

**BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD  
MAY 24, 2023  
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Brookline School Board was conducted on Wednesday, May 24, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Richard Maghakian Memorial School.

Kenneth Haag, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present:        Colleen Micavich, Vice Chairman  
Tracy Perry, Secretary  
Alyson Manion  
Kelly Zakar

Members of the Board Absent:

Also in Attendance:                    Andrew Corey, Superintendent  
Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction  
Lauren DiGennaro, Director of Student Services  
Donna Smith, Assistant Business Administrator  
Daniel Molinari, Principal, Richard Maghakian Memorial School  
Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy  
Carol Tyler, Director, Information Technology

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**AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS** - None

**CORRESPONDENCE / RESIGNATIONS / RETIREMENTS / NOMINATIONS**

Noted was receipt of a Letter of Resignation from Shannon Sinclair from the position of Music Teacher with an effective date of June 21, 2023. In her letter, she states “Working for you and our students has been one of the most valuable and rewarding experiences of my life and I am truly sad to say good-bye, however, my family is moving to the Boston area to be closer to my husband’s work, and I feel that it makes sense to pursue the next chapter in my career there as well.”

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF SHANNON SINCLAIR AS A MUSIC TEACHER AT THE RICHARD MAGHAKIAN MEMORIAL SCHOOL WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JUNE 21, 2023**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ZAKAR**

**ON THE QUESTION**

Ms. Sinclair was thanked for her service to the students.

**MOTION CARRIED**  
**5-0-0**

A Letter of Resignation was received from Tim Putnam from the position of 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher with an effective date of June 30, 2023. In his letter, he states “It is with a heavy heart that I am leaving my role as a teacher after 16 years of service. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the entire school community for providing me with the opportunity to grow and thrive as an educator. It has been an honor to work alongside such talented

and passionate colleagues and to have had the privilege of teaching and influencing the lives of so many wonderful students.”

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF TIM PUTNAM AS A 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE TEACHER AT THE CAPTAIN SAMUEL DOUGLASS ACADEMY WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JUNE 30, 2023**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANION**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Zakar commented on his departure being a huge loss. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade team at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy (CSDA) has been such a strong team.

The Board thanked Mr. Putnam for his service to the students and community.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

A Letter of Resignation was received from Emma Danais from the position of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher at the Richard Maghakian Memorial School (RMMS) effective June 30, 2023. In her letter she states “I appreciate the experience I have gained from this role at the Brookline School District. I would like to thank both of you for the opportunity to be in this position as I have learned so much and have thoroughly enjoyed working with the Brookline staff.”

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF EMMA DANAIS AS A 3<sup>rd</sup> GRADE TEACHER AT THE RICHARD MAGHAKIAN MEMORIAL SCHOOL WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JUNE 30, 2023**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ZAKAR**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Manion spoke of appreciation for her service to the school community.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

A Letter of Resignation was received from Melissa Davis. In her letter she states, “It is with a mix of emotions that I write to tender my resignation from my position as a 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at CSDA.” “The decision has not been an easy one to make as I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at CSDA.” “After careful consideration I have decided to pursue a new opportunity that aligns with my long-term career goals and personal aspirations as an educational consultant.”

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF MELISSA DAVIS AS A 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE TEACHER AT THE CAPTAIN SAMUEL DOUGLASS ACADEMY WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JUNE 30, 2023**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANION**

ON THE QUESTION

The Board thanked her for her service.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

Superintendent Corey noted each nominee was selected by a committee at their school which included administration as well as faculty. The recommended candidates were sent to the SAU for interviews with either the Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent.

Melissa Brennan was nominated for the position of 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher at CSDA. She has her bachelors in psychology from the University of New Hampshire and masters in elementary education from Rivier University. She would join the district at a masters, step 3 and a salary of \$51,911.

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE SUPERINTENDENT'S NOMINATION OF MELISSA BRENNAN FOR THE POSITION OF 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE TEACHER AT A MASTERS STEP 3 AND A SALARY OF FIFTY ONE THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED ELEVEN DOLLARS (\$51,911) \_**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ZAKAR**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

Julia Overhiser was nominated for the position of Grade 3 teacher. She has her bachelors in business communication from Fitchburg State and masters in education and moderated disabilities from Merrimack College. She would join the district at a masters step 1 and a salary of \$48,931.

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE SUPERINTENDENT'S NOMINATION OF JULIA OVERHISER FOR THE POSITION OF THIRD GRADE TEACHER AT A MASTERS STEP ONE AND A SALARY OF FORTY EIGHT THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED THIRTY ONE DOLLARS (\$48,931)**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ZAKAR**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

Patricia Smith was nominated for the position of Case Manager at CSDA. She has her bachelors from Granite State College and will join the district at a bachelors plus 30, step 5 and a salary of \$50,677.

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE SUPERINTENDENT'S NOMINATION OF PATRICIA SMITH FOR THE POSITION OF CASE MANAGER AT THE CAPTAIN SAMUEL DOUGLASS ACADEMY AT A BACHELORS PLUS 30 STEP 5 AND A SALARY OF FIFTY THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED SEVENTY SEVEN DOLLARS (\$50,677) \_**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANION**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

Rebecca Hall was nominated for the position of School Counselor at RMMS. She comes to the district with her bachelors in elementary education from St. Anselm College and masters from the School of Counseling and Psychology from Rivier University. She will join the district at a masters step 5 for a salary of \$55,073.

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE SUPERINTENDENT’S NOMINATION OF REBECCA HALL FOR THE POSITION OF SCHOOL COUNSELOR AT THE RICHARD MAGHAKIAN MEMORIAL SCHOOL AT A MASTERS STEP 5 AND A SALARY OF FIFTY FIVE THOUSAND SEVENTY THREE DOLLARS (\$55,073)**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ZAKAR**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

Meaghan Elwell was nominated for the position of 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher. She has her bachelors in elementary education from Plymouth State University and will join the district at a bachelors step 1 for a salary of \$42,032.

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT THE SUPERINTENDENT’S NOMINATION OF MEAGHAN ELWELL FOR THE POSITION OF 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE TEACHER AT A BACHELORS STEP 1 AND A SALARY OF FORTY TWO THOUSAND THIRTY TWO DOLLARS (\$42,032)**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANION**

ON THE QUESTION

Asked if this represents the first year of teaching, Superintendent Corey stated that to be the case.

Asked if it is common to have a first year teacher in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded she recruited this nominee. She saw her from across the room, had her eyes set on her, and she followed through every step of the way. She has been nothing but thoroughly impressed with her. The certification is K-6. Sixth grade is often middle school so often times folks are a bit more nervous about grade 6, but she has full faith and confidence that Ms. Elwell can do the job especially knowing that she will be doing the ELA in Social Studies and will be paired up with Ms. Furbush.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Brookline School Board – **Organizational Meeting** ..... [April 19, 2023](#)

*The following amendments were offered:*

- Page 6, Line 11; replace “American” with “America”
- Page 8, Line 34; replace “of” with “at”
- Page 8, Line 46; insert “and” before “gone down”
- Page 10, Line 46; correct the spelling of “root”
- Page 11, Line 11; replace “communicate” with “community”

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MICAVICH**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

Brookline School Board – **Non-Public** ..... [April 19, 2023](#)

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ZAKAR  
MOTION CARRIED  
5-0-0**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG THAT THE BOARD RECESS UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF THE  
PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TRUST AND RETAINED FUND BALANCE  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ZAKAR  
MOTION CARRIED  
5-0-0**

*The Board recessed at 6:15 p.m.  
The Board reconvened at 6:20 p.m.*

**PUBLIC INPUT**

The intent of the public comment period is for the Board to receive input from the public. It is not to be a back and forth discussion. The Board will consider the input provided during the deliberations portion of the agenda.

