

Merrimack School District/SAU 26
School Board Meeting
Preliminary Agenda
September 7, 2021 (Tuesday)
Merrimack Town Hall – Memorial Room

PUBLIC MEETING

7:00 p.m. **1. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

7:05 p.m. **2. RECOGNITIONS**

1. Ryan Carlson's Eagle Scout Project
2. Louis Normandin's Years of Service

Kimberly Yarlott
Matthew Shevenell

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

7:30 p.m. **4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES**

1. Superintendent Update
2. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update
3. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update
4. School Board Update
5. Student Representative Update

7:40 p.m. **5. OLD BUSINESS**

1. Rescind Motion from August 23, 2021 Meeting
2. Health and Safety Task Force Update

Cinda Guagliumi
Everett Olsen

8:00 p.m. **6. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Welcome Back Student Representative Kaitlyn Vadney
2. Update to the Use of Masks by Students and Staff Policy (EBCVM)
3. Student Enrollment Update
4. Review of September 2, 2021 Professional Development Program

Cinda Guagliumi
Everett Olsen
Everett Olsen
Kimberly Yarlott

8:45 p.m. **7. APPROVAL REQUESTS**

1. August 23, 2021 Minutes
2. August 26, 2021 Non-Public Minutes
3. June 2, 2021 Non-Public Minutes
4. June 9, 2021 Non-Public Minutes
5. Educator/Administrator Nominations
6. Approval of the Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and Grievance Process

Cinda Guagliumi
Cinda Guagliumi
Cinda Guagliumi
Cinda Guagliumi
Kimberly Yarlott
Cinda Guagliumi

9:00 p.m. **8. OTHER**

1. Committee Reports
2. Correspondence
3. Comments

9:10 p.m. **9. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

9:30 p.m. **10. ADJOURN**

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

MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Administrative Unit #26
36 McElwain Street
Merrimack, New Hampshire 03054
Tel. (603) 424-6200 Fax (603) 424-6229

KIMBERLY YARLOTT
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum

EVERETT V. OLSEN, Jr.
Interim Chief Educational Officer

MATTHEW D. SHEVENELL
Assistant Superintendent for Business

To: Cinda Guagliumi
Laurie Rothhaus
Shannon Barnes

Jenna Hardy
Lori Peters
Kaitlyn Vadney

From: Everett V. Olsen, Jr.

Date: September 3, 2021

Subject: Merrimack COVID Data and Opt-Out Numbers

I am providing data to you on the COVID Metrics that are from the NHDPHS database and our current mask opt-out numbers, as of September 3rd. I continue to be concerned about the increasing number of new cases per 100K population and the test positivity rate.

One issue that I did not address at our last meeting which I believe deserves discussion is the matter of students who opt-out but have been identified as a close household contact. Specifically I believe that we should require students (who have opted out) to wear a mask at all times in our schools (indoors) if they have been identified as a close contact to a family member (in the home) who has tested positive for COVID-19. It is my recommendation that this also applies to a student who has been identified as a close contact to someone in the community who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Thank you for your consideration of my updated masking recommendation.

Number of Students Opting-Out of Masking

SCHOOL	9/1/2021	9/2/2021	9/3/2021
MHS	117	127	134
MMS	47	53	58
MUES	43	47	57
MES	35	44	46
RFS	29	31	33
TFS	43	49	55
TOTAL	314	351	383

