Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
June 16, 2025

Present: Ms. Lori Peters, Chair; Ms. Laurie Rothhaus, Vice-Chair; Ms. Jenna Hardy Board Member; and Ms. Naomi Halter, Board Member.

Also, Present: Mr. Everett Olsen, Chief Education Officer, Mrs. Amy Doyle, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Mr. Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent for Business.

Excused: Ms. Rachel Paepke, Board Member

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

At 6:00 p.m., Chair Peters called the regular meeting to order.

Chair Peters read aloud the Merrimack School District's mission statement into the record as follows:

The Merrimack School District will provide a high-quality, future-driven education to all students in the community. Students will engage in learning opportunities that reflect both rigor and relevance and meet their cognitive, social and emotional needs. The district will prepare students to understand, adapt to and adjust to the changing world, including civic, economic, social and technological developments. Our overall goal is to inspire, create, and encourage students to be curious, connected, prepared, resilient, and dedicated individuals who are lifelong expert learners. Merrimack graduates exercise judgment: they are innovative and will become responsible contributors to society. We hope the discussions we have tonight will always align with that mission.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Rosemarie Rung of 21 Ministerial Drive congratulated the District on a successful high school graduation. She asked the Board to consider reinstating the high school end of the year report. She explained the end of year report was created by a former high school principal. It included the drop-out rate, attendance, grade distribution, number of students taking weighted courses, percentage of students participating in co-curricular activities and the number of bullying reports. She felt this would provide a broader picture of how the District services students rather than just test scores.

Heather Robitaille of 45 Springfield Circle spoke as a parent to express her appreciation to everyone who made a difference in her daughter's experience and transition to the upper elementary school this past school year. She thanked Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Doyle for the impact she had on the curriculum during her time in Merrimack.

3. RECOGNITIONS

a. Holly Levine

The Board recognized Holly Levine for receiving the 2025 Outstanding Band Director of the Year Award from the New Hampshire Band Directors Association.

4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Education Officer Olsen announced a successful Merrimack High School graduation. The resurrected Watkins Public Speaking Contest was held at Merrimack Middle School last week. He congratulated all the participants. The graduating seniors participated in the Senior Hawk Walk at each of the three elementary schools. The high school history department is making considerate effort to connect at a higher level with the community. This year students were very involved in a voter registration drive and met with members of the Merrimack Historical Society to engage in a more collaborate effort in terms of bringing Merrimack's history to students. Approximately 300 families participated in the Reeds Ferry Elementary School Family Fun Night.

Chief Education Officer Olsen stated the impact of Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Doyle's accomplishments over the last three years will last for decades and he wished her well in her new assignment.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Doyle reported staff will be participating in professional development on Thursday and Friday of this week. She expressed her congratulations to the class of 2025, their families and staff.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell highlighted the summer projects (roof project, window replacement and the installation of a few split systems). Recent changes to the traffic flow at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School improved the traffic congestion. He will be closing out the 2024-2025 school year.

d. School Board Update

Chair Peters congratulated the class of 2025. She also congratulated the students in transition grades K, 4, 5, and 8. She thanked the staff for the challenges they faced this year. The next two school board meetings will be Monday, July 14, 2025 and Monday, August 11, 2025.

e. Student Representative Update

There was no report.

5. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. K-8 School Year 2024-2025 Highlights

Merrimack Middle School Principal Boezeman and Assistant Principal Hoppa highlighted student created core principle words "Mature", "Determined", "Supportive" and "Fun". These words describe

to the students what it takes to be successful at Merrimack Middle School. The words will change next year to “Commitment”, “Empathy”,” Optimistic” and” Fun.

Additional Highlights:

- Practice evacuation drills included passing time, during lunch, and alternative exits.
- First year of Wit and Wisdom implementation for the 7th grade.
- First year of OpenSciEd for 7th and 8th grades.
- Most students received a full quarter of both Spanish and French
- Band and Chorus met daily during the school day
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) implementation through the use of technology
- Representatives from NELMS (New England League of Middle Schools) performed a three-day whole-school assessment
- MTSS-B (Multi-Tiered System of Supports for Behavioral Health) Implementation
- High school credit will be available for 8th grade students next year in Algebra, Spanish and French.
- The boys’ track and field team won the Tri County Championship, the field hockey team and soccer team competed in the finals.

James Mastricola Upper Elementary School Principal Rheault reported Wit and Wisdom was the highlight for grades K-6. She stated Wit and Wisdom had an incredible impact in the area of reading, writing and literacy.

Principal Rheault introduced Melissa Lloyd, first grade teacher at RFS; Sue Bradford, third grade teacher at MES; Nicole Diggins, fourth grade teacher at TFS; and Beth Tamulevich, sixth grade teacher at JMUES.

Melissa Lloyd state the greatest strength of Wit and Wisdom was the exceptional approach to increasing vocabulary. Wit and Wisdom prepares students in the primary grade levels with both the language and the background knowledge to assess complex ideas and express themselves with clarity and precision.

Sue Bradford explained that the craft and skill set of teachers are important and support the Wit and Wisdom modules. Wit and Wisdom encompasses vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing. Third grade students studied the sea and space modules. She explained the variety of texts are engaging and provide students the opportunity to revisit multiple excerpts from books they already read allowing for a deep dive into a variety of topics. When her students were asked what message Mrs. Bradford could bring to the school board meeting their response was they like writing multiple paragraph essays.

Nicole Diggins spoke about the impact Wit and Wisdom had on writing skills of fourth grade students. Students across the district are learning very specific writing routines for different writing purposes. She explained the routines become more sophisticated in the upper grade levels.

