Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Memorial Room
July 10, 2023

5:15 P.M. NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91A:3, II (a) (b) & (c) – Memorial Room

- **Staff Welfare**

Present: Ken Martin, Chair; Laurie Rothhaus, Vice-Chair; Naomi Halter, Board Member; and Jenna Hardy, Board Member. Also present were Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent for Business; Amy Doyle, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment, and Student Representative Sean Evidenti.

Not Present: Lori Peters, Board Member

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Martin called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public comments.

3. RECOGNITIONS

There were no recognitions.

4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the summer programs had begun in earnest, pointing out that most of the classes were being held at the Merrimack Middle School because it had air conditioning.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen also pointed out that the Brentwood building was in the process of being razed, and the roofing project at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School had begun. He thanked the town for supporting the roof project.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said that he and Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle would be meeting with Ms. Mackenzie Murphy who was the Admission Coordinator for the New Hampshire Community College. He said the hope was to strengthen their partnership.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen thanked the Board for giving him a very supportive evaluation and said he felt it was a privilege to work in Merrimack.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle stated that they had already had some really great professional development thus far, including a 4-day Elementary Course for Responsive Classroom, and a 1-day training for a leadership seminar. She continued by saying that the current week they were a host district for OGAP (Ongoing Assessment Project) training which

was math professional development for teachers in grades K through 8. She thanked all of the teachers for ensuring students were closing some learning gaps over the summer months.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said curriculum teams were meeting and all of the core content areas had scheduled times that they were already meeting. She said there was a lot of work being done, not just in Merrimack, but in the state, from Performance Plus which was their "warehouse of sorts for assessment data" to Performance Matters.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle commented that she had an opportunity to meet many new administrators and directors who had started in the roles beginning on July 1st and their energy was just amazing.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen added that they were also developing a new teacher evaluation process. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said they were partnering with the MTA to gather input from them as well.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the roof at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School was underway. He noted that Teamcraft Roofing was awarded the bid because they came in at the lowest bid, but added they were a quality organization.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell also said the demolition of the Brentwood building was underway.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus asked how much it had cost per year to keep the Brentwood building going. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied that it was about $12,000 per year.

d. School Board Update

Chair Martin said a fun time was had by all on the 4th of July parade. He said a few members of the Budget Committee, and the Planning & Building Committee joined the School Board in the parade.

Chair Martin said the School Board had its goal-setting meeting on June 22nd and it went very well.

e. Student Representative Update

Student Representative Evidenti said the Class of 2025 would hold a car wash fundraiser on Saturday, July 15th behind Burger King.

Student Representative Evidenti said the students were wondering about having an "open campus" and would like the School Board to provide updates to the students in a more efficient way. Board Member Hardy replied she felt Student Representative Evidenti should be updating the student population via social media. Vice-Chair Rothhaus said having an "open campus" would be up to the principal of the high school and not the School Board.

5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Review of June 22nd Goal Setting Meeting & 2022 – 2023 Goals Update

Chair Martin said they had a very productive Goal Setting Meeting, noting that a representative from Primex was present, and they started by reviewing the 2022 – 2023 goals update. He said all of the goals had been met or were in the process of being met. He said new goals included:

- Communication
- Assessment & Accountability
- Administrative Facilities (SAU Office)

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Approval of MESSA Memorandum of Agreement for 2023 – 2024

Chief Educational Officer Olsen explained that the Covid-19 pandemic had an extraordinary impact on labor markets in certain segments of the economy and the education field felt a negative impact. He said they found that the district was very uncompetitive in terms of the contract that represented the support staff employees. He said although some changes were made to the contract, he still felt it was less than uncompetitive and he said it had to be addressed in the upcoming collective bargaining process.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen recommended that the School Board approve the Memorandum of Agreement that was already in place for the last fiscal year to the current fiscal year.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to accept the Merrimack School District and the Merrimack Educational Support Staff Association's Memorandum of Agreement for the next school year. Chair Martin seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

b. Crossing Guard Discussion

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said there had been discussions in the past regarding crossing guards and the Merrimack Police Department did not feel they should have to fund the position as it was a school function. He further said that Chief Educational Officer Olsen and himself had recently met with Chief Brian Levesque, and Deputy Chief Matthew Tarleton on a few other issues, and Chief Levesque asked if they would be willing to "pick up the cost of the crossing guards" and felt that all of the school crossing guards should go with the district. He said long ago the School Board did not like that idea, but that he spoke with a representative from N.H. Primex who informed him that normally it was, in fact, a town function. He requested that the School Board consider the information.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said in his experience, the funding for crossing guards was the function of the police department.

Board Member Halter said her concern was where the training for crossing guards would come from.

