Merrimack School District/SAU 26
School Board Meeting
Preliminary Agenda
August 12, 2024
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room

5:30 p.m. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – Merrimack TV Training Classroom

- Staff Welfare

PUBLIC MEETING

6:00 p.m. **1. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** — Lori Peters

6:05 p.m. **2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** — Lori Peters

3. RECOGNITIONS — Lori Peters

6:15 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

6:25 p.m. **5. OLD BUSINESS** — Lori Peters

a. Letter to the Merrimack Village District Regarding Low Salt Use on Continental Blvd. — Lori Peters

6:30 p.m. **6. NEW BUSINESS** — Lori Peters

a. Strategic Plan Discussion — Everett Olsen/Amy Doyle
b. Other

7:00 p.m. **7. POLICIES** — Lori Peters

a. Temporary Title IX Policy — Everett Olsen/Amy Doyle
b. Approval of Promotion and Retention of Students Policy (IKE) and Promotion and Retention of Students Procedures (IKE-R)

7:10 p.m. **8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** — Lori Peters

a. July 15, 2024 Public Minutes

7:15 p.m. **9. CONSENT AGENDA** — Amanda Doyle

a. Educator Resignations
b. Educator Nominations
c. Approval of MESSA Vacation Sidebar
d. Approval of MTA Classroom Coverage Memo of Agreement

7:25 p.m. **10. OTHER** — Lori Peters

a. Committee Reports
b. Correspondence
c. Comments

7:30 p.m. **11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS** — Lori Peters

7:45 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, NH 03054
Tel. 603-424-6200 Fax 603-424-6229

August 12, 2024

Merrimack Village District Water Works
2 Greens Pond Road
Merrimack, NH 03054

Dear Merrimack Village District Water Works:

The Merrimack School Board "(Board") understands that officials with the Town of Merrimack ("Town") would like to request that the NH Department of Transportation ("NHDOT") change a certain route within Merrimack, NH to a "low salt" or "limited salt" zone. The Board also understands that said route starts from the Exit 10 on-ramp southbound off Daniel Webster Highway onto Industrial Drive, continues south on Continental Boulevard, and ends at the intersection of Continental Boulevard and Milford Road ("Route").

The Board declines to sign or otherwise support the Town officials' request that the NHDOT issue a "low salt" or "limited salt" zone for the Route. Instead, the Board supports the NHDOT's current best practices for winter road maintenance regarding the Route. The Board does so because it is concerned that limiting winter road maintenance on the Route could potentially impact school buses. In the event that the Route were to become a "low salt" or "limited salt" zone, the Board requests that the NHDOT affirm that doing such would be consistent with the DOT's best management practices.

Sincerely,

Lori Peters
Merrimack School Board Chair

Date_____

New Hampshire Department of Transportation
Attn: David Rodrigue P.E.
Assistant Commissioner
John O. Morton Building
PO Box 483 | 7 Hazen Drive
Concord, New Hampshire 03302-0483

Re: Industrial and Continental Boulevard Salt Use

Dear NHDOT,

Merrimack Village District is requesting that the NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) issue a "Low Salt" or "Limited Salt" route from the Exit 10 on-ramp from DW Highway southbound onto Industrial Drive, continuing south on Continental Boulevard to end where Continental meets Milford Road.

The undersigned Town Officials support this change in winter maintenance as this route is within the Wellhead Protection area that provides drinking water to the businesses and residents of Merrimack.

Sincerely,

Town Council (all members)

Signature

FINLAY ROTHHAUS
Printed Name/Title

Signature

Nancy A Murphy
Printed Name/Title

Signature

BARBARA HEALEY
Printed Name/Title

Signature

THOMAS P KOENIG
Printed Name/Title

Signature

Nancy M. Harrington / Councilor
Printed Name/Title

Signature

Printed Name/Title

Signature

Printed Name/Title

Merrimack Police Chief

Signature

Brian Levesque

Printed Name/Title Chief of Police

Merrimack Fire Chief

Signature

Mark W. DiFranzo Fire Chief

Printed Name/Title

Superintendent of schools or school board members

Signature

Printed Name/Title

Ambulance Service Chief (If separate from the Fire Department)

Signature

Printed Name/Title

Summary of Title IX Changes
(August 1, 2024)

Below are nine significant changes to Title IX.

1. Clarify the Scope of Prohibited Sex Discrimination

The 2024 regulations prohibit discrimination not only on the basis of sex, but also on the basis of sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, and gender identity.

2. Redefine "Sexual Harassment"

Rather than applying only to sexual harassment, the 2024 regulations apply to "sex-based harassment," which includes quid pro quo sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence and stalking.

"Sex-based harassment" also includes hostile environment harassment, which is defined as unwelcome sex-based conduct that, based on the totality of the circumstances, is subjectively and objectively offensive and is so severe or pervasive that it limits or denies a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the recipient's education program or activity.

3. Expand Application of Title IX Processes and Procedures

In addition to addressing sex discrimination that occurs in a school's education contributing to the hostile environment occurred outside the recipient's education program or activity or outside the United States.

4. Change to "Actual Knowledge" and "Deliberate Indifference" Standards

Now, a school with knowledge of conduct in its education program or activity that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination must respond promptly and effectively.

5. Return to the Single-Investigator Model

Schools now have the option to use a single-investigator model, and schools may choose to use this model in some, but not all, cases as long as it is clear in their grievance procedures when this model will be utilized.

6. Increase Access to the Informal Resolution Process

Schools also have the option to offer an informal resolution process for sex discrimination complaints, unless the complaint includes allegations that an employee engaged in sex-based harassment of an elementary school or secondary school student, or unless such a process would conflict with federal, state or local law.

7. Designate Confidential Employees

The 2024 regulations create three categories of confidential employees who are not required to notify the Title IX coordinator about conduct that reasonably may constitute sex discrimination. Instead, these confidential employees must provide sex discrimination about their status as a confidential employee for purposes of Title IX, how to contact the Title IX coordinator, how to make a complaint, and how the Title IX coordinator can help.

8. Decrease Autonomy for Title IX Coordinators

Under the 2024 regulations, the Title IX coordinator may only initiate a complaint if the conduct presents an imminent and serious threat to someone's health or safety or prevents the school from ensuring equal access based on sex to its education program or activity.

9. Accommodate Pregnant and Lactating Students and Employees

The 2024 regulations strengthen requirements that schools provide reasonable modifications for students based on pregnancy or related conditions, allow for reasonable break time for lactation for employees, and access to a clean, private lactation space for students and employees.

Additional Changes

Additional changes were made to the specific provisions that apply to post-secondary institutions, including the following:

- Broadened definition of sexual harassment that includes conduct that is "sufficiently severe or pervasive".
- Clear language that includes discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity in the sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX.
- Clarification of the prohibition on discrimination on the basis of current, potential, or past pregnancy or related conditions.
- Approval of single-investigator resolution of Title IX complaints.
- Replaces the cross-examination requirement with questioning by the decision maker or investigator for sex-based sexual harassment complaints involving a student.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

The definition of "Sexual Harassment" is found in Section II.B of this Policy. Instructions for making a report or complaint of sexual harassment are found in Section II.J.1. The "Title IX Grievance Process" is Section III, and the procedure for filing a formal complaint to initiate the grievance process is found in Section III.A

I. RESTATEMENT OF POLICY PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION ON THE BAIS OF SEX.

Per Board policy AC, Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 ("Title IX"), as well as RSA 193:38, among others, the District does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its educational programs and activities, including employment and admissions. All forms of sex-based discrimination, including sexual harassment are prohibited in the District.

II. TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY.

A. Application of This Policy

While all forms of sex-based discrimination are prohibited in the district, the purpose of this policy is to address, and only to address, *sexual harassment as defined in Title IX and Sec. II.B,* below, that occurs within the educational programs and activities of the district, and to provide a grievance process for investigating and reaching a final determination of responsibility for a formal complaint of sexual harassment. The "Title IX Grievance Process" is set out in Sec. III below. While the District must respond to all "reports" it receives of sexual harassment, the Title IX Grievance Process is initiated only with the filing of a formal complaint.

The purpose of this Policy, however, is to address, and only to address, sexual harassment as defined in Title IX that occurs within the educational programs and activities of the district. For harassing conduct which does not meet the definition of sexual harassment under Title IX and this Policy, the District's response will be governed under other applicable laws and policies per Board policy AC, and policies referenced therein.

This Policy shall apply to all students, employees, and any third party who contracts with the District to provide services to District students or employees, upon District property or during any school program oractivity.

Nothing in this policy will be construed to confer on any third party a right to due process or other proceedings to which student and employee respondents are entitled under this policy unless such right exists under law. Volunteers and visitors who engage in sexual harassment will be directed to leave school property and/or be reported to law enforcement, the NH Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF),as appropriate. A third party under the supervision and control of the school system will be subject to termination of contracts/agreements, restricted from access to school property, and/or subject to other consequences, as appropriate.

The Superintendent shall have overall responsibility for implementing this Policy and shall annually appoint a District Title IX Coordinator as that position is described in Section II.C, below.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

B. Definitions.

As used in this Policy and the Title IX Grievance Process, the terms below shall have the meaning ascribed.

"Actual knowledge" occurs when the District's Title IX Coordinator or **ANY** employee of one of the District's schools (other than a "respondent" or alleged harasser) receives a notice, report or information or becomes aware of sexual harassment or allegations of sexual harassment.

"Complainant" is an individual who is alleged to be the victim of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment, whether or not that person files a report or formal complaint.

"Days" shall mean calendar days, but shall exclude non-weekend days on which the SAU office is closed (e.g., holidays, office-wide vacations), or any weekday during the school year on which school is closed (e.g., snow days).

"Decision Maker" means persons tasked with: the responsibility of making initial determinations of responsibility (at times referred to as "initial decision maker"); or the responsibility to decide any appeal (at times "appeals decision maker") with respect to formal complaints of sexual harassment in accordance with the Title IX Grievance Process.

"Determination of Responsibility" is the formal finding by the decision-maker on each allegation of Sexual Harassment contained in a Formal Complaint that the Respondent did or did not engage in conduct constituting Sexual Harassment Under Title IX.

"Formal Complaint" means a document filed by a complainant, the complainant's parent/guardian, or the Title IX Coordinator, alleging sexual harassment against a respondent, and requesting that the district investigate the allegation of sexual harassment.

