10 %	31	84
Litchfield	Sci	Litchfield	District Data	All grades	All students	240 - 245	41	29	22	< 10 %	31	89
Londonderry	Sci	Londonderry	District Data	All grades	All students	635 - 640	48	23	23	< 10 %	29	69
Milford	Sci	Milford	District Data	All grades	All students	345 - 350	40	30	24	< 10 %	30	69
Nashua	Sci	Nashua	District Data	All grades	All students	850 - 855	52	21	20	< 10 %	27	37
Salem	Sci	Salem	District Data	All grades	All students	755 - 760	39	25	30	< 10 %	36	90
Windham	Sci	Windham	District Data	All grades	All students	640 - 645	22	21	41	17	58	89
Goffstown	Sci	Goffstown	District Data	All grades	All students	505 - 510	28	23	38	10	49	79

About the NH School Day SAT

- The School Day SAT is the College Board SAT administered on a school day in the spring to all Grade 11 students in New Hampshire.
- There is no cost to students to participate in the School Day SAT.
- Like the Saturday SAT, the School Day SAT is scored on a 400-1600 point scale. Each section, math and evidenced-based reading and writing, is scored independently on a 200-800 point scale; the section scores are then combined for a total score.

SAT®
CollegeBoard

New Hampshire

SATs Spring 2022

Merrimack High School - 236 Test Taker(s)

SAT School Day March 2022 - April 2022, All grades - Scores & Benchmarks

Total Score/Section Scores

Group	Number of Test Takers	Total Score 400-1600	ERW Score 200-800	Math Score 200-800
School	236	988	499	489
District	236	988	499	489
State	10,703	1006	512	493
Total Group	1,203,276	959	488	470

Questions & Next Steps

- Please forward your questions and/or requests for additional information.

Revised 7/29/2022

Leadership Retreat
August 3rd and 4th, 2022
Sheraton Portsmouth Harborside Hotel
Gardner Room

August 3, 2022 (Wednesday)

8:00 – 8:30	Welcome (coffee, pastries, fruit, juice)
8:30 – 9:30	- Welcome Message from Bill Olsen and Amy Doyle - Introduction of Team Members - Overview of Leadership Retreat Agenda - "Getting To Know You" Activity
9:30 – 12:00	The Impact of Culture - John D'Auria (break from 10:45 – 11:00)
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch (on-site in the Warner Room)
1:00 – 2:30	Book Share: RECULTURING by Melissa Daimler
2:30 – 2:45	Break (coffee, water, fruit, cookies)
2:45 – 3:30	School Board Goals - Action Plan for Goals
3:30 – 5:00	Room Check-In and Exploring
6:00	Dinner (on-Site in the Warner Room)
7:30 – 8:30	Team Trivia

August 4, 2022 (Thursday)

7:30 – 8:30	Breakfast (on-site in the Warner Room)
8:30 – 11:30	Leadership Team Meeting (Break at 10:00 – 10:15)
11:30 – 12:00	Check-out
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch (on-site in the Warner Room)
1:00 – 3:00	Team Photo and Treats at Prescott Park

Dress Code: Business Casual or Casual

Strengthening A Culture of Leadership & Learning

1

Shaping Culture

Leaders have tremendous influence over the the culture (weather) their employees experience. The culture represents the conditions under which we work and those conditions influence our behaviors.

2

Big Ideas

- Leaders can shape a culture of mutual learning.
- Leadership is ultimately about supporting adult learning.
- Learning is intimately connected to our emotions. Paying attention to this connection will strengthen our leadership.
- Balancing **Psychological Safety** with **Accountability** is key.

3

Itinerary

- Check In
- Mirror Images
- Beliefs to Ponder
- A Critically Important Idea
- Turn, Talk, and Learn
- Key Assumptions
- Large Group Discussion
- Feedback

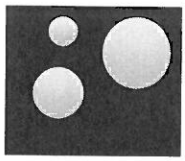
4

Check In

5

Draw A LARGE SQUARE

Inside the square (which represents time) draw three circles-one representing the time you spend putting out fires (F), one for the time spent maintaining all the operations you must pay attention to in order to fulfill your job(M), and one for time spent on improvement efforts (I).



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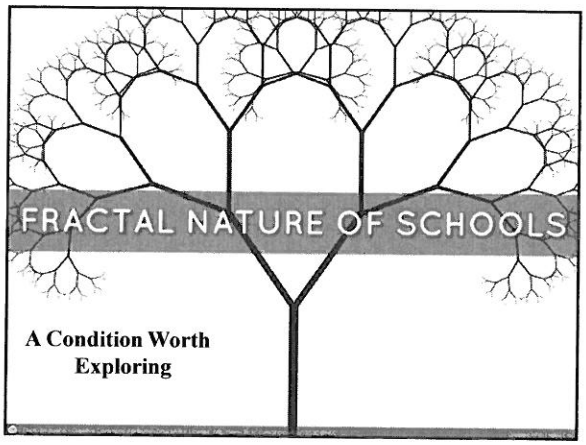
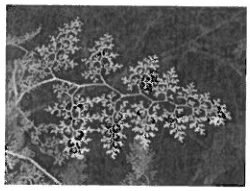


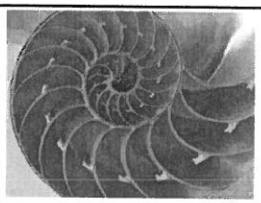
7

If we want to achieve something for our students



We need to mirror our strategic efforts with our staff

8



I've yet to see a school where the learning curves of the youngsters are off the chart upward while the learning curves of the adults are off the chart downward, or a school where the learning curves of the adults were steep upward and those of the students were not. Teachers and students go hand in hand as learners-or they don't go at all

-Roland Barth, Learning by Heart

9

FIVE BIG FEARS (students)

- Fear Of Making Mistakes
- Fear Of Looking Like A Fool
- Fear Of Having A Weakness Exposed
- Fear Of Not Being Liked
- Fear Of Failure

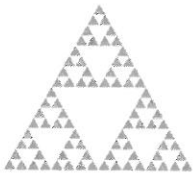
-from the work of John D'Auria

10

SIX BIG FEARS (Adult Educators)

- Fear Of Making Mistakes
- Fear That Errors Will Erase Prior Success
- Fear Of Having A Weakness Exposed
- Fear That Asking For Assistance Will Diminish Respect
- Fear Of Looking Like A Novice
- Fear of Conflict

11



Meetings are to administrators the way classroom lessons are to teachers

12

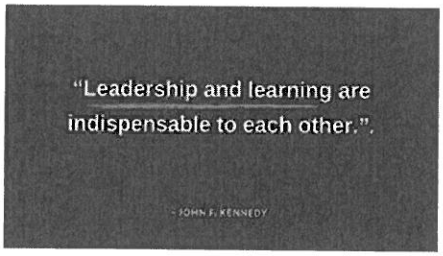
Imagine if these were our beliefs

- Every meeting is an opportunity to learn.
- Every *chance encounter* is an opportunity to learn.
- Leaders influence the conditions that impact adult learning.

