

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
February 18, 2025
Monadnock Regional Middle/High School, Swanzey, NH

School Board Members Present: Scott Peters, Lisa Steadman, Betty Tatro, Kristen Noonan, Edmond LaPlante, Jeff Cesaitis, Dan LeClair, Gina Carraro, Eric Stanley, Jennifer Strimbeck and Hannah Blood. **Absent:** Brian Bohannon and Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas.

Administration Present: J. Rathbun, Superintendent, L. Spencer, Assistant Superintendent and J. Morin, Business Administrator.

1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER at 7:00 PM: S.Peters called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

3. #celebrate MRSD: J. Rathbun informed the Board that the District is up to date on Student Violence and Prevention and passed with flying colors with the Dept. of Labor.

a. Indoor Track: State Championship: Payton Joslyn is the new Division II, 1000 Meter State Champion. Congratulations Payton. **MOTION:** E. Stanley **MOVED** to award swag to Payton Joslyn for being Division II, 1000 Meter State Champion. **SECOND:** K. Noonan.

VOTE: Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

4. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION & DISCUSSION

a. Standing agenda:

i. Superintendent Goals Update: S.Peters reviewed the 3 goals of the Superintendent. The Board will be receiving a survey for the Superintendent's Evaluation. This is based on the goals. Any questions may be emailed to J. Rathbun. **H. Blood arrives.**

ii. Board Meeting Calendar & Goals: S. Peters announced that C. McDaniel-Thomas will no longer be on the Fin/Fac Committee. The committee will wrap things up on Wednesday. The Policy Committee is done unless something needs to be done.

iii. School Resource Officer (Status Update): There is no update.

iv. Staffing Update: There is no update.

b. Annual Board & Superintendent Evaluations (Process Overview): The Board Evaluations have gone out to the members. S.Peters explained the process.

c. Committee Appointments: There are no committee appointments at this time.

d. Policies 1st Read:

i. ACAC: Prohibition of Sexual Harassment: Policy & Grievance Procedures

ii. AC: Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment & Anti-Discrimination Plan

iii. AC-R(2):Nondiscrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment, and Anti-Discrimination Plan - Annual Notice of Contact Information

iv. ACA: Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedure

v. ACN: Accommodation of Lactation Needs

vi. GBAM: Accommodation of Pregnancy and Related Medical Conditions:

Personnel

vii. IHBCA: Accommodation of Pregnancy and Related Medical Conditions:

Students: K. Noonan presented the policies for first read on behalf of the Policy Committee and asked the Board to waive the first read on Policy ACAC. **MOTION:** K. Noonan **MOVED** to waive Policy ACAC for a first read and to accept Policy ACAC as presented by the Policy Committee. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

viii. Motion to adopt policy eff. 3/5/25

1. IKL - Academic Honesty & Integrity

ix. Motion to update policies eff. 7/1/25

1. EEAA - Video And Audio Surveillance On School Property

2. EHAA - Computer Security, E-Mail And Internet Communications

3. JICL/GBEF - Technology Acceptable Use

4. JICJ/JICM/GBEH/GBEBE - Authorized Communication Devices

(A.K.A. "The Cell Phone Policy"): H. Blood on behalf of the Education Committee explained that the committee met with the Behavior Committee asking input on what they would like to see a Cell Phone Policy look like. There is one Cell Phone Policy for both staff and students. The policies being presented was through the work of the Education Committee, administration and Behavior Committee. S.Peters explained the committee is presenting Policy IKL because the District does not have an academic honesty policy.