Beth Tamulevich stated Wit and Wisdom encompasses many different literary genres and student experiences. The sixth grade students studied the depression era. The practice of sentence starters helped make connections with ideas, boosted the confidence of reluctant speakers and reinforce the

basic foundational principles of interpersonal conversation. She reported 100% student participation during her last Socratic seminar.

Chair Peters stated there is a science and art to teaching students. She is proud of the teachers for accepting the challenge of adopting a new literary curriculum.

Board member Hardy spoke as a parent and expressed her gratitude to the staff for her child's success this past school year. She also thanked the community for supporting Wit and Wisdom.

Vice Chair Rothhaus, Board member Halter and Chair Peters shared examples of how students are learning important literary skills through Wit and Wisdom.

Chief Education Officer Olsen added corporations expressed to him a desire to employ people with better speaking and writing skills.

b. Discussion Regarding Goals Setting Meeting

Chair Peters reported the 2025-2026 Goal Setting meeting will be held on Thursday, June 19 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Merrimack High School library.

c. New Hampshire School Boards Association's 2025 Call for Resolutions

Chair Peters asked the Board to review the 2025 NHSBA resolutions. Resolutions can be brought forward for discussion at the July meeting.

d. Discussion of Chief Education Officer Olsen's Performance

Chair Peters asked the Board to email Chair Peters and Vice Chair Rothhaus their input regarding Chief Education Officer Olsen's performance.

e. Other

Chair Peters reported the Merrimack School District will participate in the July 4 parade. Bailey's Towing will provide the truck and trailer for the float. Candy will be purchased, and the float will be decorated on July 3rd. Board Member Hardy stated that she will not be able to participate in the parade.

7. POLICIES

a. First Reading of School Guidance and Counseling Program Policy (JLD)

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to waive the first reading of the School Guidance and Counseling Program Policy (JLD). Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

b. First Reading of Revised Behavior Management and Intervention Policy (JLDBA)

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to waive the first reading of the Revised Behavior Management and Intervention Policy (JLDBA). Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

c. First Reading of Accommodation of Lactation Needs Policy (ACN)

MOTION: Vice Chair Rothhaus made a motion to waive the first reading of the Accommodation of Lactation Needs Policy (ACN). Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

d. First Reading of Revised Daily Physical Activity Policy (IMAH)

MOTION: Board Member Halter made a motion to waive the first reading of the Revised Daily Physical Activity Policy (IMAH). Vice Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. May 28, 2025 Non-Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Halter made a motion to approve the May 28, 2025 Non-Public Minutes. Vice Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

b. June 2, 2025 Non-Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to approve the June 2, 20025 non-public minutes. Vice Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

9. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND GRANTS UNDER $20,000

a. Anonymous Donor to Food Services Department for $1,000

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell reported the $1,000 will be used to pay off the negative accrued balances for free and reduced lunches at the high school.

MOTION: Vice Chair Rothhaus made a motion to accept the $1,000 anonymous donation for the food services department. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

Chair Peters thanked the anonymous donor for the generous gift.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

10. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Educator Resignation

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Doyle announced the following educator resignation.

Caroline Conrad, Art Teacher, James Mastricola Elementary School.

b. Educator Nomination

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Doyle presented the following educator nomination.

Kailyn Chamberlin, One Year Classroom Teacher, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4-0-0.

11. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

Vice Chair Rothhaus reported that the Planning and Building Committee met. The committee discussed the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), traffic flow at the upper elementary school that was put to rest as a result of a new traffic pattern, the Our Lady of Mercy parking lot, and the need for crossing guards. Chair Peters will attend a future Planning and Building Committee meeting to present a charge from the Board.

Chair Peters reported the Watkins Forrest Committee met. The Watkins Forrest land was a gift to the Town of Merrimack. Funds received from tree harvests is given to the Merrimack School District. Work orders were signed to approve the next tree harvest. Merrimack TV and the community will be invited to a site walk that will determine which trees will be harvested and the process. The date for the site work is unknown at this time.

b. Correspondence

Vice Chair Rothhaus received correspondence about graduation.

Chair Peters also received correspondence about graduation.

c. Comments

Vice Chair Rothhaus was impressed with the high school graduation. She appreciated all the organization and work of many people. There was a sense of gratitude from the graduates and their families.

Vice Chair Rothhaus expressed her appreciation to Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Doyle. She stated that Amy had a huge impact on the District, was exceptional in every

way, had tremendous skill and vision. Her work will have a lasting impact on the Merrimack School District. Her work ethic and leadership will be greatly missed.

Board Member Hardy was impressed with the events during senior week and graduation. She expressed her appreciation to Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Doyle. Mrs. Doyle's legacy, in only three years, will last decades due to her talent and dedication to the District.

Board Member Halter shared a personal story as an example of Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Doyle's impact to the District.

Chair Peters stated that Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Doyle received every challenge and supported the staff through those challenges during her three short years in Merrimack. Chair Peters is grateful for Mrs. Doyle's time in Merrimack and wishes her great success in her new District.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Rosemarie Rung of 21 Ministerial Drive stated she has a resource that explains responsible forestry. She noted the importance of the Board staying in touch with State Representatives regarding the impact(s) of any bill.

Heather Robitaille of 45 Springfield Circle wished Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Doyle all the best in her new assignment. She appreciated the Wit and Wisdom presentation. She appreciates the Board bringing the Watkins Forrest information to the public to understand the forestry project. She congratulated the class of 2025.

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At approximately 7:30 p.m., Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn. Vice Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4-0-0.