**Merrimack School District/SAU 26**
**School Board Meeting**
**Preliminary Agenda**
**April 1, 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

**6:10 P.M. - PUBLIC HEARING**

- Board to authorize the purchase of Wit and Wisdom curriculum from surplus funds in the amount of $237,500.

**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. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** | Ken Martin |
| | **3. RECOGNITIONS** | Ken Martin |
| 6:35 p.m. | **4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES** | Ken Martin |
| | a. Superintendent Update | |
| | b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update | |
| | c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update | |
| | d. School Board Update | |
| | e. Student Representative Update | |
| 6:50 p.m. | **5. OLD BUSINESS** | Ken Martin |
| | a. Discussion on Warrant Articles/Review Voters Guide | Matthew Shevenell |
| 7:15 p.m. | **6. NEW BUSINESS** | Ken Martin |
| | a. Discussion on Staff Evaluation Process | E. Olsen/A.Doyle |
| | b. Review and Approval of the Document Entitled "FY2025 General Assurances, Requirements and Definitions for Participation in Federal Programs" | Everett Olsen |
| | c. Last Day of School | Everett Olsen |
| | d. Other | |
| 7:50 p.m. | **7. POLICIES** | Ken Martin |
| | a. 3rd Review and Adoption of Student Dress Code Policy (JICA) | |
| 8:00 p.m. | **8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** | Ken Martin |
| | a. March 18, 2024 Public Minutes | |
| 8:05 p.m. | **10. CONSENT AGENDA** | Amanda Doyle |
| | a. Educator Resignations | |
| | b. Educator Nominations | |
| 8:10 p.m. | **11. OTHER** | Ken Martin |
| | a. Committee Reports | |
| | b. Correspondence | |
| | c. Comments | |
| 8:20 p.m. | **12. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS** | Ken Martin |
| 8:30 p.m. | **13. ADJOURN** | Ken Martin |

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

**Merrimack School District**
**Voting Day – Tuesday April 09, 2024**
**7:00AM to 7:00PM**
**James Mastricola Upper Elementary School**
**Merrimack Middle School**
**St. John Neumann Church**

**Elections, Voting, and Polling Locations**
https://www.merrimacknh.gov/elections-voting

**SUMMARY OF WARRANT ARTICLES**

**ARTICLE 1: Election of School District Officials**

The names of candidates for elected offices for the Merrimack School District will appear on the ballot. Candidate names are those seeking the offices for School Board, School District Planning and Building Committee and School District Budget Committee.

**ARTICLE 2: Central Office and Student Services Building**

This Article seeks to raise and appropriate the sum of $4,800,000 for the for the construction and original equipping of a new Central Office to include but not be limited to the Superintendent Services, Student Services, Student Wellness, Business Operations, and Human Resources.

These district employees oversee and provide services for approximately 353 full time teaching staff, 340 support staff and 3,621 students

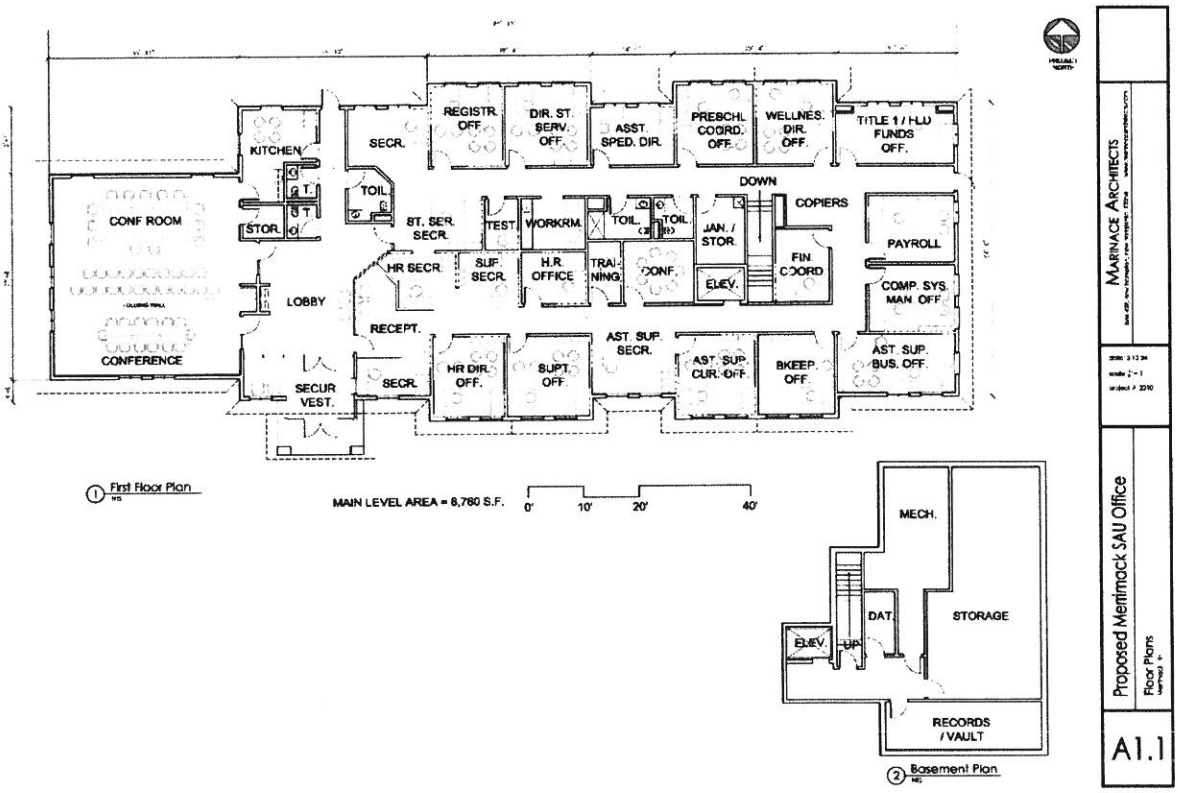
That amount will be bonded over a 15-year period at an estimated interest rate of 3.25%. The first year's payment would be a half years interest payment of $120,000 and would offset by the reduction of the Middle School Bond that was retired in the 2023-2024 school year, if not for this offset, the tax impact would be .02 cents per thousand which would equal $12 dollars on a $500,000 house. In year 2, the cost would be .09 cents per thousand which would equal $47 on a $500,000 house. The last year would be .07 cents per thousand which would equal $34 dollars per year on a similar house.

