Merrimack School District/SAU 26
School Board Meeting
Preliminary Agenda
February 17, 2025
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room

5:00 p.m. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – Merrimack TV Training Classroom

- Staff Welfare

6:00 p.m. PUBLIC MEETING

6:00 p.m.	**1. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**	Lori Peters
6:10 p.m.	**2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**	Lori Peters
	3. RECOGNITIONS	Lori Peters
6:20 p.m.	**4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES**	Lori Peters
	a. Superintendent Update	
	b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update	
	c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update	
	d. School Board Update	
	e. Student Representative Update	
6:30 p.m.	**5. OLD BUSINESS**	Lori Peters
	a. 2025-2026 Budget Update	
7:00 p.m.	**6. NEW BUSINESS**	Lori Peters
	a. Review of Protocol for Responding to Immigration Authorities	Everett Olsen
	b. Board's Action on Petition Warrant Article to Delegate the Determination of the Default Budget to the Municipal Budget Committee	Lori Peters
	c. 2025-2026 School Calendar Discussion	
	d. Other	
7:30 p.m.	**7. POLICIES**	Lori Peters
	a. Approval of Revised Health Education and Exemption from Instruction (IHAM)	
	b. Second Review of Revised Procedural Safeguards Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability Policy (ACE)	
	c. Second Review of Revised Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment, and Anti-Discrimination Plan Policy (AC)	
	d. Approval of Amended Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment, and Anti-Discrimination Plan Policy (ACAC)	
7:40 p.m.	**8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**	Lori Peters
	a. February 3, 2025 Public and Non-Public Minutes	
	9. CONSENT AGENDA	Amanda Doyle
7:45 p.m.	**10. OTHER**	Lori Peters
	a. Committee Reports	
	b. Correspondence	
	c. Comments	
7:55 p.m.	**11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**	Lori Peters
8:15 p.m.	**12. ADJOURN**	

* These times are estimates and may vary depending on discussion.

MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Administrative Unit #26
36 McElwain Street
Merrimack, New Hampshire 03054
Tel. (603) 424-6200 Fax (603) 424-6229

AMANDA S. DOYLE
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum

EVERETT V. OLSEN, Jr.
Chief Education Officer

MATTHEW D. SHEVENELL
Assistant Superintendent for Business

To: Merrimack School Staff

From: Everett V. Olsen, Jr.

Date: February 12, 2025

Subject: Protocol For Responding to Immigration Authorities

President Trump has initiated an aggressive national deportation policy pertaining to undocumented people. The Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) is responsible for enforcement of immigration laws throughout the United States.

I have spoken with both our legal counsel and the Merrimack Police Chief about how the enforcement could impact public schools. From my conversations it appears that although it is possible that an ICE official(s) could visit one of our schools, there is a relatively small chance of this happening.

The District is required by law to enroll all students who reside in the District, regardless of whether they are a citizen. As a result, when a child is registered for school, the District does not inquire as to a student's citizenship status. School districts are allowed to obtain documentation pertaining to legal residency within the community in accordance with state statute. Therefore, we would not possess information regarding the citizenship of the family/child. Sometimes, a citizen will inform the ICE agency of a suspected undocumented family and this may initiate an investigation. As previously stated, although an investigation in our school district is possible, it appears to be less likely than more likely.

In the unlikely event that an Immigration official appears at one of our schools, please follow the protocols in the document accompanying this memo. It is important that we comply with the law while also looking out for the safety and wellbeing of our students!

School District Protocol for Responding to Immigration Authorities

As a result of a new Immigration Policy being signed into law on January 20, 2025, we need to be aware of our legal responsibilities if we interact with Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agents (ICE) who seek to conduct immigration enforcement actions on our school property. I am listing the protocols for **three scenarios** which include:

1. ICE Agents visiting a school stating that they are responding to an emergency
2. ICE Agents visiting a school and possessing a "Judicial Warrant" signed by Federal or State judge
3. ICE Agents visiting a school and possessing an "Administration Warrant" (sometimes referred to as a "Detainee/Removal Warrant")

Regardless of the scenario, you must immediately notify the school Principal and Assistant Principal, and the Superintendent's office.

Scenario #1: ICE Agents visiting a school stating that they are responding to an emergency.

ACTIONS:

Staff

- Ask the Immigration Agent the reason for their visit.
- Notify Principal, Assistant Principal and Superintendent's Office
- Access needs to be granted to Agent(s)
  - Do not make any statement that you are denying access to the agent.
  - Principal/Assistant Principal will check to see if the Agent has a Warrant, and/or what is the nature of the emergency.
- Students should remain in classrooms with closed doors.

Principal/Assistant Principal

- Inform Agent that you are required to follow the school district protocol in responding to the Agent's request.
- Request Agent's:
  - Name
  - ID number
  - Agency they work for
  - Location of their office
- Confirm the reason for the Agent's visit.

Scenario #2: ICE Agent visiting a school and possessing a "Judicial Warrant" signed by a Federal or State Judge

ACTIONS:

Staff

- Ask the Immigration Agent the reason for their visit.
- If the Agent possesses a "Judicial Warrant" immediately direct the Agent to the Principal/Assistant Principal and let the Principal/Assistant Principal know that the Agent has a Warrant. NOTIFY THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE.

Principal/Assistant Principal

- Inform the Immigration Agent that you are required to follow district protocol in responding to the Agent's request
- Request the following information:
  - Agent's name and badge
  - ID number
  - The agency they work for
  - Location of their office
  - Ask for a copy of the Judicial Warrant and read it.
  - Inform Agent that you must consult with Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent before letting anyone into non-public areas of the school (beyond the main office).
  - **DO NOT** impede the movement of the Agent, attempt to warn anyone or hide or destroy any documents.
  - Respond to the Agents request for access as advised by the Superintendent
  - Inform the Agent that you are required to inform parents prior to producing student records (if requested) unless a Judicial Warrant order prohibits parental notification.
  - Document your interaction with immigration officials in writing.
  - FERPA must be followed. While the district does not document a student's immigration status, it is personally identifiable information protected by FERPA.
  - If the Agent(s) have a Judicial Warrant, the school district staff **may not** withhold consent to enter into non-public areas covered by the Warrant.
  - School district staff must not obstruct a lawful immigration enforcement (specified in a Judicial Warrant), by doing the following:
    - Physically interfering with the actions of immigration enforcement officers
    - Hiding students or employees to evade detention
    - Hiding or destroying documents that are the subject of a Warrant

Scenario #3: ICE Agent(s) visiting a school and possessing an "Administrative Warrant" (sometimes referred to as a Detainee/Removal Warrant)

Note: An Administrative Warrant is not a Judicial Warrant and does not grant the Agent(s) authority to enter a non-public area without consent. In these situations, school district administrators may lawfully refuse to grant consent to enter non-public areas (areas beyond the main office).