If we acted according to these beliefs, what would be the impact in the Merrimack Schools? Reflect & write a response. We will pass our responses around.

13

You Are The Leadership Learning Team



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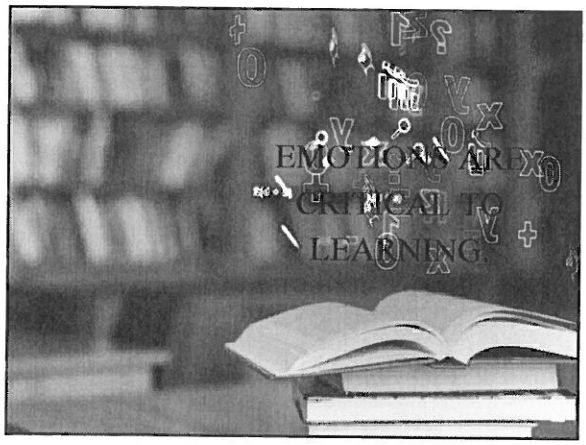
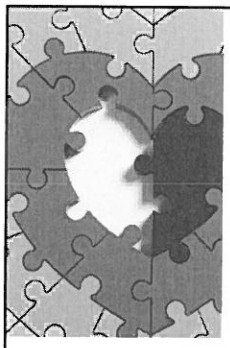


16

- Emotion is essential to learning, Dr. Immordino-Yang said and should not be underestimated or misunderstood as a trend, or as merely the "E" in "SEL," or social-emotional learning. Put simply, **"It is literally neurobiologically impossible to think deeply about things that you don't care about," she said.**
- **The Brain: Exploring the Educational Implications of Affective Neuroscience**

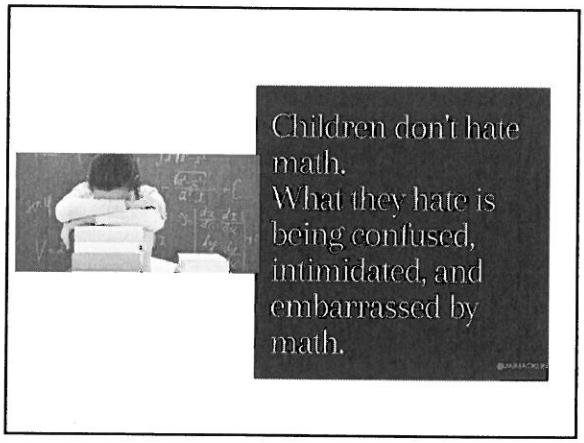
17



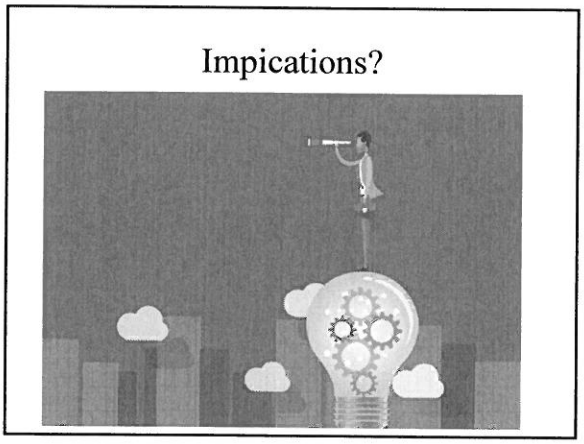
Curiosity

- Choosing to be curious is choosing to be vulnerable because it requires us to surrender to uncertainty. We have to ask questions, admit to not knowing, risk being told that we shouldn't be asking, and sometimes, make discoveries that lead to discomfort.
- Brene Brown, The Atlas of the Heart

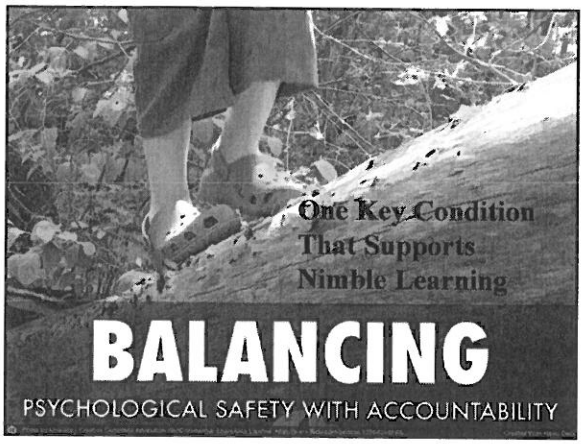
18


Children don't hate math.
What they hate is being confused, intimidated, and embarrassed by math.

19


Impications?

20


One Key Condition That Supports Nimble Learning
BALANCING
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY WITH ACCOUNTABILITY

21

In organizations that learn…

People must become comfortable

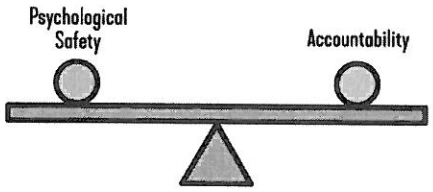
- Not knowing
- Not being right
- Asking for help
- Reporting mistakes
- Re-strategizing quickly after failing
- Disagreeing openly & respectfully with colleagues and those with more authority.

– Amy Edmondson, *Teaming*

22

A Critically Important Idea

Leadership is about *Balancing Psychological Safety with Accountability*



Where is the correct balance point on your team?

23

Unpacking the concepts

Psychological Safety invites new ideas and learning from both successful and not so successful experimentation. Psychological safety exists when people feel they can learn from mistakes AND they can honestly share their thoughts and disagreements with colleagues as well as those with more authority.

24

Unpacking Concepts Cont'd

Accountability means *noticing and discussing* both positive and worrisome behaviors (addressing non discussables)

25

Clarifications

What clarifying questions will strengthen your understanding of these ideas?

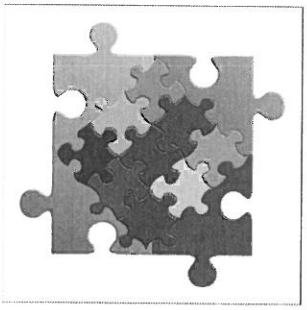
1.Please turn to a partner and first share your understanding of *balancing psychological safety with accountability* and listen to your partner share his or her understanding.