**HISTORICAL REFERENCE –**

- **Discussions between the School Board and The Planning & Building Committee (PBC) began in 1995 about the idea of a new Central Office building.**
- **In 2008, The PBC were formally charged by the School Board with looking into costs and procedures for a sufficient space for our central office staff.**
- **In 2010, after 2 years of research and discussions with architects the PBC presented a 9-page report outlining the proposal for a new Central Office with an anticipated cost of $1.8 million.**

- **In 2013, this proposal was on the ballot and received 52% of the vote. Bond proposals must receive 60% of the vote in order to pass so it did not pass garnering a simple majority but not a 3/5th majority as needed for bond issues.**
- **Over the following 2 years, the PBC looked at multiple options including leasing pre-existing commercial space, current space in the school district, and portable units.**
- **In 2015 the PBC, in conjunction with The New England School Development Council presented a new report outlining their conclusions that the only economically feasible solution was a new building.**
- **In 2018, the PBC did an engineering study to add an addition to MHS. Existing gas lines would have to be moved at a huge cost.**
- **In 2019, the PBC brought a new proposal to the School Board costing $3.2 million. It never went before the voters.**

**Proposed Design Plan for The New Central Office**




This revised proposal decreases the size of the building from 11,200 square feet as previously proposed to 8,700 square feet by a motion by the School Board at the Deliberative Session bringing the total cost down from $6.9 million to $4.8 million. This budget also includes the demolition of the current SAU and Special Services Building. It is all inclusive.

This article has been recommended by the School Board and the Budget Committee.



**Scan here for:**

- **Frequently Asked Questions Proposed School District Central Office Building**
- **Feasibility of Locating District Special Ed Offices in Mastricola Upper Elementary School**
- **Proposed New Central and Special Services Office**
- **Potential Site Plan for New Central Office**
- **New SAU Cost**
- **Consolidated Central Office Building**
- **SAU Air Quality Study**
- **SPED Air Quality Study**

**ARTICLE 3: Accepting Gifts on Behalf of the School District**

This article would allow the Merrimack School Board to accept gifts of personal or real property during the year such as land.
This article appears on the ballot every year to allow the School Board to accept property on behalf of the district. If this article was not approved, all non-cash donations would have to come before the voters. This does not negate public discussion by the School Board and would still require a vote of the Board.

**TAX IMPACT:** NONE

This article has been recommended by the School Board.

**ARTICLE 4: Merrimack Educational Support Staff Association Contract**

The Merrimack School District Support Staff union includes the following positions:

- Food Service Worker, Support, Supervisor, and Managers – Current starting wages = $11.89 to $13.17 per hour.
- Paraeducators and Kindergarten Instructional Assistants – Current starting wages = $13.51 per hour.
- Custodial Staff– Current starting wages = $15.87 per hour
- Maintenance Mechanics – plumbers, electrician, grounds specialists etc. – Current starting wages = $19.52 per hour.
- Administrative Assistants and Library Media Assistants– Current starting wages = $13.13 to $14.09 per hour.
- Title I Tutors – Current starting wages = $16.35 per hour.
- Certified Speech/Occupational Therapy Assistants – Current starting wages = $17.38.

As we have realized throughout the past three years, our support staff are underpaid compared to the districts that surround us. As a part of the negotiating process and the rates tentatively agreed upon by the MESSA and School Board negotiating team, we reviewed the comparable district ranges for each position. Merrimack School District had the lowest starting and top salary for each job category (with the exception of the Maintenance Mechanic starting rate). This new contract helps to keep Merrimack competitive with the districts that surround us.

