Merrimack School District/SAU 26
School Board Meeting
Preliminary Agenda
April 15, 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

6:00 P.M. - PUBLIC HEARING

- Board to authorize the purchase of security cameras and access control from the SAFE Grant III in the amount of $387,127.

6:15 P.M. PUBLIC MEETING

6:15 p.m.	**1. CALL TO ORDER and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**	Ken Martin
6:20 p.m.	**2. SCHOOL BOARD REORGANIZATION**	Ken Martin
6:30 p.m.	**3. COMMITMENT TO BOARD CODE OF ETHICS**	Chair
6:40 p.m.	**4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**	Chair
	5. RECOGNITIONS	Chair
7:00 p.m.	**6. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES**	Chair
	a. Superintendent Update	
	b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update	
	c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update	
	d. School Board Update	
	e. Student Representative Update	
7:15 p.m.	**7. OLD BUSINESS**	
	a. Review Outcomes of School District Elections, 2025-2026 Budget and Warrant Articles	Everett Olsen
7:30 p.m.	**8. NEW BUSINESS**	Chair
	a. Memo of Agreement Between the School Board and the Merrimack Teachers Association Regarding Retirement Provision for 2023-2024	Everett Olsen
	b. Responsive Classroom Presentation	K-6 Elementary Principals
	c. Last Day of School	Everett Olsen
	d. Summer Meeting Dates	Everett Olsen
	e. Date for June Goals Meeting	Everett Olsen
	f. Other	
8:20 p.m.	**9. POLICIES**	Chair
	a. Updated Suicide Prevention/Response Plan (JLDBB-R)	Sara Parrotto
8:25 p.m.	**10. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**	Chair
	a. April 1, 2024 Public Hearing, Public and Non-Public Minutes	
8:30 p.m.	**11. CONSENT AGENDA**	Amanda Doyle
	a. Educator Resignations and Retirements	
	b. Administrator Resignation	
	c. Educator Nominations	
8:40 p.m.	**12. OTHER**	Chair
	a. Committee Reports	
	b. Correspondence	
	c. Comments	
8:50 p.m.	**13. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**	Chair
9:15 p.m.	**14. ADJOURN**	Chair

Approved by the
Board on 10/7/02

Merrimack School Board
Code of Ethics

As a member of the Merrimack School Board, I shall promote the best interests of the District by adhering to the following ethical standards, and affix my signature to the same:

Trustworthy in Responsibilities

- I will always remember that my first and greatest concern will be the educational welfare of the students in the Merrimack School District.
- I will be accountable to the public by accurately representing District policies, programs, priorities, and progress.
- I will be responsive to the community by seeking its involvement in District affairs and by communicating its priorities and concerns.
- I will work to ensure prudent and accountable use of District resources and never lose sight of the fiscal responsibility owed to the taxpayers of the District.
- I will make no personal promise or take private action that may compromise my performance or my responsibilities or those of my fellow Board members.
- I will avoid being placed in a position of conflict of interest, and refrain from using my board position for personal or partisan gain.

Honor in Conduct

- I will be honest, fair, just, and impartial in all my decisions and actions.
- I will encourage and respect open dialogue and listen with an open mind while working for consensus.
- I will respect the majority decision as the decision of the Board.

Integrity of Character

- I will consistently uphold all applicable laws, rules, policies, and District procedures.
- I will not disclose information that is confidential by law or that will undermine the District.

Commitment to Service

- I will focus my attention on fulfilling the Board's responsibilities of goal setting, policymaking, and evaluation.
- I will diligently prepare for and attend Board meetings.
- I will avoid personal involvement in activities the Board has delegated to the Superintendent.
- I will inform myself about relevant educational issues.

Signature Name

Date

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN

MERRIMACK SCHOOL BOARD

AND THE MERRIMACK TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

This **Memorandum of Agreement ("MOA")** is entered into by the Merrimack School District and the Merrimack Teachers Association, NEA-NH ("MTA" or "Association"). Hereinafter, the term "Employee" will refer to any employee represented by the Association and covered by the Collective Bargaining Agreement ("CBA") in effect for the period July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2026.

WHEREAS the MTA CBA limits payout of the retirement incentive to tenure in the district as a covered member of the MTA Contract.

WHEREAS the District has an employee who has worked in the district for over twenty years, in both teaching and an administrative position, with a combined 47 years in education, including 10 years as an assistant Principal at the Merrimack High school, 13 years in a teaching position in the Merrimack School District, and 24 years of teaching experience prior to coming to Merrimack.

WHEREAS Article 10.2 of the CBA limits payout of the incentive to 15 years in the MTA.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Parties agree to the following provision for the 2023-2024 school year:

1. Additional retirement incentives may be granted if the employee has completed 15+ years of service in district, which may not be limited to service only in the Teachers contract and may include a combination of Administrator and Teacher years of service.

2. This Memorandum of Agreement shall be a one-time agreement and shall set no precedent for future additional incentives.

3. There must be money available in the budget line item for retirement incentives for such incentive to be granted.

4. The parties agree that this Memorandum of Agreement is temporary and will only be in effect for the 2023-2024 school year and will automatically expire on June 30, 2024.