2. Develop one or two questions that you will raise with the group to deepen our collective understanding.

26

FIVE KEY ASSUMPTIONS THAT WILL SUPPORT OUR COLLECTIVE LEARNING

From the work of Roger Schwartz



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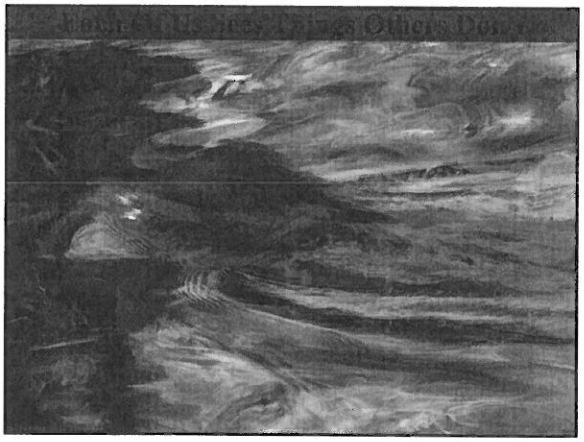
28

Unilateral Assumptions

- I understand the situation; those who disagree, don't.

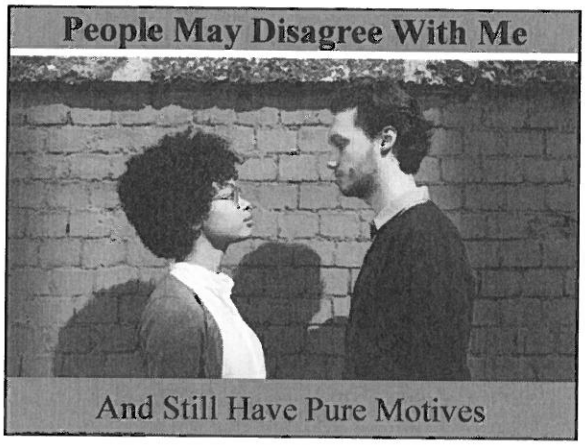
29



30

- I am right; those who disagree are wrong.

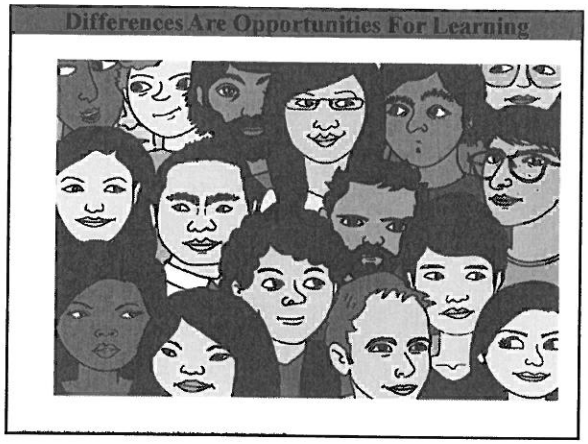
31



32

- My motives are pure; those who disagree have questionable motives.

33



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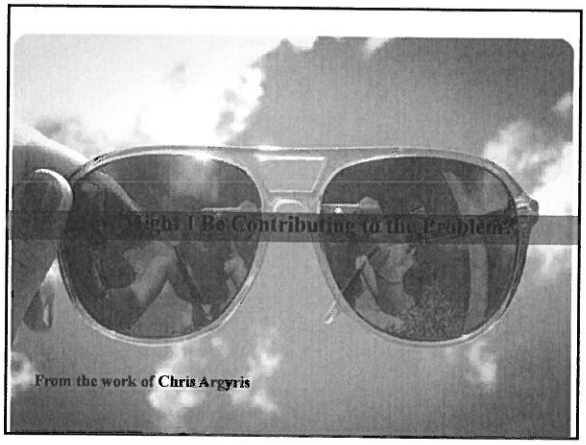
- Because others don't understand the situation the way it really is (and because others are wrong and have questionable motives), there is no reason to take into account other viewpoints.

35



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- I'm not contributing to the problem

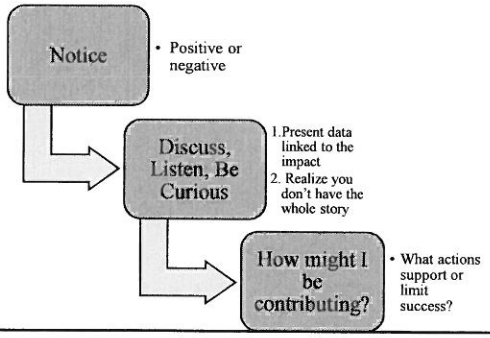
37

What about Accountability?

Noticing + **Discussing**


38

When you start thinking *accountability*....



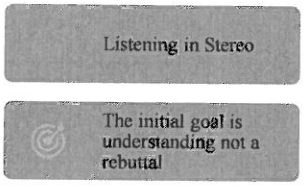
39

More Unpacking

- When navigating difficult conversations and non discussables, *listen in stereo*, *be curious* about how others view the problem, share your *different* point of view
- *Consistently seek out diverse perspectives and regular feedback* about your leadership

40

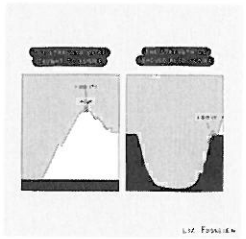
Skill: Responding With Curiosity



41

- The goal of a great discussion isn't to land on the same page. It's to explore different views. Nods and smiles stroke your ego and close your mind. Thoughtful questions stoke your curiosity and stretch your thinking. Consensus makes you comfortable. Dissent makes you smarter.
- Adam Grant

42



PROGRESS ISN'T ALWAYS ABOUT GETTING BETTER. SOMETIMES IT'S ABOUT BOUNCING BACK. SUCCESS IS NOT ONLY THE PEAKS YOU REACH—IT'S THE VALLEYS YOU CONQUER. EVERY EXPERIENCE OF ENDURING ADVERSITY AND OVERCOMING OBSTACLES IS A MEANINGFUL ACCOMPLISHMENT. RESILIENCE IS A FORM OF GROWTH.

ADAM GRANT

43

Feedback Survey

- **Please take a few minutes to fill out this anonymous survey. Your feedback will help us learn.**
- **https://www.formstack.com/forms/?3806412-UQFaAfDV6h**

44

Leadership Matters!