Board Member Hardy said her concern was the same as Board Member Halters. She added that she did not feel that the title of crossing guard was appropriate as the people were actually directing traffic, and not just safely directing the children to cross the street. She also said she felt there needed to be a skilled crossing guard who could direct traffic and she did not feel it was the school district's responsibility.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus also said she did not feel it was the school district's responsibility to fund the crossing guard positions.

Chair Martin commented that he too felt it was traffic control and not a crossing guard and therefore, did not feel it was the responsibility of the school district.

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to continue to ask the Merrimack Police Department to support and fund the traffic control guards. Vice-Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

c. Other

Chair Martin commented that there was some conversation about having another joint Budget Committee/School Board meeting to go over the procedure of how the two committees worked together, ideally with some type of mediator. He asked if that was something the School Board still wanted to do. The School Board collectively decided to move forward with scheduling another meeting.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus requested that Mr. Jim Bailey be recognized at the September meeting as he was such a valuable member of the community. Chief Educational Officer Olsen replied he would do that.

7. POLICIES

Chief Educational Officer Olsen pointed out that all of the policies had been reviewed by legal counsel.

a. Approval of Fund Balance Policy (DIA)

MOTION: Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve the Fund Balance Policy (DIA), as presented. Chair Martin seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

b. Approval of Wellness Policy (JLCF)

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to approve the Wellness Policy (JLCF), as amended. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Vice-Chair Rothhaus suggested that adding the words "supports the development of lifelong wellness practices such as mental and social-emotional well-being" be added to the first paragraph.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus also suggested (on page 5 of 7) that the sentence reading “the district recognizes that social-emotional health” should be changed to “the district recognized that mental and social-emotional well-being”.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

c. Student Transportation Services Policy (EEA) 2nd Reading

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that they had not received any public comment regarding the Student Transportation Services Policy (EEA) and the School Board did not need to take any action at this meeting.

d. Admission of Homeless Students (JFABD) 1st Reading

MOTION: Chair Martin made a motion to waive the first reading of the Admission of Homeless Students (JFABD). Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

e. Education of Children in Foster Care (JFABE) 1st Reading

MOTION: Chair Martin made a motion to waive the first reading of the Education of Children in Foster Care (JFABE). Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. June 19, 2023 – Public and Non-Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 19, 2023, public and non-public meetings, as presented. Vice-Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

9. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND GRANTS UNDER $5,000

a. Jeanine Marie Briggs to Merrimack High School for $800.00

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that Ms. Jeanine Marie Briggs’ yoga class raised and wished to donate $800.00 to Merrimack High School to be used for Mr. Phil Carle’s Wood Tech Program in memory of Xander Venedam.

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept the donation in the amount of $800.00 with the Board’s sincere gratitude. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

10. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Educator and Administrator Resignations

- Ms. Fern Seiden, Director of Student Wellness, Districtwide
- Ms. Diane Darius, Special Education Teacher, Merrimack Middle School

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept the resignations. Vice-Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

b. Educator Nominations

- Ms. Jennifer Ruscito, Special Education Coordinator, Merrimack Middle School
- Ms. Kathryn Lambert, Speech Language Pathologist, Reeds Ferry Elementary School
- Ms. Cinzia Bibb, Part-Time School Nurse, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

MOTION: Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to accept the educator nominations. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

c. Administrator Nominations

- Ms. Sara Parrotto, Director of Wellness, Districtwide
- Ms. Kathleen McCall-Ortega, Assistant Principal, James Mastricola Elementary School

MOTION: Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to accept the administrator nominations. Board Member Halter seconded the motion. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

d. Approval of District Registrar Job Description

e. Approval of Director of School Counseling Job Description

f. Approval of Middle School Dean of Students Job Description

g. Approval of Reading Interventionist Job Description

MOTION: Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve the above-listed job descriptions (d through g) with the following recommendation to (e) Director of School Counseling Job Description: "Work with the Athletic Director to train and oversee all NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) compliances."

Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.

11. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

Vice-Chair Rothhaus said she attended the Parks & Recreation meeting where they discussed the parade, summer camp, and the following year after school program.

b. Correspondence

Board Member Hardy said she had a parent reach out to her regarding energy drinks in the vending machines at the high school. She said she contacted the Director of Food Services and was waiting to hear back.

c. Comments

Board Member Hardy asked if Chief Educational Officer Olsen's meeting with Mackenzie Murphy would include a discussion about expanding the dual enrollment opportunities. Chief Educational Officer Olsen
replied that would be discussed.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Cindy Poirier, 5 Hickory Lane, addressed the Board and said was the President of MESSA. She thanked the School Board for giving them the retention bonus, and the sign-on bonus would bring people to the district.

Student Finnegan Haddad addressed the Board and said that the Governor's scholarship would provide two free STEM classes at NCC for dual enrollment. He said he did not feel that the Guidance Department did not share that information with students.

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At approximately 7:02 p.m. Board Member Hardy made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 0.