The tax impact would be $.24 cents increase per thousand for a total of $121.00 dollars on a 500K house in year 1, $.22 cents increase per thousand for a total of $111.00 dollars in year 2, and $.17 cents for a total of $83.00 dollars in year 3.

| Position | Merrimack Step 1 | Comp District Lowest | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Food Service Worker | $11.89 | $14.75 | -$2.86 |
| Food Service Support | $12.27 | $14.75 | -$2.48 |
| Food Service Supervisor | $12.78 | $15.25 | -$2.47 |
| Food Service Manager | $13.17 | $17.67 | -$4.50 |
| Custodian | $15.87 | $17.00 | -$1.13 |
| Maintenance Mechanic | $19.52 | $18.87 | $0.65 |
| Library Media Assistant | $13.13 | $15.50 | -$2.37 |
| Paraeducator/Kindergarten Asst. | $13.51 | $15.87 | -$2.36 |
| Administrative Assistant I/II | $14.09 | $16.25 | -$2.16 |
| Title One Tutor | $16.35 | $18.00 | -$1.65 |
| Occupational/Speech Assistant | $17.38 | N/A (non union positions in other districts) | N/A |

| Position | Merrimack Step 10 (top) | Comp District Highest | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Food Service Worker | $15.33 | 21.8 | -$6.47 |
| Food Service Support | $15.72 | $21.80 | -$6.08 |
| Food Service Supervisor | $16.20 | $32.00 | -$15.80 |
| Food Service Manager | $16.63 | $32.00 | -$15.37 |
| Custodian | $21.06 | $32.68 | -$11.62 |
| Maintenance Mechanic | $24.92 | $35.00 | -$10.08 |
| Library Media Assistant | $18.34 | $33.00 | -$14.66 |
| Paraeducator/Kindergarten Asst. | $19.56 | $33.00 | -$13.44 |
| Administrative Assistant I/II | $19.31 | $33.00 | -$13.69 |
| Title One Tutor | $21.66 | $33.00 | -$11.34 |
| Occupational/Speech Assistant | $22.68 | N/A (non union positions in other districts) | N/A |

**In the last year of this 3 years contract, wages will be adjusted to a somewhat more competitive rate to allow us to fill personnel shortages in every category.**

| Position | 1 |
|---|---|
| Food Service Worker | $16.10 |
| Food Service Support | $16.53 |
| Food Service Supervisor | $17.11 |
| Food Service Manager | $17.55 |
| Custodian | $20.61 |
| Maintenance Mechanic | $24.75 |
| Library Media Assistant | $17.50 |
| Paraeducator | $17.93 |
| Paraeducator I | $18.42 |
| Paraeducator II | $18.85 |
| Kindergarten Instructional Assi | $17.93 |
| Administrative Assistant I | $18.59 |
| Administrative Assistant II | $19.73 |
| Title One Tutor | $21.15 |
| COTA | $22.32 |
| CSLA | $22.32 |

As stated, this is a 3-year contract that is summarized in the chart below as far as all costs including wages and benefits included such as FICA, Medicare, and were applicable, NH Retirement contributions.

| Year | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|
| 2024-2025 | $1,200,624 |
| 2025-2026 | $1,101,059 |
| 2026-2027 | $ 821,954 |

This article has been recommended by the School Board and the Budget Committee.

**ARTICLE 5: Educational Support Staff Association Contract (Special Meeting)**

This article gives the School Board the option of calling one special meeting to discuss cost items only in the negotiated agreement if not passed by the voters. If this article is not on the warrant, the School Board would have to petition Superior Court to get approval for a special meeting. The court only grants such special meetings for emergency purposes.

**TAX IMPACT:** None.

This article has been recommended by the School Board.

**ARTICLE 6: James Mastricola Upper Elementary and Mastricola Elementary School Roof Replacement**

This article seeks to replace 16,500 square feet of roof at James Mastricola Elementary School and Upper Elementary School that is 25 years old and off warranty. At this point it has the potential for failing. The consequences of not taking such action at this time could lead to deck rot and the potential for mold in classrooms.

Sections B and D were constructed in 1999 and have been out of warranty since 2014. These sections are built-up roofing of tar and gravel that was applied on top of the existing roof.

Section Z was constructed in 1997.

The roof is currently telegraphing potentially urgent problems with the insulation below. There are areas where the morning frost has melted immediately adjacent to unmelted areas. This indicates that the insulation in the melted areas could be saturated from leakage at the surface. Saturated insulation has no insulating value and can lead to mold problems and damage the metal deck below. We must pass this article to ensure that the current issue does not become an emergency that cannot be taken care of in a controlled fashion during the summer of 2024.

This is part of our multi-year comprehensive roof replacement plan.

**TAX IMPACT - $.16 cents increase per thousand for a total of $80.00 dollars on a 500K house.**

This article has been recommended by the School Board and the Budget Committee.

**ARTICLE 7:** (By Petition) Shall the voters advise the Merrimack School District to develop a curriculum which enables all students to fulfill their educational potential
This article has no tax impact

**ARTICLE 8: Merrimack School District Operating Budget**

This article is to raise and appropriate $93,285,848 to support the operation of the School District. This budget represents a 2.80% increase over the 2023-2024 operating budget and was derived through a series of public meetings with the School Board, Budget Committee, and voters at the Deliberative Session. If this article is defeated, the School District will revert to a default budget which is $ 91,301,349.