Merrimack School District

By:_____

Date:_____

Merrimack Teachers Association

By:_____

Date:_____

Merrimack School Board

By:_____

Date: _____

MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT
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AMANDA S. DOYLE
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum

EVERETT V. OLSEN, Jr.
Chief Education Officer

MATTHEW D. SHEVENNEL
Assistant Superintendent for Business

To: Ken Martin, Laurie Rothhaus, Jenna Hardy, Naomi Halter, Lori Peters, Chase Rheault

From: Everett V. Olsen, Jr.

Date: 04/12/24

Subject: 2023-2024 Last Day of School

The 2023-2024 school calendar was approved with June 17th being the ending date of the school year. As of April 12, 2024, we have had two no-school days due to inclement weather, making the revised last day of school, June 19th. RSA 189:1 requires that the School Board of every district shall provide standard schools for at least 180 days in each year, or the equivalent number of hours required in the rules of the department of education (ED306.18).

New Hampshire Department of Education ED306.18 requires that public schools are required to meet at least the following number of instructional hours:

Kindergarten	450 hours
Elementary grades 1-6	945 hours
Middle and High School	990 hours

The number of instructional hours includes those hours devoted to direct instruction activities and does not include hours/minutes devoted to lunch, homeroom, passing time and early release for professional staff development. ED306.18 does allow elementary grades (K-6) to count up to 30 minutes of recess per day as instructional time. Additionally, advisory periods in the middle school and high school are counted as instructional time.

Based on my conversations with principals and my calculations of instructional hours, in compliance with ED306.18, I am recommending that we revise the last day of school from Wednesday, June 19, 2024, to Friday, June 14, 2024. All students will have exceeded the number of required hours as of June 14, 2024. With this revision, June 17, 18, and 19 will be devoted to professional development which will allow staff to fulfill the contracted work year. Please keep in mind that if we have to cancel school for any reason between now and the end of the year, the last day of school will have to be revised from June 14th.

Thank you for your consideration of my recommendation to revise the last day of school for the current school year.

Merrimack School District Suicide Prevention and Response Plan

Purpose

In 2019, the Suicide Prevention Education statute (RSA 193:J) was signed into law mandating that school districts provide evidence-based suicide prevention education and training to staff and students in an effort to "reduce suicides in our school population." The district policy, Suicide Prevention and Response (JDLBB) requires a written plan that details the guidelines, protocols, and procedures that the district uses to prevent, assess, intervene, and respond to youth suicide. Through the adoption and implementation of this policy and plan, the district seeks to join with families and the community in this important work, understanding that suicide prevention is an integral component of the trauma-informed System of Care that promotes student social-emotional health and wellbeing and equitable access to education.

In implementing this policy and plan, the Merrimack School District:

- Recognizes that physical and mental health are integral to student success, both in school and beyond graduation.
- Believes that only through a proactive and collaborative approach between the school, families, and the community, can the problem of youth suicide be addressed.
- Pairs this policy with others that support the overall emotional and behavioral health of students, such as the Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention-Bullying Policy and the District Wellness Policy.

MSD Prevention Implementation

Organizational Structure

- Each school principal will designate a team of individuals who are trained in the various components of suicide prevention, intervention and postvention, and within this team the principal will designate a point of contact for issues related to suicide prevention and policy implementation. Examples of designated individuals include School Counselors, Social Emotional Learning Support Specialists, and School Nurses.
- The principal and his/her designee shall be responsible for planning and coordinating the implementation of this policy within each school.
- All staff members shall report students they believe to be at risk for suicide to the principal or designee.
- All screenings done in schools will be reported as part of a system-wide data collection effort to support the mental health and well-being of all students.
- All school personnel and students will be encouraged to help create a trauma-informed, equitable culture of respect and support both in the classroom and across the school and district.

- Students will be explicitly taught and encouraged to tell any staff member if they or a friend are struggling with suicidal thoughts or need help. While confidentiality and privacy are important, students will be taught that when there is a risk of suicide, safety comes first.

Staff Professional Development

- All staff, designated volunteers, and contracted personnel shall receive, at minimum, two hours of annual professional development on: risk factors, warning signs, protective factors, response procedures, referral protocols, postvention, and resources regarding youth suicide prevention.
- The professional development shall include additional information about populations with higher rates of suicide and about factors that may increase a person's risk of suicide, including those living with mental and/or substance use disorders, those who engage in self-harm or have attempted suicide, those in out-of-home settings (e.g., youth in foster care, group homes, incarcerated youth), those experiencing homelessness, American Indian/Alaska Native students, LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning) students, students bereaved by suicide, and those with medical conditions or certain types of disabilities.
- Additional professional development in risk assessment, intervention and postvention may be provided to school-employed mental health professionals and nurses.
- All staff designated to administer the Safety Screening for Suicide/Self-Harm will be trained in the tool used to complete this process.

Youth Suicide Prevention Programming

- Trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate, student-centered, and evidence-informed education materials shall be integrated into the curriculum of all K-12 Social Emotional Learning and Health classes, as appropriate.
- The content of these age-appropriate materials shall include: the importance of safe and healthy choices and coping strategies focused on resiliency building, and how to recognize risk factors and warning signs of mental health conditions and suicidality in oneself and others. The content shall also include help-seeking strategies for oneself or others and how to engage school resources and refer friends for help.

School and Community Collaboration for Suicide Prevention

- The Director of Student Wellness will maintain cooperative and collaborative relationships with community suicide prevention programs and personnel, and regularly update referral intervention information.