"Respondent" is an individual who is reported to be the individual accused of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment.

"Sexual harassment" prohibited under Title IX and by this policy *is conduct on the basis of sex* (including, without limitation, gender, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity), occurring in a school system education program or activity that satisfies one or more of the following:

1. A school district employee conditioning an aid, benefit, or service of an education program or activity on an individual's participation or refusal to participate in sexual conduct irrespective of whether the conduct is welcomed by the student or other employee;

2. Unwelcome sex-based/related conduct determined by a reasonable person to be so severe, pervasive, **AND** objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the education program or activity (this standard requires consideration of all the facts and circumstances, including, but not limited to, the ages and disability statuses of the harasser and victim and the number of individuals involved and their authority; **OR**

3. Sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking as defined in state or federal law.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Behaviors that constitute sexual harassment may include, but are not limited to:

i. Sexually suggestive remarks or jokes;
ii. Verbal harassment or abuse;
iii. Displaying or distributing sexually suggestive pictures, in whatever form (e.g., drawings, photographs, videos, irrespective of format);
iv. Sexually suggestive gesturing, including touching oneself in a sexually suggestive manner in front of others;
v. Harassing or sexually suggestive or offensive messages that are written or electronic;
vi. Subtle or direct propositions for sexual favors or activities;
vii. Touching of a sexual nature or groping; and
viii. Teasing or name-calling related to sexual characteristics or the belief or perception that an individual is not conforming to expected gender roles or conduct.

Note: incidents of the above conduct would still need to satisfy one or more of the criteria in paragraphs 1-3 of this definition.

Sexual harassment may be directed against a particular person or persons, or a group, whether of the opposite sex or the same sex.

The context of behavior can make a difference between conduct falling within the technical definition of Sexual Harassment Under Title IX, and conduct of a sexual nature that is offensive or hostile in itself, but which does not arise to the level within that definition. **District policies prohibit both, but for purposes of its Title IX obligations the District must address reports or complaints of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment as defined above, under this specific, limited scope Policy and Title IX Grievance Process.** Except as used in other laws (e.g., Title VII) or policies (e.g., Board policy JICK*)* pertaining to harassment, including of a sexual nature, other than Title IX sexual harassment, all references to "sexual harassment" in this policy mean sexual harassment that meets the above definition.

Conduct that satisfies this definition is not sexual harassment for purposes of this policy if the conduct occurred (1) outside the United States or (2) under circumstances in which the school system did not have substantial control over both the harasser/respondent and the context in which the harassment occurred.

NOTE Regarding Concurrent Enrollment and Dual Enrollment, Extended Learning Opportunities, 3rd Party Distance Learning and Other Alternative Instructional Programs*: Under federal regulations, in order for the District to have jurisdiction over conduct that would otherwise meet the definition above of sexual harassment, the District must have substantial control over both the respondent and the context in which the harassment occurred. In general, this will mean that unless such learning program is occurring upon district property, conduct otherwise meeting the definition of sexual harassment within that program, may not be subject to this policy.*

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

"Supportive Measures" are free, non-disciplinary, non-punitive, individualized services and shall be offered to the complainant, and may be offered to the respondent, as appropriate. These measures may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Counseling;
2. Course modifications;
3. Schedule changes; and
4. Increased monitoring or supervision
5. School Resource Officer (in accordance with the Merrimack School District Memorandum of Understanding (MOU))
6. Social Emotional Learning Measures
7. System of Care and Learning Supports

Such measures shall be designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District's education programs and activities without unreasonably burdening the other party, including measures designed to protect the safety of all parties or the District's educational environment and/or deter sexual harassment. Supportive measures shall remain confidential with exclusive exceptions stated required in Sec. II.E, below.

C. Title IX Coordinator.

The Title IX Coordinator shall respond promptly to all general reports as well as formal complaints of sexual harassment. the Title IX Coordinator shall receive general and specific reports of sexual harassment and coordinate the District's responses to both reports and formal complaints of sexual harassment so thatthe same are prompt and equitable. In addition to any other specific responsibilities assigned under this Policy, or as assigned by the Superintendent, the Title IX Coordinator will be responsible for:

1. meeting with a complainant, and informing the parent/guardian once the Title IX Coordinator becomes aware of allegations of conduct that could constitute sexual harassment as defined in this Policy;
2. identification and implementation of supportive measures;
3. signing or receiving formal complaints of sexual harassment;
4. engaging with the parents/guardians of parties to any formal complaint of sexual harassment;
5. coordinating with District and school-level personnel to facilitate and assure implementation of investigations, and remedies, and helping to assure that the District otherwise meets its obligations associated with reports and complaints of sexual harassment;
6. coordinating with the Superintendent with respect to assignment of persons to fulfill the District's obligations, both general and case specific, relative to this Policy (e.g., investigator, decision makers, etc.; this may involve the retention of third party personnel.);
7. coordinating with District and school-level personnel to assure appropriate training and professional development of employees and others in accordance with Sec. II.D of this Policy; and
8. helping to assure that appropriate systems are identified and maintained to centralize sexual harassment records and data.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

In cases where the Title IX Coordinator is unavailable, including unavailability due to a conflict of interestor other disqualifying reason (see Sec. II.G, below), the Superintendent shall assure that another person with the appropriate training and qualifications is appointed as acting Title IX Coordinator for that case, insuch instances "Title IX Coordinator" shall include the acting Title IX Coordinators.

D. Training.

All District employees shall receive regular training relative to mandatory reporting obligations, and any other responsibilities they may have relative to this Policy.

Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, must receive training on the definition of sexual harassment, this Policy, the scope of the District's education program or activity, and how to conduct an investigation (including the requirements of the reporting and the Title IX Grievance Process, including hearings, appeals, and information resolution processes). The training must also include avoiding prejudgment of the facts, conflicts of interest and bias.

Decision-makers must also receive training on issues of relevance of questions and evidence, including when questions about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant.

Investigators must receive training on issues of relevance to create an investigative report that fairly summarizes relevant evidence.

Materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, decision-makers, and any person who facilitates an informal resolution process, must not rely on sex stereotypes, must promote impartial investigations and adjudications of formal complaints of sexual harassment, and must be made available to the public as provided in Sec. II.H of this Policy.

E. Confidentiality.

The District will respect the confidentiality of the complainant and the respondent as much as possible, however, some information may need to be disclosed to appropriate individuals or authorities. All disclosures shall be consistent with the District's legal obligations and the necessity to investigate allegations of harassment and take disciplinary action. Examples of required disclosure include:

1. information to either party to the extent necessary to provide the parties due process during the Title IX Grievance Process;
2. information to individuals who are responsible for handling the District's investigation and determination of responsibility to the extent necessary to complete the District's grievance process;
3. mandatory reports of child abuse or neglect to DCYF or local law enforcement (per Board policy JLF);
4. information to the complainant's and the respondent's parent/guardian as required under this Policy and or the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"); and
5. reports to the New Hampshire Department of Education as required under N.H. Code ofAdministrative Rules Ed 510 regarding violations of the NH Code of Conduct for Education Professionals.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Additionally, any supportive measures offered to the complainant or the respondent shall remain confidential to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality would not impair the ability of the school district to provide the supportive measures.

Except as specified above, the District shall keep confidential the identity of:

1. Any individual who has made a report or complaint of sex discrimination;
2. Any individual who has made a report or filed a formal complaint of sexual harassment;
3. Any complainant;
4. Any individual who has been reported to be the perpetrator of sex discrimination[1];
5. Any respondent; and
6. Any witness.

Any supportive measures provided to the complainant or respondent shall be kept confidential to the extent that maintaining such confidentiality does not impair the ability of the District to provide the supportive measures.

F. Retaliation Prohibited.

Retaliation against any person who makes a report or complaint, or against any person who assists, participates, or refuses to participate[2] in any investigation of an act alleged in this Policy is prohibited. Actions taken in response to **materially** false statements made in bad faith, or to submitting **materially** false information in bad faith, as part of a report or during the Title IX Grievance Process do not constitute retaliation. A finding of responsibility alone is insufficient to conclude that a person made a materially false statement in bad faith. Complaints of retaliation with respect to reports or formal complaints of sexual harassment shall be filed under the District's general grievance process.

G. Conflict of Interest.

No person designated as a Title IX Coordinator, investigator, decision-maker, nor any person designated by the District to facilitate an informal resolution process, may have a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or an individual complainant or respondent.

H. Dissemination and Notice.

The District shall include in all student and employee handbooks, and shall make *publicly available on the district's website* the following information:

1. The District's policy of non-discrimination on the basis of sex (included in Board policy AC).
2. the title, name, office address, email address, and telephone number of the Title IX Coordinator (to be provided pursuant to Board policy AC and its addendum, updated annually, ACE;
3. the complaint process;

[1] 34 CFR 106.71 (a).
[2] 34 CFR 106.71 (a).

4. how to file a complaint of sex discrimination or sexual harassment;
5. how the District will respond to such a complaint; and
6. a statement that Title IX inquiries may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator or to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights.

The same information shall be provided to all persons seeking employment with the District, or seeking to roll or participate in the District's educational programs or activities.

Additionally, the District will make this Policy, as well as any materials used to train personnel as required under Sec. II.D *publicly available on the district's website.*

I. Records and Record Keeping.

1. For each report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, the District, through the Title IX Coordinator, must create, and maintain for seven (7) years, record of:
   a. Any actions, including any supportive measures,
   b. The basis for the District's conclusion that its response was not deliberately indifferent; and
   c. Documentation which:
      - If supportive measures were provided to the complainant, a description of the supportive measures taken designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District's education program or activity; or
      - If no supportive measures were provided to a complainant, explains the reasons why such a response was not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances.
2. In addition, the District shall maintain the following records for a minimum of seven (7) years:
   a. Records for each formal complaint of sexual harassment, including:
      - Any determination regarding responsibility, including dismissals;
      - Any disciplinary sanctions imposed on the respondent;
      - Any remedies provided to the complainant designed to restore or preserve equal access to the District's education program or activity;
      - Any appeal and the result therefrom;
      - Any informal resolution process and the result therefrom;
   b. All materials used to train Title IX Coordinators, investigators, and decision-makers.