It is important to note that while an Administrative Warrant does not require school district staff to consent to entry into a non-public area of the school, school district staff must still ensure that they do not otherwise obstruct lawful immigration enforcement actions taken pursuant to an Administrative Warrant. This may include but is not limited to:

- Immigration enforcement actions on portions of school district property which are open to the public.
- Immigration enforcement actions during school district activities which take place away from school district property.
- Immigration enforcement actions on school grounds when the Agent(s) have obtained consent.

ACTIONS:

Staff

- Ask the Immigration Agent the reason for their visit.
- If the Agent possesses an "Administrative Warrant" immediately direct the Agent to the Principal/Assistant Principal and let the Principal/Assistant Principal know that the Agent has a Warrant. NOTIFY THE SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE.

Principal/Assistant Principal

- Inform the Immigration Agent that you are required to follow district protocol in responding to the Agent's request.
- Request the following information:
  - Agent's name and badge
  - ID number
  - The agency they work for
  - Location of their office
  - Ask for a copy of the Administrative Warrant and read it.
  - Inform Agent that you must consult with Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent before letting anyone into non-public areas of the school (beyond the main office).
  - DO NOT impede the movement of the Agent, attempt to warn anyone or hide or destroy any documents.
  - Respond to the Agents request for access as advised by the Superintendent.

- Inform the Agent that you are required to inform parents prior to producing student records (if requested) unless an Administrative Warrant order prohibits parental notification.
- Document your interaction with immigration officials in writing.
- FERPA must be followed. While the district does not document a student's immigration status, it is personally identifiable information protected by FERPA
- If the Agent(s) have an Administrative Warrant, the school district staff **may not** withhold consent to enter into non-public areas covered by the Warrant.
- School district staff must not obstruct a lawful immigration enforcement (specified in an Administrative Warrant), by doing the following:
    - Physically interfering with the actions of immigration enforcement officers.
    - Hiding students or employees to evade detention.
    - Hiding or destroying documents that are the subject of a Warrant.

AO 93 (Rev. 11/13) Search and Seizure Warrant

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

In the Matter of the Search of
(Briefly describe the property to be searched or identify the person by name and address)

Case No.

SEARCH AND SEIZURE WARRANT

To: Any authorized law enforcement officer

An application by a federal law enforcement officer or an attorney for the government requests the search of the following person or property located in the _____ District of _____
(identify the person or describe the property to be searched and give its location):

I find that the affidavit(s), or any recorded testimony, establish probable cause to search and seize the person or property described above, and that such search will reveal *(identify the person or describe the property to be seized)*:

YOU ARE COMMANDED to execute this warrant on or before _____ *(not to exceed 14 days)*
☐ in the daytime 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ☐ at any time in the day or night because good cause has been established.

Unless delayed notice is authorized below, you must give a copy of the warrant and a receipt for the property taken to the person from whom, or from whose premises, the property was taken, or leave the copy and receipt at the place where the property was taken.

The officer executing this warrant, or an officer present during the execution of the warrant, must prepare an inventory as required by law and promptly return this warrant and inventory to _____.
(United States Magistrate Judge)

☐ Pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3103a(b), I find that immediate notification may have an adverse result listed in 18 U.S.C. § 2705 (except for delay of trial), and authorize the officer executing this warrant to delay notice to the person who, or whose property, will be searched or seized *(check the appropriate box)*
☐ for _____ days *(not to exceed 30)* ☐ until, the facts justifying, the later specific date of _____.

Date and time issued: _____ _____
Judge's signature

City and state: _____ _____
Printed name and title

Return

Case No.:	Date and time warrant executed:	Copy of warrant and inventory left with:

Inventory made in the presence of :

Inventory of the property taken and name of any person(s) seized:

Certification

I declare under penalty of perjury that this inventory is correct and was returned along with the original warrant to the designated judge.

Date: _____

_____
Executing officer's signature

_____
Printed name and title

Print Save As... Reset

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY **Warrant for Arrest of Alien**

File No. _____

Date: _____

To: Any immigration officer authorized pursuant to sections 236 and 287 of the Immigration and Nationality Act and part 287 of title 8, Code of Federal Regulations, to serve warrants of arrest for immigration violations

I have determined that there is probable cause to believe that _____ is removable from the United States. This determination is based upon:

☐ the execution of a charging document to initiate removal proceedings against the subject;

☐ the pendency of ongoing removal proceedings against the subject;

☐ the failure to establish admissibility subsequent to deferred inspection;

☐ biometric confirmation of the subject's identity and a records check of federal databases that affirmatively indicate, by themselves or in addition to other reliable information, that the subject either lacks immigration status or notwithstanding such status is removable under U.S. immigration law; and/or

☐ statements made voluntarily by the subject to an immigration officer and/or other reliable evidence that affirmatively indicate the subject either lacks immigration status or notwithstanding such status is removable under U.S. immigration law.

YOU ARE COMMANDED to arrest and take into custody for removal proceedings under the Immigration and Nationality Act, the above-named alien.

SAMPLE

_____
(Signature of Authorized Immigration Officer)

_____
(Printed Name and Title of Authorized Immigration Officer)

Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that the Warrant for Arrest of Alien was served by me at _____ (Location)

on _____ (Name of Alien) on _____ (Date of Service), and the contents of this notice were read to him or her in the _____ (Language) language.