Case data								
Active Cases	18	30	31	30	26	28	28	39
New Cases (last 14 days)	26							
Rate New Infections (per 100k)		162	174	174	151	151	174	186
Antigen+PCR Test Positivity Rate (last 7 days)								
Vaccination Data								
% of Individuals Fully Vaccinated	56.50%	56.60%	56.70%	56.70%	56.70%	56.80%	56.80%	56.80%
% of Individuals with at least 1 dose		61.80%	61.90%	62.00%	62.10%	62.10%	62.20%	62.20%
% of Merrimack residents ages 12-19 fully vaccinated	36.90%	36.90%	36.90%	37.10%	37.20%	37.20%	37.20%	37.20%
Hillsborough County COVID-19 Data								
Date	8/5/2021	8/12/2021	8/16/2021	8/17/2021	8/18/2021	8/19/2021	8/20/2021	8/23/2021
COVID-19 Case data								
Active Cases	252	371	250	263	257	265	289	302
New Cases (last 14 days)								
New Infections (per 100k)	77.4	145	181.7	192.4	194.7	186.8	188	204
Antigen+PCR Test Positivity Rate (last 7 days)	4.30%							
COVID-19 Vaccination Data								
% of Individuals Fully Vaccinated			49.70%	49.80%	49.80%	49.80%	49.90%	49.90%
% of Individuals with at least 1 dose			54.30%	54.30%	54.40%	54.50%	54.60%	54.60%
% of Hillsborough residents ages 12-19 fully vaccinated			35%	35.10%	35.10%	35.10%	35.10%	35.10%
State of New Hampshire COVID-19 Data								
Date	8/5/2021	8/12/2021	8/16/2021	8/17/2021	8/18/2021	8/19/2021	8/20/2021	8/23/2021
COVID-19 Case data								
Active Cases	893	1,305		1,844	1,910	2,058	2,191	2,324
New Cases (by day)						299	337	174
New Infections (per 100k)				228	243	242	252	281
Antigen+PCR Test Positivity Rate (last 7 days)	3.90%	4.50%		5.60%	5.80%	5.90%	6.00%	5.80%
COVID-19 Vaccination Data								
% of Individuals Fully Vaccinated	53.70%	53.80%	53.90%	53.80%	53.90%	53.90%	53.90%	54.00%

8/24/2021	8/25/2021	8/26/2021	8/27/2021	8/30/2021	8/31/2021	9/1/2021	9/2/2021	9/3/2021				
37	42	57	70	72	66							
208	219	257	314	332	355							
56.80%	56.80%	56.90%	56.90%	57%	57%							
62.20%	62.20%	62.20%	62.30%	62.30%	62.40%							
37.20%	37.30%	37.30%	37.30%	37.30%	37.30%							
8/24/2021	8/25/2021	8/26/2021	8/27/2021	8/30/2021	8/31/2021	9/1/2021	9/2/2021	9/3/2021				
297	323	373	418	424	423							
210	225	234	266	270	277							
49.90%	49.90%	49.90%	50.00%	50.00%	50.00%							
54.70%	54.70%	54.70%	54.70%	54.70%	54.70%							
35.10%	35.20%	35.20%	35.20%	35.20%	35.20%							
8/24/2021	8/25/2021	8/26/2021	8/27/2021	8/30/2021	8/31/2021	9/1/2021	9/2/2021	9/3/2021				
2,377	2,524	2,786	2,927	2,864								
280	329	356	384	218								
281	282	303	336	326								
6.10%	6.00%	5.90%	5.40%	5.80%								
54.00%	54.00%	54.00%	54.00%	54.00%								

USE OF MASKS BY STUDENTS AND STAFF POLICY**General Requirements**

All staff shall wear medical masks or cloth face coverings at all times when in school buildings and District offices at all times during the school day.

Classes shall be configured so that when possible, educators may be able to have a socially distanced location in the room for general instruction.

All visitors on campus shall be required to wear a mask upon entry to any school building and will be required to wear their mask at all times throughout their stay in any school building or District office.

No person, including a student, shall be required to wear a mask if their disability or a medical condition prevents them from doing such. In such cases, documentation of the disability or medical condition will be required and in such cases, alternative precautions will be sought in order to achieve the same or similar safety benefits.

Staff (including contracted service providers) who work with deaf students or hard of hearing students, students learning to read, and students who rely on lip reading shall wear clear masks or visors/clear face shields which enhance service provision.

The District shall endeavor to maintain a supply of masks for students and staff who do not have access to a mask or cloth face covering.