J. Reports of Sexual Harassment, Formal Complaints and District Responses.

1. Report of Sexual Harassment.

NOTE: *A report does not initiate the formal Title IX Grievance Process. That process is begun only upon the filing of a formal complaint under the procedures set out in II.J.3, and III.A, below.*

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

Any person may report sexual harassment whether relating to her/himself or another person. **However, if any District employee – other than the employee harasser, or the Title IX Coordinator – receives information of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment under this Policy, s/he shall, without delay, inform the Title IX Coordinator** of the alleged sexual harassment. Failure to report will subject the employee to discipline up to and including dismissal.

A report of sexual harassment may be made at any time, in person, by mail, by telephone, electronic mail, or by any other means that results in the Title IX Coordinator receiving the person's verbal or written report. Additionally, while the District strongly encourages reports of sexual harassment to be made directly to the Title IX Coordinator, the report may be made to **any** District staff member, including, for instance, a counselor, teacher or principal.

If the Title IX Coordinator is the alleged respondent, the report or formal complaint may be made directly to the Superintendent, who shall thereafter fulfill the functions of the Title IX Coordinator regarding that report/complaint, or delegate the function to another person.

NOTE: For any allegation of sexual assault on a student under the age of 18, such conduction shall be reported immediately to the DCYF per Board policy *JLF*. If the alleged respondent is a person holding a license or credential from the New Hampshire Department of Education (i.e., "credential holder"), then a report shall also be made pursuant to the requirements of Ed 510 (Code of Conduct).

2. District Response to Report of Sexual Harassment.

The district will promptly respond when there is actual knowledge of sexual harassment, even if aformal complaint has not been filed. The district shall treat complainants and respondents equitably by providing supportive measures to the complainant and by following the Title IX Grievance Process prior to imposing any disciplinary sanctions or other actions that are not supportive measures against a respondent. The Title IX Coordinator may also offer supportive measures to the respondent.

As soon as reasonably possible after receiving a report of alleged sexual harassment from another District employee or after receiving a report directly through any means, the Title IX Coordinator shall contact the complainant to:

i. discuss the availability of and offer supportive measures;

ii. consider the complainant's wishes with respect to supportive measures;

iii. inform the complainant of the availability of supportive measures with or without the filing of a formal complaint; and

iv. explain to the complainant the process for filing a formal complaint.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

3. Formal Complaints.

   Pursuant to federal regulations, and this Policy, a formal complaint that contains an allegation of sexual harassment and a request that the District investigate the allegations is required before the District may conduct a formal investigation of sexual harassment or take any action (other than supportive measures) against a person accused of sexual harassment. **Once a formal complaint of sexual harassment is received by the Title IX Coordinator, s/he shall commence the Title IX Grievance Process set out in Sec. III below. The process for filing a formal complaint is set forth in Sec. III.A.**

4. Limitation on Disciplinary Action.

   In no case shall the District impose disciplinary consequences or sanctions against a respondent who has been accused of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment, until the Title IX Grievance Process has been completed.

5. Emergency Removal and Administrative Leave.

   At any point after receiving a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator (or other District official charged with a specific function under this Policy or the Title IX Process: e.g., investigator, decision maker, etc.) may request the Superintendent to direct that an individualized safety and risk analysis be performed to determine whether a respondent student is an immediate threat to the physical health or safety of any person. In the event that the safety and risk analysis determines that the respondent student does present an immediate threat to the physical health and safety of any person, the District may remove that student, provided that such removal is in full compliance with the IDEA, a student's IEP and or 504 plan if applicable. Such emergency removal shall not be disciplinary. However, the District must provide the respondent with notice and an opportunity to challenge the decision immediately following the removal and shall continue to offer educational programming until a final determination is made pursuant to theTitle IX Grievance Process.

   The Title IX Coordinator shall keep the Superintendent of Schools informed of any employee respondents so that he/she can make any necessary reports to New Hampshire Department of Education in compliance with applicable administrative rules and the New Hampshire Code of Conduct for Educational Professionals. In appropriate cases, the Superintendent may place an employee respondent on non-disciplinary administrative leave pursuant to RSA 189:31.

III. TITLE IX GRIEVANCE PROCESS.

The Title IX Grievance Process is used only upon the filing of a formal complaint of sexual harassment as described in Sec. III.A, below. The provisions of Section I of the Policy are incorporated as part of the Title IX Grievance Process. Upon receipt of a formal complaint of sexual harassment, the Title IX Coordinator will coordinate the District's efforts to comply with its responsibilities related to the Title IX Grievance Process.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

A. Process for Filing a Formal Complaint of Sexual Harassment.

The Title IX Grievance Process is initiated by way of a formal complaint ("complaint" or "formal complaint") filed by the complainant, the complainant's parent/guardian, or the Title IX Coordinator. The complainant may file a complaint or choose not to file a complaint and simply receive the supportive measures. If the Complainant does not file a complaint, the Title IX Coordinator may sign a formal complaint, but only if initiating the grievance process against the respondent is not clearly unreasonable in light of the known circumstances, and in other cases where, in the exercise of good judgment and in consultation with the District's attorney as appropriate, the Title IX Coordinator determines that a grievance process is necessary to comply with the obligation not to be deliberately indifferent to known allegations of sexual harassment (e.g., reports of sexual assault, employee on student harassment, repeat reports, or the conduct in the complainant's report has not been adequately resolved through the provision of supportive measures). If the complaint is filed by the Title IX Coordinator, he/she is not a party to the action, and the District must comply with all of the provisionsof the Title IX Grievance Process relative to respondents and complainants.

If no formal complaint is filed by the complainant or the Title IX Coordinator no disciplinary action may be taken against the respondent based upon conduct that would constitute sexual harassment under this policy.

Although there is no time limit per se to filing a formal complaint, for complaints initiated by the complainant or his/her parent/guardian, the complainant must be employed by the District or participating in or attempting to participate in the education program or activities of the District at the time of filing. Additionally, although the District will initiate the Title IX Grievance Process regardless of when the formal complaint is submitted, delays in reporting may significantly impair the ability of school officials to investigate and respond to the allegations.

At a minimum, a formal complaint must:

1. contain the name and address of the complainant and the student's parent or guardian if the complainant is a minor student;
2. describe the alleged sexual harassment,
3. request an investigation of the matter, and
4. be signed by the complainant or otherwise indicate that the complainant is the person filing the complaint.

The complaint may be filed with the Title IX coordinator in person, by mail, or by email. Complaint forms may be obtained from the Title IX Coordinator *or on the District and school websites*.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

B. Initial Steps and Notice of Formal Complaint.

1. The Title IX Coordinator will provide notice to the complainant and the complainant's parent/guardian (if the complainant is a non-eligible student under FERPA), and to the respondent (if known) and the respondent's parent/guardian (if the respondent is a non-eligible student under FERPA), as well as to any other known parties, of the following:

    a. this Title IX Grievance Process, including any informal resolution process;

    b. the allegations of sexual harassment potentially constituting sexual harassment, including sufficient details known at the time and with sufficient time to prepare a response before any initial interview; "sufficient details" shall include to the extent known identities of persons involved, the conduct allegedly constituting sexual harassment, and the date and location of the incident;

    c. a statement that the respondent is presumed not responsible for the alleged conduct and that a determination regarding responsibility will be made at the conclusion of the grievance process;

    d. that each party may have an advisor of their choice, who may be, but is not required to be, an attorney (the advisor must be at least 18 years of age);

    e. that each party is entitled to inspect and review evidence; and

    f. a reference to any provision in the District's code of conduct that prohibits knowingly making false statements or knowingly submitting false information during the grievance process.

2. The Title IX Coordinator will contact the complainant to discuss and offer supportive measures.

3. The Title IX Coordinator may contact the respondent to discuss, and or impose, non-disciplinary supportive measures.

4. The Title IX Coordinator will examine the allegations in the formal complaint, to determine whether even if assumed true, the allegations are sufficient to sustain a finding of sexual harassment under this Policy. If the Title IX Coordinator was not involved with preparing the formal complaint, the Title IX Coordinator will contact the complainant to discuss the complaint and whether amendment is appropriate, in which case the process of Sec. III.C.4 will apply.

5. If the formal complaint fails to satisfy the definition of sexual harassment in this Policy, the complaint shall be dismissed as provided in Sec. III.G, below.

6. If the complaint is not dismissed, then Title IX Coordinator will consult with the Superintendentas to whether the Title IX Coordinator should act as the investigator or whether a different District or other employee shall act in that capacity. At the same time, the Title IX Coordinator and the Superintendent shall appoint the person who shall make the initial determination of responsibility (initial decision maker). In all cases, the investigator and the initial decision maker must be properly trained and otherwise qualified (see Sec. II.D "Training", and Section II.G "Conflict of Interest").

7. If the report alleges sexual harassment by the Superintendent, the Title IX Coordinator will inform the School Board Chair and Human Resources *Manager,* the latter of whom shall have authority to seek guidance from the District's general counsel, but shall not delay the District'sresponse to the report as outlined in this Policy.

C. General Provisions and Additional Definitions Relative to Title IX Grievance Process.

1. Copies and Notices. Except as specifically stated elsewhere in this Policy, for any document, information or material required to be delivered to a party or to a person assigned with responsibility under the Title IX Grievance Process, the manner of transmittal may be by electronic mail, regular mail or such other manner reasonably calculated to assure prompt delivery with evidence thereof (such as a commercial carrier or other receipted delivery). Hand delivery will only be permitted if made to the District official charged with the specific function under this Policy (e.g., Title IX Coordinator, Superintendent, investigator, decision maker(s), etc.). Any document required to be delivered to a minor or other non-eligible student, must alsobe delivered to the minor's parent/guardian. Copies should also be sent to a party's advisor if the information for the advisor has been previously communicated to the sending party. (Under federal regulations, copies of the investigative evidence, as well as the investigative report, mustbe forwarded to a party's advisor. See Sections III.E.3, and III.E.4).

2. Risk Analysis and Emergency Removal. At any point during the Title IX Grievance Process, the Title IX Coordinator may arrange for an individualized safety and risk analysis as described in Sec. II.J.5, following which a student may be removed.

3. Administrative Leave. At any point during the Title IX Grievance Process, the Superintendent, and at his/her own discretion, and with or without consulting the Title IX Coordinator, may place an employee on administrative leave pursuant to RSA 189:31.