John D'Auria, Ed.D

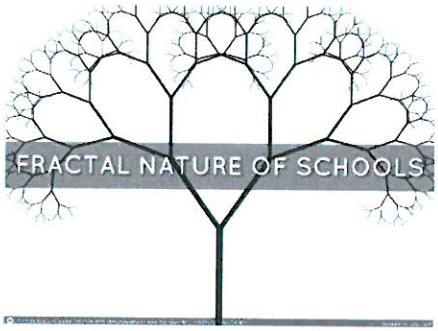
Introduction

While we understand that leaders play an important role in school improvement, we do not have a shared understanding of what leaders can do to improve student learning. While the past decade has produced a wide range of recommended policies and strategies to transform schools, these approaches have not produced a consistent pattern of constructive results. Insights from organizational psychology indicate that deep and sustainable improvement require that the people who are tasked with implementing the modifications, namely the faculty and staff, must be committed to those changes. We also know that when leaders develop trusting relationships, a shared vision of deep learning, and the conditions that foster continuous improvement, students are the beneficiaries. This work requires that leaders shape a work culture of continuous improvement. In this paper, I will outline five big ideas that undergird how a fertile school culture can energize educators to continually improve their craft so that they can better serve their students. While shaping school culture requires a collective effort, it is the significant responsibility of school leaders. The ideas that follow illuminate a thought pathway to support the kind of leadership that will shape a transformative school culture.

The Fractal Nature of Schools

School improvement efforts often begin with inspired and energized efforts to enhance educational opportunities for all children. While focusing on student impact has to be our main goal, we will be unable to gain a number of teaching and learning improvements without shifting the behaviors of adults. The faculty and staff of a school are the ones who deliver key services to children, and without paying attention to the adults who work in schools, our collective efforts will be akin to pouring water into a colander. Consequently, if we are going to improve student services and learning, leaders of schools must focus their efforts on shaping the conditions that support and encourage continuous growth, learning, and improvement in the adults. My years as an educational leader have taught me that whatever we want to achieve for our students must first be modeled and developed within the school system's adult community of learners. I have referred to this concept as the *fractal nature of schools*[1]. A fractal is a design in which any part resembles the whole. The tree below is an example of a fractal. Any branch resembles the entire tree.

[1] (D'Auria, 2012)



One example of the fractal aspect of schools is when we examine the fears and anxieties that often limit learning-both for students and adults. Regardless of age or context, students have to manage five big fears in order to maximize learning:

- Fear of making mistakes
- Fear of looking like a fool
- Fear of having a weakness exposed
- Fear of not being liked
- Fear of failure

My years as a middle school principal taught me how frequently inappropriate behavior stemmed from one of these fears. I still remember clearly when we discovered, for example, that one of our most challenging 7th graders who consistently acted out in his classrooms was camouflaging his inability to read well. From his vantage point, he preferred to be seen as unruly rather than stupid. Effective teachers create classroom cultures that address these fears and support students in their self-management of the forces that limit learning.

My conversations with and observations of adult educators have indicated that there is a parallel set of concerns and anxieties that often limit the professional development of educators:

- Fear of making mistakes
- Fear that errors will erase prior success
- Fear of having a weakness exposed
- Fear that asking for assistance will diminish respect
- Fear of looking like a novice
- Fear of conflict

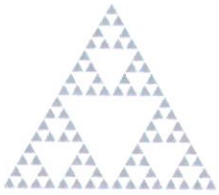
As one examines both the student and the adult lists of fears, it is easy to detect their commonalities. When leaders create the conditions that support ongoing learning in the faculty, including how to normalize the errors, mistakes, and failed experiments that are always part of new learning, the likelihood that teachers will create similar classroom conditions for their students increases. Roland Barth captures this parallelism in his observation,

I've yet to see a school where the learning curves of the youngsters are off the chart upward while the learning curves of the adults are off the chart downward, or a school where the learning curves of the adults were steep upward and those of the students were not. Teachers and students go hand in hand as learners-or they don't go at all

-Roland Barth, Learning by Heart

The recent pandemic necessitated that schools pivot quickly to an online environment requiring the learning of new systems and approaches. While this experience was challenging for all educators, it was particularly troublesome to those veteran and experienced teachers who felt like they had returned to being a novice. The new context compelled educators to ask for assistance and acknowledge their weaknesses. While this can be easily viewed as normal and understandable within this unique context, unless educators were able to overcome their fears, progress was going to be slow, and in some cases, disappointing.

Effective principals create the conditions that help adult learners manage these limiters to professional development and growth. Leaders create the conditions or culture that can support new learning. When leaders craft a culture that supports ongoing learning, educators are able to more nimbly adapt their strategies to effectively address new challenges. While the pandemic was a particularly unique challenge, issues related to social justice, social emotional learning, brain science developments, and technology are just a small sample of complex areas of change that require educators to adapt their strategies and approaches. In addition to the benefits that accrue when educators continually learn new and improved strategies, their classroom cultures mimic the culture of the school. Support for their learning translates to support for student learning. This is the potency of the fractal nature of schools.



For effective leaders, the fractal nature of schools also opens up the power of day-to-day interactions on professional learning. For example, I have worked with leaders to help them reconceptualize the meetings they organize and facilitate, as opportunities for the staff to experience engaging *lessons*. If we want our faculties to engage students, challenge their thinking, and differentiate effectively, we are not going to be able to accomplish that change by designing meetings where attendees passively listen to information that could have easily been communicated in a memo. The analogy that is apropos for this situation is *meetings are to administrators* as *lessons are to teachers.*

<u>The importance of balancing accountability with psychological safety</u>

Once leaders embrace the concept that when adult educators continuously learn, students will be the beneficiaries of that learning, it becomes clearer that we must balance accountability with psychological safety. During the past decade in education, leaders have become more focused on accountability often defined narrowly as test scores. While standardized test scores can provide a perspective on educational effectiveness, this kind of accountability without sufficient psychological safety often produces a stagnant and anxiety-laden environment that limits

learning. Psychological safety is the critical nutrient in a learning ecosystem that allows educators to learn from their mistakes, recycle their errors into insights, experiment with new approaches, and openly share their opinions and ideas with colleagues and with those who have more authority. Edmondson[2] notes that it is sufficient psychological safety that allows organizations to adapt to changing circumstances and learn rapidly in order to address the shifting needs of their clients and customers, and in the case of schools, their students. Determining the optimal balance between psychological safety and accountability is the critical challenge of leadership. It means calibrating a mixture of safety and accountability that shapes a learning culture where rigorous standards are upheld, and constant learning is fully supported. Getting the balance right is not an easy task. It is also important to keep in mind that psychological safety can sometimes be confused with comfortability or congeniality. When leaders get the balance right between safety and accountability, people can receive direct feedback about their work-including leaders, challenge ideas regardless of the roles of those who express those ideas, acknowledge mistakes and setbacks so that collective learning can occur, and address nondiscussables. Nondiscussables, such as the leadership of the principal or the impact of race on our actions, are subjects with emotional charge that often are avoided at meetings. Barth points out that, "the health of a school culture is indirectly proportional to the number of nondiscussables. As the number of nondiscussables increases, the health of a school community weakens."[3]