Publication and Distribution

The plan will be distributed and posted annually on the district website. A hard copy can be available upon request. All school personnel are expected to know and be accountable for following all policies and procedures regarding suicide prevention.

The MSD Intervention Implementation

Warning Sign (taken from 988 Lifeline):

- Talking about wanting to die or to kill themselves
- Looking for a way to kill themselves, like searching online or buying a gun
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or isolating themselves

Assessment and Referral

When a student is identified by a peer, educator, or other source as experiencing thoughts or feelings of suicide, (i.e. Verbalizes thoughts about suicide, presents overt risk factors such as agitation, an act of self-harm occurs, or expresses or otherwise shows signs of suicidal ideation) the student shall be seen by a member of the designated team, such as a school counselor, as designated by the school administrator, within the same school day to provide a *Safety Screening for Suicide/Self Harm* and to notify family and facilitate referral.

Educators shall also report written threats and expressions about suicide and death in school assignments. Such incidents require immediate referral to a designated team member.

After Hours, Extra-Curricular, Summer, or Remote Learning Situation

If an educator is made aware of an incident indicating risk after hours, during the summer, during extra-curricular activities, or during remote learning situations, parents will receive notification immediately, either from an administrator or from the educator. The educator shall contact an administrator upon learning of a student with elevated risk, and the administrator, or his/her designee will immediately contact the parent. Should the educator be unable to reach an administrator, the educator will contact the parent directly. If immediate help is needed, the educator will call 911 or 988 for a mental health emergency.

For Students Identified as Having Thoughts or Feelings of Suicide

- School staff shall continuously supervise the student to ensure their safety until the screening process is complete.
- The Principal or designee shall be made aware of the situation as soon as reasonably possible.
- The Principal or his/her designee shall contact the student's parent or guardian, as described in the Parental Notification section and shall assist the family to identify appropriate community resources.
- Staff may ask the student's parent or guardian, and/or eligible student, for a written release granting permission to discuss the student's health with outside care providers, if appropriate.

Parameters for Engagement of Law Enforcement

When a student is having thoughts of suicide that include a plan and/or intent, and the immediate safety of the student or others is at risk (such as when a weapon is in the possession of the student), school staff shall call 911 immediately. The staff calling shall provide as much information about the situation as possible, including the name of the student, where the student is located, and if the student has a weapon. School staff may tell the dispatcher that the student is at risk to themselves or others.

Parental Notification and Involvement

The Principal or designee shall inform the student's parent or guardian on the same school day, or as soon as possible, any time a student is screened for safety or if the Rapid Response Access Team is called (988) to conduct an assessment in school.

Following parental notification and based on initial screening, the principal or designee may request that the parent/guardian meet with the appropriate personnel. If the school conducts a Safety Screening:

- The *Notification of Safety/Suicidal/Risk* form will be shared by the appropriate personnel, advising that the parent/guardian seek medical/psychological/psychiatric consultation immediately, and provided a list of emergency community resources.
- Copies of the *Safety Screening for Suicide/Self-Harm* form will be shared with the parent or guardian.
- The *Merrimack School District Student Crisis Guide* will be offered to the parent, detailing all available local resources, warning signs, information about resuming the school routine, and additional suicide prevention resources.
- A discussion will take place to review safety at home, with the goal of eliminating the student's access to lethal means for carrying out an attempt (i.e. guns, knives, pills).
- The parent may be asked to sign a release form if this would help with communication with community-based mental health professionals.

If the school calls the Rapid Response Access Team:

- The parent or guardian will be notified before or as soon as possible after the Rapid Response Team is called.
- The parent or guardian may come to the school when an assessment by the Rapid Response Team occurs in school.
- Information from the Rapid Response Team will be shared with the parent or guardian.

Lethal Means Counseling: Firearms and Medication

Because firearms and medications are the most lethal method of suicide attempts, the following will be adopted as part of the procedures for student safety:

Firearms

- Inquire of the parent or guardian if firearms are kept in the home or are otherwise accessible to the student in any other residences the child may visit.
- Should the child or parent indicate the presence of firearms, the administrator or designee will inform police, who will review gun safety measures.

Medications

- Recommend the parent or guardian lock up all medications (except rescue meds like inhalers), either with a traditional lock box or a daily pill dispenser.
- Recommend the parent or guardian dispose of expired and unneeded medications, especially prescription pain pills.
- Recommend the parent or guardian maintain possession of the student's medication, only dispensing one dose at a time under supervision.

In School Suicide Attempts

In the case of an in-school suicide attempt, the physical and mental health and safety of the student are paramount. In these situations:

- First aid shall be rendered until professional medical services and/or transportation can be received, following district emergency medical procedures.
- Administration will be contacted immediately.
- The student will be supervised at all times to ensure safety.
- Staff shall move all other students out of the immediate area as soon as possible to maintain privacy.
- The principal or designee shall contact the student's parent or guardian as soon as possible.
- The school shall engage the School Crisis Team as necessary to assess whether additional steps should be taken to ensure staff and student safety and well-being, including anyone who may have been impacted by the student's actions.
- The principal or designee will brief the Superintendent on the situation.