4. Additional Allegations. If, in the course of an investigation, the District decides to investigate allegations about the complainant or respondent that were not included in the previous notice, the District shall simultaneously provide notice of the additional allegations to the parties whose identities are known.

5. No Interference with Legal Privileges. At no point in process will the Title IX Coordinator, the investigator, any decision maker, or any other person participating on behalf of the District, require, allow, rely upon, or otherwise use questions or evidence that constitutes, or seeks disclosure of, information protected under a legally recognized privilege (e.g., doctor/patient, attorney/client, clergy, etc.), unless the person holding such privilege (parent/guardian for minorstudent) has waived the privilege in writing to use the information with respect to the Title IX Grievance Process.

6. Consolidation of Complaints. The District may consolidate formal complaints of allegations of sexual harassment where the allegations of sexual harassment arise out of the same facts or circumstances and the formal complaints are against more than one respondent; or by more than one complainant against one or more respondents; or by one party against the other party. When he the District has consolidated formal complaints so that the grievance process involves more than one complainant or more than one respondent, references to the singular "party", "complainant",or "respondent" include the plural, as applicable.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

7. Remedies: Range of Disciplinary Sanctions and Remedial Actions Upon Final Determination of Responsibility.

   a. "Disciplinary sanctions" are consequences imposed on a respondent when s/he is found responsible for sexual harassment under this Policy. Remedial actions are actions intended to restore or preserve a complainant's equal access to the educational programs and activities of the District.

   b. "Disciplinary sanctions" against an employee respondent may include any available sanction available for the discipline of employees, up to and including dismissal or non-renewal for any other violation of Board policy, NH Code of Conduct for Educational Professionals, applicable individual or collective bargaining contract, or state or federal laws or regulations.

   c. "Disciplinary sanctions" against a student may include any available discipline or sanction, up to and including expulsion, under the policies, rules and procedures that establish the district's comprehensive student code of conduct.

   d. "Remedial actions" as to a respondent after a final finding of responsibility, whether employee or student, may include the imposition upon a responsible respondent of any additional non-disciplinary measures appropriate to effecting a remedy for sexual harassment, and may include such measures as no-contact requirements, scheduling adjustments, removal or exclusion from extracurricular activities, class reassignments, limits on future class registrations, restrictions on access to various spaces in the school buildings, reassignment of attendance, and similar measures fine-tuned to respond appropriately to the circumstances surrounding a successful complainant's right to access the district's program and activity.

      Additional remedial actions may include recommendations that a school-wide or system-wide response is needed in order to respond to the sexual harassment in a way that is not clearly unreasonable under the circumstances. In such cases, the Superintendent shall provide additional staff training, harassment prevention programs, or such other measures as determined appropriate to protect the safety of the educational environment and/or to deter sexual harassment.

D. Timeframe of Grievance Process.

The District shall make a good faith effort to conduct a fair, impartial grievance process in a timely manner designed to provide all parties with a prompt and equitable resolution. It is expected that in most cases, the grievance process will be concluded through at least the determination of responsibility decision within 80 days after filing the formal complaint. In more complex cases, the time necessary to complete a fair and thorough investigation or other circumstances mean that a determination of responsibility cannot reasonably be made within that timeframe.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

1. Summary of Grievance Process Timeline.

    a. Investigation 20 +/- days as the complexity of the case demands (Sec. III.E.1)

    b. 10 days for reviewing information prior to conclusion of investigation

    c. 10 days after receiving report to respond to report

    d. 10 days for decision maker to allow initial questions

    e. 10 days for responses to questions

    f. 10 days for questions and responses to follow-up questions.

    g. 10 days for determination of responsibility decision

    h. 10 days for appeal (6 additional days for administrative steps)

    i. 10 days for argument/statement challenging or supporting determination

    j. 10 days for decision on appeal

2. Delays and Extensions of Time. At any stage of the grievance process, the District (through the Superintendent, or if the Superintendent is the respondent, the Title IX Coordinator or designee) may for good cause allow for temporary delays or extensions of time upon request of either party, or on his/her own initiative. Examples of good cause may include such things as availability of parties or witnesses, school or school administrative office holidays or vacations, referral back to an earlier stage of the grievance process, concurrent law enforcement or other agency activity, or need to obtain interpreters or accommodation of disabilities. For any such delay or extension of time, the Superintendent or the Title IX Coordinator will provide written notice to the parties of the delay/extension and the reason(s).

E. Investigation.

The Title IX Coordinator will coordinate the investigation. The investigator shall be as appointed pursuant to Sec. III.B.5.

1. The Title IX Coordinator may conduct the investigation, or, in consultation with the Superintendent, designate another qualified person to investigate. The investigation and investigator must:

    a. Include objective evaluation of all relevant evidence, including inculpatory and exculpatory evidence. (Evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior is offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the evidence concerns specific incidents of the complainant's prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and is offered to prove consent.)

b. Ensure that the burden of proof (and the burden of gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination) regarding responsibility rests on the District and not on either of the parties;

c. Provide an equal opportunity for the parties to present witnesses, and other inculpatory and exculpatory evidence;

d. Not restrict the ability of either party to discuss the allegations under investigation or togather and present relevant evidence;

e. Provide the parties with the same opportunities to have others present during any interview or other part of the investigation, including the opportunity to be accompanied to any related meeting or proceeding by the advisor of their choice. The investigator may restrict any others from participating, as long as the restrictions apply equally to both parties;

f. Provide, to a party (e.g., respondent or complainant – and parent/guardian as appropriate) whose participation is invited or expected, written notice of the date, time, location, participants, and purpose of all hearings, investigative interviews, or other meetings, with sufficient time for the party to prepare to participate within the timeframes established in Sec. IIID, below.

g. Provide both parties an equal opportunity to inspect and review any evidence obtained as part of the investigation that is directly related to the allegations raised in a formal complaint;

2. Prior to completion of the investigative report, the District, through the Title IX Coordinator, must send to each party and party's advisor, if any, the evidence subject to inspection and review in an electronic format or a hard copy, and the parties must have at least 10 days to submit a written response, which the investigator will consider prior to completion of the investigative report;

3. The investigator must prepare a written investigative report that summarizes without bias, relevant evidence, including, without limitation, witness credibility, discrepancies, inculpatory and exculpatory information, and relevant District policies, rules and regulations, and the manner in which the same were made known to the pertinent school populations or specific parties. The investigative report shall include a description of the procedural steps taken, starting with the receipt of the formal complaint, and continuing through the preparation of the investigative report, including any notifications to the parties, interview with parties and witnesses, site visit, and methods used to gather evidence.

4. The investigator shall provide the investigative report in hard copy or electronic format to the Title IX Coordinator, to each party and each party's advisor, if any. Each party will have 10 days from receipt to provide the Title IX Coordinator a written response to the investigative report.

5. It serves all parties when investigations proceed diligently and conclude within a reasonable time, which may vary case by case. In most cases, it is expected that the investigator will conclude the initial investigation and provide the parties the evidence and other information required under Sec. III.E.2. Not more frequently than every other week, any party may request the Title IX Coordinator to obtain and provide the parties with a basic status report on the investigator's progress toward completion (the status report may be given orally or in writing). In most cases,the investigator should conclude the investigation within 10-20 days after receiving a Formal Complaint.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

F. Determination of Responsibility and Initial Decision Maker.

The determination of responsibility of the respondent shall be made by the initial decision maker asappointed pursuant to Section III.B.5.

1. Prior to making a determination of responsibility, the initial decision maker will afford each party 10 days to submit written, relevant questions to the initial decision maker that the party wants asked of any party or witness.

2. The initial decision-maker must explain to the party proposing the questions any decision to exclude a question as not relevant. Questions and evidence about the complainant's sexual predisposition or prior sexual behavior are not relevant, unless such questions and evidence about the complainant's prior sexual behavior are offered to prove that someone other than the respondent committed the conduct alleged by the complainant, or if the question and evidence concern specific incidents of the complainants prior sexual behavior with respect to the respondent and are offered to prove consent The initial decision maker may not make any creditability determinations based on the person's status as a complainant, respondent or witness.

3. The initial decision maker will provide the questions to the party/witness, with copies to each party, and provide no less than 10 days for written responses, likewise to be provided to each party.

4. The initial decision maker will provide 5 days each for supplementary, limited follow-up questions and 5 days for answers, and may provide for additional rounds of follow-up questions, as long as the provision is extended to both parties equally.

5. The respondent must be deemed to be not responsible for the alleged conduct until a determination regarding responsibility is made at the conclusion of the grievance process.

6. The initial decision maker may impose disciplinary sanctions and remedies as described in Section III.C7, above.

7. The standard to be used for formal complaints in determining whether a violation has occurred and/or that the respondent is responsible is the preponderance of the evidence standard, which is only met when the party with the burden convinces the fact finder (the initial decision maker) that there is a greater than 50% chance that the claim is true (i.e., more likely than not).

8. The initial decision-maker must issue a written determination/decision within 10 days after the close of the period for responses to the last round of follow-up questions. The written "Initial Determination of Responsibility" must include:

    a. Identification of the allegations potentially constituting sexual harassment;

    b. A description of the procedural steps taken from the receipt of the formal complaint through the Initial Determination of Responsibility, including any notifications to the parties, interviews with parties and witnesses, site visits, methods used to gather evidence, and hearings held;

    c. Findings of fact supporting the determination;

d. Conclusions regarding the application of the District's applicable codes of conduct, policies, administrative regulations or rules to the facts;

e. A statement of, and rationale for, the result as to each allegation, including a determination regarding responsibility (i.e., whether or not the respondent is responsible for sexual harassment), and any disciplinary sanctions or remedies; and

f. The District's procedures and permissible bases for the complainant and respondent to appeal (as set forth in Section III.H, below).

9. The decision maker shall provide the Initial Determination of Responsibility to the Title IX Coordinator, the Superintendent and the parties simultaneously.

G. Dismissal of a Formal Complaint.

1. The District must dismiss a formal complaint with regard to Title IX sexual harassment if the alleged conduct:

   a. Would not constitute sexual harassment, even if proved;

   b. Did not occur in the District's education program or District sponsored activity; or

   c. Did not occur against a person in the United States.