_____ Name and Signature of Officer

_____ Name or Number of Interpreter (if applicable)

Form I-200 (Rev. 09/16)

Presented to the School Board on 2-17-2025

Merrimack School District
School District Warrant

March 4, 2025 (Deliberation)
and April 8, 2025 (Voting)
STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

To the inhabitants of the School District in the Town of Merrimack, County of Hillsborough, New Hampshire, qualified to vote in School District affairs:

You are hereby notified to meet at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School in said District on Tuesday March 4, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. for Session 1 (Deliberation), to discuss the matters to be voted on by official ballot; and to meet at the designated polling sites, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, Merrimack Middle School, or St. John Neumann Church on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, Session 2 (Voting) for the choice of School District officers elected by ballot and any other action required to be inserted on said official ballot. The polls for the election of school district officers and other action required to be inserted on said ballot will open on said date at 7:00 a.m. and will not close earlier than 7:00 p.m. to act upon the following subjects:

ARTICLE 1 To elect all necessary school district officers for the ensuing year. (Vote by Ballot.)

ARTICLE 2 Shall the Merrimack School Board be authorized to accept on behalf of the District, without further action by the voters, gifts, legacies and devises of personal or real property which may become available to the District during the fiscal year? (Majority vote required). (Recommended by the School Board Vote: 5-0-0).

ARTICLE 3 (Special Warrant Article) Shall the District establish a capital reserve fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1, to be known as the Administrative Office Development Fund for the purpose of designing, constructing, equipping, furnishing, and/or renovating office space located in the district to include but not be limited to the offices for Superintendent Services, Student Services, Student Wellness, Technology, Business Operations, and Human Resources, and to raise and appropriate the sum of up to Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($500,000); this sum to come from the June 30, 2025 fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2025, and further, to name the school board as agents to expend from this fund? No amount to be raised from new taxation. (Majority vote required).
(Recommended by the School Board Vote: 5-0-0). (Recommended by the Budget Committee Vote: 13-0-0).

ARTICLE 4 (Special Warrant Article) Shall the District raise and appropriate the sum of Eight Hundred Twenty-Three Thousand Two Hundred Thirty Dollars ($823,230) for the purpose of roof replacement at James Mastricola Elementary School and James Mastricola Upper Elementary School? (Majority vote required).
(Recommended by the School Board Vote: 5-0-0). (Recommended by the Budget Committee Vote: 13-0-0).

ARTICLE 5 By Petition Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 40:14-b to delegate the determination of the default budget to the municipal budget committee which has been adopted under RSA 32:14 (315th Majority vote required).

ARTICLE 6 By Petition Shall the District, pursuant to RSA 32:14, V, rescind the adoption of Article 7 of the 2006 School District Warrant that established a school district budget committee? (Majority vote required).

ARTICLE 7 Shall the District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling $ 96,823,198? (Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be $ 95,808,066 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the District or by law, or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only)? (Majority vote required). (Recommended by the School Board Vote: 5-0-0). (Recommended by the Budget Committee Vote: 8-4-1).

MerrimackSchool District - SAU 26

School Calendar 2025-2026

Draft - 2/12/2025

August 2025 — Students: 2 days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Aug 25 - Classroom Set Up - no MESSA
Aug 26 - District Mtgs/PD - All Staff
Aug 27 - Building Mtgs/PD - All Staff
Aug 28 - First Day of School Transition Day*
*Gr.K,5,7,9 Regular Arrival Time
*All other grades: 2hr delay

September 2025 — Students: 20 days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Sept 1- No School/Labor Day
Sept 10/17 - Tentative PD Day
Sept 11- MHS Back to School Night (Tentative)

October 2025 — Students: 22 days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Oct 10 - Early Release
Oct 13 - Columbus/Indigenous people Day
*conferences

November 2025 — Students: 16 days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

Nov 10 - No School/Veterans Day Observed
Nov 26-28 - No School/Thanksgiving Break

December 2025 — Students: 15 days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Dec 10 - Early Release
Dec 22 to Jan 2 - No School/Winter Break

Key

Teacher Workshop, No School for Students	
First/Last Day of School for Students	
No School, Observed Holiday/Vacation	
Early Release	
Summer Break/Weekends (no school)	

January 2026 — Students: 19 days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Jan 1 - No School/New Years' Day
Jan 2 - No School
Jan 19 - No School/MLK Jr Day

February 2026 — Students: 15 days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

Feb 4 - Early Release
Feb 23 to 27 - No School/February Break

March 2026 — Students: 21 days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Mar 11 - Workshop Day
Mar 25 - Early Release
*conferences

April 2026 — Students: 17 days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Apr 7 - No School/Town Elections
Apr 27 to May 1 - No School/Spring Break

May 2026 — Students: 19 days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

May 1 - No School
May 6 - Early Release
May 25 - No School/Memorial Day

June 2026 — Students: 14 days

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

June 13 - Tentative Graduation Date
June 18 - Tentative last day of school-ER

School Start/End Times

School	Start	End	ER Dismissal
Merrimack Middle School	7:30	2:05	11:00
Merrimack High School	7:30	2:15	11:15
Mastricola Elementary	8:30	2:45	12:15
Reeds Ferry Elementary	8:30	2:45	12:15
Thorntons Ferry Elementary	8:30	2:45	12:15
Mastricola Upper Elementary	8:40	2:55	12:25

Important Dates*

Event	MES	RFS	TFS	MUES	MMS	MHS
Parent Information Night						
Fall Parent Teacher Conferences						10/9/25, 10/14/25 (Tentative)
Kindergarten Registration						
Kindergarten Registration Night						
Spring Parent Teacher Conferences						3/12/26, 3/18/26 (Tentative)
Term/Marking Period End Dates						
Report Cards						
Election Dates	Town Elections April 7, 2026					

* Dates above are subject to change with notice

MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Administrative Unit #26
36 McElwain Street
Merrimack, New Hampshire 03054
Tel. (603) 424-6200 Fax (603) 424-6229

AMANDA S. DOYLE
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum

EVERETT V. OLSEN, Jr.
Chief Educational Officer

MATTHEW D. SHEVENELL
Assistant Superintendent for Business

To: Lori Peters
Jenna Hardy
Naomi Halter
Ken Martin
Laurie Rothhaus
Finnegan Haddad

From: Everett V. Olsen, Jr.