Out-of-School Suicide Attempts

If a staff member becomes aware of a suicide attempt by a student that is in progress in an out-of-school location, the staff member shall:

- Call 911 (police and/or emergency medical services).
- Inform the student's parent or guardian.
- Inform the building administration, who will inform the appropriate identified school personnel.
- If the student contacts the staff member and expresses suicidal ideation, the staff member shall maintain contact with the student (either in person, online, or on the phone) and then enlist the assistance of another person to contact the police while maintaining engagement with the student.

The MSD Re-Entry Procedure

When the school is made aware that a student is returning to school after a mental health crisis (e.g., suicide ideation, attempt or psychiatric hospitalization), the principal or designee shall meet with the student's parent or guardian, and if appropriate, include the student to discuss re-entry. Parents are encouraged to let the school know when a student is returning to school after a mental health crisis.

- At this time the *Student Re-Entry after Safety/Suicide/Self-Harm Behavior* form will be completed and signed by the parent/guardian and administrator.

- This meeting shall address next steps needed to ensure the student's readiness for return to school and plan for the first day back and continued interventions and recommendations.
- Parents are expected to inform the school counselor *or* administrator of the student's hospitalization to ensure continuity of service provision and increase the likelihood of a successful re-entry.
- Resources within the community may be accessed to support this transition.
- Release forms will be shared if possible, to enable effective communication with all mental health supports the student has in place during this time.
- A conversation during re-entry will occur with student and parent/guardian about maintaining privacy about the events that have occurred. This includes maintaining privacy on social media. Staff can guide students on a comfortable response if questions arise about the student's absence.

The goal of this process is to:

- Create a response that is coordinated with the student, parent/guardian and outside health care providers.
- Identify ways to ease the transition back into the school environment (i.e., whether the student will be required to make up missed work, the nature of check-in/check-out visits, and other necessary accommodations, etc.)
- Establish agreed upon intervals for check-ins with parent/guardians and student by phone or in-person (e.g. for a period of three months) with more frequent check-ins initially, and then fading support.
- Discuss Confidentiality: The administration or designee shall disclose to the student's teachers and other relevant staff that the student is returning after a medically related absence and may need adjusted deadlines for assignments and extra supports. The principal or designee shall be available to teachers to discuss any concerns they may have regarding the student after re-entry. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis, to support the confidentiality of students.

The MSD Postvention Plan: After a Suicide Death

Development and Implementation of a Crisis Response Plan

The School Crisis Response Team, led by the principal or designee, and in consult with the Superintendent shall develop a Crisis Response Plan following the death of a student or school community member. The School Crisis Team will implement the appropriate plan when the nature of the untimely death has been determined. This plan may be applicable to all school community related suicides or suspected suicides. Whether it be student (past or present), staff, or other prominent school community members. A meeting of the School Crisis Team to implement the plan shall take place immediately following word of the suicide death. Consultation with the parents/guardians and the Merrimack Police Department will guide the Crisis Response Team.

Action Plan Steps

Step 1: Get the Facts

The Superintendent or designee shall confirm the death and determine the cause of death through communication with the student's parent or guardian or police department. Before the death is officially classified as a suicide by the coroner's office, the death shall be reported as due to unknown cause to all staff, students, and parents or guardians. Even when a case is perceived as being an obvious instance of suicide, it shall not be labeled as such until after a cause of death ruling has been made.

If the cause of death has been confirmed as suicide but the parent or guardian prefers the cause of death not be disclosed:

- The school may release a general statement without disclosing the student's name or cause of death (e.g., "We had a ninth-grade student die over the weekend")
- The principal or designee who has a good relationship with the family shall speak with the parents to explain the benefits of sharing mental health and suicide prevention resource with students.
- If the family refuses to permit disclosure, the school will respect the privacy of the family, as per FERPA.
- The school will focus on providing mental health resources to students and school community, as needed.

Step 2: Assess and Prepare for the Situation

The Crisis Response Team shall meet to prepare the postvention response. The team shall:

- Reflect upon how the community may be affected.
- Identify the students most likely to be affected.
- Identify any recent traumatic events that have occurred within the school community or anniversaries of traumatic events.
- Develop a plan to triage staff and all teachers directly involved with the victim who will be notified in-person and offered the opportunity for support.
- Discuss the contents of a written statement that will be developed by the Principal in consultation from district leadership, for staff members to share with students.
    - The statement may include the basic facts of the death and known funeral arrangements, recognition of the sorrow the news will cause, and information about the resources available to help students cope with their grief.
- Set a time for an all-staff meeting.

Step 3: Share Information

Inform the faculty and staff that a sudden death has occurred, preferably in an all-staff meeting so that all members of the staff receive the same information at the same time:

- The principal shall provide the written statement for staff members to share with students.

- The *School* Crisis Response Team will assess staff's emotional readiness to provide this message in the event a designee is needed, understanding that staff members may have direct relationships with victims and be affected by the loss. A point person will be available for following up with impacted staff members.
- Staff shall be instructed to respond to questions only with information that has been confirmed. Staff shall dispel rumors with facts, be flexible with academic demands, normalize a wide range of emotional reactions, and know the referral process and how to get help for a student.
- The School Crisis Response Team shall review suicide warning signs and procedures for referring students who present with increased risk.
- Avoid public address system announcements and school-wide assemblies in favor of face-to-face notifications, including small-group and classroom discussions.
- The principal — with the input and permission from the student's parent or guardian — may write a letter to communicate with parents which includes facts about the death, information about what the school is doing to support students, the warning signs of at-risk behaviors, and a list of resources available.
- Staff shall direct all media inquiries to the principal.