2. The District may dismiss a formal complaint with regard to Title IX sexual harassment if at any time during the investigation or determination of responsibility stage(s):

   a. A complainant notifies the Title IX Coordinator in writing that the complainant would like to withdraw the formal complaint or any allegations therein;

   b. The respondent is no longer enrolled or employed by the District; or

   c. Specific circumstances prevent the recipient from gathering evidence sufficient to reach a determination as to the formal complaint or allegations therein.

3. Prior to dismissal of a complaint, the person responsible at that stage shall consult with the Superintendent.

4. Upon dismissal of a formal complaint, the District must promptly send written notice of the dismissal and the reason(s) therefor simultaneously to the parties.

The dismissal of a formal complaint under Title IX does not preclude the District from continuing any investigation or taking action under other District policies, code of conduct or administrative rules/regulations. In some cases, the District may have an obligation to continue an investigation and proceed under a different policy or mandated process.

TITLE IX SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

H. Appeals Process.

1. Either party may appeal the Initial Determination of Responsibility or the dismissal of a formal complaint or any allegation in a formal complaint by notifying the Superintendent in writing ("written appeal"), with a copy to the Title IX Coordinator. If there are multiple determinations of responsibility, the written appeal shall specify which ones are included in the appeal. The written appeal must be received by the Superintendent within 10 days of the Initial Determination of Responsibility or written notice of dismissal being communicated to the parties.

2. An appeal under this Policy may only be based upon one or more of the following bases, which must be stated specifically in the party's written appeal:

   i. Procedural irregularity that affected the outcome of the matter;

   ii. New evidence that was not reasonably available at the time the determination regarding responsibility or dismissal was made, that could affect the outcome of the matter; or

   iii. The Title IX Coordinator, investigator(s), or decision-maker(s) had a conflict of interest or bias for or against complainants or respondents generally or the individual complainant or respondent that affected the outcome of the matter.

   Appeals for any other reason or upon any determination of responsibility not included in the written appeal will not be heard.

   Appeals pertain only to the determination of responsibility and non-disciplinary remedies. Once a determination of responsibility is final per Sec. III.I, below, appeals of disciplinary sanctions may be made pursuant to the District's ordinary review process for discipline, or, to the extent applicable, any statutory or other processes provided under collective bargaining agreements or individual contracts.

3. Within 3 days of receipt of the written appeal, the Superintendent shall appoint a decision maker for appeal ("appeals decision maker"),[3] who must have adequate training as provided in Section II.D, be free from conflict of interest as provided in Section II.G, and may not be the same person as the initial decision maker, the person who ordered dismissal, the investigator(s), or the Title IX Coordinator. Upon the appointment of the appeals decision maker, the Superintendent shall provide a Notice of Appeal to each party and to the Title IX Coordinator, with a copy of the written appeal. The Notice of Appeal must include information about all deadlines and time frames in the appeal stage.

4. Each party shall have 10 days from the date the Notice of Appeal is delivered to the parties to submit to the appeals decision maker a written statement, with copies to the Superintendent, Title IX Coordinator, and other party a statement ("appeal statement") in support of, or challenging, the determination of responsibility or dismissal.

[3] Although the school board is not precluded from serving as a decision maker with respect to appeals, before it may do so, each member of the board must meet both the training and conflict of interest requirements described in Sections II.D and II.G. Such training may be provided on an as-needed basis, but because of necessary timelines, the framework will need to be in place long before a case is appealed.

5. Each party shall provide copies of the appeal statement to the other party, the Superintendent, and the Title IX Coordinator at the same time the appeal statement is given to the appeals decision maker. If the basis of the appeal is newly available evidence affecting the outcome, the party shall submit such evidence or a summary of such evidence along with the party's appeal statement.

6. The appeals decision maker may refer an appealed issue back to a prior point in the grievance process, with written notice to the parties, the Superintendent and the Title IX Coordinator.

7. The appeals decision maker shall provide a written appeals decision after considering the record and the parties' appeal statements. The appeals decision maker will only overturn the Initial Determination of Responsibility upon a conclusion that it was clearly erroneous (i.e., either made on unreasonable grounds, or without any proper consideration of the circumstances). If the basis or one of the bases for the appeal was new evidence, the appeals decision maker may either make a determination of responsibility regarding that evidence, or refer it back to the appropriate stage of the Title IX Grievance Process. The written appeals decision will describe the result(s) of the appeal and the rationale, with copies provided to the parties, Superintendent and Title IX Coordinator, no more than 10 days after receiving the last of the parties' written statements per Section III.H.5.

I. **Finality of Determination of Responsibility.** The determination regarding responsibility becomes final either on the date that the recipient, through the Superintendent, provides the parties with the written determination of the result of the appeal, if an appeal is filed, or if an appeal is not filed, the date on which an appeal of the Initial Determination of Responsibility would no longer be considered timely. The final determination shall be identified as the Title IX Decision.

Once the Title IX Decision is final, the District may implement remedies and disciplinary sanctions. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for effective implementation of any non-disciplinary remedies, with the assistance of building and District administrative personnel, while disciplinary sanctions will be imposed by persons charged with such responsibilities under other Board policies,regulations or administrative procedures. The District may also proceed against the respondent or complainant pursuant to the District's applicable code of conduct or other Board policies, collective bargaining agreement, individual contract or administrative rules/regulations/procedures. The issue of responsibility for the conduct at issue shall not be subject to further review or appeal within the District.

J. **Informal Resolution.**

At any time prior to reaching a determination regarding responsibility (but only after the filing of a formal complaint), the District may offer an optional informal resolution process (e.g., mediation, arbitration), provided that the District:

1. Provides written notice to the parties disclosing:

    a. The allegations of the formal complaint;

b. The requirements of the information resolution process including the circumstances under which it precludes the parties from resuming a formal complaint arising from the same allegations, provided, however, that at any time prior to agreeing to an informal final resolution, any party has the right to withdraw from the informal resolution process and resume the grievance process with respect to the formal complaint; and

c. Any consequences resulting from participating in the informal resolution process, including the records that will be maintained or could be shared.

2. Obtains the parties' voluntary written consent to the informal resolution process; and

In no event may the District offer or facilitate an informal resolution process to resolve allegations that an employee sexually harassed a student.

Legal References:

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C 1681, et seq20 U.S.C. §1232g, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
34 CFR. Part 99, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations
34 CFR 106.8, Designation of responsible employee and adoption of grievance procedures.
34 CFR 106.30, Definitions
34 CFR 106.44, Recipient's response to sexual harassment
34 CFR 106.4, Grievance process for formal complaints of sexual harassment
34 CFR 106.71, Retaliation
RSA 193:38, Discrimination in Public Schools
NH Dept of Ed. Rules Ed 303.01 (i), School Board Substantive Duties
Ed 303.01(j), Substantive Duties of School Boards; Sexual Harassment Policy

Policy Reference: Memorandum of Understanding: Safe School Zones

***Legal References Disclaimer**: These references are not intended to be considered part of this policy, nor should they be taken as a comprehensive statement of the legal basis for the Board to enact this policy, nor as a complete recitation of related legal authority. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.*

1st Reading: August 9, 2021
2nd Review: August 23, 2021
Adoption: September 7, 2021

MERRIMACK SCHOOL BOARD POLICY **IKE**

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

Students shall be promoted to, or retained in, the appropriate grade level ~~to which they are best adjusted academically, socially, and emotionally~~. Students are promoted to the next grade level each year unless a decision is made otherwise. This decision is made jointly by the school ~~administrator~~ principal or designee, ~~guidance~~ school counselor, teachers, and parents/legal guardians with the school administrator moderating any disagreements and making the final decision. ~~The educational program shall provide for the continuous progress of children from grade to grade with children normally spending one year in each grade.~~

Criteria to be considered regarding the promotion of students should include, but is not limited to, a student's mastery of course level competencies, grades, teacher recommendations, and the student's social growth and readiness.

The Superintendent or designee and building principals shall develop rules and/or procedures for the promotion and retention of students. These rules and/or procedures will be approved by the Board and shall be published in the Parent-Student Handbook for each school.

Legal References:

NH Code of Admin. Rules, Sect. Ed 306.14(~~b~~ a)(3), Basic Instructional Standards
~~NH Code of Admin. Rules, Sect. Ed 306.141(a)(3)~~

1st Reading: June 17, 2024
2nd Review: July 15, 2024
Adoption: August 12, 2024

DRAFT

MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURE **IKE-R**

PROMOTION AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS PROCEDURES

The Promotion and Retention Procedures approved by the Merrimack School Board shall be published yearly in the Parent-Student handbook for each school.

Students are typically promoted to the next grade level. A decision to retain a student must be given careful and thorough consideration. All promotions and retentions must adhere to District Policy and Procedures and must be based on classroom and identified grade level assessments. This information will determine the degree to which the student does or does not meet the grade level standards for academic performance. If retention is being considered for a child, parents will be notified as soon as retention is being considered, and in all cases, parents shall be notified no later than March of the academic year. A parent request for retention shall be submitted to the Principal/Designee on or before March 15.

All students are expected to meet or exceed grade level standards and competencies. For those students who are failing to meet such standards, after multiple intervention teaching strategies have been implemented, retention should only be used where there is compelling evidence that the student is likely to benefit from retention academically and/or socially.

The decision to retain a child will be made only after:

1. Careful analysis of all available assessment data

2. Consideration of all relevant data, including the child's chronological age, academic growth and potential in all areas of schoolwork, ~~cognitive development,~~ social adjustment, physical well-being, ~~emotional condition, and~~ school attendance, and any other factors which may impact the student.

3. Discussion with teacher, service providers, counselors and parents/guardians.

Retentions will be considered only after multiple strategies have been employed to remediate the child's academic learning difficulties.

If there is a disagreement between parents and school officials, with respect to a student's retention, the school principal will have the final decision on whether or not the student will be retained. If the parent\guardian is not satisfied with the principal's decision, an appeal may be made to the Superintendent of Schools on or before May 1st. The Superintendent's decision shall be the final decision of the District with respect to the student's retention.

1st Reading: June 17, 2024
2nd Review: July 15, 2024
Adoption: August 12, 2024 (per policy)

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.