New Hampshire State Department of Health and Human Service guidelines on masks and cloth face coverings shall be made available to all staff. Masks shall not be required during outdoor recess, outdoor physical education and designated mask breaks provided social distancing is in place.

Pre-Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade

- All students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade shall be required to wear a mask or face covering at all times and in all locations throughout the designated school day except during designated mask breaks. This includes when on a school bus or other student transportation; when entering or exiting a school building or District office; when in corridors for any reason or transitioning from class to class; and in such other settings and environments as the District deems appropriate based on evolving data.

USE OF MASKS BY STUDENTS AND STAFF POLICY (continued)

Any student who is deemed by school staff to present a risk of contagion or a health hazard to themselves or others by virtue of not wearing a mask shall be removed from the classroom setting or not permitted to enter the classroom setting and the parents shall be required to pick up their child. See NH RSA 200:39.

Any student in the circumstances listed above who is not wearing a mask shall be asked to wear a mask. Any student who is not wearing a mask or is wearing a mask in an improper fashion shall be asked to don a mask or to wear their mask properly, which is, safely covering both mouth and nose. Any student who refuses to do such shall be deemed a health hazard to themselves and others, shall be removed from the school building, their parent/guardian shall be contacted and required to take their child unless and until such time as they are willing to comply with the face mask or cloth covering requirement. See NH RSA 200:39.

Duration

This policy will be enacted in cases of wide-spread health concerns as defined by New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. It will remain in place until the warning is lifted, or the Board determines that there is no longer a substantial risk that unmasked persons will present a hazard to themselves or others in the school setting, whichever event is the latter. The Board shall review this policy regularly to determine whether it remains appropriate.

Legal References

NH RSA 194:3, VIII, Powers of Districts, available at:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/XV/194/194-3.htm>

NH RSA 194-C:4, II(j), Superintendent Services, available at:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/XV/194-C/194-C-4.htm>

NH RSA 200:39, Exclusion from School, available at:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/XV/200/200-39.htm>

Emergency Order #2020-04_, available at:

<https://www.governor.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt336/files/documents/2020-04.pdf>

Emergency Order #2020- 15, available at:

<https://www.governor.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt336/files/documents/executive-order-2020-5.pdf>

1st Reading: July 28, 2020

2nd Review: August 10, 2020

3rd Review: August 19, 2020

Approved: August 19, 2020

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KIMBERLY YARLOTT
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum

EVERETT V. OLSEN, Jr.
Interim Chief Educational Officer

MATTHEW D. SHEVENELL
Assistant Superintendent for Business

To: Cinda Guagliumi
Laurie Rothhaus
Shannon Barnes

Jenna Hardy
Lori Peters
Kaitlyn Vadney

From: Everett V. Olsen Jr.

Date: September 2, 2021

Subject: Elementary Enrollment Update

I am pleased to present our updated elementary enrollment as of September 1, 2021. Our student/teacher ratio in all grades and elementary schools is excellent and represents a very important ability for our teachers to connect and know our students.

At a recent meeting you approved my recommendation to hire one additional teacher for grade 6 at James Masticola Upper Elementary School. Sixth grade is a critical year for students as they prepare for their transition between elementary school and middle school. Please know how much I appreciate your approval of this additional staff member and your continued support for educationally sound class sizes at all grade levels.

Merrimack School District
K-6 Enrollments
As of September 1, 2021 (subject to change)

Mastricola Elementary School

Grade	Classrooms	Students per Classroom	Total Students
K	5	14, 16, 15, 15, 15	75
1	4	20, 19, 18, 19	76
2	4	20, 20, 22, 19	81
3	4	21, 21, 19, 22	83
4	3	23, 24, 24	71
			Total 386

Reeds Ferry Elementary School

Grade	Classrooms	Students per Classroom	Total Students
K	5	17, 17, 17, 17, 16	84
1	5	15, 15, 15, 15, 15	75
2	5	16, 16, 15, 16, 15	78
3	5	19, 17, 18, 21, 20	95
4	4	22, 21, 21, 21	85
			Total 417

Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

Grade	Classrooms	Students per Classroom	Total Students
K	5	19, 18, 19, 19, 19	94
1	6	16, 16, 16, 16, 16, 16	96
2	6	18, 17, 17, 17, 18, 18	105
3	4	21, 22, 21, 22	86
3/4 Multi-Age	2	21, 21	42
4	3	23, 23, 23	69
			Total 492

Note: 5 additional students still need to be placed at TFS.