*Chairman Haag declared the period for public input open at 6:20 p.m.*

Kacie Petrin Ellis, 7 Smith Road

Is saddened to hear of the resignation of Mr. Putnam. He is her child’s teacher and has been a wonderful educator and role model to all students at CSDA. She thanked him for his service.

Wished to express great concern over what appears to be rampant and severe bullying, hate speech, and racism. She understands that we will never be able to eradicate any of these things, however it is apparent that the severity of these behaviors needs to be addressed. The behaviors she is hearing about are abnormal and problematic.

She fears if they are not resolved they will become a larger problem. She feels all can agree that to some degree or another we have all experienced some form of racism growing up. However, this is not the same bullying from our childhood. Today’s children are exposed to various forms of social media and varying degrees of internet access. To make matters worse they are growing up in a divisive time in our country. Hate is taught, and while we cannot prevent that from happening, we can create an environment at school where it is not tolerated and must openly and aggressively take a stance that is clear to everyone in the school community that the behavior is unacceptable.

If you are a parent condoning hatred of others, you are only doing them a disservice as one day they will likely have to enter into the real world outside of Hollis or Brookline.

She has asked numerous times for action to be taken and is still waiting for the school and/or district to release a statement to the parents in our school community about what has been going on and that it will not be tolerated. Silence is acceptance, and in some cases, silence can result in death.

When a child is bullied to the point where it affects their mental health, to the point where they self-harm, to the point where they no longer want to go to school, in essence their childhood has been taken away from them. We need to do better, and we need to act now.

Melanie Levesque, 2 McDaniels Drive

Echoed the concerns of the previous speaker. When she was a young mom and her daughter attended these schools, she experienced incidents as well. To every child that it happens to it is severe when they are harassed or bullied or called the N word. The last time she was called the N word was when she was in high school. That student never said that again. She went right to the principal, and they dealt with it.

She sits on the Board of New Hampshire Civics where the role is to help bring civics to K-12. They are looking at different projects to work on. One that she is promoting is books for young kids on voting or making choices and decisions to help children at a young age know that they can make decisions. They talked about other programs and one of the members said a program to have kids work together, interface with each other who would not normally do so was not something that we do in civics. She replied civics is not just knowing the Constitution or how many Representatives you have in your State House, but how we interface with each other. She implored the Board and our community to understand that these children are very vulnerable. Even people who are bullies are hurting. We need to work together, help our community and act as a community to solve these problems.

Erica Hill, 28 Pigeon Hill Road

Was troubled to hear from her own child some of the language she has heard fairly frequently at the school. It was mentioned that the N word is heard frequently at schools or jokes that are racist in nature. She has heard that from her older children as well. She is uncertain what is occurring or why it feels acceptable to kids to be talking that way. She agrees more needs to be done. Whether that is more training and development, education or simply open discussion, something needs to be clearly stated related to no tolerance.

Kirsten Zimmerman, 31 Milford Street

Was at the meeting last month to discuss bullying and Ms. Petrin Ellis was before the Board in March to share her horrifying realization that her child is being bullied because of the tint of his skin. Last month there was a lot of discussion about making a statement to the community quickly so that parents who aren't aware of it can have conversations with their children about what is acceptable and what is not. She questioned what happened to that statement that was going to be made.

Maria Jose Labrana-Shapiro, 1 Mountain Road

Wished to discuss the bullying and hate speech. Every child has a right to an education. There are rules and laws in place, but yet this behavior continues. This is a nationwide issue. As a small community, it is disturbing. She spoke of the huge loss for the school and community with the departure of Mr. Putnam. Her child is one of the ones that was bullied, and that Vice Chairman Micavich mentioned at a previous meeting. Her child is good and kind. She feels she has done wrong, having taught her child to continue being kind and not to defend herself. Some of these kids don't know how to handle a situation when being bullied. They don't know how to conflict manage. While talking about the bullying, morning announcements, and the Choose Love Program, which is all great, the students also need to learn about conflict management. Part of the problem with society today is that people don't know how to conflict manage.

As a child, because of her nationality and her name, she was made fun of. She was bullied and stopped at airports because of her name. When she hears some of the kids talking or making fun of a second language or not pronouncing something correctly, it is disturbing. She came from New York to a small community trying to give her child a better education and better quality of life, and yet we are in a situation where there are no consequences to some of these actions. That is what concerns her. She always asks how school went and she gets well 20 minutes was the teacher trying to deal with a handful of kids that were not paying attention or being disruptive. That is a problem. The Choose Love Program is a great program, but it is not enough. What are we going to do? There need to be consequences to these actions.

You have a group of parents and community members that care about these kids. We want them to thrive. Her child is leaving the district, but she is still a member of this community. The kids growing up in this district will eventually be adults in this community. As a community member that concerns her as well. In his class Mr. Putnam strives to help these kids become good citizens, and that should be our job too.

Karen Jew, 141 Old Milford Road

Knows there is a lot of handwringing about parental rights. She feels there is some abdication of parental responsibilities and that has fallen to the school to take that on. At the start of this year it was articulated to students; kind of a new behavioral plan with consequences. She questioned if there are success stories from this program. We don't get to see all the consequences, and that is hard too, but are there things that have resulted from this new plan, or will this be discussed at the end of the year wrap-up next month or discussion of ways that will be built upon for next year? Maybe some of these things are being addressed. There is a lot more work to be done, but have there been some parts of that that have worked?

She saw the beginning of the Climate Study. She liked the score on the institutional vulnerability and wants the Board to keep in mind how to help the Administration and staff ensure there are healthy boundaries with families to avoid an instance such as a new teacher feeling overwhelmed by intense parental requests, etc.

Chairman Haag thanked those who shared their stories with the Board and viewing audience.

***The Public Input period was declared closed at 6:50 p.m.***

Member Manion remarked on there being a lot of work to be done. The Board has seen a lot of repeated and new faces and has received a lot of communication. She wished to reiterate the Board is hearing the information being shared and is aware of the importance. She has been doing an immense amount of research from a policy perspective. She heard the question is anything being done; yes, we are all committed to working through this problem. Knowing that our children will be community members later, it is important that we, as adults, are setting boundaries for them now.