Date: February 13, 2025

Subject: Proposed 2025-2026 School District Calendar

I recently convened a 12-member committee to develop the calendar for the 2025-2026 school year. The committee consisted of members of our Leadership Team and Merrimack Teachers' Association (MTA) representatives. A calendar survey was developed and distributed to staff and parents. I am pleased to say that we had 395 staff responses, and 1011 parent responses. These responses have helped shape the decisions of the calendar committee in the development of the 2025-2026 school year calendar.

In January, I established a committee to develop a school district calendar for the 2025-2026 school year. The committee included the following staff:

Deb Fournier, Teacher, MES
Bonnie Painchaud, Principal, RFS
Brooke, Ross, Assistant Principal, TFS
Nicole Rheault, Principal, JMUES
Chrigus Boezeman, Principal, MMS
Steve Claire, Principal, MHS
Rich Zampieri, Assistant Principal, MHS
Sally Agel, Teacher, MHS
Melissa Fazlic, Director of Human Resources
Sarah Reinhardt, Director of Student Services
Amy Doyle, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Everett Olsen, Chief Educational Officer

Philosophy Behind Calendar Development

The development of a school district calendar involves a number of issues for consideration, which include:

- Appearance and Readability of Calendar
- Required Number of Instructional Days and Contract Days
- Professional Development Needs (discretionary and mandatory)
- Holidays/Cultural Observances/Vacation Periods
- High School Graduation Date
- Parent Conferences
- Election Days
- Collective Bargaining Agreements
- Kindergarten Registration
- Transition Day
- School Daily Start/End Times
- Parent and Staff Input
- Sensitivity to Cultural/Religious Observances
- Alignment with Calendars of Regional Career Technical Education Centers
- Report Card Dates

Appearance and Readability of Calendar

For the last several years we have presented a calendar that is more appealing and readable than school calendars prior to 2022. The calendar template once again includes weekend days which help with the readability of the calendar from one week to the next. We utilized different colors to highlight certain events during the school year, and we have included explanatory comments associated with events occurring within each respective month.

Required Number of Instructional Days and Contract Days and Professional Development Time

The 2025-2026 calendar meets the minimum number of school days (180) required by New Hampshire Statute 189:1; New Hampshire Code Administrative Rule 306.18. The calendars also align with both the Merrimack Teachers Association (MTA) and the Merrimack Educational Support Staff Association (MESSA) union contracts. The MTA contract includes calendar-related language which is addressed below:

- Teacher Work Days: One hundred eighty-seven (187) days, between the Monday before Labor Day of one year and June thirtieth (30th) of the next year.

- In-Service Days: A minimum of seven (7) in-service days in the school year, with at least four (4) days reserved for workshops and building meetings, one (1) day for classroom preparation prior to the beginning of school for students, and the equivalent of two (2) days for parent conferences. The 2025-2026 calendar incorporates five (5) early release days into the school year. These days may be used for staff collaboration time, building meetings, discretionary and mandatory staff training. These early release days are strongly supported in both parent and staff surveys.

Holidays/Cultural Observances/Vacation Periods

The calendar committee is maintaining the traditional school vacation week periods in the 2025-2026 calendar. This will allow us to address the state's proposed legislation that the school calendars of Career Technical Education Centers (CTE) member districts may not be out of instructional day alignment (with the CTE) by more than 10 days. Additionally, the major holidays (some with local discretion of observance) are noted in yellow on the calendar. Of special note is the inclusion of a "Guide to Religious and Cultural Observances" that will be included with the 2025-2026 calendar. This guide will be sent to all staff in an effort to enhance our organizational level of cultural competency. It is important for staff to understand the observances of students and their families and demonstrate sensitivity in scheduling events, exams, major assignments, etc.

High School Graduation Date

The state statute with respect to high school graduation is as follows:

"The high school graduation date shall be set no more than 5 school days or 30 instructional hours before the end of the scheduled school year without consideration of making up lost time, pursuant to Ed 306.18 (a) (4)." Therefore, the date of graduation for Merrimack High School seniors will be June 13, 2026.

Parent Conference, Election Days and Kindergarten Registration

These events are listed on the "Important Dates" table at the bottom of the calendar. There will be no school on April 7, 2026 which is the date of Merrimack's Town Elections.

Transition Time

We will, again, have a transition time during the first two hours on the first day of school. Students in grades K, 5, 7, 9 (and new students) will arrive at school at the normal start time on the first day of school. This transition time is intended to reduce the anxiety of students attending a new school with new and/or additional peers.

Parent and Staff School Calendar Input

A school calendar survey (enclosed) was sent to staff and parents and we have responses from 395 parents and 1011 staff. The responses are included with this memo. Of note, is the support by both parents and staff for beginning the school year prior to Labor Day, providing a transition time for students in grades K, 5, 7, 9 on the opening day of school, and the inclusion of four early release days throughout the school year.

Calendar Committee Recommendation

It is the recommendation of the calendar committee that we begin the 2025-2026 school year prior to Labor Day. Most families are ready for a return to school in late August of each year and the instructional days in late August/early September are more robust than the school days in the latter part of June.

I wish to thank the members of the calendar committee for their dedication toward developing a school calendar that, I believe, serves our school district and the community very well. My thanks, also, to the parents and staff who took time to complete the calendar survey. I do hope that you will find this school calendar to be informative and helpful to students, staff, and the community. I look forward to discussing this with you at our upcoming meeting.

2025-2026 Calendar Survey For Parents

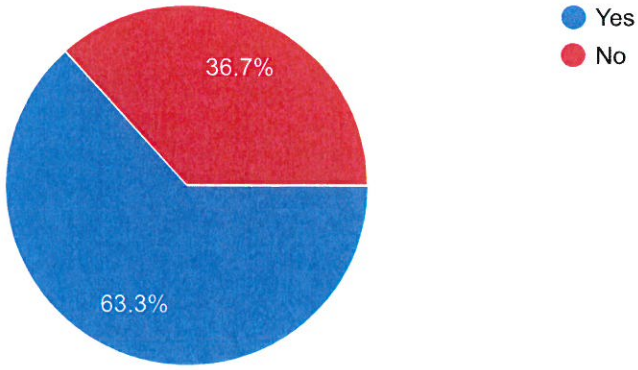
1,011 responses

Publish analytics

We are planning to begin the 2025-2026 school year, for students, on Thursday, August 28, 2025. Do you support this start date?