Mastricola Upper Elementary School

Grade	Classrooms	Students per Classroom	Total Students
5	11	22, 22, 23, 22, 22, 23, 24, 22, 21, 23, 22	246
6	12	23, 23, 23, 22, 23, 23, 23 21, 22, 22, 23, 22	270
			Total 516

Note: 2 additional students still need to be placed at JMUES.

**Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
August 23, 2021**

Present: Vice Chair Rothhaus, and Board Member Barnes. Also present were Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Yarlott, and Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen.

Vice Chair Rothhaus stated that Chair Guagliumi would participate via telephone pursuant to RSA 91-A:3 which stated that all parties must be able to hear, speak to each other, the meeting should be audible to the public, all persons present must be identified, and votes must be taken by a roll call vote.

Vice Chair Rothhaus asked Chair Guagliumi why her attendance was not reasonable or practicable. Chair Guagliumi replied she was in Holland, MI, was unable to attend in person and stated she was alone.

1. Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance

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

2. Public Participation

Ms. Laura Czerlonka, 17 Pilgrim Avenue, addressed the Board and stated she was very much in favor of the students and teachers wearing masks and may not send her children to school if it were decided the students did not have to wear masks.

Ms. Rebecca Wurst, 12 Cramer Hill Road, addressed the Board and said she was not in favor of the students wearing masks.

Ms. Jennifer Monroy, 40 Lampson Drive, a registered nurse in pediatrics said she had seen children getting very sick from COVID. She said she felt it was extremely important for students to wear masks.

Ms. Lindsay Thibeault, a parent, addressed the Board and said she was not in favor of the students wearing masks and felt it should be left up to the parents to decide.

Ms. Nicole Page, 74 Cota Road, addressed the Board and said she was not in favor of community or student masking.

Ms. Shayna Debork, 89 Belmont Drive, addressed the Board and said she strongly felt that the use of masks should be up to the individual parent.

Ms. Taryn Swenson, 38 Marty Drive, addressed the Board and said she was not in favor of the students wearing masks.

Mr. Joe D'Agostino, 7 Timber Lane, addressed the Board and said he was not in favor of the students wearing masks.

51
52 Mr. Evan Fulmer, 5A Woodbury Street, addressed the Board and said he was very much in favor
53 of the use of masks.

54
55 Ms. Natalie Reyes-Silverman, London Court, addressed the Board and said she was in favor of
56 masks being optional.

57
58 Ms. Samantha Beebe, 81 Wire Road, addressed the Board and said she was not in favor of
59 students wearing masks.

60
61 Ms. Erin Pagan, 33 Mallard Point, addressed the Board and stated she felt the use of masks
62 should be up to the individual.

63
64 Ms. Amanda Gendron, 9 Railroad Avenue, addressed the Board and said she did not feel it was
65 right to lump the children's risk factors with the adult risk factors.

66
67 Ms. Michele Caracatos, 25 Swift Lane, addressed the Board and said she felt the issue of masks
68 should be up to the parents.

69
70 Mr. (inaudible), Amherst Road, addressed the Board and said he was not in favor of the students
71 wearing masks and strongly felt the decision should be up to the parents.

72
73 Mr. Charles Day, 2 Chadsworth Court, addressed the Board and said he was not in favor of
74 mandating masks and if that were to be the case he would not send his children to the Merrimack
75 School District.

76
77 Mr. Gary Barton, 38 McQuestion Road, addressed the Board and said he was not in favor of the
78 use of masks.