While the First Amendment protects freedom of speech, not all speech is protected, and it was clear in Harper vs. Poway Unified School District that school officials can limit that speech within schools. When she started digging into policies, she looked at a variety of bullying policies in our neighboring towns and throughout the State. She believes ours language is weak. Bedford's policy is incredibly strong. She read from that policy the following:

*"Students who are found to have engaged in bullying will be subject to disciplinary action. Students who support bullying through laughter, encouraging comments and/or parent approval of intimidating behavior will also be subject to disciplinary action under this policy."*

Member Manion commented that language speaks to ensuring we are addressing not just the aggressors but those who are quietly supporting it. She reiterated the Board is hearing the input provided and is aware that each individual Board member is doing their due diligence understanding that change needs to happen. There is a lot of legwork that needs to go into this to ensure it is fair and represents all students.

Vice Chairman Micavich remarked in regard to the incidents that have been occurring and continue to occur, there is a roadmap for schools on this. It is very clear. The Anti-Defamation League puts out “Responding to Bias Incidents in Middle and High School”. The reason it is middle and high school is because you wouldn’t expect kindergarten or first grade students to be using these words, but in our district they are. The roadmap starts with a peace framework, so you really take a look at what is our district doing and what are we not doing.

If you have an incident of using a specific bias word, how do we teach kids about that? She does not care if parents are angry when we teach kids about the history of the N word. Let them come in here and try to defend that. It is our job to protect kids and it needs to be done. She asked that the Administration look at this very carefully, consider that the ADL is willing to work with schools. This is their job. They have a department specifically for this. They can guide us in this. We don’t need to reinvent the wheel. There are things that have been proven to work.

What she is hearing is that there is a vicious cycle of kids likely hearing these words at home because that does not come out of nowhere, and then other kids who might not understand the meaning of the word repeating it. One of the things discussed in the framework is that you need to handle each incident individually. What is clear is there are students who are learning these atrocious words in their home. We have no control over that, but we do have control over how that is responded to when we have victims in the community.

She supports a strong statement and believes some parents have no idea this is being said because they don’t listen to our meetings. Although we only have 3 weeks left in the school year, we need to figure out if our kids are feeling safe. We’re assuming they are feeling safe. One of her children might feel safe and the other might not. How do we know? Do we have any data? What are we afraid of through collecting data? We collected data for our staff, and the results acknowledge that we have some issues to work on. We need and owe it to our students to do the same.

Member Perry remarked she listened to an interesting webinar noting there is information that says explicit conversations with 5-7 year olds about interracial friendships can dramatically improve their racial attitudes in as little as a single week. Kindergarteners pick up these racial attitudes. She has a kindergartener and unfortunately has experienced some of these things. As a parent she was shocked and appalled. Another piece of data she saw said by Kindergarten children show many of the same racial attitudes that adults in our culture hold.

Member Zakar echoed the remarks of community members and her colleagues. She believes there to be a pathway for dealing with bullying. Bullying behavior is a very described set of behaviors and characteristics and a pattern of behavior whereas hate speech or using racial disparaging words or other discriminatory remarks based on someone’s cultural background, skin color, country of origin, etc., can happen one time. It is wrong and disgusting to have children being referred to as animals based on racial stereotypes, children being called the N word, or the N word being used as a joke on a school bus or playground and having kids laugh at it maybe not even understanding what it means.

It is really important to make the distinction that there is a whole body of research and educational tools to deal with bullying. She does not want to lump these racial incidents, and this racially charged environment that our schools are becoming in with bullying because it doesn’t take a repeated pattern of behaviors, it takes one child



to say one thing and that should be addressed immediately. She agrees there should be communication coming out from the schools and if there is not then the Board needs to draft a statement that is sent out independent of the schools. She believes parents have now for the third month come to the Board to ask us to intervene, and she thinks the Board should do that. It is important that our community members understand that they are being heard, that the Board is taking this very seriously and that it is unacceptable.

Member Manion commented that the New Hampshire Department of Education (NH DOE) language does actually include actions motivated by pupil's actual or perceived race color, religion, national origin, and ancestry, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and it goes on, is covered under the bullying law so while yes there is a distinction, when we go and re-work our bullying policy, she would like to believe the Board would be referencing the law that has that very explicit language. While yes bullying is multiple times, when we re-do our policies, we can establish the consequences that come even after one incident.

### **PRINCIPALS' REPORT**

- Climate survey data and presentation requested by the Board regarding student supports

Daniel Molinari, Principal, RMMS, and Patricia Bouley, Principal, CSDA, highlighted items from the report, which was included as part of the [agenda](#) packet.

Provided was a presentation (can be viewed [here](#) beginning at tape counter 53:33) intended to address some of the comments shared at the last meeting.

The presentation focused on Response to Intervention (RtI) as well as Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Noted were related policies.

#### **Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Grade Level Overview**

Principal Molinari stated at RMMS, for SEL, on a daily basis lessons take 5-10 minutes and typically occur in the morning to set the tone for the day. It is a time where teachers and students talk about expectations, reflect on the previous day and discuss what is ahead for the current day.

Teachers often use literature to address topics such as kindness, self-care, and self-love. Students are provided time to journal through writing prompts, discussions, skits, etc. to continue to reflect on those areas. Classroom discussions occur as things come up. Every classroom has its own classroom behavior system in addition to the school-wide system of supports. Some students need sensory breaks or time to become more self-aware and take time to reflect on how their day is going; a lot of teachers have a classroom break zone.

Principal Bouley noted at CSDA, they use the Choose Love Program to teach the themes of courage, compassion, forgiveness, and gratitude. They also present every morning through morning announcements focusing each month on one of those key areas. This month they are talking about mental health awareness. The calendar that is provided through the program will give hints or key strategies that students and staff can do or conduct during the day and something that helps to trigger for the rest of the day that teachers can talk about that theme.

In grades 4-6 they focus typically on a morning meeting, or some grades have it at a little later time in the day to discuss issues. They also read books aloud. They have discussions around any issues within the classroom.

Class lessons, discussions and assemblies were conducted this year with the Principal and Guidance Counselor regarding friendship, communication, bullying, and growth mindset lessons focusing on perseverance, flexibility, empathy, resilience, and optimism.

Grades 5 and 6 were introduced to the “One Trusted Adult” that was provided by the DOE. That was provided during weeklong guidance lessons covering units in the Ripple Journal allowing for class discussion and individual self-reflection. The program is focused on how every single student should have at least one trusted adult in their life; parent, aunt, uncle, teacher, coach, sibling. Each student has a Ripple Journal that goes through the different areas of compassion, gratitude, forgiveness, and cooperation. The students would be able to reflect on their ideas and the discussion.

### School-wide Activities

At RMMS, They pass out birthday pencils to recognize all students, every Friday they announce students who receive Blue Jay Awards, which are received for being responsible, kind, respectful, etc. Every morning during morning meeting there is a little news station where students are the news anchors and interview students around the building. A lot of the SEL components that we discuss in the classrooms are reinforced in the news.

In September, there is the Flag Pole Ceremony (recognize all new staff and students, Pledge of Allegiance). Also in September was the assembly with staff and students where they talked about school expectations; bus rules, recess rules, etc. Those rules are reinforced throughout the year whether in the morning news, daily announcements, or classrooms. In October, they invited TIGER and had the Kindness Speaks performance. In years past there have been ones on bullying, etc. TIGER is through Plymouth State University. They have their masters degree program present around the State.

