

Ashland School Board Regular Meeting Ashland Elementary
School – Heffernan Media Center
Tuesday, June 4, 2024 @ 6:00 p.m.
Policy Review Committee – 5:30 p.m.
MINUTES

- I. CALL TO ORDER
- II. RECORD ROLL
- III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Members Present:

Mr. Stephen Heath, Chair
Mrs. Sandra Coleman, Vice-Chair
Mr. Stephen Felton

Members Absent:

Mr. Jesse Farris (with notice)
Mrs. Jennifer Foote (with notice)

Administrators Present:

Mrs. Mary Moriarty, Superintendent
Mrs. Ashley Dolloff, Business
Administrator

Others Present:

Mrs. Elaine Dodge
Mrs. Lisa Holiday
Mr. Cole Mock
Ms. Rachel Soney
Ms. Elisabeth Hess

- IV. PUBLIC COMMENT – *Opened at 6:02 p.m.*
- V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Data Privacy Plan

Cole Mock provided an update regarding the Ashland Data Privacy Plan. With increasing use of digital tools and technology in the classroom, it is essential to protect the personal information of students (names, date of birth, addresses, etc.) as this data can impact student safety, privacy, and their academic future. Student data privacy laws and regulations serve to maintain and safeguard sensitive information from being misused.

Mr. Mock is still working to completely redraft the plan. Mark Parsons from Inter-Lakes has been assisting. They have worked with Primex in person and remotely to ensure our school is following all policies and procedures that Primex deems necessary. Primex provides audits and works with the school district to help us strengthen our plan.

Ashland has done very well in the audits over the last year. All policies are in alignment with laws and regulation, including data records, password procedures, and other privacy and security procedures and policies.

Working on an emergency response plan with Mark Parsons, which will provide a comprehensive overview of the procedures in the case of a data breach or other security emergency. Primex is also helping develop this plan.

Mr. Felton asked if the school provides any training on digital security with staff.

Mr. Mock said there is some, but he would like to do more at the beginning of the year. The staff generally know to report anything that looks strange.

Mrs. Moriarty noted that this would be a great thing to incorporate into the beginning of the year.

Mr. Mock said that it would be helpful to go over how to identify phishing attempts.

Mr. Felton asked if there were any changes to the plan.

Mr. Cole said the plan is the same as last year. There are no additions or subtractions to the plan yet. The team will be collecting all the data from Primex about things that need to be tweaked or changed, and Mark Parsons will assist in aligning the Ashland plan with the Inter-Lakes plan.

Mrs. Moriarty clarified that legally, the Board must approve the Data Privacy Plan by June 30th each year. Mr. Mock is still in the process of integrating all the work with Primex and Mr. Parsons into the plan, so those changes will be finalized at a later date. He will circle back during the next school year with any changes, before the next approval cycle.

Mrs. Coleman moved, seconded by Mr. Felton, to approve the Data Privacy Plan as presented.

The motion carried 3-0.

B. Special Education Determinations

Mrs. Moriarty introduced the Ashland and SAU #2 Special Education department, including Rachel Soney, Special Education Teacher; Elisabeth Hess, Special Education Teacher; Elaine Dodge, former Director of Student Services, supporting the SAU part-time; and Lisa Holiday, Director of Student Services.

Mrs. Dodge shared the determinations for Special Education. The federal government monitors all states in regards the implementation of IDEA regulations and determines if the state is meeting all the requirements. In turn, the state monitors every District. There are Special Education Indicators, and recently new indicators were added in terms of state assessment.

On the LEA Determination Rubric, a lower score is better. Districts can receive scores of N/A, 0, 1, or 2 for each determination. 0 means you did not meet indicator; 1 means that the indicator was met but does not necessarily mean intervention is required from the state. Ashland did very well, with only a couple of indicators being met. Overall, AES scored in the net criteria range so there will be no assistance or sanctions from the state.

Mrs. Dodge provided the Board with an overview of the areas in the LEA Determinations document and went through Ashland's scores in each area.

Mr. Felton asked where the data comes from and when it is collected.

Mrs. Dodge explained that the data comes from our state special education IEP system. Every IEP developed for a student must get developed through this system, and a lot of information about services, service time, speech therapy/occupational therapy/physical therapy, and how much time of their

day is spent in the regular education classroom versus outside of the classroom. Another data source is i4see, our student data management system. The data in i4see picks up data on student assessment. Mrs. Dodge also noted that the district's grant management system is also a data source.

In the seven indicators, Ashland Elementary did very well. The one area to note is the Preschool Environment. Because we do not have a preschool at our elementary school, we receive the highest score (2). Ashland's preschool age students may be attending a private daycare, and the school staff need to work with the family and that daycare to figure out how Special Education services will be delivered. The district has been successful in the past with that model. Currently, we are struggling a little with that model. We have to track the progress of preschool students, and three times a year we have to rate them on their communication, social-emotional, academic, language, physical development, etc.