Copy

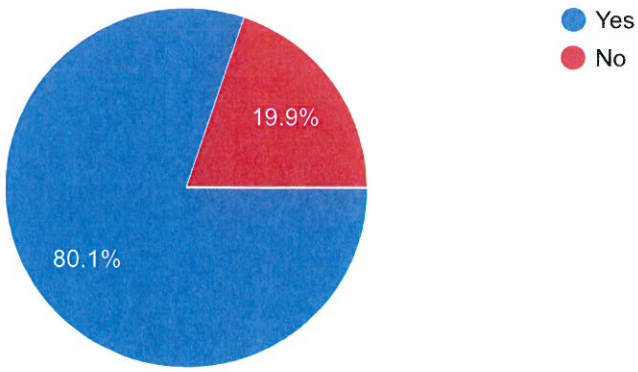
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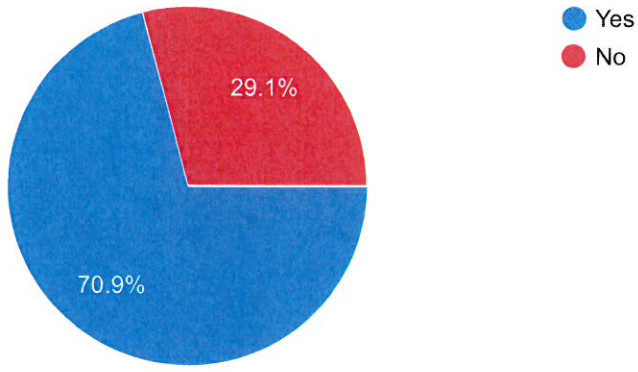
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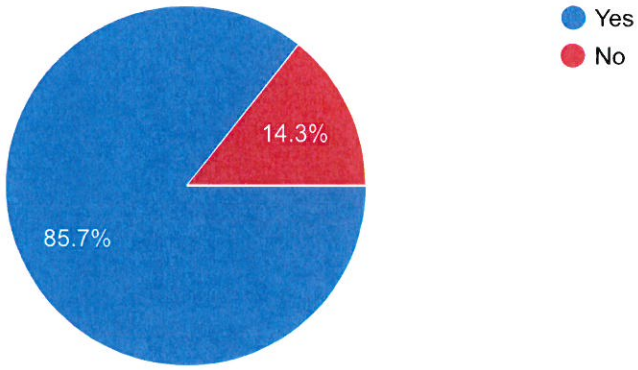
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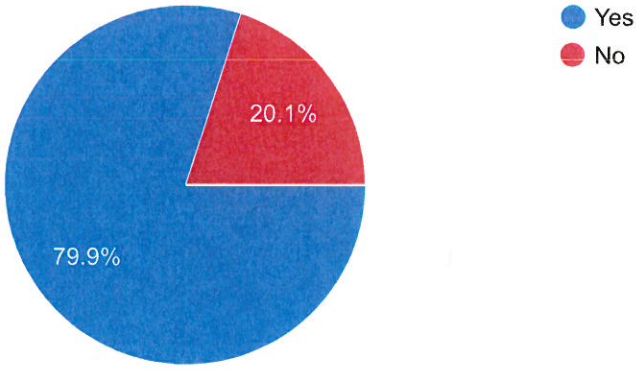
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Do you support having NO SCHOOL on Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 19, 2026)?

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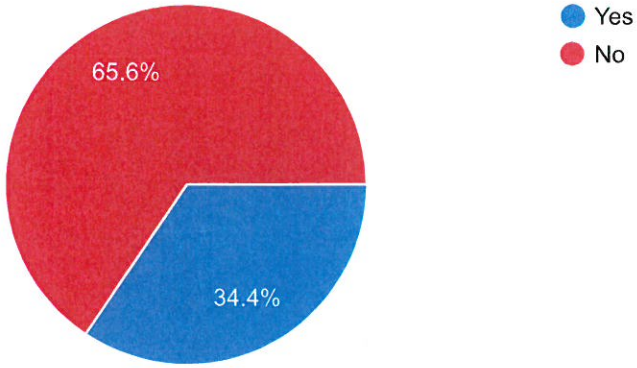
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Do you support having NO SCHOOL on Presidents Day (February 16, 2026)? Note that February vacation next year is scheduled to begin the following week (February 23 – February 27, 2026).

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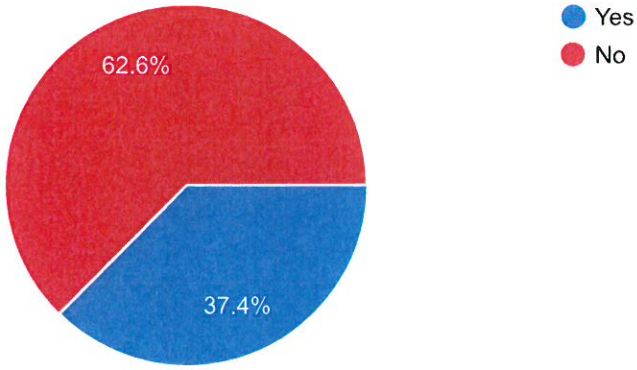
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If school is in session on June 19, 2026 (Juneteenth), do you support having NO SCHOOL on this day?

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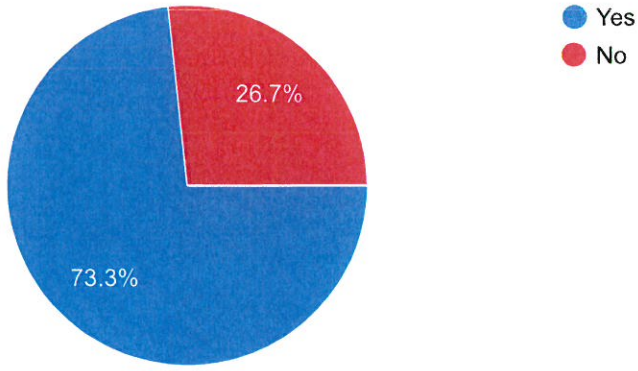
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Do you support several early release days during the school year for staff training and teacher collaboration?