In November, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class presented on teamwork to the entire school (skit). In January, the reading buddy cooperative groups started; kindergarteners and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes and 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes join together (buddies). Those classes will meet throughout the year, read together, do outdoor activities, etc. In January they started planning the STEAM project together.

In February, they recognize acts of kindness, in March, the Hip Hoppin Hawks from Londonderry were onsite. In April, there was a presentation on hallway and recess behavior, in May, the Food Pantry Challenge, and in June, the end-of-year assembly; slideshow and clap out ceremony for all 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students.

At CSDA, there are morning announcements, birthdays, the weather news (6<sup>th</sup> grade), the Wolf Pack Paws Awards, and the different assemblies. In September, they had two assemblies reviewing and explaining school-wide expectations of behaviors. In October, Principal Bouley worked with various classes where students put together skits and created posters that could be hung around the gym and cafeteria regarding courage and communication; the importance of communication, how to communicate and the effects of bullying.

In November, they worked with Choose Love with Gratitude and talked about the food pantry collection and do the Turkey Trot. All of these activities are intended to create a sense of community, but have a message that we are directing, providing, and guiding to our students.

In December, it was Having the Courage to Respond in Love; how to respond to individuals properly. We also take part in the SHARE socks collection and write cards for military personnel.

This year was the first time that CSDA took part in the STEAM assembly and fair and worked collaboratively in different groupings to work alongside RMMS for another community event where we were able to have parents come in and see the success that students are creating and managing each day.

This month they will do a Memorial Day Service. In June, will be the grade 6 Science Fair, promotion, and field day.

### School-wide Expectations

Displayed was a listing of school-wide expectations for each of the schools. The lists are broken down by each area of the building. The lists identify the expected behaviors in the classroom, hallway, bathroom, on the bus, at recess, during field trips and assemblies. These are all worked in on a daily basis whether through announcements, morning news, morning meeting, etc., to reinforce expectations for students. Over the past several months, as a staff, they have been working on taking the expectations from our whole school grid but making them more student friendly so that it is easier to understand at a younger student level.

### School Counseling Program

The curriculum addresses Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL domain). It teaches students about self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. Direct instruction and hands on application is utilized through group work, individual work, group share, and independent sessions. Guidance Counselors teach week-long lessons by classroom. Otherwise it would be once a month and in small groups, individual, or lunch bunch and it is broken down into Tier II and Tier III.

In the Student Parent Handbook there is a section on student conduct and expectations and guidelines. With that, towards the end of the student handbook is where they list the Level I, II and III discipline and conduct procedures. It is a guide. It is used to identify the behaviors being dealt with, how we will intervene, and the consequences that we have a menu to choose from based off of the progressive discipline we can put into place. It is broken down to identify what a Level I behavior is, Level II, etc.

Asked if that is what was referred to earlier during public input with regard to what is new this year, Principal Bouley suggested the reference was to the matrixes that were created.

Also in the student handbook is the positive discipline pathways to self-control. We want to have proactive discipline, establishing positive relationships between each child and teacher where they will create, model, and practice rules in the classroom or other environments. Some of the pathways are simply reminding and redirecting. Students at this age need to hear things repeated constantly in order for them to really understand and establish that as a norm. Having logical consequences such as you break it you can fix it or clean it, apology of action; teaching students the importance of communication and what an apology is and why it is important. Also loss of privileges or telling a student you need to take a break and understanding when that child needs to take a break. In some classrooms, taking a break might mean going to a buddy classroom meaning a co-teacher or partner teacher. Sometimes just a change of environment will help a child. There is the involvement of the Principal/Administrator developing individual behavior plans for students, which we do quite frequently, and also involving additional assistance, e.g., bringing in the Guidance Counselor, School Psychologist or special education administrators.

Member Perry questioned how long the district has been following the positive discipline pathways to self-control. Principal Bouley stated this has been followed since her time in the district (3 years). Principal Molinari echoed this has been in the handbook for the past three years.

Asked if any modifications have been made based on the time before, during, or coming back from COVID, Principal Molinari stated every year the Administration reflects on and updates the handbook in June and based on feedback received. Principal Bouley commented on having come to the district during COVID. It changed as far as what we were seeing as students returned to school.

Utilized internally are the behavioral referral forms; if there is a major incident those forms are used by staff. There are also minor forms that are typically handled in the classroom. If the behavior continues after 3 or so they come to the Administration. The Board was provided with examples of the bullying investigation form and all of the steps of the investigation. At both schools they have a Crisis Escalation Response. If there is a crisis in a school with a student or a student that might be bolting, for example, and the school has to go into what they call a clear hallways situation where they shut down a hallway to provide privacy for that student, it lists the guidelines/protocols we follow to address that situation in more depth.

A flowchart was shown that depicts the Professional Learning Community (PLC). The map shows how the district goes about addressing Tier I, II, and III instruction. Every 6-8 weeks teachers meet as a data team to discuss all student data based off of local assessments such as AIMSWeb, observations in the classrooms, etc. If there are concerns and students need to be evaluated that is brought up as a student referral. Tier II supports may be a student seeing a reading or math specialist for additional support and/or the Guidance Counselor. Tier III is typically special education services.

Member Manion asked, as you have gone through this process, do you have enough adult support for the students that you are identifying to be able to effectively assist our kids. Principal Molinari responded that is something they have been working on for the past few years and something that is brought up every year; can definitely use more hands. We have to work within budgetary constraints. We do the best we can to see all students and to maximize that schedule. He provided the example of instances where they have had to utilize Mrs. Murray who teaches library in the morning. We have a group of students that might not be able to see the reading specialist if she is seeing our most struggling readers. Mrs. Murray might take a group on an off time if she has that availability. They continue to look to the Administration for how to close that gap more. They are working on Multi-Tiered System of Support for Behavioral Health and Wellness (MTSS-B), and what areas we need to address further and trying to determine the need, e.g., additional reading specialist, behaviorist. We have to look at where those interventions are that we need and address it that way. We have to work within the budget too.

Principal Bouley added when coming to the Tier II intervention for reading or math for example, they have had issues with hiring paraeducators (experienced over the past two years).

Member Manion commented she has no doubt they are doing the best they can with what they have. She has seen this work when you have the right number of hands. She was looking to determine if it is believed they feel they have the support they need. There is clearly a gap.

Chairman Haag questioned if behavior is acting out in class or is it concerns such as bullying that would follow these interventions. He was looking to identify gaps. Principal Bouley commented as far as behavior, in this area, it would typically be individuals who have been identified with consistent behavior problems. Chairman Haag asked if an example of that would be throwing things or if a child is bullying consistently or a student is using language that is concerning.

Lauren DiGennaro, Director of Student Services, stated when we look at behavior, we have to look at it the same way we look at the spectrum for academics for example. You are looking at the skills and what are the expectations and developmental skills that we would expect from students behaviorally. That will be a spectrum of behaviors. What we are looking at is really resetting student expectations and student behaviors coming out of the pandemic and those pieces and how we can address that in the school from a whole building perspective down into the individual classrooms.

