Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
August 12, 2024

Present: Ms. Lori Peters, Chair; Ms. Jenna Hardy, Vice-Chair; Board Member; and Ms. Naomi Halter, Board Member Mr. Ken Martin, Board Member.

Not Present: Ms. Laurie Rothhaus, Board Member - Excused

Also present were Mr. Everett Olsen, Chief Educational Officer; Ms. Amy Doyle, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum; and Mr. Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent for Business.

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were none.

3. RECOGNITIONS

There were none.

4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen noted that school would begin on Thursday, August 29th, and three days prior to that, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle would conduct three days of professional development. He said once again students in grades K, 5, 7, and 9 would begin the day at the regular time, and all other grades would have a two-hour delay to allow for students who were transitioning some time to become acclimated.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the leadership team just completed a two-day retreat, where the leadership team reviewed the Strategic Plan. He said the goal was to have the strategic plan initiatives in various areas, and the team's goals could be operationalized to meet the Vision of a Learner and the Vision of a Graduate.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle stated that they had a very successful summer of learning and thanked the teachers and students who had participated in the summer programming. She said they were looking forward to closing some of the gaps that the students had, as well as providing some enrichment programs for the students.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said the district's mentoring program, entitled "Torch Bearers' Program," would begin the following day. She said it was a great opportunity to welcome new staff and help them acclimate to the district. She added that the curriculum teams were still meeting and that they had done some planning for Wit & Wisdom.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle noted that the district had openings for special education teachers and support staff and encouraged anyone listening to consider applying.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said they were finishing installing the new security cameras and lock sets. He also said the roof project was almost complete.

d. School Board Update

Chair Peters said there would be a detailed presentation of the School Board's goals in September, along with the Strategic Plan. She also said the next School Board meeting would be held on September 9, 2024, as September 2, 2024, was Labor Day. She added that the meeting after that would be on September 23, 2024.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Letter to the Merrimack Village District Regarding Low Sale Use on Continental Blvd.

Chair Peters asked if there were members of the Board who had questions or concerns regarding the draft letter to the Merrimack Village District.

Board Member Martin commented that his only thought was concerning the high salt levels in the water, and he recognized that it was an issue, but he also recognized the need for safety. Board Member Halter said she agreed with Board Member Martin's statement.

Chair Peters suggested that a line before the second paragraph could be added that said, "We, the Merrimack School District/School Board, recognize the significant concern and impact that salt use affects groundwater in our wells, and we support looking for innovative ways to limit and reduce salt use in these areas. Chief Educational Officer Olsen requested that the Board send the proposed change to him, and he would bring it to legal counsel.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Strategic Plan Discussion

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said they tried to cover six important focus areas, pointing out that it took over one year to complete. Chief Educational Officer Olsen pointed out that the Strategic Plan would be finalized once the School Board approved it. He said the Strategic Plan did not mention a need for performing arts. Chair Peters commented that since the SAU Central Office was a part of the current Strategic Plan, the Performing Arts need could be listed in a future plan.

Board Member Halter said she was part of the Strategic Plan Committee and thanked all the other members of the committee for their hard work and dedication.

The School Board collectively decided to wait until there was a full complement of the Board to vote on the approval of the Strategic Plan.

7. POLICIES

a. Temporary Title IX Policy

Chief Educational Officer Olsen reviewed nine significant changes to Title IX. He said legal counsel had advised the Board to pass the revised Title IX policy on a temporary basis without a review process, and they would then begin working on the formal policy. He added that there was a

meeting scheduled with legal counsel on August 21st, during which the entire leadership team would meet with legal counsel, and the topic would be one of the focal points of the meeting.

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to approve the temporary Title IX policy. Vice-Chair Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

b. Approval of Promotion and Retention of Students Policy (IKE) and Promotion and Retention of Students Procedures (IKE-R)

MOTION: Board Member Halter made a motion to approve the Promotion and Retention of Students Policy (IKE) and the Promotion and Retention of Students Procedures (IKE-R). Vice-Chair Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. July 15, 2024 – Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept the minutes from the July 15, 2024, meeting as amended. Vice-Chair Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 – 0 – 1. (Abstain – Board Member Martin)

9. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Teacher Nominations

o Melisa Bezanson, Math Teacher	Merrimack High School
o Cynthia Joyce, Art Teacher	Reeds Ferry Elementary School
o Kierra McCarthy, Physical Ed. Teacher	Merrimack High School
o Darcy Borowitz, English Teacher	Merrimack High School
o Karen King, Special Education Teacher	Merrimack High School
o Katelyn Mooney, Music Teacher	Thorntons Ferry Elem. School
o Steve Lebel, Elementary Classroom Teacher	JMUES

b. Resignations/Retirements

o Carole Lewis, Digital Learning Specialist	Reeds Ferry Elementary School
o Casey Morin, Elementary Classroom Teacher	Reeds Ferry Elementary School
o Melissa Terry, Preschool Teacher	Reeds Ferry Elementary School
o Lisa Kennedy, Elementary Classroom Teacher	JMUES
o Breanna Goodrich-Bundy, English Teacher	Merrimack High School
o Kyle Masson, Social Studies Teacher	Merrimack High School
o Aaron Regis, Special Education Coordinator	Merrimack High School

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to approve the teacher nominations and resignations. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

c. Approval of MESSA Vacation Sidebar

MOTION: Vice-Chair Hardy made a motion to approve the MESSA Vacation Sidebar. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

d. Approval of MTA Classroom Coverage Memo of Agreement

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to approve the MTA Classroom Coverage Memo of Agreement. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

10. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

There were none.

b. Correspondence

Chair Peters commented that she had received a few emails that she had either been cc'd on or forwarded to the administration. She also said she had a discussion with MVD, and she told them they would discuss the draft letter regarding the Low Salt Use at the meeting.

c. Comments

Board Member Martin said he was excited for the beginning of the school year.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were none.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At approximately 7:33 p.m., Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.