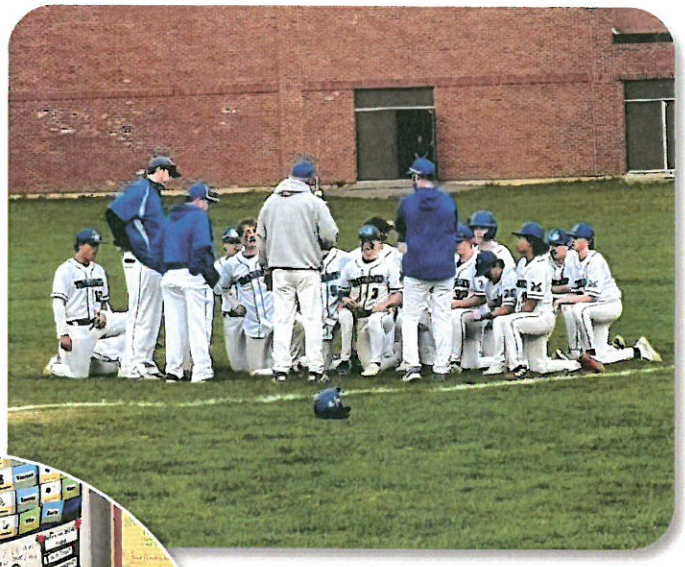
12. ADJOURNMENT

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.

Merrimack School District
Strategic Plan 2024-2027













Merrimack School District
School Administrative Unit #26
36 McElwain Street,
Merrimack, New Hampshire 03054

www.sau26.org

Tel. (603) 424-6200
Fax (603) 424-6229

Letter from the Superintendent

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

May 6, 2024

Dear Merrimack Community,

I am pleased and proud to present to you the Merrimack School District's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. As a public school district, we understand and embrace our mission, which is to provide a high-quality future-driven education to all students.

Over the last three years a team of staff, students and community members met to develop a "Vision of a Graduate" in preparation for our accreditation review by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. Simultaneous to this important work, another team of staff, students and community members met to develop a "Vision of a Learner" for all students in the school district. Both "Visions" articulate the life skills that we hope and expect that every student will possess as they navigate every stage of their life.

In August of 2023 the Merrimack School District's Leadership Team met to engage in a process of reflection on both our "Vision of a Learner" and "Vision of a Graduate". This reflection resulted in deep discussions on where we are as a school district at the present time, and what we need to do to effectively prepare every student to address the challenges and opportunities in the future. Our discussions resulted in the identification of six focus areas that have an impact on student learning. We have developed strategic initiatives within each of the focus areas, with the intent of continuously improving the educational experience for our students.

The six focus areas include:
- Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- Facilities
- Culture of Wellness
- ~~Studies~~ Student Outcomes
- Family and Community Engagement
- Vision of a Learner and Graduate

In the fall of 2023, a twenty-five-member Strategic Plan Committee was formed to analyze data and information in the six focus areas and draft strategic initiatives along with timelines and measures of achievement for each initiative. Meetings occurred throughout the 2023-2024 school year. Each meeting was facilitated by Mark Dolan from the New Hampshire School Boards Association. Our Strategic Plan Committee completed its work in May 2024.

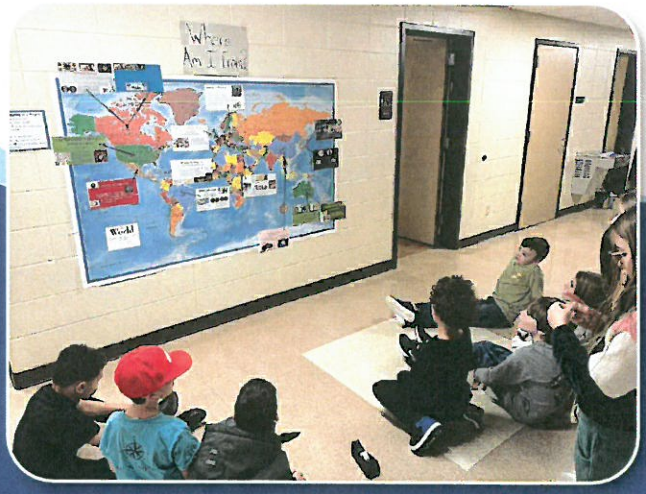
It is now our responsibility to operationalize the initiatives in the Strategic Plan which will allow us to bring continuous improvement to an excellent school district. Our district and community collaboration and support are essential to achieving the initiatives and continue the transition from a proud past to an exciting future.

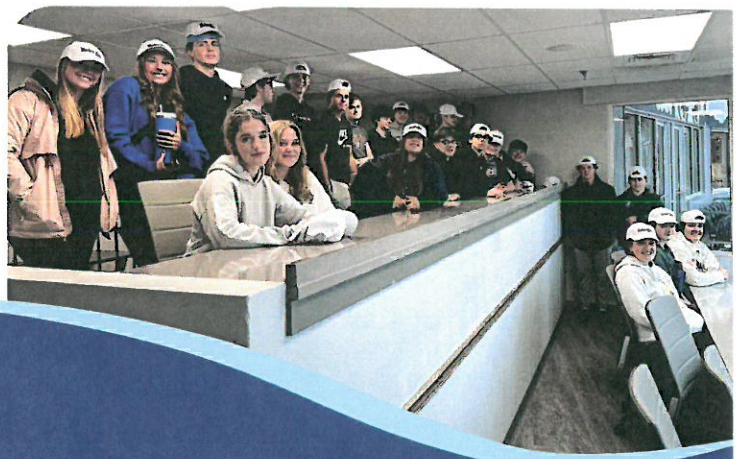
Sincerely,

Everett V. Olsen, Jr.
Chief Education Officer

Strategic Planning Committee Members

Member, Role	Member, Role
Mark Dolan, Facilitator	Alice Donahoe, MMS Teacher
Everett "Bill" Olsen, Chief Education Officer	Dr. Nicole Rheault, JMUES Principal
Matthew Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent	Catherine Goodman, JMUES Teacher
Amy Doyle, Assistant Superintendent	Julie DeLuca, TFS Principal
Sarah Reinhardt, Director of Student Services	Kate Viands, TFS Teacher
Sara Parrotto, Director of Wellness	Lori Puzzo, RFS Library Media Specialist
Naomi Halter, School Board Member	Susan Bradford, MES Teacher
Steve Clair, MHS Principal	Jennifer Jobin, Parent
Harley Hall, Director of Pathways to Graduation	Erica Miller, Parent
Kay Colbert, Director of School Counseling	Rachel Paepke, Parent
Dr. Angela Maslanka, Technology Coordinator	Rebecca Dalrymple, Parent
Chase Rheault, Student of the Class of 2024	Kip Jackson, MHS Coach and Community Partner
Matthew Brown, Student of the Class of 2026	Mackenzie Murphy, Community Partner
Chrigus Boezeman, MMS Principal	Joseph Manzoli, YMCA Community Partner





Mission Statement

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 rigor and relevance, along with meeting their cognitive, social, and emotional needs. The District will prepare students to understand, adapt, and adjust to civic, economic, social, and technological challenges in the world. Our overall goal is to inspire, create, and encourage students to be curious, connected, prepared, resilient, dedicated individuals that are lifelong, expert learners; Merrimack graduates exercise judgment, are innovative, and become responsible, contributing members of society.





Vision of a Learner

Merrimack School District



Curious

Learners wonder about and seek opportunities to explore the world around them and are open to new experiences. They listen, ask questions, and gather resources to build understanding. Learners are engaged, critical, and creative thinkers who solve problems and demonstrate understanding.



Connected

Learners are citizens of their school, community, state, and the world. They build positive relationships through the development and use of interpersonal, communication, and empathy skills. Learners consider and respect different perspectives, evaluate the impact of their actions, and demonstrate compassion for others.



Prepared

Learners engage in authentic learning experiences that prepare them with necessary and practical skills for everyday life, including digital and financial literacy. They learn to create and use a plan to guide their own academic, career, and social emotional development. Learners develop collaboration, communication, self-management, and decision making skills.



Resilient

Learners understand that risk taking and failure are part of the learning process, and perceive challenges as an opportunity for growth. They can use their knowledge about themselves to advocate for their needs and recognize when they need help. Learners develop and evaluate multiple ways to solve problems and complete tasks.



Dedicated

Learners seek to contribute to their local and global communities, giving their time and energy to pursue their goals. They are life-long learners who possess the self-worth and confidence to explore and champion their interests and passions, inspiring others to do the same. Learners persevere and collaborate to set and achieve meaningful goals.



Vision of a Graduate

Merrimack High School students engage in authentic learning that prepares them with necessary life skills to become independent as individuals and active participants as citizens upon graduation.

Mastricola Upper Elementary
Mastricola Elementary

Reeds Ferry Elementary
Thorntons Ferry Elementary

Merrimack High
Merrimack Middle

Merrimack High School
Vision of a Graduate

Merrimack High School students engage in authentic learning that prepares them with necessary life skills to become independent as individuals and active participants as citizens upon graduation.

Merrimack High School Graduates are Positive Community Members.

Graduates are effective creative and critical thinkers. They feel empowered to be leaders, to care about their self-worth, others, and their local and global community. This may be evidenced by being resilient, ethical, open-minded, confident, and flexible.

The Merrimack Graduate Will be Future Ready.

Graduates are driven to achieve their goals. The Merrimack graduate will take ownership of and responsibility for their choices and will continue to be self-directed, lifelong learners.

They have prepared for this by:

- Participating in a dynamic curriculum that aligns to the State and National Standards.
- Developing executive functioning skills
- Becoming digitally and financially literate.
- Developing communication skills in areas of listening, speaking and writing.

Glossary of Terms & Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CIA Committee	Curriculum Instructional Assessment Committee
Core Instructional Program	Primary academic content that is taught to students to achieve grade requirements and meet applicable standards.
Curriculum Review Cycle	The process involving review of existing curriculum programs in relation to state/national standards, and student needs. Updated, research-based programs are reviewed for possible piloting and adoption.
Digitally Literate	The ability to access and utilize digital information, creating digital information and communicating information. Digital safety is an important component of Digital Literacy.
District Wellness Plan	A plan that outlines our procedures and actions for addressing the physical, mental and emotional wellness of students and staff.
Enrollment Projections	The development of the future estimates of enrollment based on the Cohort Survival (Progression) Ratio methodology.
Executive Functioning Skills*	Mental health skills such as memory, flexible thinking and self-control that help people manage everyday life.
Financially Literate*	The ability to understand and effectively use various financial skills, including personal financial management, budgeting and investing.
Formative Assessments	An assessment process that allows a teacher to immediately access the progress of students on instructional content.
Graduation Pathways	A Merrimack High School Program is a 20 credit program which allows students in the district and adults in the community to achieve a diploma that meets the New Hampshire High School graduation requirement.