What you will hear about with the implementation/development of the MTSS process is that there will be a lot of committee work, research, and development over the summer to be able to address the behavioral interventions from the students who are disruptive throwing pencils around the room to students who have more challenging behaviors in the classroom. This is the work that we are doing, and that will run into the data that we need to collect, looking at the data from this year with the behavioral pieces we have seen from these referral forms and using that information to drive what our interventions are. That needs to be a more comprehensive process for the behavior aspect of the MTSS and this PLC flowchart. We are seeing different behaviors than we have seen. We are seeing things from even just a student's attention span in the classroom that is changing/evolving, so how do we address that and help support our teachers for Tier I instruction with those regards to build those capacities/routines/expectations. Giving students the sense of their ownership both individually as a person and student, their place in a classroom, their place in a school, having them recognize and value what that means in all of those different levels. That is the work that we have started already and will be building upon over the summer to implement and to beef up this process even more comprehensively.

Behaviors will vary from a student calling out in class, tapping someone else's desk, to behaviors that are louder and disruptive.

Chairman Haag questioned if a student that is bullying follows this or if the Administration is rolling up multiple types of behaviors and then we take that data and that becomes or is it both and was told it should be both. Principal Molinari commented on the levels; to the point about staffing, it is the Tier II that we will be focusing more on to get this work.

Vice Chairman Micavich remarked since we are talking about Tier I, II, and III in response to what Director DiGennaro said, this is tremendous work the schools are doing. She believes, after reading all of this, what is missing is the Tier I, consistent application of a social emotional learning program. What happens if you don't address reading in Tier I or do it appropriately, you will have more students in Tier II. She understands we are trying to use Choose Love when we can, but the district is really responsible for deciding what is the SEL programming. We are using CASEL for Tier II and III. What is missing is Tier I. Her guess is if you are not teaching everybody the behaviors and in a consistent way sometimes it is like swimming upstream. We need a consistent social emotional learning program for Tier I for all students. Otherwise we will continue to spend a lot of funding on Tier II and Tier III.

Principal Molinari continued with the presentation providing additional information on the tiers of support:

Tier 1 is core instruction delivered through differentiated, universal approaches. School-wide behavior interventions and SEL programming (teachers and counselors; whole class instruction). AIMSWeb benchmarking for all students in the fall and spring.

Students receiving Tier 2 intervention will be benchmarked in the winter as well.

Tier 2 is supporting instruction with targeted interventions through individual or small group. What that looks like is the Guidance Counselor is taking that Tier II group and doing small group cooperative play, working on

friendships, social awareness skills and self-management. Students are progress monitored to ensure intervention is effective and appropriate to close the gap. Teachers meet every 8 weeks to identify whether the interventions are working and if not review the tools/programs that are being used, whether the frequency needs to be increased, etc. They often address all of this during What I Need (WIN) time. Every single grade level has that built into their day and all students will either see a teacher, interventionist or counselor.

Tier III is the intensive intervention, one-to-one support that targets considerable skill gap for the lowest levels of academic and social emotional achievement (reading specialist, counselors, related service providers, special educators).

Vice Chairman Micavich asked what the core instruction is that is being delivered in SEL. We mention CASEL framework for Tier II, and she understands that, although she does not know what curriculum is being used. It seems at RMMS mention was made of 10 minutes/day of maybe Choose Love, but at CSDA it is largely in the announcements. Then she saw a lot of when issues come up, we use the principles of Choose Love. In order for any social emotional learning to be effective it needs to be consistently applied from grade to grade so that we are teaching self-awareness, those 5 principles and ensuring that all students hit that. If a child is in a classroom where there are no problems with kids being self-aware, they might not get the lessons on self-awareness. She thinks a framework may be missing, but wished to be certain she was not just reading into this.

Principal Bouley responded with her thoughts that for this past year we have had guidance counselors pulled in as part of the special. They have been working on week length per class. She would be using the same background foundation skills but tying in with the Choose Love themes.

Vice Chairman Micavich commented based on her work with CASEL, these are all great things that are happening, and it is benefitting some kids, but in order for it to benefit others it is really supposed to be done as part of the classroom routine and once every 6 weeks with a Guidance Counselor doesn't cut it. That is not anyone's fault, but this is really helpful for understanding and she hopes they all agree that there is a gap here. She believes we have been avoiding this for some time and our survey sort of indicates that we're responding too much to small groups in the community. There are groups in the community that don't understand SEL necessarily and are against it, but our students need it. Tier II and Tier III are wonderful, we need to ensure you are fully staffed for that, but Tier I is just not happening the best way.

Principal Molinari noted for the past few years they have had their Guidance Counselors as a special, which has taken them out to be readily accessible throughout the day. Next year that is changing, and the Guidance Counselor will not be in that special unit, they will be available throughout the day to go in and do lessons to be more available for small group instruction.

Vice Chairman Micavich responded the Guidance Counselors are Tier II and Tier III, but the teachers really need to understand that this needs to be a daily intervention in many ways and for a lot of it teachers don't have to do a lot of work, there are programs that are already put together.

Member Zakar commented on having heard there was an absence of the Guidance Counselor for a good portion of the school year. That concerns her when hearing how much of what is occurring at CSDA is dependent on the Guidance Counselor. There is concern that perhaps some of the problems we are seeing now are a result of that absence, and not being able to implement some of these plans.

Principal Bouley responded that the Guidance Counselor was out on medical. They knew that absence was going to occur in December and started interviewing in October. Every time they thought they had a candidate lined up it fell through. A lot of people that did apply were people who had retired. Unfortunately, they were

unable to hire someone until March. Basically she was the Guidance Counselor as far as going into the classroom and doing the curriculum every afternoon for about a month and a half.

Chairman Haag questioned if the Tier I, II, III approach looked at in the unstructured environment as much as in the classroom. He suggested most of the issues occur in unstructured environments such as the bus, recess, etc.

Principal Bouley commented that she also went with the training this year for the MTSS-B. Multi-tiered system of supports has been around for a long while and has only just recently added in the B for behavior. It has been recognized that in MTSS we are all looking at academics and it is not just academics. We need to ensure we are addressing the behaviors of students. Since the pandemic that SEL has been a huge area also.

Principal Molinari stated they are looking at the unstructured time. They address it more at the whole school assembly piece where they do the school-wide expectations. A lot of those unstructured interventions are mostly done by the Principals, special education administrator or Guidance Counselor. They are not bringing bus concerns to the teachers to deal with. Often the students that are receiving Tier II instruction are different than the students that are having the write-ups for the bus, etc. It is a different way to look at it and something that should be reflected on.

Member Manion added she believes with the unstructured time it goes back to what Vice Chairman Micavich brought up about the consistent Tier I daily recognition of SEL teaching and programming within our school communities. If it is consistently done as a classroom community, when the students are then in that unstructured time it may just inherently mitigate some of these issues. She is not familiar with the Choose Love Program, but if it is not the right one for our district in terms of SEL programming we have a responsibility to find one that our teachers, administrative body and school communities will truly utilize. She questioned if there has been an opportunity to determine how effective the program has been in our district.

Director DiGennaro responded that is part of the research and work over the summer is to look into the programs that can be used at the Tier I level. Teachers have spoken, as we have had these discussions, about having some consistency.

