Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
July 15, 2024

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

Not Present: Mr. Ken Martin, 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

- School Board Student Representative Chase Rheault

Chief Educational Officer Olsen recognized Chase Rheault, who had served as the School Board Student Representative. He said she had participated in the School Board meetings in a very sophisticated, very informed, and collaborative way. He added that Ms. Rheault had been an absolute delight to listen to and work with.

4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that he had been notified by the New Hampshire Department of Education that Dr. Nicole Rheault, Principal of the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, had been invited to join the State Assessment Advisory Group. He said the responsibilities would include reviewing and providing feedback on assessment policies and procedures and advising on best practices for implementing state assessments, to name a few.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said planning for the annual August retreat, noting there would be a full agenda.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle stated that she had provided the Board with a table of the summer programming that was happening throughout the district. She said they continued to offer the 8.5 Program at the high school as well as credit recovery.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said "Camp Invention" had been held the previous week. She also said curriculum teams were meeting and training for the implementation of Wit & Wisdom.
Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle shared a few staffing changes and thanked the Human Resources Department Director, Melissa Fazlic, and her team for the great job they did hiring new employees.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said that they had received the fire inspection report for the SAU and central office, and it would be presented to the Board as well as the Planning & Building Committee at a later date. He said the inspection was done on November 7, 2023. He added that the ADA evaluation of the building was not included in the report, but it would be done in the near future.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell commented that the roof project would be completed prior to the start of school, and the locksets and cameras were in the process of being installed.

d. School Board Update

Chair Peters said the goals setting meeting was a great success. She said the administration and the School Board were unified and used the strategic plan draft as their guardrails for their goals, and they dovetailed together nicely.

Chair Peters said everyone had a great time on the 4th of July.

Chair Peters said she participated in the Reunification Training with the administration, the police department, the fire department, principals, and some teachers. She added that exercise was also a great success.

e. Student Representative Update

Student Representative Rheault commented that a lot of students were working summer jobs and volunteering. She said Camp Invention was still going strong, as was the case with other camps.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Board's Response to the Merrimack Village District's Low Salt Use on Continental Boulevard

Chair Peters commented that the Board had held previous discussions regarding the request for low salt or limited salt use on Continental Boulevard (from the Exit 10 on-ramp from Daniel Webster Highway southbound onto Industrial Drive, continuing south on Continental Boulevard to end where Continental Boulevard meets Milford Road) by the Merrimack Village District.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that after legal counsel's review of the request, it had been determined that as it pertained to commercial applicators, the statute noted limited liability of any entity that applied materials to roadways as a commercial applicator as long as they followed best management practices as outlined by the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency. Chief Educational Officer Olsen said legal counsel had stated that if the roads referenced in the material were not owned or occupied by the district, then there was no need for the School Board to sign the letter. He suggested that the School Board make a general statement

they would subscribe to any applicators following best management practices on the designated roadways.

Board Member Rothhaus suggested that legal counsel draft a letter accurately stating the School Board's position.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Hardy made a motion to request that legal counsel draft a letter stating the School Board's support of best practices on the designated roadways, the reduction of salt, and the need for clean water. Board Member Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Data Collection Update

Recorder's Note: The document, in its entirety, can be found on the Merrimack, NH School District's website.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle introduced Bonnie Henson, the Student Data Collection Specialist for the Merrimack School District.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle explained that the Merrimack School District uses a variety of tools and assessments to monitor student progress and guide instruction, which included:

- Heggerty: Kindergarten – Grade 2
    - The purpose of this assessment is to gather information and monitor student progress with the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons.
    - This assessment can be used to gather baseline data about a whole class prior to implementing the Heggerty Phonemic Awareness curriculum as part of daily literacy instruction.
    - This is not a normed assessment, so teachers may use examples when introducing each skill. Options for correct and incorrect responses are provided for teacher administration.

Ms. Henson reviewed the data results.

- LETRS: Grades 3 & 4
    - This tool is a survey for identifying the phonemic skills and patterns students have learned and which ones still need to be taught. When patterns are "learned," they can be read automatically without guesswork. This survey can be used with students from the last half of kindergarten onward.
    - LETRS was introduced this school year and given to all students in Grades 3 & 4. It was administered three (3) times (fall, winter, and spring), using the

decoding skill section of the LETRS Phonics and Word-Reading Survey. Each section is scored with a total of 146 total points.