e. Warrant Article One/Budget Adjustment Plan: J. Rathbun presented possible budget reductions to the Board. He explained that he met with the full administration. They did all of the work. It was a very difficult task and he thanked them all. This possible budget reduction presentation was then brought to the teachers and staff. This was very difficult for them but he was very happy how they handled the conversation. The items being presented are not recommendations. The administration did the exercise ahead of time just in case. We have to be beneficial to the students. The grant funded and federally funded programs bring nothing to the table. When class size is discussed there are physical restraints. Transportation in NH is not required for high school students. There will be no savings because the high school students go on the middle school buses. Certified personnel is estimated at \$100,000 in salary, paraprofessionals are at \$75,000 and Specialists are at \$110,000. This includes salary and benefits. J. Rathbun mentioned that there is an Out of District Student who has moved with a savings of \$308,000. He presented his items to the Board. Materials and Maintenance in the amount of \$225,000. This will include no emergency maintenance, 25% cut from each line in those budgets, repairs will wait and parents will be asked to supply items for their children. The administration and Board reductions will be in the amount of \$83,000, Board stipends, Professional Development and Dues/Fees. This will have a minimal impact on students. SAU/District/School Support Staff in the amount of \$375,000 include five non-education staff, If

there is no custodian on for events at the school the fee would not be waived and the outside group would have to pay. Extra-Curricular in the amount of \$500,000 which includes the entire district, elementary schools and the MRMHS. There are more than 60% of the students involved and would be impacted. The students would turn to the parents and the Booster Clubs. Pre-K in the amount of \$600,000. This program is not required. This program currently has regular ed. and Special Ed. students. If the program goes away the Special Ed. Students would have to go to the school for their services. This program would be a big loss, early intervention is so important. Student Wellness and Mental Health in the amount of \$620,000. This would be 6 positions and a loss of services in a time of need. The student impact will be felt. It would lead others to take on more responsibilities. Regular Education in the amount of \$750,000 would be for classroom teachers and support to the elementary schools and electives at the MRMHS. It would be 7.5 positions and elective positions to 50%. Loss of instructional support and larger classrooms. Special Education in the amount of \$1,245,000 to include teachers/case managers, paraprofessionals and specialists. This would be up to 15 positions. It would mean major work for others and compliance issues. Significantly more difficult, more pressure on more people. Summer School and Ecology School in the amount of \$60,000. The Ecology School would shift back to the parents and fundraising. J. Rathbun commented this is only a preview of what might happen if the Proposed Default Budget does not pass. The list of cuts presented is in the amount of 4.85 million which is more than needed. G. Carraro suggested the individual towns pay for their own student transportation. J. Rathbun said transportation is out to bid currently. E. LaPlante gave a hats off to J.Rathbun and the administration for putting this together. J.Rathbun commented that the administration does not agree with these items. We need to cut 3.2million. We want to be ready to keep the schools running. We are presenting the information so the Board can be advised. G.Carraro commented on Pre-K. It was explained the program is for regular students who pay \$125.00 a month and Special Ed. students. J. Strimbeck appreciates the work but at some point will have to make changes. She knows it will hurt. D. LeClair suggested having the Middle School and the elementary school day times the same in order to save on transportation. J. Morin commented that it would be worse. It would double the buses. E.Stanley commented that this would be devastating to the School District and he hopes the voters realize it is too much and will destroy the school. H. Blood appreciates the presentation and agrees it will be devastating. It is a lot to think about. B. Tatro asked about band and drama. J. Rathbun said they are classes. It was asked what if Title One and federal funding go away. J. Rathbun explained Title One is a law and the rest he is not sure about, things change daily. H. Blood asked about vacancies. There are some vacancies that are covered by contracted services and he would not want them to go. K. Noonan said the presentation was very well done. In the Special services area there are a lot of cuts. J. Rathbun commented these are not recommendations. We do not want to see this happen, we can operate but it would not be the best for the students. K. Noonan is concerned about the Special Ed. lines. Pre-K is very important especially with the Special Ed. Students. L. Steadman commented that this is very painful. Special Ed. Services will not be able to keep up with the IEPs and parent issues. J. Rathbun commented it is a big number