Mr. Felton asked how the team identifies which students need to be evaluated.

Mrs. Dodge said it is the students considered preschool age that have an IEP in place.

Mrs. Moriarty noted that a three-year-old might come to our attention through Early Supports and Services. Area agencies will sometimes initiate contact on behalf of these students. If a student gets early interventions, they must have an IEP by the time they are three.

Mrs. Dodge continued, in the area of assessment, Ashland did not meet our state participation rate; we received a score of two. This is an area where we are contending with a state law that says parents can opt students out of state testing, but we are accountable to meet the 95% participation rate. This conflicts with federal law.

The next area is related to the state wanting to ensure that students are in school as much as possible. In that category, we have met the requirements.

The next section is related to evaluation of new IEP students. The federal government and the state government require that if a parent or anyone refers a student for Special Education, and the referral team accepts, the district must have evaluations completed and a meeting held within 60 days of a parent signing the permission to evaluate form. Mrs. Dodge acknowledged that the Ashland staff have done a wonderful job at managing the number of evaluations received.

The next section is related to IDEA Grant and whether we allocate 50% of those funds by January each year. Ashland met those deadlines and has not had any formal Special Education complaints filed with the DOE, indicating that Ashland families are happy with the services the students receive.

Mrs. Moriarty said in the assessment area, there is participation and proficiency. She noted that we are struggling in proficiency, which is not unique to Ashland. The expectation is that all students will be proficient.

Mrs. Dodge noted that the bar is not lowered for Special Education students. It is the same bar that is held for all students. That is where some of the gap comes into the play. The state and the federal governments want to see that even students with IEPs are closing the gap between their performance and the expectations for all students. That has always been difficult to meet. There are reasons why a student has an IEP, including academic struggling in various areas.

Mr. Felton asked if the gap analysis is measured from year to year.

Mrs. Dodge said yes and noted that the cohort of students changed every year. When this data is pulled, it is hard to compare this year's students to last year's students.

Mrs. Moriarty noted that the greater the gaps, the greater the need for direct services.

Mr. Felton asked if there is any practical way that this could be changed.

Mrs. Dodge said it would be helpful to analyze individual students with IEPs support and their test scores, and evaluate whether we can intensify services, or provide different or more support and services.

Mr. Heath noted that providing more services also means removing students from regular classrooms.

Mrs. Moriarty said the team is working to find ways to do more within the framework we already have.

Mr. Felton said if you score high because they are in a regular classroom, it must be difficult for the individual classrooms to deal with these wide gaps.

Mrs. Moriarty noted that the determination from the DOE says, "needs assistance."

Mrs. Dodge explained that this involves the school having internal conversations, not the DOE coming in to provide their assistance. This is more of a note of caution from the state, and an opportunity for us to look at what can be done.

Mrs. Moriarty turned the Board's attention to the fact that our Special Education numbers have increased substantially.

Elisabeth Hess, Special Education Teacher noted that the reason she was hired in 2016 was because the school and the Board recognized that the caseload was too high for the one Special Education teacher that was there.

Mrs. Moriarty said that there were 15 students in Special Education in 2016, and now there are 39 students. Not all students are present at AES, but the school is responsible for providing services.

There are 32 students in the building on IEPs out of 141 students. That is about 25% of our student body on IEPs.

Mrs. Moriarty noted that every district is experiencing an increase in Special Education needs. As a state, New Hampshire is also experiencing the intensity of needs of younger learners, including inability to regulate. AES, and the state at-large, have had an increased number of children with great difficulty being able to be in a classroom setting. Collectively, we would like to propose a full-time Special Education teacher in next year's budget.

In the interim, the district is looking for a part-time teacher. Though this was not budgeted for, the current situation is not sustainable. Mrs. Moriarty will pursue pulling some funds from various sources, including the expendable trust and REAP funds. Realistically, AES is at a breaking point, and this would be an interim step before looking for a full-time teacher. Mrs. Moriarty noted that the district has a lead on a part-time teacher that they are pursuing.

The Board asked what the anticipated cost would be.

Mrs. Moriarty shared that the part-time teacher would be about \$60,000 total, including benefits.

Discussion ensued. Mrs. Coleman noted that this would be a huge budgetary increase. The Special Education team acknowledged that there are limited services available as it stands for any students with IEPs. If one of the Special Education teachers needs to travel to an area agency to see an Early Supports and Services student, then she is not available to students in the building. Adding a third Special Education teacher would make things more sustainable. Ideally, someday we would have a preschool program, but that is another cost. Ms. Hess noted that a third teacher would alleviate some of the pressures on herself and Ms. Soney.

Mrs. Moriarty asked the Board to consider a motion to move forward with this proposal. Mr. Heath said that the Board needs to discuss unencumbered funds first. He expressed that he fears that if people are worked beyond their capacity, people will leave. He would seriously consider the possibility of a full-time teacher. Mrs. Moriarty expressed financial concerns about this possibility.

