Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
May 6, 2024

5:30 p.m. – Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – Merrimack TV Training Classroom.

- **Staff Welfare**

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

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

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

3. RECOGNITIONS

Chief Educational Officer Olsen awarded certificates of recognition to the following students for their excellence in band/chorus activities:

- NHMEA Composition Contest
    - Boden Walters
- NHMEA South Central Regional Honor Band/Chorus Festival
    - Lauren Brodsky
    - Nora Campbell
    - Elizabeth (Ella) Duval
    - Hunter Gladding
    - Tucker Landry
    - Jacinda Reisman
    - Parker Shavell
    - Josephine Swisher
    - Sadie Taylor
    - Boden Walters
- NHDBA Middle-Level Honor Band Festival
    - Lauren Brodsky
    - Nora Campbell

- Elizabeth (Ella) Duval
- Hunter Gladding
- Sam Greenspan
- Noah Henault
- Maya Kricheli
- Tucker Landry
- Ryan Marone
- Grace Massey
- Sara McDowell
- Asher Remy

Vice-Chair Hardy also congratulated Ms. Holly Levine, Instrumental Music Teacher, and Mr. Mattew McGinnis, Merrimack Middle School Chorus Teacher and Music Teacher at the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School.

4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said a bowling club had successfully started at the middle school. He also noted that with the purchase of additional computers, they would be offering three years of three computer languages, Python, C++, and Rust, along with the Robotics team, which already used Java, which totaled four computer languages.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen shared that a past student had indicated that he was able to graduate from Plymouth State University 1 ½ years early due to credits he had earned through the Dual Enrollment Program and the Running Start Classes in the business department.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen noted that the production of Mama Mia was extremely successful. He added that students who were on the Granite State Challenge team would be entering the finals.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen also said that Plymouth State's University performed "TIGER" (Theater, Integrating Guidance, Education, and Responsibility) at the Reeds Ferry Elementary School. He said the Carriage Schack Farm brought a petting farm experience to the students at the Reeds Ferry Elementary School, and the Reeds Ferry 4th-grade chorus would be performing on May 9th at 6:00 p.m.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle stated that the following Friday, May 17th, would be an early release day so the staff could engage in mandatory training on suicide prevention. She also stated that the Teacher Evaluation Model Committee had met for the last time, and members of that committee would attend the June 17th School Board meeting to provide a presentation.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle also pointed out that the School Board had an invitation to attend Merrimack School District's first-ever "Adult Diploma Graduation" to be held on June 6, 2024.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell explained that they had finalized the bid process for the door lock hardware, pointing out that the cost would be $267,000. He thanked Mr. Tom Touseau, Director of Maintenance & Facilities, for his help.

d. School Board Update

Chair Peters stated that it was National Teacher Appreciation Week and on behalf of the School Board, she thanked the entire staff. She also noted that it was National Nurse's Week, and she thanked the nurses as well.

e. Student Representative Update

Student Representative Rheault noted the following:

- Congratulated all of the students who participated in Mama Mia.
- On Thursday, May 16th, the MHS Music Department will be hosting its Spring concert.
    - Mr. McWalter, Music Teacher, was close friends with composer Spencer Miles, and he wrote a difficult 7-minute piece of music for the band to perform.
- AP Testing had started, and it was a great way to demonstrate accumulative knowledge and earn college credits.
- Athletics
    - Spring sports teams were all playing great.
    - National Letter of Intent Signing Ceremony on May 7, 2024

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Signing of the Merrimack Educational Support Staff Contract for 2024 – 2027

MOTION: Board Member Halter made a motion to accept the final version of the MESSA contract. Vice-Chair Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

b. Discussion Regarding Goals Setting Meeting

The goals meeting was changed to Thursday, June 20, 2024.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. 2024 – 2025 School Board Committee Assignments

The Board collectively discussed and assigned representatives and alternates to applicable school-related committees.

b. Request to Hire at Will

Chief Educational Officer Olsen explained that the request to hire at will was one made every year. He explained that if there were an opening that needed to be filled, the Board would give him the authority to hire them, noting it would be reported on a future Consent Agenda.