Glossary of Terms & Acronyms (cont.)

Instructional Methodologies	Types of learning methods/activities used to allow all students to access and understand the curriculum content.
Life-Cycle Cost	The amount of money spent to maintain support an asset over the time of its useful life.
Progress Monitoring Tools	Assessment used to determine a student's academic performance and progress towards instructional goals.
Rubrics	Specific criteria for the assessment of student academic progress and our employees' level of job performance.
School Safety Assessment Reports	School safety assessment conducted by the New Hampshire Department of Homeland Security. A written report is issued for every school.
State and National Standards	Standards that define the knowledge and skills that students should have within their K-12 education so that they are successfully prepared for college or a career.
Strategic Plan	A document used to communicate an organization's goals and the actions necessary to achieve those goals.
Summative Assessments	A (test) assessment that is given to students at the end of an instructional unit, or at the end of an academic year.
Universal Design for Learning	A teaching approach that is designed to accommodate the needs and abilities of all learners.
Vision of a Graduate (VOG)	The skills that we want graduates to possess to prepare them to be independent as individuals and active participating citizens
Vision of a Learner (VOL)	The academic and social/emotional skills that we want all students to possess throughout their K-12 education.

Note (*) Some definitions have been drafted from various sources.

Merrimack School District Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Focus Area 1 - Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Goal 1 - The Merrimack School District offers a dynamic and comprehensive curriculum that not only meets state and national standards, but also supports diverse pathways to graduation. Our core programs are robust and empower every student to meet their full educational potential, ensuring they are well-prepared for the future.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
1. Continuously align our district approved curriculum to changing state and national standards.	-Assistant Superintendent of CIA -District Leadership Team -Building Leadership Team -Literacy Coordinators -Department Heads (MHS) -MSD CIA Committee	-Annual review of guaranteed and viable curriculum by grade level and content area -Revisions will be accordance with our Curriculum Review Cycle	-Curriculum Review Cycle -Published curriculum documents
2. Align our core instructional programs and resources across grade levels, subject areas, and school buildings.	-Assistant Superintendent of CIA -Director of Student Services -District Leadership Team -Building Leadership Team -Literacy Coordinators -Department Heads (MHS) -MSD CIA Committee	-Fall 2025	-Student data from: -Formative and summative assessments -Topic or unit assessments -Measure the frequency of needed alignments
3. Regularly review and update our core programs to ensure they meet our students' evolving needs and interests.	-Assistant Superintendent of CIA -Director of Student Services -District Leadership Team -Building Leadership Team -Literacy Coordinators -Department Heads (MHS) -MSD CIA Committee	-Annual review of core programs and materials by grade level and content area -Consider the need for core program updates at least every five (5) years	-Student data from: -Formative and summative assessments -Topic or unit assessments -Feedback from staff and students -Measure the frequency of needed updates

Merrimack School District Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Focus Area 1 - Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Goal 2 - The Merrimack School District is committed to employing instructional and assessment practices that are differentiated, rigorous, and grounded in research and evidence. We will ensure all staff receive relevant and timely professional development, empowering them to inspire and elevate our students to reach their fullest potential.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
1. Implement dynamic instructional practices that ensure equitable access to the curriculum for every student.	-MSD Educators -District Evaluators	-June 2025	-Student data from: -Formative and summative assessments -Topic or unit assessments -Student Attendance -Course enrollment -Classroom observations
2. Use district approved progress monitoring tools and strategies to continuously analyze student performance and outcomes and drive instructional and assessment practices.	-Assistant Superintendent of CIA -Director of Student Services -District Leadership Team -Building Leadership Team -Literacy Coordinators (K-8) -Department Heads (MHS) -MSD K-12 Student Data Collection Specialist -MSD Educators	-Data Teams meet at least three (3) times per school year	-Student data from: -Formative and Summative Assessments -Use of Performance Matters -Data Team Meetings -Professional Learning Team Meetings
3. Ensure every special education and at-risk student has equitable access to the district's comprehensive intervention systems and programs, providing them with the instruction and support they need to thrive and succeed.	-Assistant Superintendent of CIA -Director of Student Services -SPED Coordinators -MSD Educators -District Leadership Team -Building Leadership Team -Literacy Coordinators (K-8) -MSD Title I Project Manager	-Fall 2025	-Pre-and post-intervention assessment data -Progress monitoring data -Achievement of IEP goals -Graduation rates -Social, emotional, and behavioral data (MTSS-B data)

Focus Area 1 - Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Goal 2 Continued - The Merrimack School District is committed to employing instructional and assessment practices that are differentiated, rigorous, and grounded in research and evidence. We will ensure all staff receive relevant and timely professional development, empowering them to inspire and elevate our students to reach their fullest potential.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
4. Implement a teacher evaluation model that is growth-oriented and tailored to the differentiated needs of new, developing, and experienced teachers, fostering an environment where every educator can thrive.	-Assistant Superintendent of CIA -District Leadership Team -District Evaluators	-Fall 2024	-Updated Teacher Evaluation Model Plan & Rubrics
5. Provide professional development on research-based instructional practices to all staff.	-Assistant Superintendent of CIA -Director of Student Services -District Leadership Team -Building Leadership Team -Literacy Coordinators (K-8) -Department Heads (MHS) -Teacher Leaders -MSD PD Committee	-Annual review and feedback of professional development offerings -MSD Professional Development Plan approved by state every five (5) years	-Annual professional development plans for all staff -Teacher growth and IPDP Plans -PD participation rates -PD feedback forms/surveys -District Professional Development Plan

Merrimack School District Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Focus Area 2- Facilities

Goal 1 - The Merrimack School District will provide facilities that are clean, healthy, efficient and safe. Our facilities will be designed or updated to have equitable access and reflect the variability and diversity of student, staff and community needs.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
1. Proactively seek Federal and state grants for school safety enhancements.	-Assistant Superintendent for Business	-Ongoing, as available	-Implementation of enhanced school safety equipment or procedures
2. Conduct school safety assessments to ensure the highest standards of safety for our students and staff.	-SAU Administration -State of NH Homeland Security	-Every 2 years	-Safety Assessment Reports from NH Homeland Security
3. Conduct annual assessments of preventive and corrective maintenance needs to ensure our facilities remain in functional condition.	-Director of Maintenance -Building Principals -Assistant Superintendent for Business	-Annually	-Annual completion of school district's "Facilities Maintenance Needs" form (for budget development)
4. Develop and propose a plan for a new Central Office building.	-SAU Administration -MSD School Board -MSD Planning and Building Committee	-Update and modify as needed based on construction funding	-Prepared design schematic from an architectural firm
5. Obtain funding for construction of a new Central Office building.	-SAU Administration -MSD School Board -MSD Planning and Building Committee	-1-3 years (2024-2027)	-Budget Committee and Voters appropriate funds for construction

Merrimack School District Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Focus Area 2- Facilities

Goal 1 Continued - The Merrimack School District will provide facilities that are clean, healthy, efficient and safe. Our facilities will be designed or updated to have equitable access and reflect the variability and diversity of student, staff and community needs.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
6. Regularly collaborate with staff to understand current and emerging instructional methodologies that may impact space utilization, ensuring our learning environments are adaptable and forward-thinking.	-SAU Administration -Building Administration	-Meet with staff at least quarterly -Report needs at least annually, especially during budget input meetings	-Alteration of classroom/ instructional environment (space, configuration, furnishings) -Appropriate modifications to interior and exterior learning spaces
7. Continuously assess the needs for conventional and adaptive furniture using Universal Design for Learning principles, ensuring learning spaces are adaptable and supportive of students.	-SAU Administration -Building Administration -Director of Student Services	-1-3 years (2024-2027)	-Procurement of adaptive furnishings, as needed -Appropriate modifications to interior and exterior learning spaces
8. Continue to annually update the five-year capital improvement plan for facilities and grounds, and conduct a "Life-Cycle" cost analysis for the improvements, ensuring sustainable and future-ready environments.	-SAU Administration -MSD School Board -MSD Planning and Building Committee	-Annually	Timely repairs made that address: -Health & Safety -Building Security -ADA Compliance -All programmatic needs
9. Provide and maintain adequate and safe playing fields that support the needs of students, sports teams, and the community.	-SAU Administration -Director of Maintenance	-Assessed on an annual basis and scheduled in Capital Improvement Plan as needed	-Well maintained playing fields for all students, sports teams, and the community

Merrimack School District Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Focus Area 2- Facilities

Goal 1 Continued - The Merrimack School District will provide facilities that are clean, healthy, efficient and safe. Our facilities will be designed or updated to have equitable access and reflect the variability and diversity of student, staff and community needs.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
10. Acquire land to support the construction of additional playing fields due to increased community demand.	-SAU Administration -MSD School Board -MSD Planning and Building Committee -MSD Voters	-Begin process by Fall 2025	-Acquire land for additional playing fields
11. Research, design, and provide "flexible" space(s) in each school for special project work, makerspace, and innovation. Each space will feature "alternative" furnishings to foster creativity and collaboration.	-Building Administration -SAU Administration -Director of Maintenance	-August 2025 - June 2027	-Innovative space will be developed as space and funding allows
12. Explore and develop innovative learning spaces outside the classroom/building to enhance environmental, wellness, and experiential education.	-Building Administration -SAU Administration -Director of Maintenance	-Annually	-Development and use of environmental learning spaces (environmental, wellness, etc.)
13. Research and assess the space and resource needs for providing on-site daycare services for employees, supporting our staff with essential services.	-SAU Administration -Director of Maintenance	-August 2027 - June 2030	-Create a plan and budget for providing on-site daycare for children of employees (in the 2027-2030 timeframe)

Merrimack School District Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Focus Area 2- Facilities

