

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2020
Zoom Virtual Meeting, Swanzey, NH

Members Present: Kristen Noonan, Winston Wright, Lisa Steadman, Colleen Toomey, Scott Peters, Eric Stanley, Betty Tatro, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas, Michelle Connor, Brian Bohannon, Karen Wheeler, Dan LeClair and Nick Mosher.

Administration Present: L. Witte, Superintendent, J. Rathbun, Director of Curriculum and Student Assessment, C. Woods, Director of Student Services and J. Morin, Business Administrator.

Also Present: L. Aivaliotis, Recording Secretary

“We collaborate not just to teach, but also to engage and educate every student in our district in an environment that is challenging, caring and safe, while fostering life-long learning.”

1. CALL TO ORDER: S. Peters opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

2. Public Comments: Rochelle Sokol thanked the Board and the staff. She commented that the mask wearing policy was inadequate. She would like the Board to look at the mask policy. She spoke of the statistics regarding COVID. She mentioned Keene and Peterborough have already gone remote. She is asking the Board to move in that direction.

William Larson had asked questions at the last meeting and heard no answers. He asked if his questions could be addressed. He has spoken to the select boards, government offices and DOE. Prolonged isolation is a concern. Dr. Fausci said to open schools and shut down bars. He commented that it was never the position of the CDC to close schools. He commented the children are not going to school for their required number of days.

Bill Hutwelker had sent a letter to the Board from the Swanzey Select board regarding the voting in March and the use of the school.

3. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:

a. Policies: (1st Read)

i. KAA-School, Family and Community Partnerships:

ii. BEDB-Agenda Preparation and Dissemination:

iii. BEDDA-Board Meeting-Rules of Procedure & Order:

iv. BEDH-Public Comment and Participation at Board Meeting:

v. EBB-Safe Schools:

vi. GBCD-Background Investigations and Criminal History Check: The

policies are for a first read. If there are any questions the Board can email K. Noonan.

b. Board Goals: S. Peters said Fac/Fin is working on the CIP and the renovations.

c. Operations/Superintendent's Report:

i. Education Data Report: J. Rathbun explained the Board received the Education slideshow. The 2020 SAT results overall were slightly less. ELA went up but combined went down. We are not seeing our highest levels. This was expected. The seniors took the SATs in the fall. There were 85% to 90% of seniors who took the test. We are seeing an upward trend with the AP results. It makes sense. We offer AP and honors courses. Overall the AP exams are on the rise. The test given at the end of the school year was online and not all of the students took them. Instead of the AP courses the students are taking the honors courses. The workload on the AP courses is quite large. J. Rathbun was asked about dual enrollment. He said it is not part of this discussion tonight. N. Mosher would like to hear the numbers for the dual enrollment at some point. J. Rathbun reviewed the results of the elementary true cohort. The 2019 State Test and the 2020 Interim test were taken by the same cohort and the tests were both similar. Proficiency was slightly down in the younger grades. Sixty to seventy percent of the students represent this report. The State has not released their numbers, there is nothing to compare, no reference and he is not sure how the State scored. It is one test, given on one day. We are now digging into it. The data does not take into consideration that we have been remote since March without anything to compare it to. This is a conversation piece until we receive the information from the State. L. Witte explained the Interim Assessment is not part of the requirement for accountability. There were some parents who opted out for their students and there were some districts who did not participate. J. Rathbun will dig into the data but it cannot be used to give straight answers by itself. J. Rathbun presented the 2020-2021 Trimester Proficiency Report. This information is for K-6 grade students. The numbers are down in Math. N. Mosher commented the numbers should not be alarming with everything going on. J. Rathbun said we will be digging into the data. The results are not a cause for a concern in English with everything going on. There were things that needed to be assessed to get the kids in the schools happy. The teachers are trained. They know the standards. They will work together to figure this out. We need to trust them. B. Bohannon thanked J. Rathbun for the data.

The Education Committee's Smart Goal is to not lose ground on the yearlong standard. The numbers continue to be on track with the goal.