The Board thanked the Special Education team for their time and efforts. No action was taken at this time.

VI. MINUTES

A. **Tuesday, May 7, 2024 Regular School Board Meeting Minutes**

Mrs. Coleman moved, seconded by Mr. Felton, to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2024 Regular School Board Meeting.

The motion carried 3-0.

B. **Tuesday, May 28, 2024 Special School Board Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Felton moved, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to approve the minutes of the May 28, 2024 Special School Board Meeting.

The motion carried 3-0.

VII. CURRENT BILLS PAYABLE

A. General Operating Expenses

Mrs. Coleman moved, seconded by Mr. Felton, to approve the payment of bills, manifest #2015.

The motion carried 3-0.

VIII. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A. Principal's Report/Enrollment Report

Mrs. Moriarty reviewed the June Enrollment Report with the Board, noting that enrollment has not changed from the previous month.

Mr. Donnelly shared his Principal's Report with the Board. Attendance for SAS testing was great and there were minimal makeups. Last week was Project Night, which had a great turnout and went well. Team Respect and Integrity are going to Prescott Farm tomorrow in Laconia for a nature field trip. Today, the school held Muffins in the Morning; the cafeteria was packed with families. Thursday morning is our Honors Society Inductees Ceremony. Our robotics team competed at Merrimack Valley High School and had a great day, finishing fifth. Field day is on Monday, and our eighth graders are preparing for graduation on Tuesday at 6:00 p.m. Finally, we have planned a staff get-together next Wednesday in the afternoon to celebrate our year and say goodbye to the staff members who are moving on.

B. Year-to-Date Financial Report

Mrs. Dolloff shared the Year-to-Date financial report with the Board. No action was taken.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

A. Anticipated End-of-Year Fund Balance and Proposed Encumbrances

Mrs. Moriarty shared the anticipated end-of-year fund balance and the proposed encumbrances with the Board.

Mrs. Moriarty shared that the district is anticipating an unassigned fund balance of about \$157,000. The district has altered the recommendation from last month, due to the Special Education needs. We had set aside some money for bollards, which are recommended from a safety perspective at the front of the building. This would be about \$15,000. We would like to move forward with these, and we may be able to absorb that cost. If not, we would ask that the Board remove \$15,000 from the Facilities Expendable Trust, which has about \$180,000 in it. Mrs. Moriarty recommended moving forward with the project and suggested that the Board wait and see where next year's budget is before taking that money out.

The district also reduced electricity, recommending the Board consider encumbering \$25,000. Mrs. Moriarty recommended shifting this to Special Education.

The playground has \$17,900 that has been encumbered for it. The district is

suggesting not making any changes or spending those funds yet, and waiting until next year to see if we need to add a full-time teacher.

Mrs. Coleman moved, seconded by Mr. Felton, to approve end-of-year fund balance encumbrances as presented.

The motion carried 3-0.

B. United States Department of Agriculture

Mrs. Moriarty shared an update regarding the USDA grant. This item will be addressed again at the next Board meeting in August.

X. NEW BUSINESS (CONT.)

A. NHSBA 2024 Call for Resolutions – Deadline August 2nd

Mrs. Moriarty shared the NHSBA 2024 Call for Resolutions with the Board.

The Board reached consensus to table this item for the August meeting and ask NHSBA for an extension.

B. Permission to Hire/Accept Resignations

Mrs. Coleman moved, seconded by Mr. Felton, to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to accept resignations and hire candidates prior to the August School Board Meeting.

The motion carried 3-0.

XI. POLICY

A. First Readings

Mr. Felton moved, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to approve first reading of the following policies:

- JICH – Student Drug and Alcohol Policy
- JJG – Non-School Sponsored Contests for Students
- CCB – Organizational Chart
- CF – Role of the Principal
- DA – Fiscal Management Goals
- DB – Annual Budget
- DBC – Budget Preparation
- DBI – Budget Implementation
- DBJ – Transfer of Appropriations
- DI – Fiscal Accounting and Reporting
- DIE – Audits
- DKA – Payroll Procedures

The motion carried 3-0.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENT – *Closed at 7:20 p.m.*

XIII. NONPUBLIC SESSION

A. Nonpublic Session

R.S.A. 91-A:3 II(c): This includes matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this Board, unless such a person requests an open meeting.

Mrs. Coleman moved, seconded by Mr. Felton, to enter nonpublic session at 7:21 p.m.

The motion carried 3-0.

B. Public Session

Mrs. Coleman moved, seconded by Mr. Felton, to reenter public session at 7:34 p.m.

XIV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Tuesday, August 6, 2024

Ashland School Board @ Ashland Elementary School - Heffernan Media Center.

- Policy Committee - **5:30 p.m.**
- Ashland School Board Regular Meeting – **6:00 p.m.**

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Felton moved, seconded by Mrs. Coleman, to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

The motion carried 3-0.

The meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Bullimore, Recording Secretary