79
80 Mr. David Hunt, 6 Maryann Lane, addressed the Board and said he was not in favor of the use of
81 masks.

82
83 Mr. Robert Reisman, 8 Iris Drive, addressed the Board and said he was in favor of the mask
84 mandate.

85
86 Ms. Tiffany Castellucci-Trant, 419 South Baboosic Lake Road, addressed the Board and said she
87 was not in favor of the mask mandate.

88
89 Ms. Sarah Lach, 51 Cota Road, addressed the Board and said she was in favor of the mask
90 mandate.

91
92 Ms. Heather Robitalle, 45 Springfield Circle, addressed the Board and said it was a public health
93 issue and felt it was important for the students to wear masks.

94
95 Ms. Joyce Allen, 52 Hansom Drive, addressed the Board and said she was not in favor of the
96 students wearing masks.

97
98 Ms. Kathy (inaudible), Belmont Drive, addressed the Board and said she felt the decision should
99 be left up to the families.

100
101 Ms. Maureen MacGregor, 3 Harwich Court, addressed the Board and said she was in favor of the
102 students wearing masks.

Mr. Brian Stisser, 50 Middlesex Road, addressed the Board and said he was in favor of the students wearing masks.

Mr. Scot Hardy, Peaslee Road, addressed the Board and said it was his hope that the Board would make a thoughtful decision for the benefit of all of the students.

Chloe, a student addressed the Board and said she was just happy to go back to school and was not so concerned with wearing a mask or not.

Ms. Erin Alukonis, 6 Mulikin Road, addressed the Board and said she felt the use of masks should be the parent's decision.

Dr. Jennifer Page, 3 Nichols Lane, addressed the Board and spoke in favor of wearing masks.

Ms. Nancy Murphy, Brenda Lane, addressed the Board and spoke in favor of the students wearing masks.

Mr. Josh Locke, 11 Peter Road, addressed the Board and said he was not in favor of wearing masks.

Ms. Heather Callahan, 5 King Henry Court, addressed the Board and stated she was not in favor of the students wearing masks and would remove her children from the Merrimack School District if a mandate were opposed until such a time when masks were optional.

Mr. Chad Laurie, Bean Road, addressed the Board and said he was not in favor of the use of masks.

Mr. Bill Pfingston, 17 Jessica Drive, addressed the Board and said he was not in favor of the students wearing masks and felt very strongly that the decision should be left up to the parents.

3. Recognitions

There were no recognitions.

4. Informational Updates

a. Superintendent Update

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen thanked all those who participated in public comment.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen commented that there would be an additional back-to-school immunization clinic that would take place on Wednesday, September 1, 2021, at Merrimack High School from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Yarlott pointed out the first day back to school for teachers would be on September 1st and on September 2nd two keynote speakers would provide presentations regarding resiliency in children. She said on the third day the professional staff would have training on Canvas, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), and social-emotional learning.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

There was no update.

d. School Board Update

There were no School Board updates.

e. Student Representative Update

Vice Chair Rothhaus said the School Board's student representative would join the meetings in September.

5. Old Business

a. Health and Safety Task Force Update

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated he knew the issue of masks would be a contentious issue and of all of the mitigation strategies, the issue of masking had been the most contentious. He said he tried to make a recommendation that represented, in his view, the best decision that would keep the children and staff safe.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the previous year was a horrific one for everyone. He said he had many conversations with pediatricians who had repeatedly informed him that they were not seeing the transmission of COVID because of the use of masks. He said it was extremely important for students to be in school, connect with their teachers and peers and noted the isolation that occurred when the schools were closed caused them much anxiety and depression.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics had repeatedly indicated the importance of students being back to in-person learning and the ultimate goal was to have all children back in school. He added administration had consulted with the Merrimack Public Health Officer, with the New Hampshire Division of Health and Human Services data, participated in multiple calls with other Superintendents and school administrators across the state. He said he had also spoken with some local pediatricians regarding what they were observing and was listening to what the community had to say.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen explained that he based a lot of his decisions on the recommendations of the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. He acknowledged the fact that the CDC changed its recommendations so frequently did not help the situation. He said he based his decisions on what was specifically happening in New Hampshire and the data that applied to Merrimack.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said in his opinion the vaccination needed to be higher than what it currently was, which was approximately 57%, to be able to say no masks or optional masks required. He said most schools in the country, including the Merrimack School District, were not able to accommodate the 3' or 6' of social distancing.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said experts had stated that an increase in vaccinations would help them address the issue of masking which had become so contentious. He said his