TAX IMPACT- $.51 cents increase per thousand for a total of $256.00 dollars on a 500K house.

| BUDGET SUMMARY 2024-2025 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Description** | **2023-2024 Approved Budget** | **2024-2025 Bud Com Budget** | **Dollar Variance 2023-2024 vs.** | **Percent Variance 2023-2024 vs.** |
| | **2023-2024** | **2024-2025** | **2024-2025** | **2024-2025** |
| **General Fund Operating Budget ($850,000) Less** | 87,695,851 | 90,190,563 | 2,494,712 | 2.84% |
| Food Service | 1,546,607 | 1,595,285 | 48,678 | 3.15% |
| Federal Funds | 1,500,000 | 1,500,000 | - | 0.00% |
| **Total Budget** | **90,742,458** | **93,285,848** | **2,543,390** | **2.80%** |

## BUDGET GOALS

Improve Programs and Services for All Students, provide a better return on investment to the taxpayers and attract and retain excellent staff.

## Building a Better School District Together

- Significant Improvements to K-12 Curriculum
  - Reading, Math, Science
- Alternative Graduation Pathways Program
  - 16 Students Enrolled
  - 12 Seniors will Receive a Diploma *Instead* of Dropping Out
- Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO's) for Students
- Improved Student Progress Monitoring
- Expanding Community and Business Partnerships
- Increased Professional Development for Staff
- Increased School Safety
- Provide Competitive Wages and Benefits
- Develop a 3 Year Strategic Plan
- Staff and Community Team
- Creating a Culture of TRUST – SUPPORT – RESPECT – COMMUNICATION
- and
  ALWAYS STUDENT FOCUSED

## Important Additional Requests for 2024 – 2025

**MES**

- 1.0 Classroom Teacher (Kindergarten)
- 1.0 Kindergarten Instructional Aide

**RFS**

- 2.0 Classroom Teachers (Gr. 1 & Gr. 3
- 1.0 Unified Arts Teacher (PE/Health)

**JMUES**

- 1.0 Social/Emotional Learning Specialist

**MHS**

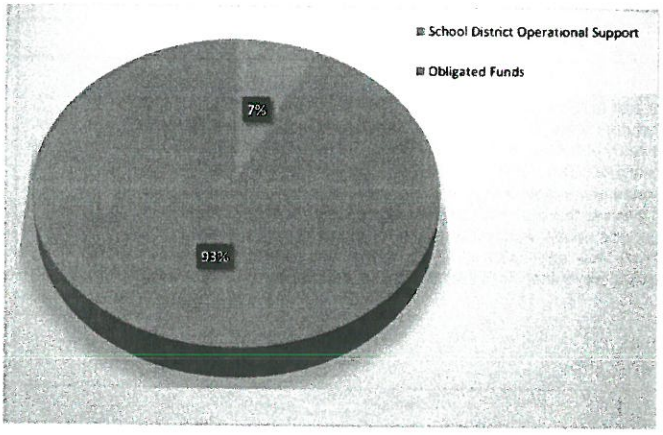
- 2.0 Teachers (TBD)*

**Reductions*

## 2024-2024 Budget Additions

| | |
|---|---|
| $50,000 | New Curriculum/Professional Development |
| $30,000 | High School Summer Band Activities |
| $6,000 | Transportation for Students Attending Summer School |
| $100,000 | Staffing Summer School |
| $160,000 | Summer Institution ELO, Middle School & High School |
| $200,000 | JMUES Window Replacement |

# District Budget Breakdown




Obligated Funds Include:

- Salaries
- Benefits
- Contracted Service Providers
- Transportation
- Utilities
- Tuition
- Federal Funds
- Food Services

- Operational Support Funds Include:
  - Supplies
  - Equipment
  - Repairs

Merrimack School District Budget 2024-2025 2.29.2024

This article has been recommended by the School Board and the Budget Committee.

# ABSENTEE
# OFFICIAL BALLOT
# MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT
# ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING
# SECOND SESSION
# APRIL 9, 2024

Patricia Heil
SCHOOL DISTRICT CLERK

## INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

A. TO VOTE, completely fill in the OVAL to the RIGHT of your choice(s) like this: ●
B. Follow directions as to the number of candidates to be marked for each office.
C. To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write the candidate's name on the line provided and completely fill in the OVAL.

## SCHOOL BOARD

Three Year Term — Vote for not more than TWO

- EMILY ROSHER BOUTIN ○
- JENNA HARDY ○
- LORI PETERS ○
- HEATHER ROBITAILLE ○
- ANTHONY SANTORIELLO ○
- (Write-in) ○
- (Write-in)

## PLANNING & BUILDING COMMITTEE

Three Year Term — Vote for not more than TWO

- KAITLYN KELLY BERNIER ○
- RICHARD HENDRICKS ○
- ANTHONY SANTORIELLO ○
- MICHAEL ALUKONIS ○
- (Write-in) ○
- (Write-in)

## BUDGET COMMITTEE

Three Year Term — Vote for not more than FOUR

- BRIAN TRANT ○
- ELLEN WILSON ○
- SHAYNE ALBUQUERQUE ○
- MARIE BERRY ○
- JOANNE GROBECKER ○
- SARA LOCKE ○
- MACKENZIE MURPHY ○
- ANTHONY SANTORIELLO ○
- (Write-in) ○
- (Write-in) ○
- (Write-in) ○
- (Write-in)

## BUDGET COMMITTEE

Two Year Term — Vote for not more than TWO

- KAITLYN KELLY BERNIER ○
- ANGELA BROWN ○
- TIFFNEY CASTELLUCCI-TRANT ○
- CINDA GUAGLIUMI ○
- SHANNON RAND ○
- KAITLYN SWEETSER ○
- ○
- (Write-in) ○
- (Write-in)