Goal 2 - The Merrimack School District will continuously analyze school building capacity and alignment of grade levels to adapt to changes in student enrollment, ensuring our facilities provide the best educational environment for students.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
1. Conduct a space capacity analysis and develop a plan for meeting the needs of student enrollment.	-SAU Administration -Director of Maintenance -Architect -MSD School Board -MSD Planning and Building Committee	-Space capacity is conducted annually assessment conducted by building administration and Central Office -Plan completed during the 2025-2026 school year -Plan approved for implementation by the MSD School Board by June 2030	-Develop and implement a plan for adequate space needs at all schools, considering both enrollment and age appropriateness -Plan submitted to and approved by school board for action in the 2027-2030 timeframe
2. Communicate with the Town of Merrimack Community Development Department to stay informed on new residential developments and provide an impact analysis to the department.	-SAU Administration -Town of Merrimack Community Development Department	-Twice per fiscal year	-Participate in department review of residential projects -Provide School Board with an update of residential development
3. Conduct an annual enrollment analysis using the cohort progression ratio methodology, including obtaining birth data from Town to estimate kindergarten enrollment	-SAU Administration	-Annually in October	-Develop an enrollment projection report for use in budget development

Merrimack School District Strategic Plan 2024-2027

Focus Area 3 - Culture of Wellness

Goal 1 - The Merrimack School District will make informed decisions regarding student, staff, and school community wellness by creating a district-wide wellness plan.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
1. Develop and sustain a District Wellness Task Force.	-SAU Staff -District Wellness Committee	-By the end of October 2024	-Task force includes representatives from all stakeholder groups
2. Gather valuable insights from the school and larger communities on the thoughts, knowledge, and feelings about wellness to inform our plan.	-Wellness Task Force	-February 2025	-Information gathering measures created and employed
3. Define wellness for the Merrimack School District and develop a plan outline including this definition.	-Wellness Task Force	-April 2025	-Wellness mission, vision, and definition statement created. -Wellness plan outline formed
4. Create a draft Wellness Plan and submit it to stakeholders for feedback.	-Wellness Task Force	-June 2025	-Draft Wellness Plan created and distributed to stakeholders
5. Using stakeholder feedback, finalize a district Wellness Plan and share it with the MSD School Board.	-Wellness Task Force -MSD School Board	-Spring 2026	-Completion of all outlined steps -Analysis and incorporation of feedback -Creation and presentation of the final plan at a School Board meeting

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Focus Area 3 - Culture of Wellness

Goal 1 Continued - The Merrimack School District will make informed decisions regarding student, staff, and school community wellness by creating a district-wide wellness plan.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
6. Review, identify, and revise any necessary policies, protocols, and procedures that address student, staff, and community wellness.	-Wellness Task Force -District Wellness Staff -MSD School Board	-Identify needed updates by Fall 2026 -Update policies following established MSD School Board process -Revise protocols and procedures by June 2027	-Updated policies, protocols, and procedures related to student, staff, and community wellness
7. Educate students, staff, and the community about the District Wellness Plan.	-Wellness Task Force -District Wellness Staff	-Ongoing	-Observable communication to staff, families/caregivers, and larger community

Goal 2 - The Merrimack School District is committed to fostering a vibrant culture of wellness that empowers students, staff and community, creating an environment where health and well-being inspire everyone to thrive.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
1. Implement the district Wellness Plan.	-District Wellness Staff	-Spring of 2026	-Wellness data collected, analyzed, and acted upon -Wellness opportunities provided to learners
2. Continue to assess and address the Wellness needs of the community as they arise and at least on a quarterly basis.	-District Wellness Staff	-Ongoing	-YRBS data -Comprehensive needs assessment for Safe and Healthy Schools -Gallup poll -DHHS data or other publicly accessible data

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Focus Area 4 - Student Outcomes

Goal - Merrimack School District will ignite student potential by offering diverse opportunities that blend rigor with real-world relevance. We aim to meet each student's unique needs, empowering them to pursue their passions and interests to the fullest.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
1. Each of our schools will have established ways for older students to lead by example through an exchange of knowledge, experience, and leadership.	-Building Administration	-June 2026 -Annual status checks in the middle and end of each school year.	-Increase availability of small-team collaboration training to foster leadership and mentorship within each school -A developed method for predictable and structured interactions between students at the higher grade levels and students within the lower grade levels
2. Foster a strong sense of connection between classroom learning and the world beyond, helping students see the relevance of their education in real-world contexts.	-Building Administration	-Assess at least annually	-Observable integration of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles, especially at the lower grade levels
3. Ignite passion and curiosity in students by incorporating more hands-on and multimodal learning opportunities into the curriculum.	-Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum -Building Administration	-Ongoing	-Implementation of a curriculum that offers varied options and methods to demonstrate understanding and learning at multiple levels -Classroom observations

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Focus Area 4 - Student Outcomes

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Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
4. Encourage and cultivate the desire for students to exercise voice and choice in their learning journeys, empowering them to take ownership in their education.	-Building Administration	-Ongoing with status checks at the end of each school year	-The increased presence of student choice in formative and summative assessments -Student feedback about assessment opportunities
5. Encourage resiliency and the development of practical skills for students in grades 9-12, at all academic achievement levels, by affording them an active role in determining their post secondary pathways.	-Director of Graduation Pathways -Merrimack High School Administration	-Semester and end of year evaluations	-A steady and measurable year-to-year increase in student enrollments in Extended Learning Opportunities

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Focus Area 5 - Family and Community Engagement

Goal - The Merrimack School District will create inclusive and accessible communication strategies that inform families, foster collaboration with all stakeholders, engage with the community, and proudly showcase the accomplishments of our schools and the collective Merrimack School District.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
1. Implement online advisory meetings with district leadership for families and caregivers to provide feedback on communication strategies.	-SAU Administration	-At least 3x/year beginning September 2024	-Hold meetings -Gather data on the effectiveness of communication strategies
2. Ensure every voice in our community is heard and valued by identifying and tailoring our communication to meet the preferences of each stakeholder group. Stakeholder groups to include: students, families and caregivers, staff, alumni, Parent Teacher Organizations, and community businesses and organizations.	-SAU Administration -MSD School Board	-Beginning 2024-2025 school year	-Presentation of data to the MSD School Board indicating stakeholder communication preferences -Adoption of communication methods that are preferred by stakeholders
3. Hire a consultant to assess current communication methods and provide recommendations to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and consistency of our communication.	-SAU Administration	-Beginning 2024-2025 school year	-Identify all methods of communication at the school and district level -Report to school board on a comprehensive communication plan

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Focus Area 5 - Family and Community Engagement

Goal Continued - The Merrimack School District will create inclusive and accessible communication strategies that inform families, foster collaboration with all stakeholders, engage with the community, and proudly showcase the accomplishments of our schools and the collective Merrimack School District.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
4. Review effective community engagement methods used by local and regional districts for possible implementation.	-SAU Administration (and their designees)	-2024-2026	-List of potential effective communication and community engagement methods used by small, medium, and large districts
5. Develop a comprehensive district communication plan that will establish effective communication with all stakeholders and clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of staff.	-SAU Administration	-2024-2026	Adoption of communication plan by the school district
6. Update district websites for improved accessibility and navigation to ensure that relevant information is available and easily accessible to all stakeholders.	-SAU Administration	-2024-2026	-Well organized website that meets the needs of stakeholders
7. Improve and maintain an online district wide calendar to accurately record all district events.	-SAU Administration	-2024-2025	-District calendar will accurately reflect religious and secular holidays, as well as school and district-wide events

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Focus Area 6 - Vision of a Learner and Graduate

Goal - The Vision of the Learner (VOL) will be the heartbeat of the Merrimack School District, infusing every academic and community endeavor with purpose and passion. This vision will serve as our guiding star, illuminating diverse paths to excellence and fostering a vibrant, inclusive community where every student can thrive.

Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
1. Introduce the Vision of a Learner (VOL) to all students and staff in Merrimack School District and communicate it to families, caregivers, and the community.	-District Leadership Team -Building Leadership Team	-September 2024	-The VOL is posted in all schools and published in all school handbooks
2. Develop a model framework for staff and students for curriculum alignment, goal-setting, and evidence collection using the Vision of Learner	-The VOL Framework Committee	-June 2025	-The VOL framework is complete
3. Train staff and students on the VOL framework, establish expectations for the school year, and implement the VOL framework.	-Building Leadership Team -The VOL Framework Committee	-September 2025	-Training is complete -Students and staff are observed using the VOL framework
4. Staff will be engaged in ongoing reflection on how the Vision of a Learner is reflected in the school community, activities, and learning goals.	-MSD Staff	-June 2026	-Professional development throughout the year will encompass and incorporate the VOL

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Focus Area 6 - Vision of a Learner and Graduate

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Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
5. Students will complete Year 1 of evidence collection and reflect on their growth journey.	-MSD Students	-June 2026	-Student portfolios -Communication about expectations to parents and families
6. Leadership will collect feedback from stakeholders about the VOL implementation.	-District Leadership Team -Building Leadership Team	-June 2026	-Survey results
7. Leadership will analyze feedback on the VOL implementation, and make revisions if necessary.	-District Leadership Team -Building Leadership Team	-Summer 2026	-Adjustments to 2026-2027 VOL implementation plan
8. We will reinforce Vision of a Learner attributes and framework with our dedicated staff and students, setting clear and inspiring expectations for the school year. Together, we will continue to bring the VOL framework to life, fostering vibrant and supportive learning for all.	-District Leadership Team -Building Leadership Team	-September 2026	-Documentation of expectations for 2026-2027 school year

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Focus Area 6 - Vision of a Learner and Graduate

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Strategic Initiative	Person(s) Responsible	Timeline of Implementation	Measure of Achievement
9. Staff will actively engage in ongoing reflection to deeply integrate the Vision of a Learner into the heart of our school community, enriching activities, and aligning with our learning goals.	-District Leadership Team -Building Leadership Team	-June 2027	-Professional development throughout the year will encompass and incorporate the VOL
10. Students will complete Year 2 of evidence collection and reflect on their growth journey	-MSD Students	-June 2027	-Student portfolios -Communication about expectations to parents and families
11. Students' yearly updates to their portfolios will reflect their goal setting process and evidence of growth in VOL attributes.	-MSD Students -All stakeholders	-June 2030	-Increase in student achievement (as measured relative to a student's own growth) -Increase in graduation rates/ post-secondary planning -More opportunities for students to directly impact their local community
12. School culture will radiate the Vision of a Learner, reflecting its principles in every interaction, activity, and goal, creating a vibrant, unified community dedicated to lifelong learning and growth.	-All stakeholders	-June 2028	-Reduction in disciplinary actions -Success focused self-reflection activities -Report card comments align with VOL -Student recognition items reflect VOL language



MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT
NEW HAMPSHIRE