The Board reviewed the incident report. It was explained we are down on the number of incidents. The learning environment is calmer. We have been working with a consultant. The information is required by the State. There are specific categories and subcategories. The report is in the Board packet.

ii. Planning for Budget Hearing (January 14):

iii. Planning for Deliberative Session (January 30) L. Witte explained she and B. Hutwelker will be Zooming with J. O'Shaughnessy to discuss the Deliberative Session. N. Mosher commented there are people who work at the poles and they have concerns.

iv. Extracurricular Discussion: The Board reviewed the information provided in the packet. There is still a lot of activity among the students via Zoom. They are still getting things done safely.

v. Remote/Hybrid Update: L. Witte reported 80.49% of the students are hybrid and 19.51% are remote.

4. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. **Motion to switch from Hybrid to Remote Education: MOTION:** N. Mosher **MOVED** to move the District to remote learning effective immediately until January 19, 2021. **SECOND:** K. Wheeler. **DISCUSSION:** It was commented that we are at a point where it makes sense to do this. B. Bohannon would like to vote on masks first. S. Peters said we have a motion on the floor. M. Connor agrees with B. Bohannon. L. Steadman commented the professionals are saying to stay in school. It is safer. L. Witte said she has provided information in the packet regarding the parent and staff survey. In both cases a broad majority chose to stay with hybrid. She has no recommendation. It is up to the Board. L. Witte explained we have our local dashboard to use. There are 3 active cases in 3 of our buildings. There have been a total of 11 with no transmissions in the schools. **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to amend the motion and to move the District to remote support effective January 4 and returning January 11, 2021. **SECOND:** M. Connor **DISCUSSION:** L. Steadman said this will allow the travelers to quarantine and still have full learning. N. Mosher will not accept it as a friendly amendment. K. Noonan said she does not agree. This will extend the travel time. The hybrid is working even the parents and staff would agree with the motion. C. Toomey would agree with K. Noonan. This will extend the travel time and the social bubble. The kids need to be in school. B. Bohannon will vote no because he wants to discuss masks. L. Steadman will withdraw her amendment. L. Witte explained the Board had made a decision to follow the DHHS decision matrix. There has been no evidence of a cluster with the cases in the district. J. Rathbun explained the improvements to the remote learning model since last year which include streamlining the classes, google classroom, lessons expected at a designated time, parent notification, teacher contact with parents and students and long term projects to name a few. M. Connor commented we need to stick with a hybrid model. K. Noonan reminded the Board about unreliable internet service. **VOTE:** K. Noonan-no, W. Wright-no, K. Wheeler-yes, M. Connor-no, N. Mosher-yes, B. Bohannon-no, D. LeClair-no, C. McDaniel-Thomas-no. E. Stanley-no, B. Tatro-no, C. Toomey-no, S. Peters-no and L. Steadman-no. **VOTE:** .97/12.030/0/0. **Motion passes.**

b. **Mask Policy:** L. Witte explained the staff did a survey regarding the wearing of masks and 57.5% would like to leave the policy as is and 42.5% would like it to change it. **MOTION:** B. Bohannon **MOVED** to mandate masks at all times while on school grounds until further notice, with the exception of lunch/snack breaks and 2 other designated mask breaks. **SECOND:** K. Wheeler. **DISCUSSION:** K. Wheeler commented there needs to be a mask break. B. Bohannon would agree no masks at lunch and when outside. L. Witte asked if they are necessary when they are at their desks and social distancing. The Board will evaluate this policy at the January 19, 2021 Board Meeting. It was commented that socially distancing outside was acceptable without masks. C. Toomey would agree. N. Mosher asked how this would affect sports. K. Noonan said the motion is too specific. It should say mask breaks when appropriate, you need to trust the staff. D. LeClair does not agree. B. Tatro is in favor of it. S. Peters does not want to micro manage. K. Noonan would like to make a friendly amendment and have a 5-minute break from the masks every hour. B. Bohannon does not agree. C. Toomey said it is clear most of the elementary teachers are okay as is. She said there are kids who wear them all day. This is doable. M. Connor would agree but what are the repercussions. N. Mosher does not agree with the 5 minute breaks. K. Noonan asked for clarity regarding masks on the buses. L. Witte will have to notify the bus company. **VOTE:** K Noonan-no, W. Wright-yes, K. Wheeler-yes, M. Connor-no, N. Mosher-yes, B. Bohannon-yes, D. LeClair-no, C. McDaniel-Thomas-yes, E. Stanley-no, B. Tatro-yes, C. Toomey-yes, S. Peters-no and L. Steadman-yes. 7.569/5.431/0/0.