## BUDGET COMMITTEE

One Year Term — Vote for not more than ONE

- RACHEL PAEPKE ○
- ○
- (Write-in)

## QUESTIONS

**Article 2**
(Special Warrant Article) Shall the District raise and appropriate the sum of $4,800,000 for the construction and original equipping of a new Central Office to include but not be limited to the Superintendent Services, Student Services, Student Wellness, Technology, Business Operations, and Human Resources, with $4,800,000 of such sum to be raised through the issuance of bonds and/or notes under and in compliance with the Municipal Finance Act, RSA 33:1, et. seq., as amended; to authorize the School Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver said bonds and notes and determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; to authorize the School Board to apply for, obtain, and accept Federal, State, or other aid, if any, which may be available for said project and to comply with all laws applicable to said project; and further to raise and appropriate $120,000 for the purpose of interest payments on said bonds or notes during the fiscal year 2024-2025?
(Three-fifths votes required)
(Recommended by the School Board: Vote 5-0-0).
(Recommended by the Budget Committee. Vote 5-0-3).

YES ○
NO ○

**Article 3**
Shall the Merrimack School Board be authorized to accept on behalf of the District, without further action by the voters, gifts, legacies and devises of personal or real property which may become available to the District during the fiscal year?
(Majority vote required).
(Recommended by the School Board Vote: 5-0-0).

YES ○
NO ○

**VOTE BOTH SIDES OF BALLOT**

SAMPLE

## QUESTIONS CONTINUED

**Article 4**
Shall the District approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Merrimack School Board and the Merrimack Educational Support Staff Association which calls for the following net increases in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year:

| Year | Estimated Amount |
|---|---|
| 2024-2025 | $1,200,624 |
| 2025-2026 | $1,101,059 |
| 2026-2027 | $ 821,954 |

YES ○
NO ○

and further raise and appropriate the sum of $1,200,624 for the current fiscal year, such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at the current staffing levels?
(Majority vote required).
(Recommended by the School Board Vote: 5-0-0).
(Recommended by the Budget Committee Vote: 13-0-0).

**Article 5**
Shall the District, if Article 3 is defeated, authorize the School Board to call one special meeting, at its option, to address Article 3 cost items only?
(Majority vote required).
(Recommended by the School Board Vote: 5-0-0).

YES ○
NO ○

**Article 6**
(Special Warrant Article) Shall the District raise and appropriate the sum of $797,000 for the purpose of roof replacement at James Mastricola Elementary School and James Mastricola Upper Elementary School?
(Majority vote required).
(Recommended by the School Board Vote: 5-0-0).
(Recommended by the Budget Committee Vote: 13-0-0).

YES ○
NO ○

**Article 7**
(By Petition) Shall the voters advise the Merrimack School District to develop a curriculum which enables all students to fulfill their educational potential?

YES ○
NO ○

**Article 8**
Shall the District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling $93,285,848? (Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be $91,301,349 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the District or by law, or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only)?
(Majority vote required).
(Recommended by the School Board Vote: 5-0-0).
(Recommended by the Budget Committee Vote: 10-2-0).

YES ○
NO ○

**VOTE BOTH SIDES OF BALLOT**

SAMPLE

## *SCHOOL DISTRICT VOTER WORKSHEET*

**ARTICLE 2:** **Central Office and Student Services Building**

**YES - ○ NO - ○**

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**ARTICLE 3:** **Accepting Gifts on Behalf of the School District**

**YES - ○ NO - ○**

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**ARTICLE 4:** **Merrimack Educational Support Staff Association Contract**

**YES - ○ NO - ○**

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**ARTICLE 5:** **Educational Support Staff Association Contract (Special Meeting)**

**YES - ○ NO - ○**

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**ARTICLE 6:** **James Mastricola Upper Elementary and Mastricola Elementary School Roof Replacement**

**YES - ○ NO - ○**

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**ARTICLE 7:** **(By Petition) – Educational Advisory Article**

**YES - ○ NO - ○**

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**ARTICLE 8:** **Operating Budget**

**YES - ○ NO - ○**

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NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Merrimack, NH
03054
PERMIT NO. 64

POSTAL PATRON

**Merrimack School District**
**36 McElwain Street**
**Merrimack, NH 03054**

**VOTER INFORMATION GUIDE**
**School District Election**
**April 9, 2024 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM**

James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
Merrimack Middle School
St. John Neumann Church

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

**AMANDA S. DOYLE**
*Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum*

**EVERETT V. OLSEN, Jr.**
Chief Education Officer

**MATTHEW D. SHEVENNEL**
*Assistant Superintendent for Business*

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

**From**: Everett V. Olsen, Jr.

**Date**: 03/26/24

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**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 March 26, 2024, we have had one no-school day due to inclement weather (1/16/24), making the revised last day of school, June 18th. 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 Tuesday, June 18, 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 17th and 18th 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 (3/26/24) 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.

# STUDENT DRESS CODE

The Merrimack School District respects students' rights to express themselves in the way they dress. At the same time, all students who attend the Merrimack School District are also expected to respect the school community by dressing appropriately for a PreK-12 educational environment. It is important that student attire facilitates ~~participation in learning~~, a positive learning environment as well as the health and safety of students and the adults that supervise them. This policy is intended to provide overarching guidance for students, staff, and families.

