

MARLBOROUGH BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, February 27, 2025 - Library @ 6:30 p.m.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call by Chairperson:

Kerri Barella, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm

BOE Members Present: Kerri Barella, Angela Colantonio, Amy Kuhrt, Chip Morris, Jean Wilson, and Linda Earley.

Administration Present: Dr. Holly Hageman, Superintendent
Paula Graef, Principal
Kristen Trahan, Principal
John Mercier, Director of Operations

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Kerri Barella proposed to move agenda item 7.2 Policy under Subcommittees to be discussed before celebrations as she has an oral report to update the Board.

C. Morris made a motion to move agenda item 7.2 Policy under Subcommittees to discuss before celebrations, seconded by J. Wilson. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Kerri Barilla shared a policy update ahead of the consent agenda action. She suggested pulling policy 5145.53 from the Consent Agenda to present changes and discuss further. Ms. Barella informed the Board that during the first reading of the transgender policy at the last meeting, the policy committee recommended adopting CAGE's updated version, with one exception: the language that prevented the school from contacting parents. After receiving feedback from board members, consultation with legal counsel, and study of the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Guidance on Civil Rights Protections and Supports for Transgender or Gender-Diverse Students, adjustments were made to the current MES policy. It is the recommendation of the Policy Committee to revise the current policy versus CAGE's update policy to ensure alignment with federal and state laws within the context of an elementary school setting.

C. Morris made a motion to pull item 6.4 from Consent Agenda and to move it to another section for further discussion, seconded by L. Earley. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

3. Celebrations: None

4. Public Comments:

Dave Porteous - 15 Edstrom Rd. Suggested having language that respects the privacy of the child and make school a safe place for children in the upper elementary grades, and at the primary level, allow the parents to be informed.

Christine Moraga - 18 Flood Rd. She was not sure why language was crossed out on the policy. She would have left the language as it was. Christine feels the privacy of the child is important. She wants teachers, students and staff to be protected.

Diane Dunn - 180 Saner Rd. Diane believes school professionals have a greater understanding of mental health issues among the school population and what students are experiencing and she respects that. Diane feels there should be more, not less open doors. Diane read a quote from Trevorproject.org. She feels the school policy must support the entire school population.

Shana McDermott - 27 Hall Trail. Shana thanked the Board for updating the policy. She feels the policy should be kept as it is currently written.

Josh Bruhn - 49 South Main St. As a parent he does not think it's the school's place to cut him out of communication about his child.

Kerri Barella read two comments that were submitted via email to be read out loud during the public comment section:

Anna Holden - 41 Emily Rd. "It is my understanding that you'll be discussing policy regarding transgender youth tonight. I sincerely hope that the policy you decide upon explicitly protects student confidentiality and privacy. I can only imagine how difficult and confusing it must be for a child who is transgender/questioning their gender with a supportive family, but for those children whose parents or family aren't supportive, it must be even more difficult, confusing, and scary. I implore you to choose language for a policy that will protect a child's right to confidentiality so that they may reach out to staff members at school for support without fear."

Jen Barrone - 422 Jones Hollow Road. "It is my firm belief that parents are the primary caregivers, not schools or teachers, and as such should be included in all decisions/information/situations involving their children. This includes gender status."

5. Additions to the Agenda: None

6. Consent Agenda:

- 6.1 Minutes of 01/23/25 Regular Business Meeting, 01/23/25 Policy Committee Meeting, and 01/30/2025 Regular Business Meeting - Budget;
- 6.2 Personnel Actions – none;
- 6.3 Reports – receive and file the following document: monthly enrollment report;
- 6.4 Approval of Policy: P# 5145.53 - Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Youth .

A.Colantonio made a motion that the Board approve Consent Agenda items 6.1-6.3, seconded by C. Morris. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Discussion of 6.4 - Policy 5145.53: On behalf of the Policy Committee, Dr. Holly Hageman read the current MES policy along with the revisions discussed in the Policy Committee meeting prior to tonight's Board meeting. These revisions are being presented for approval.