responsibility was to represent the best interest of the children from an educational standpoint but his responsibility as the leader of the District was to protect the children and the staff whether it be from an intruder or a health issue. He said while the strains of the virus continued, and until such time as the medical professionals knew more about how to deal with them and eventually live with them year to year, much like influenza, he had to do what he believed to be the right thing to do to try to protect the 5,000 people who congregated every single day when they were in school.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the cases of the Delta variant were on the rise and the recommendation of the medical community was to wear masks. He reviewed three options:

1. Everyone to be masked to start the school year and take it a month at a time which was Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen's recommendation.
2. Optional masking could result in the increase of the spread of the virus and quarantining.
3. No masking which could result in the rapid spread of the virus and could close schools, go fully remote, and end up with everyone having to wear masks.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen explained it was his job to protect all students and staff and pointed out a child who was not masked could transmit the virus to another group of students or a staff member. He said per the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services Merrimack was in a "substantial transmission" category and, therefore, universal masking was recommended while indoor for all students, staff, and visitors. He stated he would rely on the data provided and would not make up his own metrics. *The next review of the data would be at the end of September.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen reiterated his recommendation was for the use of masks through the end of September and then review the data again. He said he would rather err on the side of caution and added he would have weekly meetings with the health officer and weekly updates would be provided on the District's website.

Comments from School Board Members

Board Member Peters commented that she felt one of the problems on both sides of the issue of masks was that the experts did not agree. She said the World Health Organization and the CDC did not recommend the same information. She also said that adult vaccination was the best way to protect the children.

Board Member Peters suggested that a safe middle ground could be found by allowing students to remove their masks while seated at their desks but require them to be masked in the hallways.

Board Member Barnes commented she appreciated everyone's testimony but encouraged people to please allow other speakers to finish their comments without interruptions in the future.

Board Member Barnes suggested that the School Board could initiate a policy mandating masks but that like many other policies, parents could sign a document for their child to opt-out.

Board Member Hardy commented that she felt the most important thing was to keep the students in school. She further commented that she felt everyone would be upset if they did not enforce

250 masks and then the District had to go fully remote. She said she was in support of Interim Chief
251 Educational Officer Olsen's recommendation and proceed with caution with the stipulation that
252 the situation be revisited monthly.

253
254 Chair Guagliumi commented she too supported the Superintendent's proposal and felt it was most
255 important to keep students in school and not wanting to risk having to go remote or serious
256 quarantine right out of the gate. She said for that reason she supported having masks on a short-
257 term basis.

258
259 Board Member Barnes stated she felt masks should be mandated on busses. Interim Chief
260 Educational Officer Olsen replied masks on busses was CDC mandate.

261
262 Vice Chair Rothhaus said she was in favor of having the students wear masks in areas where
263 social distancing was not possible but that students should be able to remove their masks while
264 seated at their desks. She also said she would support parents having the final decision.

265
266 Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the proposal for wearing masks for indoors only and
267 noted it would include mask breaks. He also said he did not see a difference between allowing a
268 parent to "opt-out" and making the use of masks "optional." He said he would prefer not to rely
269 on what other Districts decided to do as it may not be a good decision for Merrimack and felt it
270 was important for the School Board to make a decision so that parents, students, and staff could
271 be informed.

272
273 Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said he was concerned with students not wearing masks
274 at their desks because if they coughed or sneezed it could affect up to three other students. Board
275 Member Peters said the District had zero in school transmission (secondary school) over the past
276 nine months.