## Core Values

~~In relation to student dress, the district's core values are the following~~:
The district's core values, which include respect, responsibility, character and courage are reflected in the following:

- It is recognized that students and their parent/guardian hold the primary responsibility in determining a student's personal attire, hairstyle, jewelry, and personal items (e.g., backpacks, book bags).

- Students are expected to meet reasonable standards with regards to health, safety, and cleanliness, and to dress in a way that is appropriate for the learning environment. Students shall have the right to express themselves through their dress and appearance choices and should also respect the school district's intent to sustain an inclusive learning community that supports a diverse range of identities.

- Students have the right to be treated equitably. Dress code enforcement will not create disparities, reinforce, or increase marginalization of any group, nor will it be more strictly enforced against students because of ~~racial identity, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, gender nonconformity, sexual orientation, cultural or religious identity,~~ their age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, marital status, familial status, disability, religion, national origin household income, body size/type, or body maturity.

- The district is responsible for ensuring that student dress choices do not interfere with the health, safety, and attendance of any student, do not create a hostile or intimidating atmosphere for any student, and do not cause any disruption or disorder within the school. Prohibited items include any clothing depicting hate speech, profanity, pornography, violent images, or language; clothing with images or language depicting drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or other controlled substances; and clothing or accessories that could be considered dangerous, used as weapons, or could cause damage to school property.

# STUDENT DRESS CODE

## Universal Dress Code

Students will wear:

- Top (shirt, blouse, sweater, sweatshirt, tank, etc.)
- Bottom (pants, shorts, skirt, dress, etc.)
- Footwear

This policy permits additional student attire requirements when necessary to ensure safety in certain academic settings (e.g., physical activity, science, or CTE courses). Additionally, this policy allows for reasonable variation in required student attire for participation in athletics and school sponsored activities.

Students may not wear clothing, jewelry, accessories, personal items, or show tattoos that through word, design, or double meaning, display, advertise, or otherwise:

- Depict pornography, sexual references, sexual language or innuendo, profanity, or vulgarity.
- ~~Intentionally~~ Show private parts/areas, or undergarments. Specifically, clothing must cover private areas in opaque (not able to be seen-through) material. ~~Students are encouraged to wear tops that either tuck into bottoms (pants, shorts, skirt, dress, etc.) or overlap bottoms while seated, walking, and standing.~~
- Contain threats, encourage violence, or promote illegal or violent conduct such as the use of weapons, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, drug paraphernalia, or gang symbols, association, or activities.
- Demonstrate hate group association/affiliation and/or use hate speech targeting groups based on age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, marital status, familial status, disability, religion, national origin ~~race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious affiliation~~, or any other protected groups.
- Include materials and features that could cause harm to self or others. Spikes, or any similar features, are not permitted on any articles of clothing or accessories, including hats, shoes, belts, etc. Additionally, body jewelry, piercings, or clothing that may pose a safety concern will not be allowed.
- Cover a student's face (hoods and hats) to the extent that the student is not identifiable (except clothing/headgear worn for a religious or medical purpose) and represents a possible security risk.
- Promote intolerance of or lack of respect to others based on age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, color, marital status, familial status, disability, religion, national origin, ~~ethnicity, social, sexual preference,~~ or economic background.

## STUDENT DRESS CODE (continued)

**Enforcement**

Conversations about dress choice will be a collaborative discussion with the student to achieve an appropriate and satisfactory solution. Individual dress code accommodations may be made based on a student's disability or medical, religious, or sensory needs. If necessary, the student's parents or guardians may be contacted to help address the issue. Should a satisfactory solution not be reached, decisions regarding the safety, respect, or disruption of the learning environment will be made by the building administration.

School staff shall enforce the dress code consistently and equitably, and in a manner that respects the privacy, comfort, and well-being of the student. If a student's attire creates a ~~substantial~~ disruption to the educational environment, poses a hazard to the health or safety of others, or factors into a student behavior rule violation (such as malicious harassment or the prohibition on harassment, intimidation, and bullying), they may be temporarily removed from the classroom and/or be given a related directive or consequence. Every effort will be made by staff to minimize the loss of instructional time and ensure a swift return to the classroom.

Building or program-based student handbooks may include more specific student dress guidelines regarding wellness classes, specialized programs, safety considerations, and school-sponsored events. Specific dress suggestions for classroom activities, extra-curricular activities, school ceremonies, school photos, field trips and other special events shall be inclusive, gender-neutral, and accessible to all students.

The Superintendent or their designee is authorized to develop procedures to implement this policy, if needed.

***Legal References:***

U.S. Constitution, 1st Amendment
RSA 189:15, Regulations
RSA 193:38, Discrimination in Public Schools

1st Reading: September 11, 2023
2nd Review: October 2, 2023
3rd Review: April 1, 2024
Adoption:

# Merrimack School Board Meeting
# Merrimack School District, SAU #26
# Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room
# March 18, 2024

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

## 1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

## 2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Chuck Mower, 4 Depot Street, addressed the Board and congratulated the School Board on its annual district meeting. He said he believed the appropriate questions and information were passed along to the voters, and he encouraged the voters to confirm the needs of the school district by an appropriate vote of yes on the budget as well as the scaled-back version of the SAU facility plan.