Principal Molinari spoke of the support staff is provided with. There is a mentor program all new staff go through; monthly meetings at building level and quarterly at district level. Every new teacher goes through new hire orientation before the start of the school year and is paired off with a mentor. The opening week training is 3 days of training. When staff return to school the Principals have a schedule that is shared with staff with trainings, professional development opportunities, review staff handbook and guidelines and expectations. It is a collaborative time for staff to provide feedback and paves the way for the school year. All staff have opportunities for professional development growth e.g., can attend classes, workshops.

There is a page in the packet titled Prohibition on Teaching Discrimination. SAU41 is prohibited from stating that people are of a protected class: are inherently superior or inferior, are inherently racist, sexist or oppressive, should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment, cannot or should not treat others equally and/or without regard to a protected characteristic. That is passed out to all staff at the opening week and is reviewed as a staff around guidance about when engaging in conversations.

Member Manion questioned who oversees the mentor program and was told the Assistant Superintendent does. Asked if she has any concerns that she is out of the administrative unit and new teachers might find that a little intimidating, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded we have undergone some changes to the program; this year implemented the first phase of a revamped program and next year will be phase II. There will be a Phase III as well. She oversees the entire program, e.g., grants, develops structure, contracts, etc. She is

available if needed but is not there interfering with that mentor/mentee relationship. Added was an instructional coach to provide another body to provide that coaching from a non-evaluative perspective.

Member Manion questioned if there would be a benefit to having a teacher who oversees that program so that if a mentor is uncertain how to assist their mentee, they don't necessarily have to admit that to administrators. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated there are building coaches; teacher in each building that serves as that person.

Chairman Haag commented the prohibition of teaching discrimination seems to be a concern for teachers because the lines can be grey and there is a fear of repudiation. Principal Molinari stated that came out about two years ago when we had HB2. The document originated from the Bedford School District. We used it as a guideline at our opening days because it was a hot topic the fall of 2021. As part of the programming it is likely an invaluable piece to have a catalogue type program so that you can have these that have gone through a legal review but still talk about things rather than putting the onus on a teacher that may be fearful of stepping over a line.

Superintendent Corey stated his belief the district has done a nice job, but if you talk to faculty that concern still exists. When he speaks with faculty there is a looking over your shoulder view. That is one of the things that has become concerning with education and why a lot of educators are questioning staying in the field because they want the freedom to teach and address issues as they come up but are very cautious because of the potential licensing impact. Principal Molinari stated if staff have concerns, they bring them to the administration. They along with the SAU support them through that process.

Principal Molinari spoke of the community partnerships, e.g., holiday cards, SHARE donations, Food Pantry project. This past fall Lynn Lyons, Clinical Social Worker and Psychotherapist gave a Family's Emotional Health presentation at the high school for any staff or families wishing to attend.

Goals for FY24 include:

- Implementation and continued development of MTSS Process
- September Assembly with TIGER (T - working Together, I - Inspiring others to greatness, G – Giving to others, E – showing Empathy and compassion, and R – Respect yourself and others)
- Supplement Choose Love with TIGER time
- Parent Workshop Night with Plymouth State University TIGER (masters degree program; just finished 20<sup>th</sup> year)
- TIGER takes on Bullying video

Goals for FY25 include:

- Implement phase 2 of MTSS-B
- Increase staffing to address MTSS-B needs, e.g., social worker, school psychologist, BCBA/Behavior Specialist
- Include potential stipend work for staff for MTSS-B process and department work
- Explore academic, evidenced based behavior programs
- Continue partnership with TIGER
- Re-propose the hiring of lunch/recess monitors



Chairman Haag spoke of the discussion around unstructured MTSS-B and Tier I and questioned the thinking around FY25 as opposed to FY24. He clarified when discussing the Tier I and teaching on a daily basis that sounded like the big aha moment so far, and he questioned why not address that next year.

Director DiGennaro responded we are implementing the MTSS process in FY24. FY25 will be building upon it with what those extra needs are. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted that it will have budgetary constraints. This July we have to put a ton of things in the budget process and see how far through the process they go. To take the data that we have and put in requests for positions that can support the data that we see and the work we are doing.

Principal Bouley added part of Phase I is still gathering more data of the things we will start to implement that we are putting together this summer. Basically MTSS-B is a five-year plan.

Chairman Haag asked for clarification that over the summer that would be part of the teachers' rollout where they are learning some of that before coming back into the classrooms and was told that is what the Principals will be doing during that opening week. They are also encouraging teachers with professional development opportunities to hopefully join the committee this summer.

Director DiGennaro stated there are staff in both buildings that are interested in participating in this work and the work being put forward. As part of this process, there is also the development of an MTSS handbook and manual along with all of the supplemental information we are talking about with what those interventions and programs are for each of the tiered levels. That is information that can be shared with the Board. That has already been started and will be built upon throughout the course of the year that can guide these FY25 asks and requests.

Chairman Haag commented, as an observation for K-3, this seems like a lot. Is part of this rollout a way to make this a little more 1<sup>st</sup> grade brain friendly? Principal Molinari stated the work to make it student friendly began in February. Asked for additional clarification, he stated student friendly means that a student could pick it up and understand what it means. Director DiGennaro remarked they are planning on having them in the classrooms for each grade level; having students make posters to interpret it, etc.

Vice Chairman Micavich thanked the administration for the information provided commenting it was thorough and highlighted a lot of the positive things we are doing. She thinks parents in our community, except for those who might be involved in education and a few others, don't understand why SEL is so important. SEL has been shown in hundreds of studies to improve academic outcomes. What she often hears is the desire for the focus to be on academics. Those who are in education get that unless a kid feels safe, we can't really focus on education. SEL decreases mental distress, mental health issues, anxiety and depression, which are now rampant in youth. This isn't academic or social emotional; in order for our kids to learn they need to feel safe in the classroom, they need to have the skills to manage their own emotions and conflict.

Chairman Haag echoed the comments around the information provided. He spoke of the public input around a formal statement. At the last meeting we talked, and he said that we were going to go through this. He is uncertain what a statement will do versus seeing action. To him statements are nothing more than standalone words. It is the policy, actions, and procedures that are meaningful to him.

Member Zakar remarked we talk about revising policy, which needs to happen, but that is something that happens at a slow pace. One of the emails sent by a parent included an example of what another school sent out to the parents of the community following a racial incident. That is one of the things parents are asking for is

that kind of community messaging or statement that goes out when there is a racial incident in one of our buildings. We have to speak as a unified voice, but if the SAU or the individual building administrators are reluctant to send out that kind of messaging, she feels someone needs to. If not them, then maybe it is us.

Chairman Haag remarked he was thinking more along the line of a statement not plural. He is uncertain if we can make statements about individual incidents. Member Zakar clarified not for individual incidents but more to the point of watch the meetings or read our minutes. There have been things occurring that parents have brought to the Board's attention and we're working on it, but change isn't something that happens quickly.

Chairman Haag added curriculum and policy change isn't going to happen immediately and that is the struggle that people are having. He respects that fully, but also does not want to quickly put something together.