Motion passes. It was asked about what is considered a mask. It was agreed to stick to the definition of masks currently.

c. **MOA: MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to accept the MOA between the District and the MESSA Unit as presented. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **DISCUSSION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas commented this is for the working conditions related to COVID-19. She also mentioned extending it to others not in the association. S. Peters said that is a separate motion. **VOTE:** 10.667/0/1.335/.998. (S. Peters recused from vote) **Motion passes. MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to automatically extend the broadest protections available under any one COVID-19 MOA with a MRSD Bargaining Unit, to all district staff and to extend future provisions equally and liberally. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **VOTE:** 10.544/0/1.335/1.122. (S. Peters recused) **Motion passes.**

d. **CRC Presentation: Pamphlet/Talking Points Remote:** The CRC presented an informational pamphlet which they would like the Board to approve. The CRC will then mail this information to everyone in the district. The pamphlet contains information on the elementary renovation and related items. W. Wright commented on the size of the print. C. McDaniel-Thomas explained this is a sample. The company we pay to do the graphic design will make the required adjustments. L. Steadman said it is a great job. She would suggest a graphic design company to do the work. C. McDaniel-Thomas said the administration will hire one. K. Noonan would like the Gilsum/Fitzwilliam information corrected. J. Morin explained the Finance and Facilities met and discussed the Gilsum renovations. She has received emails from K. Barker and he can identify and dial back on Gilsum. The number is smaller but we are not sure unless K. Barker does the work to come up with the exact number. S. Peters asked if the Board is okay with approving without the breakdown. K. Noonan will not approve a lump sum of Gilsum and Fitzwilliam. The school information needs to be separate. It was also suggested to remove the acronyms. K. Noonan would like to see the concrete numbers for Gilsum. It was suggested to use the Turner report number of 1.8 million for Gilsum or 1.9 million from K. Barker. S. Peters asked if it was realistic to ask D. LaPointe to make a list for Gilsum by the January 5 meeting. J. Morin will ask. He is on vacation the week of Christmas. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to table the CRC pamphlet discussion until the January 5, 2021 School Board Meeting and allow the CRC Team to continue to research. **SECOND:** K. Wheeler. **VOTE:** 6.181/5.608/1.211/0. **Motion passes.**

e. **December 1, 2020 Minutes: MOTION:** W. Wright **MOVED** To approve the December 1, 2020 School Board Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** B. Tatro **VOTE:** 12.030/0/.970/0. **Motion passes.**

f. **Manifest: MOTION:** B. Tatro **MOVED** the manifest in the amount of \$2,308,303.39. **SECOND:** W. Wright **VOTE:** 12.243/0/.757/0. **Motion passes.**

g. **Approve district vehicle purchase:** The administration met and felt purchasing a van to transport the students safely was the best use of the supplemental funds to be used by December 31, 2020. The district received 3 quotes. They would recommend Toyota/Volvo of Keene. **MOTION:** N. Mosher **MOVED** to approve the purchase of an 8 passenger Toyota Sienna Van from Toyota/Volvo of Keene using the SPSRF # 1 CARES Grant Funds. **SECOND:** M. Connor. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

h. **Half-Year Special Educator (CARES):** The Board will discuss this at their next meeting.

5. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

- a. Article One
- b. Review CRC
- c. CRC Articles in Plain English
- d. Respond to Town Selectmen
- e. Hybrid/Remote Update
- f. Update Deliberative Session Planning
- g. Public Hearing for Health Insurance Surplus

6. **Public Comments:** Yvonne Peters of Troy commented on the new adjusted mask policy. She said there will be many questions. She commented that wearing the masks all the time is silly when you are in your classroom sitting by yourself. If that is the intent, it needs to be made clear.

7. **10:39 PM Motion to enter into a Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3 II(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person: MOTION:** N. Mosher **MOVED** to enter into a non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person. **SECOND:** K. Noonan **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

8. **ADJOURNMENT: MOTION:** W. Wright **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 10:47 PM. **SECOND:** M. Connor **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY: Yes/No/Abstain/Absent