## 3. RECOGNITIONS - There were none.

## 4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said the administrators had completed the annual report, and it was currently being printed.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said that based on instructional hours, they anticipated the last day of school to be on June 18th but noted he would keep the School Board up to date.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said he would be bringing forward the dress code policy at the next School Board meeting. He also noted that Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle, Ms. Fazlic, Human Resources Director, and himself would be meeting with principals to review staff evaluations. He added that he would conduct the administrative evaluations.

b. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle stated that the New Hampshire Statewide Writing Assessment was moved up per the Department of Education's request. She said the following year, the assessment would return to its regular schedule. She said the regular New Hampshire State Assessment System (NHSAS) would open on April 1st and would go through June 7th.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle shared that some students from Merrimack Middle School and the Reeds Ferry Elementary School had been selected to participate in the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress.) She said they looked at short and long-term trends in student achievement. She also shared that the Merrimack High School would hold its first-ever Assessment Day on Wednesday, March 27th.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said there would be a two-hour early release in the Merrimack School District on Friday, March 29th, so that staff could receive differentiated training to support their migration to Google, and they would also have some required training regarding their new timecard.

Board Member Hardy added a program called the New Hampshire Seal of Biliteracy and Learning about Proficiency (AAPPL) for Mandarin, French, Spanish, and Arabic in which upper-level world language students could be awarded the New Hampshire Seal of Biliteracy as a result of their test scores. She said it also included Latin under (ALIRA).

c. Assistant Superintendent of Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell expressed how pleased he was with the number of people who turned out for the Deliberative Session.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said when the voter's guide came back from the printer, he would review it with the Board prior to making it public.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that the Grants Management System for 2024 – 2025, including the Safe Schools grant in the amount of approximately $370,000, was ready to start adding details and specifications.

d. School Board Update

Chair Martin said he was also happy with the turnout for the Deliberative Session.

Chair Martin introduced the new student representative, Chase Rheault, noting she was an accomplished percussionist.

Student Representative Rheault, a senior at Merrimack High School, said she was grateful to be a part of the School Board.

## 5. OLD BUSINESS

a. Strategic Plan Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen first thanked Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell for all of the incredible SAU-related work he had done.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said that about one year prior, they had begun the process of developing a three-year strategic plan. He said they hired Mr. Mark Dolan from the New Hampshire School Board's Association. Mr. Dolan had been facilitating meetings with the district since the prior year's August retreat.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said they were incorporating the School Board's goals as part of the strategic plan, as well as the Vision of a Learner and the Vision of a Graduate. He said they were presently in the process of collecting student focus group input, and in April, they would conduct a community survey. He added the focus areas were as follows:

- Vision of a Learner & Graduate
- Student Outcomes
- Alignment of Curriculum & Instruction
- Cultural Wellness

- Facilities
- Family & Community Engagement
- Communications

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated that he felt they would have a draft ready for the School Board to review sometime in May.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said she felt they were making very good progress, although she noted there was still some work to be done in the future, especially getting feedback from the community survey.

Student Representative Rheault said they had seen a very good turnout from the student focus groups. She said they discussed plans for the future, visions of the school, and the role of the students.

Board Member Halter noted that there were members on the committee who did not have students in the district but were business leaders in the community.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Athletic Director Update

Mr. Adam French, Athletic Director, addressed the Board and said the past winter sports season had been great. He said as of earlier that day, there were 273 athletes signed up for spring sports, 126 girls and 147 boys. He said the spring sports included:

- Baseball
- Boys & Girls Lacrosse
- Softball
- Girls & Boys Track & Field
- Boys & Girls Tennis
- Unified Track Team

Mr. French said that as he was new to the position, it had taken a little bit of time for him to become familiar with the new systems. He noted he had successfully formed relationships with all of the coaches despite the fact that he did not have an opportunity to do end-of-the-season reports with them, and his biggest goal was to make Merrimack a welcoming place.

Mr. French said one of the changes he made for the protection of all of the athletes was to move the benches so that the Merrimack fans sat directly behind the Merrimack athletes. He said although it was not 100% popular with everyone, the officials liked the idea.

Mr. French said Mia, a gymnastics athlete, came in second place; boys hockey came in 1st place in Division II in the regular season, and Connor was the Division II State MVP. He said in basketball, Logan was the first-team all-state in defense. He also said they had a cheerleading team.

Mr. French noted that they were looking at the possibility of partnering with the American Legion to develop their field into a softball field for the girls' varsity team.

Mr. French shared that the district had its first unified basketball team in the current year, and it had been quite successful. Chief Educational Officer Olsen said he felt it was extremely inspiring.

Mr. French said they would have a unified soccer team in the fall.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus said she felt technical and discipline skills were very important for athletes to learn. Additionally, she said she was pleased that Mr. French saw an opportunity to have unified sports teams and got it done. She noted that she felt partnering with the American Legion was a great idea.