*A member of the audience spoke out without being acknowledged or identifying herself.*

*The remarks made were that policy and curriculum can take a while to happen, but letting people know there are conversations you should have at the dining room table because you may not be aware there is an undercurrent happening and we're trying to address it.*

Member Minion suggested a statement informing that we are working on this. Policy takes time to change. We have had community members come out time and time again because they don't see the work because it takes time. To put something out there that the topic of racism and bullying within our schools has repeatedly come up, we do not condone it in our schools, we understand that some of our policies need to change, we want to let the community know that we hear you and we are working on it. It can be as simple as that. It lets the community know that they are being heard without having to dig to find out that they are being heard.

In the guidelines that the NH DOE puts out in terms of writing policy for response to bullying, it identifies that one of the buckets that you have to address when writing a policy is internal procedure. We can make that an internal procedure so that any time an incident happens on campus a communication has to go out. We can write that into our policy, but we are not there yet. Given how much of an issue this is, and because she knows that the Board is unified in committing to this work, she does not think it would hurt in any way to publicly state that we are doing this.

Member Perry Commented she looked at the Board Code of Ethics, which states: "Uphold the principles of due process and individual dignity and protect the civil and human rights of all;". As Board members we have to do that for our students. Doing that and putting a statement out and ensuring we are protecting the civil rights and the human dignity in saying that we are going to work on these processes and policies. Looking at these Tier I SEL programs, we owe it to our children to start working with them in kindergarten to help them be community representatives. We really need to make sure that we are upholding our Board member ethics.

Vice Chairman Micavich thanked her colleague for presenting that very strong point of view. She absolutely would support putting out a statement, which can be simple. The purpose of a statement is to send a message that we do not tolerate this. There is a belief in the community that we are tolerating this. When these incidents continue then we have to at least put out a statement that we are not accepting this, we are not going to allow children to be treated like this. Are we going to be able to stop all of it, absolutely not because some of this is coming straight from their parents. She also thinks a lot of what she is seeing is people talking about events online and with friends but not necessarily reporting it. She encouraged people to report. Part of a statement might be the importance of communicating. If you are hearing this or if your child is having issues, we do have to communicate as best we can.

Chairman Haag remarked the Board will have to determine how it wishes to craft that statement and move forward with that piece.

### Climate Survey

With a desire to look at the culture and climate in the district as a whole, a few different tools were looked at. A few Board members along with the Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent had a smaller offline meeting to select a tool and request the support of the Board.

The following results were provided as part of the agenda packet:

*“The Brookline School Board’s goal was to provide a survey to gain a better understanding of the climate in the Brookline Schools and to provide a tool that allows all voices to be heard. The tool was selected because it was validated and benchmarked. This survey was anonymous. The tabulated results will be used to inform decision-making regarding allocation of resources, potential further inquiries into staff perceptions, professional development and goals for the school year. This year’s results serve as a baseline and can be used for comparison purposes for future administration of the same climate survey.”*

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted this is the first time we have done something of this type. We have no idea if we are on an upward or downward trend or if we remain status quo. It simply is baseline data for comparison purposes for future administration of the exact same climate survey.

*“One aspect of what the survey reports on is “Institutional Vulnerability.” Institutional Vulnerability (IV) is the extent to which the school is susceptible to a few vocal parents and citizen groups. BSD scored 670, indicating an IV that is higher than 93.1% of the schools nationwide. High vulnerability suggests that both teachers and principals are unprotected and put on the defensive. It is critically important for the School District to set clear goals and standards for both the schools and the community.*

*The next aspect the survey reports on is “Achievement Press.” Achievement Press (AP) describes a school that sets high but achievable academic standards and goals. BSD scored 659 indicating an AP that is higher than 91.7% of schools nationwide. This standard demonstrates that students persist, strive to achieve and are respected by each other and teachers for their academic success. Parents, teachers, and the principal exerts pressure for high standards and school improvement. BSD has a strong reputation as a high achieving school district. It is critically important to balance the pressure with the support and collaboration with the community.*

*A third aspect of the survey is “Collegial Leadership.” Collegial Leadership (CL) is directed toward both meeting the social needs of the faculty and achieving the goals of the school. BSD scored 531 indicating CL is higher than 60.5% of schools nationwide, which is above average. The principal treats teachers as professional colleagues, is open, egalitarian, and friendly, but at the same time sets clear teacher expectations and standards of performance. It is important to note that the stress associated with Institutional Vulnerability and Achievement Press directly impact the result of CL.*

*Finally, the survey reports on “Professional Teacher Behavior.” Professional Teacher Behavior (PTB) is marked by respect for colleague competence, commitment to students, autonomous judgment, and mutual cooperation and support. BSD scored 873 indicating that PTB is higher than 99% of schools nationwide. The BSD is staffed by professional and support staff who have a high degree of respect for one another and serve as examples for the community of young learners.*

*The administration of this survey tool should be treated as baseline data as no similar survey had been provided in the past. However the District should take appropriate steps to mitigate identified concerns. The Superintendent should review how the strategic plan addresses the needed areas of focus and develop FY24 action steps and FY25 budget proposals accordingly. The BSD Policy Committee should work to review policies with this lens in mind. The building principals can schedule school-wide assemblies to address critical topics. The building leadership team can partner with the PTO to sponsor speakers and develop parent and community seminars. Finally this survey tool should be readministered in February 2024 to measure growth.”*

Member Zakar commented she believes we knew that our teachers and Principals were feeling the stress and pressure from vocal parents and citizen groups. To see that we have a really high score and higher than 93% of benchmarked schools nationwide is really concerning to her. It is important that we have this data. It quantifies something that she believes we knew, but it identifies it as a critical need for us to look at.

Vice Chairman Micavich echoed the remarks adding she believes the 60.5% is something that can be worked on. This is all data and data can be worked on. If we look at it with that objective lens, a lot of this is about people’s feelings and that can get dicey, but objectively other schools have had scores like this, and how did they improve. She is pleased this is a priority and will be reissued and that we now have more support for the Principals with an Assistant Principal coming in and a new Special Education Administrator in the building. We also really need to talk to teachers and administrators to understand why they feel vulnerable, unprotected and put on the defensive, and work to change that.

Member Manion questioned if there was a section on the survey for open comment and was told there was not. She asked if that is something we might consider and if there was any conversation about opening that up. Member Zakar stated there was. We chose a validated tool that was benchmarked. We wanted people not to feel like it was identifiable. There are great tools that require a lot of I.T. infrastructure; secure servers, randomization of IDs, etc. that we certainly could do, and it would allow us to get that kind of information and have it be anonymous. Because this was the first time that we were doing anything like this, we wanted it to be a validated tool, e.g., didn’t want to pick and choose items from different tools or add open response, which might change how it is benchmarked. There definitely was a desire to have the ability to do that. There is no perfect tool for that.

Chairman Haag added this was the quicker roll out to get baseline data that was standardized. We had talked about very open ended, and it just didn’t feel like we were going to get a baseline and where we needed to get to start. We can see at least where we are doing well and where there is an opportunity to focus.