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2025-2026 Calendar Survey For Staff

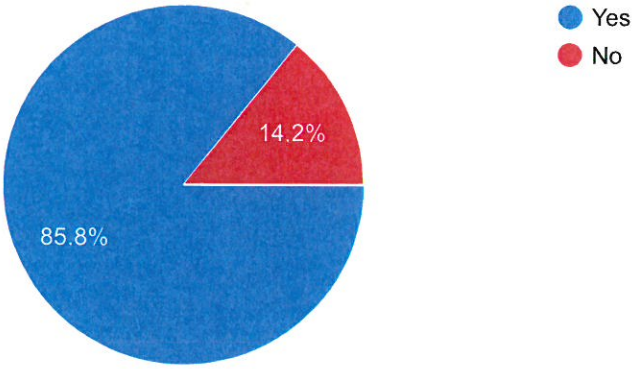
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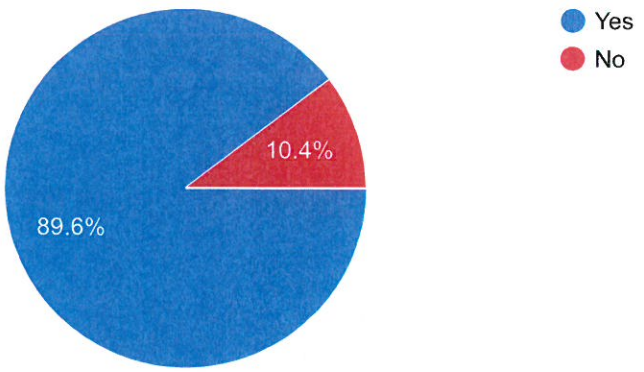
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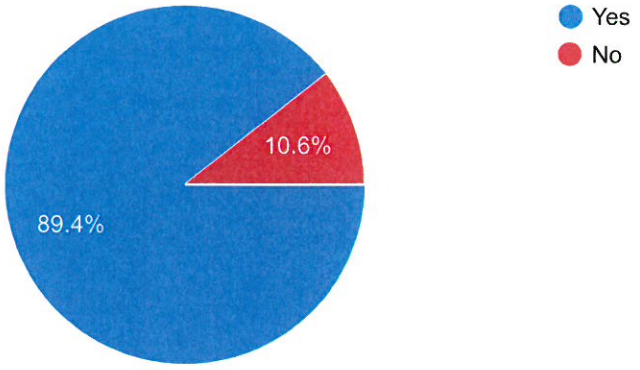
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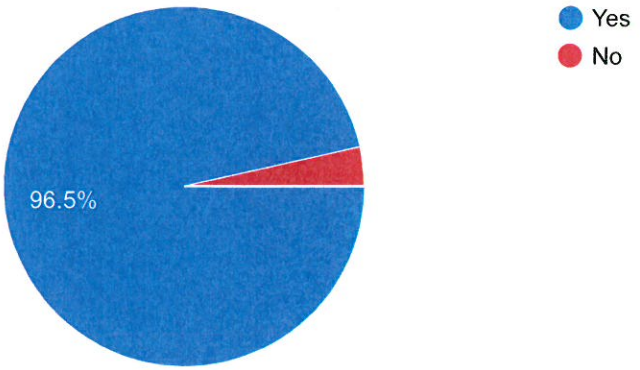
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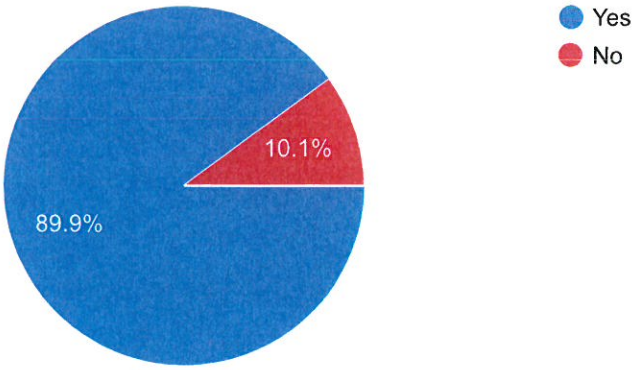
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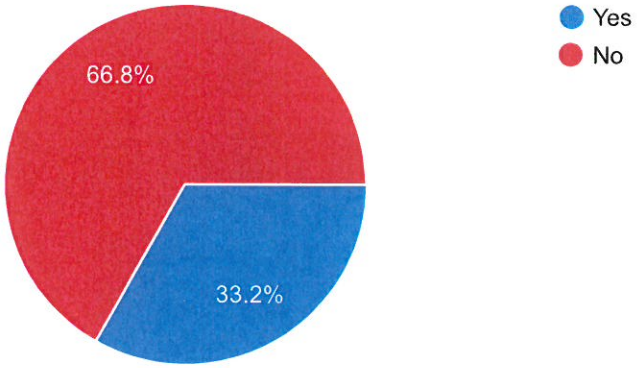
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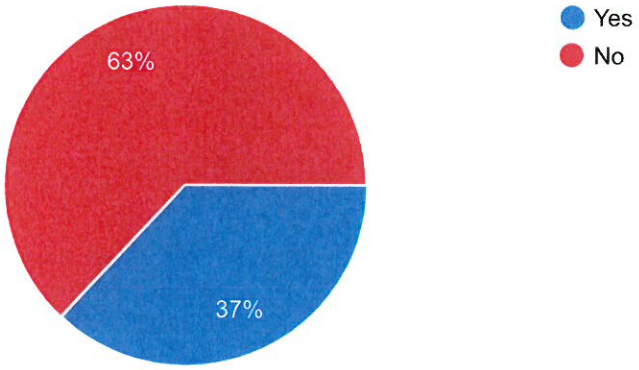
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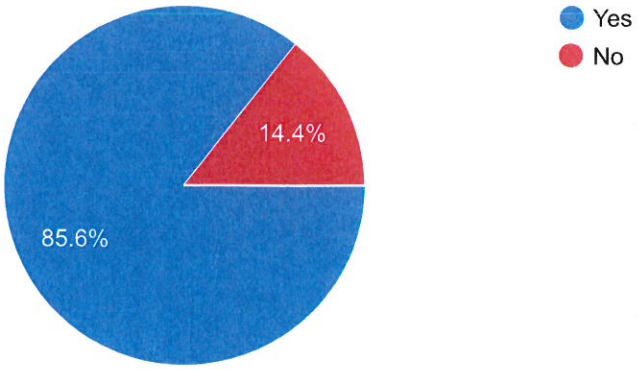
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Merrimack School Board Special Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Memorial Room
February 3, 2025