but the budget is as well. It will be hard but we have a plan to manage. Extra-curricular is on a sliding scale, Special Ed. has a little play, Reg. Ed. trying not to put people in a panic mode, not a good environment, Pre-K is all or none; that is a tough conversation, health and wellness there is movement, administration room to move and there are other areas that have wiggle room. In regular ed. there will be personnel equity throughout the district. G. Carraro suggested fundraising for the Ecology School. The Board will have a conversation on how to get the message out to the public to let the voters know that the Board and the Budget committee do not support Article One. It was suggested to present public documents in a slide deck form to the public. Board Members can present any information as long as they are not doing it as a Board Member. It was suggested to spend funds to get the word out. J. Rathbun explained that information can not go home with the students. L.Steadman commented on revenue recovery. J. Rathbun said it helps with the tax burden but does not bring the budget down. E. Stanley said to be careful with the information you are putting out there. B. Tatro said to make it clear if they vote against Article One the schools will get more money. E.LaPlante asked if it is possible to ask the Unions to change insurance plans. J. Rathbun said it can not happen. There are 100s of people and a huge task to renegotiate. It can not happen in a month. Bargaining is a year out. It is not fair to say to the teachers if you renegotiate your health insurance it can save your job. The teachers are at the bottom of the pay and were trashed at the Deliberative. We will not be able to keep staff. D. LeClair and E. Stanley felt that it is important to keep extracurricular. Some students come to school because of sports and clubs. G. Carraro would like to consider cutting Pre K. J. Rathbun commented there are 96 kids and it is not a day care.

5. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. Working Session: Warrant Article One Marketing: J. Cesaitis stated that there needs to be a unified message to the voters. S.Peters commented that this is a Board initiative not the administration. E. Stanley suggested a Zoom Meeting to inform the public. D. LeClair suggested Facebook Live. D.LeClair, J. Cesaitis, B. Tatro and H. Blood had volunteered to get Facebook Live going. The committee will write a script, organize social media accounts and promote, post upcoming events, participate in Facebook Live and post the recording to the board pages and school pages. S. Peters has appointed J. Cesaitis, H. Blood, B. Tatro and D. LeClair to the Ad hoc Committee for Facebook Live. S.Peters commented that this is a proud moment. This is the first year of the new Superintendent with no panic. He commented on the maturity of the administrative team.

b. Approve 2025/26 School Calendar: The Board discussed having 2 full weeks for Christmas break as it was done last year. J. Rathbun explained this calendar is aligned with KHS for the CCC. If the extra days are added it will have to be at the end of the school year and it will move graduation. K. Noonan commented on the early release day and said she is not a fan of them. S.Peters said families were happy with the 2 weeks of Christmas break. D. LeClair says to leave it the way it was presented. **MOTION:** D. LeClair **MOVED** to approve the 2025/26 MRSD Calendar as presented by the administration. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **DISCUSSION:** L. Steadman commented that KHS and Monadnock should do their calendars in collaboration. J.

Rathbun commented that they have been good to work with this year. The Boards do not meet to discuss the calendar. The contract says the districts will meet, not the Boards. The voting days are Monadnock's issue. **MOTION:** S.Peters **MOVED** to amend the motion, extend the 2025/26 school year by 1.5 days. Graduation will be June 13 and the last day of school will be June 16, 2025. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis **DISCUSSION:** K. Noonan said that it is terrible. It affects the most vulnerable. J. Strimbeck commented that the food banks are full at that time. **VOTE:** 8.507/1.098/0/3.395. **Motion passes.**

c. Approve the Agenda:

i. February 1, 2025 Pre/Post Deliberative Session Minutes: MOTION: H. Blood **MOVED** to approve the Pre/Post Deliberative Session Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** B. Tatro. **VOTE:** pass. **Motion passes.**

ii. February 4, 2025 Minutes

iii. Manifest: \$ 3,066,520.61. MOTION: B. Tatro **MOVED** to accept the amended February 4, 2025 Public Meeting Minutes, the Non-Public Meeting Minutes and to approve the manifest in the amount of \$3,066,520.61 **SECOND:** D. LeClair **VOTE:** K. Noonan-abstain, J. Cesaitis-abstain and remaining members- yes. **Motion passes.**

6. SETTING NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA:

a. Board Survey

b. Superintendent Evaluations

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments.

8. 9:38 PM ENTER INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3 II (c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely adversely affect the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting: **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

9. MOTION TO ADJOURN: MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:44 PM. **SECOND:** J. Cesaitis. **VOTE:** Unanimous for those present. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY:Yes/No/Abstain/Absent