Board Member Rothhaus requested that the School Board have an emergency meeting if they were not able to hire principals or assistant principals by July 1, 2024. Chief Educational Officer Olsen replied in the affirmative.

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to authorize Chief Educational Officer Olsen to hire at will as of June 1, 2024. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

c. Discussion to Improve Communication

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the issue of improving communication was being addressed in the Strategic Plan. He asked if the Board felt the district should hire someone to address the issue or if perhaps contracting the services would be best.

The School Board collectively felt that hiring a full-time, dedicated person to manage communications on behalf of the district was very important.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that he would speak with the leadership team to see how they would like to see enhanced communications and an enhanced website.

d. Expectation for Field Preparations

Mr. Tom Touseau, Director of Maintenance & Facilities, addressed the Board and said there were seven fields in the district, although some of them overlapped, which consisted of approximately 22 acres. He said 2.5 employees were dedicated to grounds, although they did not always have 2.5 people available to work.

Mr. Touseau said hiring outside contractors could save a great deal of time doing such things as "laying out the fields."

Board Member Rothhaus noted that the "Field Study" was over ten years old. She added that she felt it would be great if the town could have some of their employees help get the fields ready.

e. Memo of Agreement between the School Board and the Merrimack Teachers Association Regarding Reduction in Force

Chief Educational Officer Olsen explained that the memo was an agreement that would essentially protect a long-time employee whose assignment was being changed.

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to accept the Memo of Agreement between the School Board and the Merrimack Teachers Association regarding Reduction in Force. Board Member Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

f. Other

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

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. April 1, 2024 – Non-Public Minutes

b. April 15, 2024 – Public and Non-Public Minutes

c. April 18, 2024 – Public Special Minutes

Edit: Line 15 – "Chair Martin" was changed to "Chair Peters" (Halter)

MOTION: Chair Peters made a motion to accept the minutes from the April 1, 2024, non-public meeting, the April 15, 2024, public and non-public meetings, and the April 18, 2024, public special meeting, as amended. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

8. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Educator Resignations

o Jennifer Ruscito, Special Education Coordinator	Merrimack Middle School
o Megan Shevenell, School Counselor	Reeds Ferry Elementary
o Debi Rapson, Technology Education Teacher	Merrimack Middle School
o Hannah Greene, Elementary Classroom Teacher	JMUES
o Kaitlin Soucy, Special Education Teacher	Thorntons Ferry Elementary

b. Teacher Nominations

o Michael Smith, School Counselor	Merrimack Middle School
o Jennifer Labonte, Social Studies Teacher	Merrimack Middle School
o Gena Richards, Technology Education Teacher	Merrimack Middle School
o Kathleen Hilliard, Special Education Teacher	Merrimack Middle School
o Amy Bergquist, Special Education Teacher	JMES

c. Educator and Administrator Nominations for School Year 2024 – 2025

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle reviewed the document with the School Board.

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

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

9. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

There were none.

b. Correspondence

Board Member Rothhaus commented that she received one communication regarding an NHIAA question.

Chair Peters commented that she received correspondence regarding the fields and one question about graduation.

Vice-Chair Hardy commented that she had received multiple questions regarding graduation.

c. Comments

Board Member Rothhaus commented that she was very grateful to have Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell's institutional knowledge at the meetings as he could remember things going back to the 1970s, which proved to be very helpful.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Shannon Rand, 1 Blair Road, addressed the Board and suggested that the Merrimack Booster Club invite the school for a clean-up day and help to get fields ready. Regarding the communications position, she suggested reaching out to area colleges to see if there were students who could do internships in lieu of contracting positions out of the district.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At approximately 7:46 p.m., Vice-Chair Hardy made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.