Step 4: Avoid Suicide Contagion

Suicide contagion is when suicidal behavior or a suicide completion influences an increase in the suicide risk of others. Identification, modeling, and guilt are each thought to play a role in contagion. *Talking about mental health and suicide in a nonjudgmental, open way that encourages dialogue and help seeking does not cause contagion.* Although rare, suicide contagion can result in a cluster of suicides within a community. To avoid this:

- Actively triage particular risk factors for contagion, including emotional proximity (e.g., siblings, friends, or teammates), physical proximity (witness, neighbor) and pre-existing mental health issues or trauma.
- All staff will understand that one purpose of trying to identify and provide services to other students with multiple risk factors is to prevent another death.
- The School Crisis Response Team shall work with teachers to identify students who are most likely to be significantly affected by the death, or who exhibit behavioral changes indicating increased risk.
- Should the family give permission to share the cause of death, educators will avoid the word "commit," or "successful" to discuss the suicide. "Died by suicide" is the language used in this case.

Step 5: Initiate Support Services

The principal and/or designee shall coordinate support services for students and staff in need of individual and small group counseling as needed.

- Students identified as being more likely to be affected by the death will be referred to appropriate staff.
- School counselors and other staff will support the emotional needs of students in response to the incident.

- In consultation with the Superintendent, the Principal or designee may contact mental health resources to support the community, including Greater Nashua Mental Health Agency (603-889-6147) and Department of Health and Human Services Department Disaster Behavioral Health Response Team (603-271-9454 or 1-800-852-3345, ext. 9454).
- If long term intensive services by a community provider are warranted, school counselors will collaborate with that provider and the family to ensure continuity of care between the school, home, and community.
- Students and staff affected by the suicide death shall be encouraged to return to a normal routine as much as possible, understanding that some deviation from routine is to be expected.

Step 6: Develop Memorial Plans

The school shall develop practices regarding memorialization due to any cause and strive to treat all deaths the same way. School shall not be canceled for the funeral or for reasons related to the death.

- Avoid planned on-campus physical memorials (e.g., photos, flowers, locker displays), funeral services, tributes, or flying the flag at half-staff, because it may inadvertently sensationalize the death and encourage suicide contagion among vulnerable students.
- If a spontaneous school-based memorial (e.g., small gatherings) occurs, administration and counselors will discuss an appropriate response.
- The school will provide an opportunity for students to express grief through cards, letters, and pictures. These will be given to the student's family after being reviewed by school administration. This will be for a limited period.
- If items indicate that additional students may be at increased risk for suicide and/or in need of additional mental health support (e.g., writing about a wish to die or other risk behavior), outreach shall be made to those students to help determine level of risk and appropriate response.
- Memorials may be created off campus or online and it is important for administration and the Merrimack Police Department, if possible, to be aware of these to monitor them for sensationalizing the loss and potentially causing contagion.

Step 7: Postvention as Prevention

Following a student suicide, schools may take the initiative to review and/or revise existing policies.

External Communication

The Superintendent or designee shall be the sole media spokesperson. Staff shall refer all inquiries from the media directly to the spokesperson. The principal or designee shall:

- Keep the district Superintendent informed of school actions relating to the death.

- Prepare a statement for the media, which may include the facts of the death, postvention plans, and available resources — the statement shall not include confidential information, speculation about victim motivation, means of suicide, or personal family information.

Crisis Referral and Intervention Resources

The Family Resource Guide for the Merrimack School District can be found on the district web page:

https://www.sau26.org/Domain/976

Definitions of Terms Used in Plan

At Risk

Suicide risk exists on a continuum with various levels of risk. Each level of risk requires a different level of response and intervention by the school and the district. On one end of the spectrum may be a student with suicide ideation, indicating thoughts of suicide or self-injury without a plan and on the other end of the spectrum may be a student with multiple risk factors who has intent to die by suicide, or has displayed a significant change in behavior suggesting the onset of potential mental health conditions or a deterioration of mental health. The student may have thoughts about suicide, including potential means of death, and may have a plan. In addition, the student may exhibit behaviors or feelings of isolation, hopelessness, helplessness, and the inability to tolerate any more pain. All students on the continuum are screened within the district by a designated member of the school and procedures are followed to support the student.

Risk Factors for Suicide

Risk factors are characteristics or conditions that increase the chance that a person may attempt to take their life. Suicide risk is most often the result of multiple risk factors converging at a moment in time. Risk factors may encompass biological, psychological, and/or social factors in the individual, family, and environment. The likelihood of an attempt is highest when factors are present or escalating, when protective factors and healthy coping techniques have diminished, and when the individual has access to lethal means. Some frequently cited risk factors include:

- Mental health conditions such as depression, bipolar, anxiety or substance use disorder
- Hopelessness
- Family history of suicide or mental health problems
- Problems with impulse control and aggression
- Serious medical condition and/or pain
- History of early childhood trauma, abuse, neglect, or loss
- Current family stress or transitions

Student Populations with Higher Rates of Suicide

It is important for school districts to be aware of student populations that are at elevated risk for suicidal behavior based on various factors.