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

- **Student Welfare**
- **Staff Welfare**

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

Also Present: 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.

Chair Peters read aloud the Merrimack School District's mission statement into the record as follows:

The Merrimack School District will provide a high-quality, future-driven education to all students in the community. Students will engage in learning opportunities that reflect both rigger and relevance and meet their cognitive, social, and emotional needs. The district will prepare students to understand, adapt, and adjust to civic, economic, social, and technological changes in the world. Our overall goal is to inspire, create, and encourage students to be curious, connected, prepared, resilient, and dedicated individuals who are lifelong expert learners. Merrimack graduates exercise judgment; they are innovative and will become responsible contributors to society. We hope the discussions we have tonight will always align with that mission.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

State Representative Wendy Thomas addressed the Board and said she wanted the School Board to know she was present and would relay any information back to Concord.

Ms. Heather Robitaille, 45 Springfield Circle, addressed the Board and stated that she appreciated the staff at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School for hosting the Literacy Night the previous week. She said it was a very successful event.

3. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen thanked the staff at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School as well as Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle for the very successful Literacy Night. He said the monies that the voters had approved were providing a very solid return on investment.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said they were currently working on the 2025-2026 school year calendar and noted the importance of providing early release days to have professional development training for the teachers.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen noted that when there was inclement weather, he had to make decisions about a two-hour delay or a snow day very early in the morning. He further stated that sometimes, main roads were cleared, but side streets could remain very icy.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle also commented on the successful Literacy Night. She said there were also partners present from the New Hampshire Department of Education who were collaborating with them on the Literacy Grant.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle stated that the following Wednesday, February 5th, would be an early release for professional development where they would provide staff with a mix of mandatory training, instructional support, and time to address some building needs.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said that the Board would receive a series of parent/family engagement events via email that the district would sponsor through the end of the school year.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that he had received a number of bids and quotations regarding the warrant article to replace the roof at the James Mastricola Elementary School and the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School in the amount of $834,000. He said he felt confident that the job could be done with the sum of $834,000.

d. School Board Update

Chair Peters also said she had attended Literacy Night, where she joined the 4th-grade Writing Seminar and learned that the 4th-grade students were learning how to write four-paragraph essays.

Board Member Rothhaus commented that she felt colleges were looking for better reading and writing skills and thought the Merrimack School District was going in the right direction.

Vice-Chair Hardy and Board Member Halter both commented that they were very impressed with the Wit & Wisdom Curriculum.

e. Student Representative Update

Student Representative Haddad said February was Black History Month, and the students for cultural equality were doing an incredible job highlighting diversity.

Student Representative Haddad also said they would start course selection soon, and as part of that process, Nashua High School South would have an open house for their CTE Programs on February 12th, and Nashua High School North would have an open house for their CTE Programs on February 13th. He also said that some new courses were added to Merrimack High School. The School Board collectively said that they highly encouraged parents and students to attend the open houses.

Chair Peters said there would be a Budget Committee meeting the following evening at 6:00 p.m., and the public hearing on the budget would be held on Tuesday, February 11th.

4. OLD BUSINESS

a. Vote on Warrant Articles

To the inhabitants of the School District in the Town of Merrimack, County of Hillsborough, New Hampshire, qualified to vote in School District affairs:

You are hereby notified to meet at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School in said District on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. for Session 1 (Deliberation) to discuss the matters to be voted on by official ballot and to meet at the designated polling sites, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School, Merrimack Middle School, or St. John Neumann Church on Tuesday,
April 8, 2025, Session 2 (Voting) for the choice of School District officers elected by ballot and any other action required to be inserted on said official ballot. The polls for the election of school district officers and other action required to be inserted on said ballot will open on said date at 7:00 a.m. and will not close earlier than 7:00 p.m. to act upon the following subjects:

ARTICLE 1: To elect all necessary school district officers for the ensuing year. (Vote by Ballot.)

ARTICLE 2: Shall the Merrimack School Board be authorized to accept on behalf of the District, without further action by the voters, gifts, legacies, and devises of personal or real property which may become available to the District during the fiscal year? (Majority vote required).

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to accept Article 2. Board Member Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: **5 – 0 – 0.**

ARTICLE 3: (Special Warrant Article) Shall the District establish a capital reserve fund under the provisions of RSA 35: I, to be known as the Administrative Office Development Fund for the purpose of designing, constructing, equipping, furnishing, and/or renovating office space located in the district to include but not be limited to the offices for Superintendent Services, Student Services, Student Wellness, Technology, Business Operations, and Human Resources, and to raise and appropriate the sum of up to Seven Hundred and Fifty Thousand Dollars ($750,000); this sum to come from the June 30, 2025, fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2025, and further, to name the school board as agents to expend from this fund? **No amount is to be raised from new taxation.** (Majority vote required).

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to accept Article 3. Vice-Chair Hardy seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Board Member Rothhaus asked how much money the district usually had in surplus funds. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied that the current year's surplus was $3.6 million. He said the surplus (the unassigned fund balance) that the district had at the end of the school year was applied towards the school portion of the tax rate.