When sufficient psychological safety exists, emotionally laden topics can be addressed openly. That does not make the discussions easy, however, and that is why psychological safety should not be confused with congeniality or comfortability. We do not typically see these kinds of open and transparent discussions in schools. Instead, direct, and honest conversations are often reserved for parking lot encounters among friends and allies after meetings are over. Additionally, mistakes and errors within school operations often go unacknowledged and unexamined. While many of us have come to accept this opaque form of communication as normal and acceptable school patterns, the inability to discuss ideas, provide feedback, and examine setbacks openly are significant limiters to learning and progress. When leaders work to increase psychological safety, accountability emerges when learning does not occur. Mistakes, errors, and ineffective approaches are inevitable in a complex organization that involves human interactions and communication. Avoiding them is nearly impossible. What is critical is learning from what is not working. Closing achievement gaps, adjusting for trauma in our students' lives, or managing the social and emotional variables that impact learning are a small sample of the complex issues educators face and for which we lack a consistent set of antidotes. Educators need to constantly refine their approaches in order to improve their results over time. Learning from setbacks is critical to school improvement and psychological safety is the lynchpin for that kind of professional learning.

<u>Educators as scientists of learning</u>

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[2] Teaming (Edmondson, 2014) (Barth, 2002)

[3] Barth, R., The Culture Builder, Education Leaders (Barth, 2002)hip May 2002 | Volume **59** | Number **8** Pages 6-11

While adult learning is key to improved student learning, new learning, however, does not move forward in a linear way. Improvement Science[4] has taught us that adapting new strategies and approaches requires an iterative approach and a series of small experiments.

In the knowledge domain of science, we have come to expect that breakthroughs occur after a period of experimentation. Part of that scientific method also involves learning from failures and errors. Science does not produce insights and new learning in a straight-forward manner. When leaders fully understand the importance of balancing psychological safety with accountability, they will craft conditions that allow educators to become scientists of learning. One example of these conditions is how supervision and evaluation is viewed within an educational context. Typically, administrators observe a teacher's lesson and look for how well the students in the class learned the objectives of the lesson. In our current way of thinking, a good lesson, and by default a good teacher, is one where all the students learn the lesson objectives. When students don't learn the lesson, teachers are often criticized or judged harshly. Blaming teachers often spawns a counter set of moves (due to the fractal nature of schools) where teachers blame the students, the parents, and/or the administrators.

A classroom of twenty-five students is a complex system and the learning needs of each student are different. In my fifty years as an educator, I think it is a rare occurrence that every single student in a classroom learns all the objectives planned for the day. Given this context, what would it be like if we viewed each lesson plan as a scientific experiment? Similar to trials that occur within medical contexts, we would expect some students to learn all the objectives, some to learn some of them, and still others who might not learn any. A teacher who works in a school that balances psychological safety with accountability would realize that this is a normal part of the challenge of teaching and the goal would be to understand which of his students learned what part of the objectives. Ascertaining who learned, who almost learned, and who struggled to learn is a key skill for an effective teacher. While understanding the impact of a lesson on students is a necessary step, it is not sufficient. What to do next with that student data is as important. How does the teacher adjust her teaching the next day to address the varying needs of the students? While skilled and experienced teachers will often be able to develop a plan to address such multiple needs, some educators might get stuck. Again, in a school where teachers view themselves as scientists of learning, they would feel comfortable to collaborate and consult. Consult with whom? Within a culture of learning, effective educators consult with a wide range of people who can provide insights and potential alternative approaches to their teaching. They might consult with their students, with specialists within the school, with parents, with former teachers, with school psychologists. The quest is to achieve a breakthrough and one important way to do that is to seek out the expertise of others.

The scenario I described above is not how many schools currently work. Teachers are often isolated and the responsibility to help all their students learn is not necessarily viewed as a collective effort. More importantly, failures and setbacks are often met with blame rather than with scientific curiosity. I recently did a presentation for many educators. As I drove to the presentation site, I heard on the radio that a complex, multi-year cancer trial for a particular drug was cancelled due to the lack of promising data. When I started my presentation, I shared the story I had just heard with the audience of educators. I asked them, "What do you think

[4] (Anthony S. Bryk, 2015)

happened to the scientists involved in that experiment?" The majority of the attendees indicated that they thought the scientists would be fired. Instead, I conjectured that more than likely the scientists would publicize their results and would find support for helping others avoid similar approaches that did not work. While we want all of our teachers to be successful with all of our children all of the time, we must face the reality that it is a challenging proposition. Given the complexity of the task, we must support the urgency of ongoing learning to achieve greater effectiveness over time, rather than shaming teachers for efforts that are not efficacious. Scientists of learning recognize where they are not successful with students and energetically pursue solutions to improve their results.

Deep investment in diagnosing the challenge area you want to see improvement in while not forgetting to inquire about how we are contributing to the problem

When I ask administrators how they spend their time at work[5], many of them indicate that a good portion of their time is focused on "putting out fires," those unplanned problems that emerge and require immediate attention. A graffiti incident, offensive behavior that occurred at a school sports event, or a fire in a wastepaper basket in the bathroom are examples of incidents that need to be immediately addressed and require considerable amounts of time. "Maintenance of operations" also absorbs a great deal of administrative time. Organizing Back to School nights, developing the master schedule, conducting classroom observations as well as a myriad of other important, ongoing tasks consume substantial chunks of time. When I then ask about "Improvement Efforts", many administrators suggest that this should be a significant focus, but it often gets short shrift due to the other demands on their time (putting out fires and maintenance). Consequently, when it comes to developing improvement strategies, many administrators are pressed for time, and this often leads to quickly assessing the improvement challenge and then recommending interventions based on that quick assessment.

There are two significant issues with this approach. One is that many of the challenges that we face as educational leaders are knotty and require a deep analysis of the many factors contributing to the problem. Spending time on diagnosing the issue also requires that multiple stakeholders need to be included in the assessment so that all the major facets of the challenge can be understood.[6] Because administrators are often pressed for time, however, this deep dive into the diagnosis is often skipped or abbreviated. Hurrying through this stage also leads to minimizing the number of stakeholders who are involved in the initial conversations, and this is the second problem with rushing through the improvement process. By excluding the multiple perspectives that need to be examined with any complex challenge, leaders lessen the chances that commitment to interventions will be maximized. Without commitment of stakeholders, even the most effective interventions will have little impact.