277
278 **MOTION:** Board Member Barnes made a motion to accept the proposed plan to mandate
279 masking under the conditions outlined with a parental option for opting out. Board Member Peters
280 seconded the motion.

281
282 **Discussion:**

283
284 Board Member Barnes said she felt her motion was appropriate and it would ensure inclusivity
285 and did not want to create a cultural divide. She added, however, if schools became a source of
286 transmission the Board would certainly review the policy.

287
288 Board Member Hardy said she agreed that an opt-out option was the same thing as masks being
289 optional and that was somewhat risky. She also said she felt it would create an "us" versus "them"
290 type of situation.

291
292 Board Member Peters pointed out that the opt-out option put the onus on the parent and not the
293 child.

294
295 Board Member Hardy noted that the mask optional approach would place an additional
296 responsibility on teachers to enforce it.

297
298 Vice Chair Rothhaus called the question.

299
300 **The motion passed 3 – 1 – 0 by a roll call vote. (Nay – Board Member Hardy)**
301

Recorder's Note: Chair Guagliumi did not vote as there was a technical problem with her telephone connection.

Chair Guagliumi returned to the meeting via telephone.

MOTION: Chair Guagliumi made a motion that masks should be worn by all students when social distancing was not possible (in hallways while transitioning to classes) but once seated in their classrooms to be able to remove their masks if their parents signed a document for them to opt-out and to be reviewed after one month. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen asked if the intent of the motion was with regard to an opt-out situation. Board Member Peters replied even students who opted out would have to wear a mask while transitioning to other classes.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell pointed out that there was a number of public attendees who had just left the room who were under the impression that they could opt-out and their child would not have to wear a mask all day and the motion on the table stated otherwise.

The motion passed 4 – 1 – 0 by a roll call vote. (Nay – Vice Chair Rothhaus)

b. Second Review of Title IX Sexual Harassment Policy and Grievance Process

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen explained there was nothing to add with regard to the policy and it could be passed at the next School Board meeting.

6. New Business

a. Reopening Schools Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen explained that Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Yarlott along with the Health and Safety Task Force was working on a list of frequently asked questions regarding the reopening of schools and would be posted as part of the task force updates on the website in a short period of time.

b. September School Board Meeting Date

Vice Chair Rothhaus suggested a next meeting date of Tuesday, September 7th. The Board collectively agreed upon the date.

c. Request for One Additional Sixth Grade Teaching Position

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the grade 6 class at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School had additional students enroll and requested the Board's approval to hire an additional teacher. He said the District could readily pay for the cost and it was the best decision to make from an educational standpoint.

MOTION: Board Member Peters made a motion to approve the hiring of an additional grade 6 teacher at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School and to waive the two-week rule. Board Member Barnes seconded the motion.

The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0 by a roll call vote.

350 **7. Approval Requests**

351
352 a. August 9, 2021, Public and Non-Public Minutes

353 **MOTION:** Board Member Barnes made a motion to approve the public and non-public minutes
354 from the August 9, 2021, meetings as presented. Board Member Peters seconded the motion.
355

356 **The motion passed 4 – 0 – 1 by a roll call vote. (Abstained – Board Member Hardy)**
357

358 b. June 29, 2021, Non-Public Minutes

359 **MOTION:** Board Member Barnes made a motion to approve the non-public minutes from the
360 June 29, 2021, meeting as presented. Board Member Peters seconded the motion.
361

362 **The motion passed 4 – 0 – 1 by a roll call vote. (Abstained – Board Member Hardy)**
363

364 c. Educator/Administrator Nominations
365

- 366
 - Ms. Breanna Goodrich-Bundy, English Teacher, Merrimack High School
 - 367 • Ms. Lindsay Belmont, Special Education Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
 - 368 • Ms. Clarissa McHale, World Language Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
 - 369 • Ms. Teresa Perron, Preschool Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
 - 370 • Ms. Leah Sutherland, School Counselor, Merrimack High School
 - 371 • Ms. Brielle Lapiana, School Counselor, Merrimack High School
 - 372 • Ms. Laura Livie, Assistant Principal, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
373