- Mental health or substance use disorders
- Self-harm or past suicide attempts
- Homelessness
- Out-of-home placement
- American Indian/Alaska Native youth
- LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning) Youth
- Youth bereaved by suicide
- Youth living with medical conditions or disabilities

Protective Factors for Suicide

Protective factors are the positive conditions and resources that promote resiliency and reduce the potential for youth suicide and harmful choices. These include, but are not limited to:

- Close family bonds
- A strong sense of self-worth
- A sense of personal control
- A reasonably stable environment
- Strong friendships
- Responsibility to others
- Involvement in activities
- Pets
- Lack of access to lethal means

Safety Screening

A structured discussion with a student who may be at risk for suicide. The screening is designed to elicit information about various safety and/or warning signs, such as the student's expressed intent to die by suicide, previous history of suicide attempts, presence of a suicide plan and its level of lethality and availability, presence of support systems, and level of hopelessness and helplessness, and other relevant risk factors.

Self-Harm

Behavior that is self-directed and deliberately results in injury or the potential for injury to oneself. Self-harm behaviors can be either non-suicidal or suicidal. Although non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) lacks suicidal intent, youth who engage in any type of self-harm should receive mental health care. Treatment can improve coping strategies to lower the urge to self-harm and reduce the long-term risk of a future suicide attempt.

Suicide

Death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with any intent to die as a result of the behavior.

NOTE: The coroner's or medical examiner's office must first confirm that the death was a suicide before anyone may state this as a cause of death. **Most importantly, parent or guardian preference shall be honored when determining how the death is communicated to the larger community.**

Suicide Attempt

A self-injurious behavior for which there is evidence that the person had at least some intent to die. A suicide attempt may result in death, injuries, or no injuries. A mixture of ambivalent feelings, such as a wish to die and a desire to live, is a common experience with most suicide attempts. Therefore, ambivalence is not a reliable indicator of the seriousness or level of danger of a suicide attempt or the person's overall risk.

Suicidal Behavior

Suicide attempts, injury to oneself associated with at least some level of intent, developing a plan or strategy for suicide, gathering the means for a suicide plan, or any other overt action or thought indicating intent to end one's life.

Suicidal Ideation

Thinking about, considering, or planning for self-injurious behavior that may result in death. A desire to be dead without a plan or the intent to end one's life is still considered suicidal ideation and shall be taken seriously. *(Passive ideation describes thoughts about dying without an intent or plan to die, while active ideation involves specific plans to end one's life.)*

Suicide Contagion

The process by which suicidal behavior or a suicide completion influences an increase in the suicide risk of others. Identification, modeling, and guilt are each thought to play a role in contagion. Although rare, suicide contagion can result in a cluster of suicides within a community.

Postvention

Suicide postvention is a crisis intervention strategy designed to assist with the grief process following suicide loss. This strategy, when used appropriately, reduces the risk of suicide contagion, provides the support needed to help survivors cope with a suicide death, addresses the social stigma associated with suicide, and disseminates information after the death of a member of the school community. Often a community or school's healthy postvention effort can lead to readiness to engage further with suicide prevention efforts and save lives.

Avoid	Say
"Committed Suicide"	"Died by suicide." "Ended his/her life." "Killed himself/herself."
"Failed" or "Successful" Attempt	"Suicide attempt" "Death by suicide."

References

Model School District Policy on Suicide Prevention: Model Language, Commentary, and Resources, a joint publication of: afsp.org/modelschoolpolicy, American School Counselor Association, National Association of School Psychologists, the TREVOR Project, and the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

Suicide Prevention Education: Title XV, Chapter 193-J:1-3

http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/XV/193-J/193-J-mrg.htm

Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
April 1, 2024

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

- **Staff Welfare**

Present: Chair Ken Martin, Vice-Chair Laurie Rothhaus, Board Member Lori Peters, Board Member Jenna Hardy, and Board Member Naomi Halter. Chief Educational Officer Everett Olsen, Assistant Superintendent for Business Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle, and Student Representative Chase Rheault were also present.

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

At 6:10 p.m., Chair Martin called the public hearing to order.

2. PUBLIC HEARING

- Board to authorize the purchase of the curriculum for Wit & Wisdom from surplus funds in the amount of $237,500. (K-6)

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle stated that over the past two years, the Merrimack School District had made an intentional shift from balanced literacy to structured literacy.

- Replacing and implementing core programs that are research and evidence-based and aligned with the science of Reading.
    - Heggerty
    - Fundations
    - Geodes
    - Spelling Connections
- Wit & Wisdom is the final component of this shift.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle explained that Wit & Wisdom was a comprehensive standards-based English Language Arts curriculum that looked at reading, writing, and effective communication done through a series of complex, information-rich, grade-level text, and supplementary text.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said Wit & Wisdom paired seamlessly with our foundational skills programs of Fundations and Geodes.

- Geodes are aligned to the scope and sequence of Fundations
- Geodes are produced by the same publisher as Wit & Wisdom

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle explained that the district already had a phoenix or foundations component to its curriculum, and it was not part of Wit & Wisdom.