Board Member Halter asked how many capital reserve funds the district had and what were the balances in those funds. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied the following:

Fund	Balance in Fund
Paving Capital Reserve Fund:	$300,000
Roof Capital Reserve Fund:	$ 3,000
Math & Reading Fund:	$ 90,000
Special Education Capital Reserve Fund:	$535,000
Maintenance, Repair, & Emergency Fund:	$540,000

Board Member Halter commented that she felt the $750,000 was a bit high.

Chair Peters commented that she felt $500,000 was a more appropriate number. Board Member Halter commented that she agreed.

Board Member Martin commented that he felt it was very important to ensure that the intent was very well advertised and that it was not going to raise taxes.

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to amend his motion to accept Article 3 with an adjusted amount of $500,000 instead of $750,000. Vice-Chair Hardy seconded the motion as amended.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

ARTICLE 4: (Special Warrant Article) Shall the District raise and appropriate the sum of Eight Hundred Twenty-Three Thousand Two Hundred Thirty Dollars ($823,230) for the purpose of a roof replacement at James Mastricola Elementary School and James Mastricola Upper Elementary School? (Majority vote required).

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell explained that the portions of the roofs that needed to be replaced were quite old and were leaking in some areas.

Board Member Rothhaus commented that as a member of the Planning & Building Committee, she felt it was critical to keep all of their facilities in good shape.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Hardy made a motion to accept Article 4. Board Member Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling $96,823,198? (Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be $ 95,808,066, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the District or by law, or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget.)

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to accept Article 5. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Board Member Halter commented that she felt it was important to note that the ask represented a 1% difference between the default budget, and it represented way more than 1% in progress and approvements that the administration had done.

Chair Peters commented that the budget had been level-funded for the past three years, and they had not kept up with inflation. She further stated that the budget matched the inflation rate, and it was the first one that matched inflation in years.

MOTION CARRIED: **5 – 0 – 0.**

b. FY26 Budget Discussion

Chair Peters reviewed a PowerPoint presentation, and she explained that, per Salary.com, the cost of living in Merrimack, NH, was 16.9% higher than the national average. She added that although the teachers' salaries were much better than in past years, they were still not competitive.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that the increase in teacher salaries had made a significant difference in the number of people applying for jobs.

Chair Peters also commented that health insurance premiums had gone up by 252% since 1999, but Merrimack had managed to offer competitive health care packages.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said that while the State of New Hampshire did not have a sales tax, the money for necessary services had to come from somewhere else, and that onus fell on property taxes.

5. NEW BUSINESS

There was none.

6. POLICIES

a. Annual Review of Investment Policy (DFA)

Chair Peters stated that the School Board reviewed the Annual Review of Investment Policy (DFA) on February 3, 2025.

b. Revised Health Education and Exemption from Instruction Policy (IHAM) 2nd Reading

This policy will be voted on at the next School Board meeting.

c. Revised Procedural Safeguards Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability Policy (ACE) (1st Reading)

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to waive the first reading of the Revised Procedural Safeguards Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability Policy (ACE). Board Member Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

d. Review of Section 504 Procedural Safeguards - Parent/Guardian/Student Rights Under Section 504 (ACE-R)

e. Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment, and Anti-Discrimination Policy (AC) (1st Reading)

Chair Peters stated that the School Board reviewed the Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment, and Anti-Discrimination Policy (AC) on February 3, 2025.

f. Review of Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment and District Anti-Discrimination Policy (AC-R)

Chair Peters stated that the School Board reviewed the Non-Discrimination Equal Opportunity Employment and District Anti-Discrimination Policy (AC-R) on February 3, 2025.

g. Review of Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment, and Anti-Discrimination Annual Notice of Contact Information (AC-R2)

Chair Peters stated that the School Board reviewed the Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity Employment, and Anti-Discrimination Annual Notice of Contact Information (AC-R(2) on February 3, 2025.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. January 21, 2025, Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to accept the public minutes of the January 21, 2025, meeting, as presented. Vice-Chair Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

b. January 21, 2025, Non-Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to accept the non-public minutes from the January 21, 2025, meeting, as presented. Board Member Rothhaus seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 4 – 0 – 1. (Abstained: Board Member Halter)

8. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Educator Nominations

- Kevin Morehead, Science Teacher, Merrimack Middle School
- Shayna Beaulieu, Elementary Classroom Teacher, Reeds Ferry Elementary School

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

Board Member Halter stated that she attended a Budget Committee meeting on January 28th where the committee heard department reviews for maintenance, technology, special services, and food services. She said they would hold their work session the following day, and the following week was the public hearing.

b. Correspondence

Vice-Chair Hardy commented that she received correspondence from a parent who had a concern at the Merrimack High School, and she pointed that parent in the right direction.

Chair Peters stated that she had received several pieces of correspondence about concerns at the high school, and they were all directed to the appropriate person to handle the concerns.

Chair Peters said she also received some positive feedback pertaining to the School Board's work.

c. Comments

Student Representative Haddad stated that on Thursday, a little bit of time would be carved out of the day so that the entire school could watch a Unified Basketball game.

Board Member Rothhaus commented that she thought it was very important for the Board to keep up with updating the policies.

Board Member Martin commented that filing for school district offices would open in approximately two weeks, and two positions on the School Board would be vacant.

Chair Peters stated that it was very important that the public understood that all decisions regarding IEPs and 504s were data-driven. She said the data, through assessments, determined services and were not based on wants, needs, or suspects.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

State Representative Thomas addressed the Board and said there was a bill that requested that the rooms and meals tax be lowered from 8.5% to 7.5%. She said that

would benefit the tourists and not the people who live in New Hampshire, and the difference would have to be made up through the property taxes. She said the Interest in Dividends Tax that was removed last term had created a $189,000,000 hole in the state budget. She said that tax benefited the top 10% of the wealthiest people in New Hampshire.

State Representative Thomas said she also heard that a goal of the party that was in the majority was to cut the budget by $500,000,000. She added that all of the cuts would fall on the backs of the taxpayers.

Ms. Kaitlyn Bernier, 2 Birch Street, addressed the Board and said the Education Trust Fund was projected to have $125,000,000 with the increase of the EFA's, which would use $105,000,000, and the little bit left over was supposed to go towards special education.

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

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.