374 **MOTION:** Board Member Barnes made a motion to approve the educator/administrator
375 nominations as presented. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.
376

377 **The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0 by a roll call vote.**
378

379 **8. Other**

380 a. Committee Reports
381

382 There were no committee reports to share.
383

384 b. Correspondence

385 Board Member Barnes stated she received an email from a constituent who indicated they would
386 support whatever the decision the School Board made; however they would like to see an effort
387 made to have all students have their temperature checked.
388

389 Vice Chair Rothhaus stated she received correspondence from a teacher who wanted the use of
390 masks to be optional for special education students; especially students who were hearing
391 impaired.
392

393 Board Member Hardy stated she received correspondence from two people which were both
394 regarding the use of masks debate.
395

Board Member Peters stated she received correspondence regarding a student who was hearing impaired and stated the importance of being able to see the mouths of her teacher and fellow students in her classroom.

Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen noted the District would make special accommodations for those students with certain disabilities.

Chair Guagliumi commented every parent should feel free to reach out to the administration at each building.

c. Comments

Board Member Barnes reminded everyone that there were water filtration systems in every school in the District and the water was PFOA (Perfluorooctanic acid) free.

9. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Mr. Brian Trant, 419 South Baboosic Lake Road, addressed the Board and said he thought the motion made by the Board was that masks were optional. Board Member Barnes explained that was the original motion but that Chair Guagliumi's phone connection had dropped and when she was able to connect back to the meeting she made a motion to have a mask mandate with an opt-out option for parents.

Mr. Kevin Folner, 5A Woodbury Street, addressed the Board and said he felt the School District should provide teachers with see-through masks. Interim Chief Educational Officer Olsen replied the District had provided certain staff members with clear masks.

Ms. Jen Motyl, 27 Ellie Drive, addressed the Board and said she was impressed with the School Board and administrators and how they handled the meeting respectfully.

Ms. Rebecca Wurst, 12 Cramer Hill Road, addressed the Board and suggested that the Board reach out to a Senior Industrial Hygienist, who were masks experts, prior to the next meeting.

Mr. Larry Metaxotos, 38 Brek Drive, addressed the Board and suggested that the Board require an "opt in" to wear a mask as opposed to an "opt-out" not to wear a mask.

Ms. Sandra Metaxotos, 38 Brek Drive, addressed the Board and asked who the opt-out requests should be sent to.

Ms. Sandra Peterson, 21 Carriage Lane, addressed the Board and said she did not agree with the opt-out option and it put a lot of responsibility on teachers and it would become more confusing if there was a substitute.

Mr. Finlay Rotthaus, 14 Kitteridge Lane, addressed the Board and said he did not think Board Members of any Board should be able to call into meetings because it had the potential of creating problems; much like what happened earlier in the meeting when the telephone connection dropped.

Ms. Jennifer Page, 3 Nichols Lane, addressed the Board and stated she did not agree with the opt-out option.

Mr. Chuck Mower, 4 Depot Street, addressed the Board and said the school budget needed attention and administrative judgment.

447
448 Ms. Natalie Reyes-Silverman, London Court, addressed the Board and said she did not think it
449 was safe to trust the experts because there were not in agreement and there was a lot of
450 misinformation going around.

451
452 Ms. Tiffany Castellucci-Trant, 419 South Baboosic Lake Road, addressed the Board and said she
453 was not happy that the Board's vote changed after many of the attendees had left the room.

454
455 Ms. Heather Callahan, 5 King Henry Court, addressed the Board and said the school would lose
456 funding if parents took their children out of school.

457
458 **10. Adjournment**

459
460 **MOTION:** At approximately 10:28 p.m. Board Member Barnes made a motion to adjourn. Board
461 Member Hardy seconded the motion.

462
463 **The motion passed 5 – 0 – 0 by a roll call vote.**
464