C. Morris made a motion to approve the presented policy # 5145.53 with any amendments as advised by Board counsel relative to the paragraph referencing FERPA , seconded by L. Earley. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

7. Oral Reports

7.1 Advisory Groups

- **PTO** – Paula Graef provided an overview of the PTO events that took place in February, including the 100th Day of School celebration, a Bingo Event, and the King Arthur Bake for Good program. Kristen Trahan reviewed upcoming PTO events, including the Annual Wolf Pack Hockey Night, where chorus students will perform. Other events include Movie Night on March 14th, Parent/Teacher Conferences with the Whoot Whoot Snack Wagon on March 19th, and the Fun Run Fundraiser scheduled for April 10th.
- **SAC** – No meeting in February
- **Operations, Wellness & Safety** – John Mercier informed the Board that the Community Room experienced sound issues, which required the purchase of new audio mixing boards. One of the boards was generously donated by the PTO. He also reported that two boiler pumps had broken down; one has already been repaired, and the other is currently being evaluated.
- **Board of Finance Liaison** – Linda Earley reported that the BOF held three meetings in February to discuss the budget
- **AHM** – Chip Morris shared that registration is now open for the Spring Family Resource Center classes, which are available to children ages 0-5 and their caregivers. Preschool Summer Camp registration will begin on March 1st. The Health Matters programs, which are open to all ages, are also available. Additionally, a K-2nd grade Theatre Class will start on April 7th. Other upcoming events include the Kids vs Cops basketball game on March 14th at RHAM High School, the AHM Spring Concert Fundraiser with Patrick Tobin will be held on May 3rd, and the Tap Into Nature event on March 15th and 16th.

7.2 Subcommittees

- **Policy:** As reported at the top of the minutes
- **Personnel:** None
- **Communications:** None

7.3 **Chairperson:** Kerri Barella noted that she met with Dr. Holly Hageman earlier in the week to provide feedback for the Mid-Year Superintendent Evaluation.

7.4 Superintendent and Administrative Team:

- **FY26 Budget Process Update:** Dr. Holly Hageman reported that she has been attending the BOF meetings to stay informed about the FY26 budget and will continue to stay informed. Dr. Hageman will send the BOE the upcoming BOF meeting dates, spelling out their timeline of decision-making.

8. Unfinished Business

- 8.1 **Facilities Study: Updated Next Steps** - John Mercier provided the Board with the "MES Educational Facility Study and Project Options - What's Next?" document. The document includes a chart that outlines the next steps and organizes projects into clusters, all aligned with a potential referendum in May 2027 to approve the funding for the projects.

9. New Business

- 9.1 **Formation of Facilities Committee - Discussion:** Chip Morris emphasized the need for the school district and the Town to create a public information campaign to educate the community about

the school renovation and capital improvement project, ensuring support for the necessary funding when the referendum occurs. Dr. Hageman informed the Board that a Public Building Committee would likely be formed for this project, consisting of representatives from the school, the Board of Selectmen (BOS), the Board of Finance (BOF), and other stakeholders to oversee the project. The Board did not move to create a BOE Facilities Committee at this time, but asked the Board Chair and Superintendent to continue to collaborate with the Chair of the BOS and the Town Manager for planning steps, timeline and actions once this budget season is completed.

C. Morris made a motion that the Superintendent along with the Board Chair continue to foster communication with the Town Manager, the BOS, BOF and the Public Building Committee in planning for the future school project, seconded by K. Barella. Kerri Barella, Amy Kuhrt, Chip Morris, Jean Wilson, and Linda Earley all approved. Angela Colantonio abstained. MOTION CARRIED.

- 9.2 **Review February Financial Report:** Submitted

- 9.3 **First Reading of Proposed Policy Revisions:**

The Board reviewed and discussed on a first read basis the proposed policy revisions as presented by the Policy Subcommittee - P# 9323 - Preparation of Agenda

10. **Public Comments:** None

11. **Communications**

- 11.1 **Staff Vacancy Summary:** Submitted

12. **Future Meetings & Topics:**

- Special BOE Budget Meeting, if needed - TBD
- Tentative Policy Subcommittee Meeting, Thursday, March 27, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
- Next Regular Business Meeting, Thursday, March 27, 2025, 6:30 p.m.

13. **Adjournment:**

J. Wilson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 pm, seconded by A.Colantonio. unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carmela Monte