- Wit & Wisdom Framework
    - At Wit & Wisdom's core is a framework of strategic questions and instructional protocols designed to guide teachers and students through reading, writing, and speaking about exceptionally rich and diverse texts.
    - Devotes 6-8 weeks to explore each topic in tightly crafted, multi-faceted lesson sequences.
    - Discussions and activities are built into daily practice.
    - Writing is text-based or text-inspired with clear instructional routines.
    - High-quality materials for teachers and students.
- Core Texts, Supplementary Texts, & Media
    - The core texts include much beloved, award-winning books from both contemporary and established authors.
    - Supplementary texts and media, including poems, videos, informational articles, websites, music and other audio, fine art, graphs, charts, or maps are thoroughly integrated and seamlessly connected to the lesson studies.

Board Member Peters commented that she was very impressed with the curriculum. She added that she also thought it was an appropriate way in which to use the district's retained funds to purchase it.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus said for the past two years, in the School Board's goals meetings, literacy had been the number one goal for the district, and she was in full support of the purchase.

Board Member Hardy commented that she had a child who was participating in one of the pilot programs, and she said she loved it. Board Member Hardy also said she was in favor of using retained funds to purchase the curriculum.

Board Member Hardy commented that she liked the fact that the curriculum integrated some non-media, like famous artworks and speeches, and she also felt it was appropriate to purchase the curriculum using the retained funds.

Chair Martin also commented that he was in full support of the curriculum and also felt using the retained funds was appropriate.

MOTION: Chair Martin made a motion to purchase the Wit & Wisdom curriculum from surplus funds in the amount of $237,500. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Joanne Grobecker, 27 Craig Drive, addressed the Board and said her daughter was participating in one of the 5th grade Wit & Wisdom pilot programs. She read the following that her daughter asked her to read into the record:

"I started doing Wit & Wisdom later than my classmates, but I found a way to catch up. I love learning about the Nez Perce Tribe. Wit & Wisdom has helped me learn how to write a paragraph better. I like how I can talk with others about Wit & Wisdom. Right now, we are reading Thunder Rolling in the Mountains."

Ms. Grobecker said she was very happy that the teachers were being provided with the tools and the professional development to teach every child how to read.

4. RECOGNITIONS

There were no recognitions to share.

5. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen shared that on April 15th, twelve members of the Middle School concert band would be performing at the Middle-Level Honor Band Festival at Pinkerton Academy. He also said that on May 5th, seven members of the middle school concert band and two members of the chorus would perform at the South Central District Honor Band & Chorus Festival at the Lurgio Middle School in Bedford.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said in March, two literacy nights were hosted for parents at the Reeds Ferry Elementary School. He noted it was very well attended. He also said the Reeds Ferry School had a bingo night, and it had a tremendous turnout.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the track season would be starting soon. He recognized students who would be receiving an award from the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the 4th graders at the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School participated in a gradewide Wax Museum where each 4th grader picked a prominent person from New Hampshire and wrote a short speech.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the students would be competing in the FinLit 300, the New Hampshire Financial Literacy Capability Challenge, on Wednesday. He said students were very competitive in the areas of earning income, spending, saving, investing, and managing risk.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen shared that the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School had a "Winter Fun Week" where all activities (inside and outside of the building) included some degree of learning.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the students in Dr. Gonzalez's biology class and Ms. Jones's oceanology class visited the New England Aquarium to study the aquatic ecosystem further. He noted other students taking biology classes would be touring the Nashua Wastewater Treatment Facility plant to understand the practical applications of filtration systems from a design and engineering perspective.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the Middle School Drama Club held two sold-out performances of "Percy Jackson and the Lightening Thief."

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the Robotics Competition was held the previous weekend, and they were preparing for the New England District Championships.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle thanked the School Board for their support in the purchase of Wit & Wisdom.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said there was a two-hour early release on March 29th, where they offered some terrific, differentiated Google training. She thanked everyone involved in facilitating the training.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said she had provided the Board with some information from a teacher at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School who was interested in doing some research through a voluntary, anonymous survey. She said she would like to tell the Board more about it under "New Business."

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that the General Assurances document had to be signed by the members of the School Board in order to receive all grants. He pointed out that they had to obligate the funds by the end of June, and the money had to actually be spent by the end of December.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell commented that the preliminary audits would begin soon in anticipation of the year-end June 30th audit.

d. School Board Update

Chair Martin reminded everyone that voting day would be held on Tuesday, April 10th, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Chair Martin stated that the School Board and Chief Educational Officer Olsen had negotiated a two-year extension to Mr. Olsen's contract.

Chair Martin said he had attended the Celebration of Song in the Cavalcade of Bands. He said it was an amazing event. He said the musical maturity of the bands would never be fully realized hearing them perform in a gym.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus noted that they were also in negotiations with Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle as they wanted to be sure that the district was able to keep her.

e. Student Representative Update

Student Representative Rheault congratulated the Merrimack High School students for participating in the following:

- Celebration of Song and the Cavalcade of Bands
- The Large Group Event
- Clark Terry Jazz Festival
- 20 Students to participate in the All-State Festival at Concord High School

- The Drama Department will hold its spring musical "Mama Mia" – Friday, May 3rd, at 6:00 p.m. and Saturday, May 4th, at 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.
- The Granite State Challenge Merrimack team will participate in the Quarter Final Match, which will air on NH PBS on April 4th at 7:30 p.m.
- JV team for Quiz Bowl had the best overall record for the season.
    - The Varsity team won 9 to 1.

6. OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion on Warrant Articles/Review of Voters Guide

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell reviewed the Voters Guide and the following Warrant Articles:

- Proposed New Central Office ($4.8 million)
- Support Staff Contract
- Roofs at James Mastricola Upper Elementary School & James Mastricola Elementary School
- Operating Budget

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discussion on Staff Evaluation Process

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said that he, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle, and Ms. Fazlic, Director of Human Resources, had been meeting with all the principals and assistant principals conducting staff evaluations. He said most of the staff, by far, have received excellent evaluations. He said they used the evaluation process as a growth model and not punitive in nature. He said they looked at five areas: instruction and leadership, culture, professional learning environment, organizational resilience & community connections, and fulfilling professional responsibilities. He further said that each administrator was graded as either highly effective, effective, or in need of improvement.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus thanked Chief Educational Officer Olsen for bringing a solid evaluation tool to evaluate administrators. She said she felt the only way a person could get better at their job was to have self-evaluations and go through the process of being evaluated. She added that part of the School Board's job was to evaluate the Superintendent.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle commented that she had been meeting with the committee and was working on the teacher evaluation model. She noted that the district was growth-orientated and wanted to provide feedback to their teachers to improve their practice. She said she would bring additional clarifying information to the Board later in the year.

b. Review and Approval of the Document Entitled "FY 2025 General Assurances, Requirements, and Definitions for Participation in Federal Programs"

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said it was a standard document that was sent to all school districts across the country that received federal grant funds. He said it was basically an agreement that the district would adhere to its fiduciary responsibilities, and the procurement processes were sound and based on best practices.

9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. March 18, 2024, Public Minutes

MOTION: Vice-Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve the public minutes from the March 18, 2024, meeting, as presented. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

10. CONSENT AGENDA

There were no educator nominations or resignations to share.

11. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

Board Member Halter shared that she had attended a Strategic Planning Committee meeting where they continued to work on the focus areas of the Strategic Plan and discussed getting a presentation ready for the School Board sometime in May.

b. Correspondence

Board Member Peters commented that she had received a lot of correspondence regarding the election, the SAU building, the voter's guide, and Wit & Wisdom.

Board Member Hardy shared that she had received correspondence regarding the election and Wit & Wisdom.

Chair Martin stated that he had received correspondence regarding the voter's information guide and Wit & Wisdom.

c. Comments

Vice-Chair Rothhaus thanked the students who facilitated the School Board debate and noted that the same students would be doing the Town Council debate on 4/3/24 at 6:30 p.m.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were no public comments.

13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: At approximately 7:25 p.m., Board Member Hardy made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Peters seconded the motion.

MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.

MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT MONTHLY ENROLLMENTS 2023-2024

April 1, 2024

Enrollment On

April 1, 2024	PRE	K	1	2	3	4	Total	5	6	Total	7	8	Total	9	10	11	12	Total	ODP	HSS	TOTALS
MES	37	55	81	83	66	77	**399**														**399**
RFS	50	118	84	92	75	80	**499**														**499**
TFS	39	94	103	96	95	106	**533**														**533**
MUES								273	234	**507**											**507**
MMS											239	266	**505**								**505**
MHS														256	267	257	289	**1069**			**1069**
PR-12 Total																					**3512**
Student Services ODP**																			24		**24**
Home Study (HSS)																				148	**148**
Total	**126**	**267**	**268**	**271**	**236**	**263**	**1431**	**273**	**234**	**507**	**239**	**266**	**505**	**256**	**267**	**257**	**289**	**1069**	**24**	**148**	**3684**

**Out-of-District Placement

MONTHLY ENROLLMENTS 2023-2024

Month	*PRE	K	1	2	3	4	Total	5	6	Total	7	8	Total	9	10	11	12	Total	ODP	HSS	TOTALS
September 11, 2023	110	267	268	266	237	263	1411	273	237	510	244	269	513	263	274	261	304	1102	20	131	3687
October 1, 2023	110	267	269	267	237	264	1414	272	237	509	242	269	511	262	273	260	300	1095	20	130	3679
October 2, 2023	111	267	269	267	237	264	1415	272	237	509	241	269	510	262	272	260	300	1094	20	132	3680
November 6, 2023	121	267	269	267	237	266	1427	272	236	508	240	268	508	262	271	260	299	1092	20	134	3689
December 4, 2023	124	266	268	267	238	265	1428	272	234	506	240	268	508	262	270	262	299	1093	20	139	3694
January 8, 2024	124	265	268	269	236	265	1427	271	233	504	239	267	506	262	269	261	296	1088	21	141	3687
February 5, 2024	124	266	268	270	238	265	1431	272	234	506	243	265	508	261	268	260	292	1081	21	145	3692
March 4, 2024	125	266	268	269	236	263	1427	273	233	506	241	267	508	257	267	256	289	1069	21	148	3679
April 1, 2024	126	267	268	271	236	263	1431	273	234	507	239	266	505	256	267	257	289	1069	24	148	3684

BUS SUSPENSIONS FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH

	MHS	MMS	JMUES	MES	RFS	TFS
Fighting						
Vandalism						
Disrespect/Disrupti		2	2		2	2
Unsafe Behavior						
Other						
TOTAL	**0**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**2**	**2**