- The series of tasks is organized according to a progression of phonic elements and syllable types that increase in difficulty. The number of subtests given will depend on how far the student can go with at least some success.

Ms. Henson reviewed the data results.

- i-Ready: Kindergarten – Grade 8 (2023 - 2024)

Understanding *i-Ready's* Criterion-Referenced Relative Placement Levels

- *i-Ready's* placement levels are criterion-referenced, reflecting what students are expected to know at each grade level and in each content area. In the following analyses, student performance is described using the following five relative placement levels:

  - **Mid or Above Grade Level**

    - Students at this level have met or surpassed the minimum requirements for the expectations of college and career-ready standards in their grade level. Students will benefit from instruction in late on-grade-level topics or above-grade-level instruction.

  - **Early On Grade Level**

    - Students at this level have only partially met grade-level expectations. They will benefit from continued grade-level instruction.

  - **1 Grade Level Below**

    - Students placed one level below are approaching grade-level expectations and can be ready for grade-level instruction with targeted support.

  - **2 & 3 Grade Levels Below**

    - Students placing two or more grades below level will likely need additional support with key skills below their chronological grade level to be ready for grade-level instruction.

Ms. Henson reviewed the data results.

- NH SAS: Grades 3 - 8, & 11 for Science

  - Annually, New Hampshire school districts and public charter schools are required by state law (RSA 193-C) and federal accountability laws (Every Student Succeeds Act) to assess students using a standardized assessment. Several assessments, outlined below, are utilized in order to comply with these requirements.

    - **New Hampshire Statewide Assessments (NH SAS)** - New Hampshire students participate in the NH SAS, the general statewide assessment for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics (Grades 3-8), and science (Grades 5, 8, and 11).

    - **Dynamic Learning Maps** (DLM) – the DLM is an alternate assessment given to students with significant cognitive disabilities as designed in their active individualized education program (IEP). The English language arts and math tests are administered in grades 3-8, while the DLM for science is administered in grades 5 and 8 only.

    - **ACCESS 2.0 for English Language Learners** - Federal law requires that English learner (EL) students be assessed annually to measure English language proficiency (ELP) in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. ACCESS for ELLs is New Hampshire's approved ELP assessment administered to EL students in Kindergarten through Grade 12.

Ms. Henson reviewed the data results.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle commented on the importance of having a math interventionist in the district.

Chair Peters commented that she felt the subject of math would be discussed in next year's budget discussion.

Board Member Rothhaus asked if they could add time to the math classes or teach it every day.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the topic of math would definitely be a priority in the 2025 - 2026 budget.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle stated that the district purchased a new middle school Science curriculum that would be implemented in the fall.

- SATs: Grade 11

  - The School Day SAT is the College Board SAT administered on a school day in the spring to all Grade 11 students in New Hampshire.

- There is no cost to students to participate in the School Day SAT.

- Like the Saturday SAT, the School Day SAT is scored on a 400-1600-point scale. Each section, math, and evidenced-based reading and writing is scored independently on a 200-800 point scale; the section scores are then combined for a total score.

Ms. Henson reviewed the data results.

- PSATs: Grades 9 & 10

  - The PSAT takes 2 hours and 14 minutes and consists of 2 sections.
  - The Reading & Writing Section has four broad categories
  - The Math Section has 4 categories
  - The PSAT 10 has 4 math categories that play the most significant role in a wide range of college majors and careers.

Ms. Henson reviewed the data results.

b. New Hampshire School Boards Association's 2024 Call for Resolutions

Chair Peters commented that no one had submitted or requested anything regarding the Call for Resolutions, and in late August or early September, any districts that had submitted something, as well as any policy changes or proposals by the New Hampshire School Board's Association (NHSBA) would be sent to the Board, and they would be able to discuss them and vote on them in September. She added that she would bring anything the Board wished to speak to the delegate assembly.

c. Review of the June 20th Goals Setting Meeting and 2023 - 2024 Goals Update

Chair Peters reviewed a high-level look at the Goals Setting Meeting, which occurred on June 20th.

The following 2023-2024 goals were reviewed.