Member Perry commented on her hope it can be administered again in the next year.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **- FY23 Revenue and Expense Update**

Donna Smith, Assistant Business Administrator, commented on there not being much in the way of change from what was reported last month with the exception of the additional unanticipated special education expenses.

If the requests that are the subject of the public hearings are approved, the district stands in a pretty good spot of ending the year with no projected fund balance. However, that can change prior to the end of the fiscal year (June 30<sup>th</sup>).

Chairman Haag noted, with approval of the requested transfers, the fiscal year would close with the district whole.

- General Assurances

Superintendent Corey noted the agenda packet included a copy of the General Assurances, which is a statement that the Board Chair would sign stating the District adheres to all procedures around the Federal grants. We receive IDEA Grants, Food Service dollars, etc. This is the yearly acknowledgement that the Board is aware we receive those funds and that we have to comply with certain regulations mainly overseen by the Business Manager and Assistant Superintendent.

- Preview of new SAU 41 website

Carol Tyler, Director, Information Technology, provided a PowerPoint presentation (can be viewed [here](#) (beginning at tape counter 2:17).

The website hosting company, SchoolPointe, was purchased in 2022 by Finalsite. All sites were migrated to a new content management system. Our current site will be sun-setted in June. The required content migration not only provides the opportunity to freshen up the site, but it also enables us to add new features, content, and an update to our menu structure.

About 9 months ago a website committee was formed and reviewed various website designs, templates, etc. The Committee reviewed about 100 different websites with the goals of having menus that made sense, ease of use, and helpful pages with new content. There was also the desire for a pleasing design.

The new site will include a homepage having three layers of menus. The top level menu shows the district and the link to all schools (drop down menu). The next level is for families and staff and an inquire button. Following that are the major menus (district, boards, department, resources).

The school homepage has the same menu configuration at the top. With the current website if on the page of one school and wanting to get to another school or back to the district, it requires 2-3 clicks. With the new format, regardless of the page you are on, you can get to any school or district by the top level menu.

On the school page, the first two menus match the district pages. The next menu has titles more in line with the mission of the district, e.g., our school (description of school), learning, enrichment, resources.

One of the issues with the current site was users being unable to locate information. As a result, there are repeated menus in places. Content continues to be built and the site goes live June 30<sup>th</sup>.

A lot of new pages have been added to provide content community members have asked for. There will now be a family portal page for the district page as well as each school page. There are interactive tiles users can click on to obtain information. Another new feature is a Frequently Asked Questions page where users can obtain additional information and, if not obtaining an answer to a question, can submit a form requesting it.

Member Manion questioned where the questions are directed and was told it would be directed based on who is designated to receive them.

There is a new student registration page. Interactive registration documents show basic information needed, e.g., residency requirements. School specific information is included in another tab.

A brief demonstration was provided of the site and the various links. The family portal provides easy access to documents and resources such as student handbooks, school supply lists, free and reduced lunch application, and information on after school programs and the PTA.

The School Board page has a link on every school website plus the district site. The setup will be pretty similar to the current site. Two weeks ago new software was purchased called BoardDocs. It will house all of the meeting agendas and policies. It is not yet set-up. The goal is to have it implemented by July 1<sup>st</sup>. That is a very tight schedule to get all of that data in there, but certainly by the beginning of the school year we will have that.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug added when doing a search on the old policy database sometimes it worked and other times it did not. With BoardDocs you can do a search and it will bring up any policy that addresses the searched item, any times the item was addressed on an agenda, etc.

Asked if the SAU would be hosting its policies on its own server, the response was they would be on the BoardDocs server.

Member Manion commented on having used BoardDocs for the past 17 years, and of her positive experience. It is user friendly and easily accessible.

Chairman Haag suggested drop off and pick up times for the schools would be helpful to be listed. Member Manion added the times and procedures would be helpful.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted a communication would be sent out alerting the school community that the site is changing after June 30<sup>th</sup> and provide a little information on how to navigate the new site.

Member Manion spoke of the need for individuals to go to the SAU when wanting a copy of policies. As a temporary measure, she offered to scan, organize and catalog every policy to get them up online on a shared Google drive so that electronic copies could be provided as needed.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated she can scan copies and upload them as a large file or do it by section and it can be posted. She spoke of the amount of work occurring with building a new site and maintaining two sites simultaneously.

## **DELIBERATIONS**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Business Administrator's recommendation with regard to the use of the Special Education Trust Fund

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO APPROVE THE USE OF AN AMOUNT UP TO ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$100,000) FROM THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TRUST FUND TO COVER THE COST OF UNANTICIPATED SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPENSES**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ZAKAR**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Business Administrator's recommendation with regard to the use of the Retained Fund Balance

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO APPROVE THE EXPENDITURE OF ONE HUNDRED EIGHT THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED SIXTY TWO DOLLARS (\$108,162) FROM THE FY23 RETAINED FUND BALANCE TO COVER THE COST OF THE REQUIRED ADA PROJECT  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANION**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Zakar commented it seems to be the perfect use for those funds.

**MOTION CARRIED  
5-0-0**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the General Assurances

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD CHAIRMAN TO REPRESENT THE SCHOOL BOARD, AND ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT HAS CONSULTED WITH ALL MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL BOARD, IN FURTHERANCE OF THE SCHOOL BOARD'S OBLIGATIONS, INCLUDING THOSE ENUMERATED IN [RSA 189:1-A](#), AND PURSUANT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD'S OVERSIGHT OF FEDERAL FUNDS THE DISTRICT WILL BE RECEIVING AND OF THE GENERAL ASSURANCES, REQUIREMENTS AND DEFINITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN SAID FEDERAL PROGRAMS  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANION**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Zakar commented one of the assurances is related to the gun free school zone. She questioned the Board's obligation in signing this when the State says that the State of New Hampshire doesn't have to abide by any Federal gun laws.

Superintendent Corey remarked in terms of Board compliance, what the Board is doing is recognizing all of the different pieces that exist. As far as how we proceed with a case, whether it be in Brookline or Hollis, the Administration would notify the local police department and they would come and deal with the situation. He does not believe there would be non-compliance issue but a discussion with that individual why we don't permit weapons on the property.

**MOTION CARRIED  
5-0-0**

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, GO INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3, II (a) THE DISMISSAL, PROMOTION OR COMPENSATION OF ANY PUBLIC EMPLOYEE AND RSA 91-A:3, II (c) TO DISCUSS A MATTER, WHICH IF DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC, WOULD LIKELY AFFECT ADVERSELY THE REPUTATION OF A PERSON, OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF THE BODY OR AGENCY ITSELF  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ZAKAR**

*A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:*

Yea: Tracy Perry, Colleen Micavich, Alyson Manion, Kelly Zakar, Kenneth Haag

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Nay:

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**MOTION CARRIED**

*The Board went into non-public session at 8:40 p.m.*

*The Board came out of non-public session at 9:35 p.m.*

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO APPROVE THE SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDATION  
FOR COMPENSATION OF NON-UNION PERSONNEL**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MICAVICH**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ADJOURN**

**SECONDED BY MEMBER MANION**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

*The May 24, 2023 meeting of the Brookline School Board was adjourned at 9:36 p.m.*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_