In our book, *The Influential School Leader*, Dr. Craig Murphy and I recommend an antidote to this problem We suggest that educational leaders assemble a small but diverse group of stakeholders to study a challenge and spend considerable time not on solving the problem but on

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[5] Supovitz, Jonathan A. and D'Auria, John, "Leading Improvement in Challenging Times Guide" (2020). CPRE Workbooks. https://repository.upenn.edu/cpre_workbooks/2

[6] (D'Auria C. M., 2020)

trying to understand the many layers that contribute to the challenge. The group process we propose for this exploration requires a number of guidelines that raise the probability that the group will be able to address hard to discuss issues that often block a fuller understanding of the problem. A key step in this diagnostic deep dive is that participants must address a key question, "How might we be contributing to the problem?"[7] This is a critical step in order to achieve significant results. While problems like closing achievement gaps or addressing the lack of participation in programs across all student groups often have contributing factors outside the schoolhouse, these issues also have school-based factors that are within the purview of educators. Ignoring those factors lead to incomplete and often ineffective interventions.

One example of this process occurred at an elementary school that had a consistent track record of high achievement. Several years ago, a small group of students who struggled with self-regulation and as a result, exhibited at times disruptive behaviors, were part of an incoming kindergarten cohort. Each of the years following brought additional students with similar needs. Experienced teachers found the behaviors exhibited by some of these students to be difficult to address with their traditional approaches. When student behaviors escalated, the teacher would often send the student out of class and to the principal's office. The principal would provide a time out, call the parents, and then return the student back to the class either later in the day or the next morning. A number of the teachers found the student behaviors to be disruptive to regular teaching and upsetting to other students.

Tension grew among the faculty because many of the teachers felt that the needs of the students would be best addressed in a separate and specialized classroom rather than in a regular classroom. The principal and other central office administrators thought differently and believed that the students would be better served if they were included in regular classrooms with appropriate supports, as long as teachers learned different approaches to better meet the needs of the students. Friction in the school increased, and in an attempt to address this mounting challenge, the principal formed a diverse group of staff in the hopes of better understanding all the aspects of this tension-filled situation. Within the group were teachers who had different perspectives on the issue. Some agreed with administrators while others felt strongly that the student needs required a specialized setting.

The principal had set up the guidelines for the group to encourage and allow for honest conversations. In the initial meetings, the group discussed issues related to factors that they believed were contributing to the problem: poor parenting, lax enforcement of school rules, and inconsistency in the principal's handling of student behavior. The latter example, which was hard for the principal to hear, was also solid evidence that the encouragement to be open and honest in these discussions was working. By the third session, the principal asked the group to discuss how might the staff be contributing to the problem. While participants were expecting this question from the group's orientation, it was still met with silence. At the end of the meeting, the principal said that she planned to send out an anonymous survey to both gather feedback from the group as to how the group process was going, and to ask if people were

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[7] Argyris, C. "Good Communication That Blocks Learning." Harvard Business Review, July-August, 1994, pp. 78-85

willing to write a response to how the staff might be contributing to the problem. The principal indicated that she would share the results with everyone the next time the group met. At the succeeding session, the principal distributed the results, and one comment in particular caught everyone's attention. Someone had written that the way he had contributed to the problem was by how he responded to the child study team (CST).

The CST was designed to be a group of specialists who would assist teachers with complex student issues. The teacher who had written about CST in the survey stated that he had no faith in the CST's ability to truly provide help and guidance. When the principal asked the group to discuss this issue further, many agreed with the stated concerns about CST. One teacher spoke and shared that the CST had specialists in language arts and math but no one who had insights into challenging behaviors. Another person shared that when she attends a CST meeting, she ignores their advice because of her lack of confidence in their recommendations but goes to CST so that she can "check the box" in a process that would hopefully lead to the student being given a special education plan. This commentary about CST seemed to open up a number of ways that the staff themselves were contributing to the problem.

One other powerful example the group members raised of how the staff might be contributing to the problem focused on class placement. Typically, teachers of a particular grade would recommend the next year's teachers for their students, thus creating the classes for the succeeding year. In that process, educators would often avoid placing students with challenging behavioral needs with teachers who had a reputation of not being able to handle them. This approach often would lead to other classes having a higher number of challenging students. This unequal placement process engendered resentment and anger among the faculty. The committee, after much discussion, decided that the classroom placement process was contributing to the problem and thus needed to be reviewed. These examples demonstrate how important it is to focus on multiple layers of a problem and to be certain to include how the very people impacted by the problem often contribute in some way to its dynamics. Because the participants were engaged in the diagnosis of the problem, their commitment to transforming the CST and the classroom placement process was strong. Other faculty saw that deep commitment from their colleagues and it significantly influenced their own willingness to rethink their practice.

The role of social and emotional skills in adult learning

In the ideas described above, the interactions and conversations that occur as educators talk about nondiscussables, share their setbacks and mistakes, challenge the opinions of those with more authority at meetings, or discuss their own contributions to a problem produce many emotions. These are not easy tasks to navigate and when professionals engage in this hard work, fear, worry, anxiety, and apprehension are often in the mix. These are not comfortable feelings, but these emotions often emerge when important work is occurring, as participants approach the boundaries of changing the way things are. Managing the emotions in ourselves and detecting them in others so that one can acknowledge those emotions are key skills that are as vital for adults to demonstrate as they are for our students to develop. This is another example of the fractal nature of schools. The social and emotional curricula that schools have begun to integrate into the K-12 space are also helpful for the adult educators to learn. Feelings are data and as such provide important information and perspectives that often illuminate important dynamics

within learning. As a former math teacher, it would have been a mistake to ignore how students' fears about making mistakes or their nervousness about not understanding a math concept played a role in limiting their learning. Helping students detect and manage emotions is as important as any pedagogical strategy I could muster to bring clarity to the Pythagorean Theorem or any other concept I hoped they would learn.

Similarly, we are not going to be able to navigate the difficult terrain within our schools when we encounter issues related to equity or inclusion or other potentially divisive topics without skillfully managing our own emotions and responding to the emotions of others. Two key leadership skills emerge in this work: 1) Listening in stereo 2) Responding to criticism and wrong-sounding ideas with curiosity. *Listening in stereo* requires that in addition to understanding the ideas and perspectives that are communicated to us, we also need to be listening for the feelings that are attached to those thoughts. It is when we "hear" both the content and the underlying emotions that we receive the richest form of data. *Listening in stereo* also provides a conduit for leaders to build an empathetic bridge between their point of view and the perspective of others, particularly when there is a significant chasm between those positions. The empathetic bridge is built by acknowledging the feelings of the other person. Acknowledgement does not imply agreement with the point of view; it simply is a human connection that can be established between two people. The second key skill is *responding to either criticism or wrong-sounding ideas with curiosity.* Digging deeper into another's perspective often reveals information that illuminates aspects of the perspective that were hidden or unspoken. If one can demonstrates authentic curiosity, the genuine interest in someone else's thinking can provide a small relationship connection. If you can invest in that kind of listening and understanding, you will be able to offer to the other person the idea that you have a *different* perspective. Your original curiosity is often then mirrored in the other person, and you might be pleasantly surprised to hear, "Tell me more!".