Board Member Peters said she was very excited to hear about the unified sports teams and was also happy to hear about the potential partnership with the American Legion.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen, Board Member Hardy, and Chair Martin echoed the previous speaker's comments and expressed their appreciation for a job well done.

b. Central Office Building Proposal

Chair Martin explained that an amendment had been made at the Deliberative Session, which would reduce the size and cost of the proposed central office building. He said the new proposed cost was $4.8 million as opposed to $6.9 million.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that they took into account the meeting held with the Planning & Building Committee, the Ad Hoc Committee, and the School Board. He said some comments were made suggesting that perhaps some of the offices could be located at the schools and the size of the conference room was too large. He added that the original proposed size of the central office was 11,100 square feet, and the revised proposal was 8,760 square feet. He said the proposed conference room would be approximately 1,200 square feet, but it was not a Board meeting room, meaning it was just a conference room that did not need electronics, and the School Board would continue to meet in the Merrimack Town Hall.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the new proposed project total was $4.8 million, which included a $300,000 contingency. He noted that if they did not end up using the contingency, they would use the money to refund part of the bond issue.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell stated that the district received three estimates, as explained below:

1. Sullivan Construction – (Not received yet)
2. Eckman Construction – (Not received yet)
3. Hutter Construction – ($4 million – Received prior to the Deliberative Session)

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell explained that the price included the cost of demolition for the SAU building as well as the special services building. He noted, however, that they could not demolish the buildings until the new building was complete so they could move into it. He added it would take approximately one year to complete the new building.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the highest year payment (year two) for the prior $6.9 million was $676,000, and the highest year payment (year two) for the $4.8 million was $470,000. He said that broke down to an increase of $47.00 per year on a $500,000 home. He added that the tax impact for the proposed 15-year bond was based on a 3.25% increase. He said April 26, 2024, was the deadline to submit the bond application.

c. Review of Deliberative Session

Chief Educational Officer Olsen also thanked the community for coming out to vote. He said after speaking with the Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell, between 2014 and 2022, the school budget came in under the default budget. He said that was concerning because if a budget came in at the default or below the default, a lot of the needs of students would not be addressed. He said he felt the district was making very good progress.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen reviewed the things that the district was able to do with the investment the taxpayers had provided, and the Budget Committee had supported:

- An increase in reading and math scores.
- Significant curriculum improvements.
- Adequate materials, supplies, and programs provided to staff.
- Tailor programs to the needs of the students.
- Quality extended learning opportunities.
- Expanding community partnerships.
- Increased professional development.
- Improved student monitoring process.
- School safety.
- Provide competitive wages and salaries. (Marked increase in the quality of applicants.)
- The development of a 3-year strategic plan.
- Create a culture of trust, respect, support, communication, and always be student focused.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen explained that the fiscal 2025 budget was above the default budget because the district needed to move forward and improve. He said the administration team and the staff were superb.

Board Member Hardy commented that she felt the administrative staff was excellent, and she was very grateful.
Board Member Peters echoed everything Board Member Hardy had said. She said the present curriculum was incredible.

Vice-Chair Rothhaus commented that she felt public school education was the backbone of America and said she felt everyone representing the Merrimack School District needed to be held accountable.

Chair Martin said progress was made when a community and School Board bought into the leadership team.

Board Member Halter said she noticed a big difference for the better in the way her children were being taught presently as opposed to three years ago during COVID-19.

## 7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. February 13, 2024 (Public & Non-Public Minutes) (Carried over from 2/19/24)

**MOTION:** Chair Martin made a motion to approve the public and non-public minutes from February 13, 2024, as presented. Vice-Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

b. February 19, 2024 (Public & Non-Public Minutes)

**MOTION:** Chair Martin made a motion to approve the public and non-public minutes from February 19, 2024, as presented. Board Member Peters seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

c. March 4, 2024 (Non-Public Minutes)

**MOTION:** Chair Martin made a motion to approve the non-public minutes from March 4, 2024, as presented. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

d. March 7, 2024 (Special Meeting Minutes)

**MOTION:** Chair Martin made a motion to approve the special meeting minutes from March 7, 2024, as presented. Board Member Peters seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

## 8. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Educator Resignations

- Ms. Rebekah Spotts, School Counselor, Merrimack High School
- Ms. Leslie Warhola, School Counselor, Merrimack Middle School

b. Teacher Nominations

- Ms. Tracy Griffenhagen, Special Education Coordinator, Thorntons Ferry School

**MOTION:** Board Member Peters made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, as presented. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**

## 9. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle stated that she had attended the Professional Development Committee and reported that people were taking courses and getting re-certified.

b. Correspondence

Chair Martin shared that he and the rest of the School Board received an email regarding concerns about the French program and exploring the possibility of expanding the program to make it a more world-language-friendly offering at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School.

Board Member Peters shared that she had received additional correspondence regarding questions about the SAU building and the budget, and she had forwarded the questions to the central office.

Board Member Hardy also shared that she had received correspondence regarding the SAU building and the budget, and she, too, forwarded those emails to the central office.

c. Comments

There were none.

**10. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. Chuck Mower, 4 Depot Street, addressed the Board and said he felt it was imperative that they find a solution to the constant stress and anxiety of funding education in the Town of Merrimack. He said he felt the town needed better representation from the people they elected in Merrimack to go to Concord and represent Merrimack's best community interests.

Mr. Mower said he felt block scheduling would deliver more educational services with less cost.

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION:** At approximately 7:58 p.m., Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

**MOTION CARRIED: 5 – 0 – 0.**