1. Create an engaged, inclusive, and collaborative district culture built on mutual trust and respect (this goal is a continuation of the goal developed from 2022-2023.
2. The Pathways to Graduation (this goal was further developed from last year)
3. Improve our learning outcomes by ensuring our instruction is responsive to the varied needs of our student population (this goal was further developed from last year.)
4. Have facilities and equipment that are safe, secure, clean, healthy, current, and appropriate for meeting the educational needs of students and staff (this goal was further developed from last year.)
5. Create a dynamic relationship between the school district and community through clear and consistent communication (new goal identified in 2023-2024)

The Goals to carry into 2024-2025 were identified as:

1. Communication: Create a dynamic relationship between the District and the Community through clear and consistent communication.
2. Student Services Provide responsive programs, instruction, and systems of support that engage all students with opportunities and pathways that effectively meet their needs, support academic, social, and emotional growth, and enable the pursuit of individual passions and interests.
3. Strengthen practices at Merrimack High School: Collaborate with the high school administration and staff on a study with the goal of outlining the resources needed to make MHS a flagship school of New Hampshire.
4. New SAU Building: Work with the Community to communicate the importance of building a new multifunctional, welcoming, and accessible SAU unit.

Board Member Halter commented that she felt it was a good meeting and was happy with the facilitator.

Chair Peters noted that a more in-depth discussion would occur with the presentation of the Strategic Plan.

d. Other

Board Member Rothhaus commented that she felt it would be important to form a relationship with the Reeds Ferry Elementary School and the Baptist Church so that there would be a second way out of Reeds Ferry.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said they had several conversations in the past with the church regarding the creation of a second egress into their parking lot. He said a few large rocks were blocking the area, noting there were no wetlands in the location. He said he could continue the conservation with them.

7. POLICIES

a. Second Review of Promotion and Retention of Students Policy (IKE) and Procedures (IKE-R)

Chair Peters noted that the Board had an updated copy of the Promotion and Retention of Students Policy (IKE) and Procedures (IKE-R), which included the changes made by legal counsel.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that he had one suggestion for a change to the pages pertaining to Procedures.

He suggested that the last sentence in paragraph two: "If retention is being considered for a child, parents will be notified as soon as retention is being considered, and in all cases, no later than January of the academic year," should be changed to "A parent request for retention shall be submitted to the school principal or designee on or before March 15th" with a final decision to be made in May."

Board Member Rothhaus suggested that the date should be changed to March 15th as the child had ample time to catch up.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle commented that the latest data would not be available until May.

Board Member Halter suggested that the procedure did not speak to "promotion" at all. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle recommended adding language that read, "Students are typically promoted to the next level."

Chair Peters stated that an edited version would be discussed at the next School Board meeting.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. June 17, 2024 – Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Rothhaus made a motion to accept the minutes from the June 17, 2024, meeting as amended. Vice-Chair Hardy seconded the motion.

Edit:

Line 234 – The word "I" was changed to "Board Member Halter made a motion to accept the minutes from the June 17, 2024, meeting, as amended." (Halter)

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

b. June 20, 2024 – Non-Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Halter made a motion to accept the non-public minutes from the June 20, 2024, meeting, as presented. Board Member Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

9. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Teacher Nominations

o Jennifer Szela, One Year Art Teacher	JMES
o Nicole Driscoll, Classroom Teacher	Reeds Ferry Elementary School
o Denise Jean-Lutton, Gifted & Talented Teacher	RFS/TFS
o Rachel Ford, Social Studies Teacher	Merrimack High School
o Denyelle Klayton, Digital Learning Specialist	JMUES
o Daniel Dresios, Special Education Teacher	Merrimack High School
o Lisa Kennedy, Classroom Teacher	JMUES

b. Resignations/Retirements

o Matthew McGinnis, Music Teacher	Thorntons Ferry
o Caroline Conrad*, Art Teacher	JMES, *1-Year Leave of Absence
o Bethany Taylor, Digital Learning Specialist	JMUES
o Rafael Rodreguez, Science Teacher	Merrimack Middle School
o Tracy Gruber, Art Teacher (Retirement)	JMUES

MOTION: Vice-Chair Hardy made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Board Member Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

10. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports to share.

b. Correspondence

Chair Peters commented that she had received a number of emails regarding parent concerns and student welfare concerns that she forwarded to the administration.

c. Comments

Board Member Rothhaus thanked the Board and the administration for the positive results they were all getting.

Chair Peters encouraged people to take a look at the data collection update and reach out with questions.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were none.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At approximately 7:38 p.m., Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn. Vice-Chair Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.