When I have shared this skill set with leaders, I often use the analogy of a ping pong game as an image for this kind of conversation. In a typical conversation with someone who has a very different point of view, we tend to want to "win the match" by hitting the ball into places where the other person will struggle to return it. Conversationally, that usually means defending our perspectives and trying to win a debate point by outthinking the other person. Using curiosity and acknowledgment, we are not playing to win the match, but we are trying to increase the number of volleys we can have. We are attempting to hit the ball gently over the net and down the middle of the table in the hopes that the other person will hit it back to us. The more times we can "volley," we increase the probability that an oppositional set of statements can become a dialogue. While having a dialogue does not guarantee we will come to agreement, it raises the chances that we can find some common ground. Durable change in schools rarely occurs as a result of top-down executive orders or by the application of unilaterally developed policies. If we are going to create change that is lasting, and most importantly, change that the staff and parents will stand behind, we will have to navigate numerous difficult conversations. What makes conversations difficult, even more than the opposing points of view, are the emotions that are part of the beliefs and opinions that are expressed. Navigating emotions is a critical leadership skill that is required by anyone who wants to achieve lasting, transformational change.

<u>Conclusion</u>

The five big ideas outlined in this paper:

The fractal nature of schools
The importance of balancing accountability with psychological safety
Educators as scientists of learning
Deep investment in diagnosing the challenge area you want to see improvement in while not forgetting to inquire about how we are contributing to the problem, and
The role of social and emotional skills in adult learning

are not meant to be a detailed set of plans on how to transform a school culture. They are designed to be a set of beacons indicating where to head as leaders navigate the complexity and ambiguity of our current cultural contexts. Making meaning out of these ideas within one's own unique context will strengthen the conditions that support continuous professional learning and strengthen the capacity to adapt nimbly to the shifting needs of our students. The ultimate responsibility of school leaders is to craft and shape a culture that promotes effective responsiveness to the needs of our learners. Shaping culture is not traditionally taught in leadership prep programs nor is it often seen as a critical responsibility. The purpose of this essay is to highlight how leaders can and must influence the dynamics that either optimize or limit the pace and scope of learning.

MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT
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AMANDA S. DOYLE
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum

EVERETT V. OLSEN, Jr.
Interim Chief Educational Officer

MATTHEW D. SHEVENELL
Assistant Superintendent for Business

To: Laurie Rothhaus
Lori Peters
Jenna Hardy
Naomi Halter
Ken Martin

From: Everett V. Olsen, Jr.

Date: August 18, 2022

Subject: First Meeting in September

Our first meeting in September is scheduled for Tuesday, September 6th. On that date, neither the Matthew Thornton Room nor the Memorial Room are available at Town Hall.

We have two alternatives to consider for a meeting at Town Hall. On Wednesday, September 7th both the Matthew Thornton and Memorial Rooms are available. On Thursday, September 8th, only the Memorial Room is available. I will discuss this with you at our upcoming meeting so that we can select a date that works for you.

Merrimack School Board Special Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Memorial Room
July 25, 2022

6:00 p.m. – NON-PUBLIC SESSION IN ACCORDANCE WITH RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – MEMORIAL ROOM

1. **Staff Welfare**
2. **Legal**

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 Doyle, and Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen.

Not Present: Board Member Hardy – Excused
Student Representative Vadney - 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 comment.

3. RECOGNITIONS

There were none.

4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATE

a. Superintendent Update

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen welcomed Ms. Amanda Doyle as the new Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the enrollments looked particularly good and the class sizes were reasonable.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the student handbooks were finished being reviewed and rewritten by legal counsel and he would share them with the Board at a future meeting. He also said he had recently received a mock-up of the new "Crisis Management" flip chart and noted they would be distributed just prior to the beginning of the school year.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the two-day leadership retreat would be held the following week.

b. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said she and staff continued to work on the curriculum and would be conducting an audit of the instructional practices and would then look at assessments.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said multiple capital improvement projects were not yet complete due to the supply chain issue. He also said they continued to work with Honeywell on the unit ventilator project.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the playground at the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School was moving along as the site work had been completed and some of the equipment had already been installed. He also said the Thorntons Ferry roof project was also coming along nicely.

d. School Board Update

Chair Rothhaus said all five School Board members, Planning Board members, and Budget Committee members participated in the 4th of July parade.

Chair Rothhaus said a goals meeting was held between the School Board and the administration of the School District. She said it was a very intense meeting, but a lot of results came from it including establishing short-term & long-term goals, needed to move the district forward with its Vision of a Graduate, aligning goals with the district's strategic plan, and working together as a team.

Vice-Chair Peters said the goals for the next 12 to 24 months included:

1. To continue developing a culture of trust and respect.
2. Create multiple pathways to graduation that included robust course offerings, responsive programming and intervention, and an engaging learning experience for all students.
3. To improve learning outcomes by ensuring the instruction is responsive to the varied needs of the district's population.
4. To have facilities and equipment that are safe, secure, clean, healthy, current, and appropriate for meeting the educational needs of all students and staff.
5. To have up-to-date policies and practices with an ongoing review of existing policies to ensure they were compliant and in alignment with district practices.

Board Member Martin said the next steps included:

- School District staff will work together to develop action plans for accomplishing the goals and objectives over the next few months.
- The action plans will outline who would be responsible, how the goals and objectives would be met, and the timelines for said accomplishments.

Vice-Chair Peters said the Board was partnering with the administration and recognized they were working towards a Strategic Plan, and it was a community project in addition to being a School Board and administration project.

Board Member Halter said she felt it was an incredible meeting and was happy to have been a part of it.

e. Student Representative Update

There was no update.

5. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. High School Student Highlights

Mr. Stephen Claire, Principal, Merrimack High School addressed the Board and said he had hoped to introduce Ms. Jill Hanlon, the new Assistant Principal, but she could not attend the meeting. Mr. Richard Zampieri, Assistant Principal, was also present.

