Approved 6-17-2024

Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
June 3, 2024

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

Not Present: Ms. Jenna Hardy, Vice-Chair; Mr. Ken Martin, Board Member; and Mr. Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent for Business. (Excused)

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

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

3. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that he had attended an event for the Historical Society where Schoolhouse #3 and Schoolhouse #12 were recognized; in particular, Schoolhouse #3 was being included in the Registry of the Country Schools Association of America.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said that there would be a graduation ceremony held on Thursday at 5:30 p.m. for the adult education group.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the district received an email that day from the Department of Education regarding the audit findings with respect to grant accounting. He thanked the Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell for his diligent work.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen shared that the gifted and talented students at Reeds Ferry Elementary School and Thorntons Ferry Elementary School put together a book on species survival. He said he felt the work was outstanding. He also said that a group of students from the James Mastricola Elementary School had visited the Great Bay Environmental Center.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen mentioned that the track and field championships had ended with three Merrimack athletes competing in the Meet of Champions at the University of New Hampshire. He also said that 5th-grade student, Gavin, had raised $211.00 for the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen noted that the Merrimack Unified Track & Field Team had competed for the first time in the Unified State Championships at Alvirne High School. He added that the previous Friday, students from the Merrimack High School Chop Shop went to Thorntons Ferry Elementary School to work with the 4th-grade classes on a STEAM activity.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen congratulated Ms. Colby Wygant, a 1st-grade teacher at the James Mastricola Elementary School, as the New Hampshire Down Syndrome Association had nominated her for the 2023 – 2024 Exceptional Educator Award. He also said that on the following Thursday evening, Merrimack TV would air the 7th Annual Merrimack High School Film Festival in the Matthew Thornton Room live at 6:30 p.m.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle commented that the New Hampshire SAS (Statewide Assessment System) results had started to come in, and directions to see those results were available on the district's website. She also commented that the students at the Merrimack High School and the Merrimack Middle School were given their second-year opportunity to participate in the gallop poll, which helped to capture data regarding student engagement, entrepreneurship, hope, and career-connected learning. She said she would share the results of that poll when the information was available.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

There was no new update to share.

d. School Board Update

Chair Peters thanked the team at the Reeds Ferry Elementary School for hosting their Art Show and the wonderful personal invitations that the School Board had received.

Chair Peters also commented that Vice-Chair Hardy and she had a Zoom meeting scheduled with the administration to speak with someone regarding leading the goals meeting. She said the NHSBA (New Hampshire School Board Association) proposals would be discussed at the goals meeting, and the Delegate meeting would be held on October 19, 2024.

Chair Peters stated that parents should reach out to teachers if they had any concerns about their child's SAS scores.

e. Student Representative Update

Student Representative Rheault noted the following:

- 7 out of 9 sports teams made it to the post-season.
- Envirothon Team Placed 3rd in the state (A competitive team at MHS that participated in environmental studies, competitions, and research)
- 8th-grade night was held at the high school the prior week.
- MHS Band and Chorus students performed at the JMUES arts festival.
- Senior awards night to be held on June 5th.
- Music awards night to be held on June 11th.
- Graduation to be held on June 14, 2024.

The School Board collectively thanked Student Representative Rheault for her service on the Board and wished her all the best in her future endeavors.

4. OLD BUSINESS

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

Chair Peters stated that item #4 would be taken up at the next School Board meeting to allow for a full complement of the Board.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Merrimack Middle School Highlights

Mr. Chrigus Boezeman, Principal, Ms. Kathy Hoppa, Vice-Principal, and Mr. Patrick Jennings, Dean of Students, were present.

Principal Boezeman said there were four core principles (schoolwide behavior expectations) that the Merrimack Middle School followed:

- Maturity – Be aware of your environment. Respond with expected behavior.
- Determination – Commit to choices that lead to success.
- Supportive – Pay attention to the needs of others.
- Fun – The result of being mature, determined, and supportive.

A PowerPoint presentation was provided where some of the highlights from the Merrimack Middle School were reviewed. He also reviewed the Multi-Tiered System of Care.

Ms. Stephanie Sekela, a World Language Teacher, addressed the Board and said the middle school was looking at revising the existing program in an effort to build more interest in foreign languages. She said she felt it was important to introduce both French and Spanish to incoming middle school students so they could make a more informed decision as to which language they would like to explore further.

Mr. Boezeman shared that they had received a free trial of the electronic hall pass system, and it was successful.

The School Board collectively thanked the staff for providing such a comprehensive presentation.

b. American Legion Field Memorandum of Understanding Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the American Legion had granted permission for the School District to utilize a field that they owned. He said the field was in need of some initial maintenance that the district had agreed to perform.

MOTION: Board Member Rothhaus made a motion to accept the Memorandum of Understanding between the American Legion Post 98 and the Merrimack School District regarding the softball field. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 – 0 – 0.

c. Planning and Building Committee Meeting Update

Board Member Rothhaus stated that Chief Educational Officer Olsen, Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell, and Chair Peters had met with the Planning and Building Committee, where Chair Peters provided them with a vision of the School Board and also asked them to televise all of their meetings, of which they agreed. She noted it was particularly important to provide information about the proposed SAU building. She also said they discussed the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee to get more people involved.

Board Member Rothhaus said they continued to look at space, including the Rite-Aid building for the proposed SAU building.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that he would provide the Planning and Building Committee with a list of staff members who would be desired for the central office as well as their tasks. Additionally, he said he would provide an explanation of why a conference room was so important to the district.

d. Other

Chair Peters commented that the Board would be moving forward with consolidating the evaluation for the Superintendent.

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. May 20, 2024 – Public Minutes

Chair Peters explained that the minutes of the May 20, 2024, meeting would be addressed at the next School Board meeting.

7. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Teacher Nominations

o Hope Bibeault, Elementary Classroom Teacher	JMES
o Emily Robinson, K-8 School Social Worker	All Schools K-8
o Michelle Castelli, Elementary Classroom Teacher	JMUES
o Cristopher Andrews, Physical Education Teacher	Thorntons Ferry Elementary
o Krysta Blondin, Special Education Teacher	Merrimack Middle School
o Sadie Geary, Special Education Teacher	Thorntons Ferry Elementary
o Kaitlin Justason, Special Education Teacher	Thorntons Ferry Elementary
o Elizabeth Lambert, Special Education Teacher	Thorntons Ferry Elementary
o Jillian Sweesy, Special Education Teacher	Thorntons Ferry Elementary

b. Administrator Nominations

o Sara Parrotto, Director of School Counseling K-8	All Schools K-8
o Amy Gentile, Assistant Principal	Reeds Ferry Elementary

c. Resignations

- Amy Larkin-Perez, Physical Education Teacher/Dept. Head — MHS
- Milagros Santiago, World Language Teacher — MHS
- April Doss, Special Education Teacher — Thorntons Ferry

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

MOTION CARRIED: 3 – 0 – 0.

8. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

Board Member Halter commented that she had attended the final Strategic Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday, May 28th, stating that the Strategic Plan was about 99% complete.

Board Member Rothhaus commented that she and Board Member Halter would be sworn in regarding their respective roles on the Parks & Recreation Committee the following Thursday.

b. Correspondence

Chair Peters commented that she had received a number of emails that were not in the School Board's lane and passed them along to the administration.

c. Comments

Board Member Rothhaus commented that she had attended the dedication of Schoolhouses #3 and #12, and she was happy to see them become a landmark CSAA (Country School Association of America.)

Board Member Rothhaus also commented that she was very excited about the softball field that the American Legion had permitted them to use.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were none.

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At approximately 7:35 p.m., Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 3 – 0 – 0.