Mr. Claire reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted students' projects and achievements in social studies, art, science, English, math, technical education, world language, health & physical education, business, music, videography, Students for Student Advocacy, First Robotics, Quiz Bowl & Granite State Challenge, theater, Senior Service Day, Field Day.

b. High School NEASC Visit Summary

Mr. Claire reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that described the initial observations of the team who visited the high school:

- The visit took place from May 16th through May 18th.
- They review the high school's NEASC documents: teacher evidence, NEASC survey results, and decennial summary report.
- The visiting team summarized their findings to the Steering Committee, and the staff, framing their comment in terms of conceptual understanding, commitment to growth, competency, and capacity.

Priority Area 1: Vision of a Graduate (Meets Standard)

- The Vision of a Graduate was so new that teachers and students were not acquainted with it yet.
- Need to continue to engage staff and students to adopt the Vision of a Graduate.
- Develop tools to measure students' progress toward meeting their Vision of a Graduate.
- Roll out the Vision of a Graduate to families and engage the community.

Priority Area 2: Developing a School Growth Plan (Meets Standard)

- The growth plan was laid out well and provided a good foundation.
- The plan continues with UDL (Universal Design for Learning)
- The team was very complimentary of the Torchbearer mentor program.

- The team was impressed by the collaborative relationship between department heads and building administration.
- One area of concern was whether the school had the capacity in terms of collaborative time to implement the plan.

Priority Area 3: Curriculum (Did not Meet Standard)

- The team was pleased to hear that the curriculum work involved teachers K-12 and pulled district initiatives together.
- They liked that they had EduPlanet to help get the curricula into a consistent format.
- They were hopeful that EduPlanet would help improve consistency in instruction and assessment.
- The team repeatedly stressed the need for staff professional development and collaboration time to do the work.

Priority Area 4: Social & Emotional Learning (Meets Standard)

- The team praised our many opportunities for students to access services.
- They highlighted the Student Support Team referral process.
- They noted that students have positive relationships with staff members.
- Students voiced concerns about student and staff mental health.

Priority Area 5: Technology (Meets Standard)

- The team found that everyone could access the wi-fi, but coverage was not even throughout the building.
- They had concerns about issues with pairing Microsoft tools with Google Chromebooks for student use.
- The team was concerned about possible inequity in students' access to software at home.
- They recommended continuing to support professional development around technology.

Mr. Claire said they would not receive the final report until it was approved by the Commissioner and once received, he would report back to the Board.

Vice-Chair Peters asked how Mr. Claire planned to address the item that stated: "The team repeatedly stressed the need for staff professional development and collaboration time to do the work." Mr. Claire replied he would like to address it at the August academy, and he hoped to know what their professional development plan would be for the year. He said one of the things he would like to reimplement was collaboration days which were put on hold because of COVID-19.

Chair Rothhaus commented that she felt they should talk about adding funds to the next budget to allow for teachers to get some of the work done after school hours because there was too much work to get it done during the time dedicated to professional development.

c. Visioning Task Force

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said the Visioning Taskforce began in December of 2021 and a committee was formed in February of 2022 and that group met once or twice per month. She added in June the group broke into two short-term committees, one was looking at the drafting language of the Vision of a Learner, and the other group was the Visuals team who was working with Cookson Communications. She said the group would meet all together again on August 19th and she would update the Board after that meeting.

d. Discussion of Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen's Performance

Vice-Chair Peters commented that Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen's self-reflection and self-evaluation were available on the website, and it had been presented to the School Board as well. She said the Board would finalize their report for the public record in August. She added the Board was very pleased with his reflection report and his performance.

Chair Rothhaus added some highlights of the Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen's report including:

- He empowered leadership throughout the district.
- He builds trust.
- He is visible.
- He is reliable and caring.

Chair Rothhaus said she felt the district valued Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen's work.

e. Request for a Secondary Student Support Interventionist Position at Merrimack High School

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen explained that during the fiscal 2023 budget process there was conversation surrounding the importance of social & emotional learning, and being able to provide services and, if necessary, to staff regarding mental health issues, and crisis that may arise. He said there was money in the Contracted Services Account, and he said he was requesting that a certain amount of money be transferred from the Contracted Services Account to the Salaries Account to hire a Student Support Interventionist at the Merrimack High School.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen added that the qualifications of the position would be upgraded to ensure it was reflective of the actual nature of the work.

MOTION: Board Member Halter made a motion to transfer monies from the Contracted Services Account into the Salaries Account to hire a Secondary Student Support Interventionist at the Merrimack High School. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.

f. Student Enrollment Update

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen commented that he was very happy with the student-to-teacher ratio. He noted there might be more registrations in the month of August which was typical.

g. Other

Chair Rothhaus requested a meeting between the School Board and the Budget Committee to discuss associated costs regarding school safety and to discuss issues raised during the goals meeting.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. June 6, 2022 – Public Meetings

MOTION: Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 6, 2022, meeting, as presented. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

The motion passed 3 – 0 – 1. (Abstained – Board Member Martin)

b. June 20, 2022 – Public and Non-Public Meetings

MOTION: Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2022, public and non-public meetings, as presented. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.

8. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND GRANTS UNDER $5,000

a. Merrimack Lions Club to Merrimack High School for $1,000.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the Lion's Club gave a gift to the Merrimack High School on a yearly basis and he thanked them very much for their support. He further said this year the gift would be awarded to Mr. Michael Valinski, Technology Education Teacher for the upgrade and purchase of safety sets for the welding classroom and automotive shop.

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to accept the gift from the Lion's Club in the amount of $1,000, with the School Board's sincere appreciation. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.

9. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Educator Resignations

- Ms. Nichole Iacuzio O'Brien, Assistant Principal, Merrimack Middle School

b. Educator Nominations

- Ms. Lori Vigeant, Preschool Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
- Ms. Jessica Provencher, Physical Education Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- Ms. Beatrice Choiniere, Math Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- Ms. Brianna Durand, Language Arts Coordinator

- Mr. Lindsey Tuttle, Music Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- Ms. Maryam Doskocil, Grade 6 Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
- Ms. Meagan Everitt, Special Education Teacher, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School.

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

The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.

10. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

There were no Committee Reports to share.

b. Correspondence

Chair Rothhaus said she received a piece of correspondence from a woman who worked with UNH (University of New Hampshire) on EPECS (Education Performance and Evaluation Committee) and wanted the Board to know that she was very impressed with the discussion surrounding the Student Discipline Policy.

Vice-Chair Peters commented that she received one piece of follow-up correspondence reiterating a concern surrounding athletics at the high school.

c. Comments

Vice-Chair Peters commented that she enjoyed collaborating with the School Board members as well as with the administration.

Board Member Martin commented that he agreed with Vice-Chair Peter's comment.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were no public comments.

12. ADJOURN

MOTION: At approximately 8:06 p.m. Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

The motion passed 4 – 0 – 0.