Merrimack School District/SAU 26
School Board Meeting
Preliminary Agenda
February 6, 2023
Merrimack Town Hall – Matthew Thornton Room

PUBLIC MEETING

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

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

3. RECOGNITIONS — Lori Peters

6:20 p.m. **4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES** — Lori Peters
- a. Superintendent Update
- b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update
- c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update
- d. School Board Update
- e. Student Representative Update

6:30 p.m. **5. OLD BUSINESS** — Lori Peters
- a. 2023-2024 School Calendar Discussion

6:40 p.m. **6. NEW BUSINESS** — Lori Peters
- a. Merrimack Delegation Visit — Rosemarie Rung
- b. Other

7:20 p.m. **7. POLICIES** — Lori Peters
- a. Second Review of Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect Policy (JLF)
- b. Second Review of Availability and Distribution of Healthy Food (EFA)
- c. Approval of Revised Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention – Bullying Policy (JICK)

7:45 p.m. **8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** — Lori Peters
- a. December 19, 2022 Minutes
- b. January 4, 2023 Minutes
- c. January 12, 2023 Minutes
- d. January 17, 2023 Minutes
- e. January 19, 2023 Minutes

7:55 p.m. **9. CONSENT AGENDA** — Amanda Doyle
- a. Educator Nomination

8:00 p.m. **10. OTHER** — Lori Peters
- a. Committee Reports
- b. Correspondence
- c. Comments

8:15 p.m. **11. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS** — Lori Peters

8:30 p.m. **12. ADJOURN** — Lori Peters

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

MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT
School Administrative Unit #26
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Tel. (603) 424-6200 Fax (603) 424-6229

AMANDA S. DOYLE
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum

EVERETT V. OLSEN, Jr.
Chief Education Officer

MATTHEW D. SHEVENELL
Assistant Superintendent for Business

To: Laurie Rothhaus
Lori Peters
Jenna Hardy
Naomi Halter
Ken Martin
Kaitlyn Vadney

From: Everett V. Olsen, Jr.

Date: February 3, 2023

Subject: Update on 2023-2024 School Calendar

I have convened a committee to begin the process of developing the calendar for the 2023-2024 school year. In our initial meeting, our 13-member committee decided to conduct a calendar survey of both parents and school staff (enclosed). We have also consulted with Town Moderator Lynn Christensen regarding election dates during the 2023-2024 school year.

Each year presents a unique challenge in the development of a calendar in that the following issues need to be considered:

- Appearance and Readability of the Calendar
- Required Number of Instructional Days and Contract Days
- Professional Development Needs
- Holidays, Cultural Observance, and Vacation Weeks
- High School Graduation Date
- Parent Conferences
- Election Days
- Kindergarten Registration
- Transition Time for Grades K, 5, 7, 9
- Daily School Start/End Times
- Parent and Staff Input
- Cultural and Religious Observances
- Alignment with Calendars of Regional Career Technical Education Centers

Our committee will analyze the results of the calendar surveys and I expect that we will have the 2023-2024 school calendar completed for presentation to you in early March.

Merrimack School District 2023-2024 School Calendar Survey

Dear Merrimack Parent/Guardian,

It is time to plan the school year calendar for the 2023-2024 school year. The School Board is seeking your input so that we can develop a calendar that addresses the needs of students and staff. New Hampshire school districts have discretion on whether or not to have school on certain federal and state holidays. School districts in New Hampshire are required to have no school on Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

Your opinion is always valued and can be shared with the school board by contacting School Board Chair, Laurie Rotthaus at: laurie.rotthaus@sau26.org

Sincerely,
The Merrimack School Board

Please note: This survey will close at 5PM on Friday, February 17.

* Required

1. Do you support having NO SCHOOL on Columbus Day (October 9, 2023)? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

2. Do you support having NO SCHOOL the Wednesday before Thanksgiving (November 22, 2023)? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

3. Do you support having NO SCHOOL on Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 15, 2024)? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

4. Do you support having NO SCHOOL on Presidents Day (February 19, 2024)? Note that February vacation next year is scheduled to begin the following week (February 26-March 1, 2024). *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

5. We are planning to begin the 2023-2024 school year prior to Labor Day. Do you support this? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

6. If school is in session on June 19, 2024 (Juneteenth), do you support having no school on this day? *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

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

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

8. What levels of school are your children attending? (choose all that apply) *

- ☐ Elementary
- ☐ Upper Elementary
- ☐ Middle School
- ☐ High School

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Merrimack School District STAFF 2023-2024 School Calendar Survey

Dear Merrimack School District Staff,

It is time to plan the school year calendar for the 2023-2024 school year. The School Board is seeking your input so that we can develop a calendar that addresses the needs of students and staff. New Hampshire school districts have discretion on whether or not to have school on certain federal and state holidays. School districts in New Hampshire are required to have no school on Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

Sincerely,
The Merrimack School Board

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Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack High School/Cafeteria
December 19, 2022

6:30 p.m. – Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – MHS Main Office Conference Room

- **Student Welfare**

Present: Chair Laurie Rothhaus, Vice-Chair Lori Peters, Board Member Jenna Hardy, Board Member Naomi Halter, and Board Member Ken Martin. Also present were Assistant Superintendent for Business Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Amy Doyle, and Chief Educational Officer Olsen.

Not Present: Ms. Kaitlyn Vadney, Student Representative – Excused

Budget Committee Members Present: Dan Coakley, (Carl) Lee French, Gina Groff, Michelle Mackay, Charles Mower, Mackenzie Murphy, Rachel Paepke, Naomi Schoenfeld, Ellen Wilson

Not Present: Budget Committee Members Shayne Albuquerque, Michelle Bronchuck, Carol Lang - Excused

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Rothhaus called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Rothhaus welcomed the members of the Budget Committee to the meeting.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

3. RECOGNITIONS

There were no recognitions to share.

4. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen recognized the "What's Up Merrimack" program and said he found it to be very interesting.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said winter sports were in full swing and wished all of the participating students the very best of luck.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen commented that the middle school received the okay to start the Clothing Closet to help students in need.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen noted eight different schools had participated in the "Quiz Bowl" the previous Saturday and Merrimack had a very strong showing.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen also noted that the James Mastricola Elementary School had its chorus concert the previous Thursday. He added that Ms. Heather Barker, Director of Student Services said that parent conservation meetings would be held on January 11th from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. where the guest would be Ms. Peg Dawson, a well-known author, and psychologist.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said calling snow days remained a difficult decision, even after his many years of experience.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said the Vision of a Learner presentation would be moved to a future agenda.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle commented that they were actively looking to adopt a new phonics program for the lower elementary schools and would keep the School Board informed.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said, regarding homework, that they were moving forward with making some updates and revisions to the grading practices and she would be sending information out to the community soon.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell commented that he was pleased that the School Board and the School Budget Committee were meeting.

d. School Board Update

e. Student Representative Update

There was no update to share.

5. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to address.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Discussion with School District Budget Committee

Chair Rothhaus asked the members of the Budget Committee to introduce themselves.

Mr. Charles Mower, Chair; Ms. Naomi Schoenfeld, Vice Chair; Mr. Dan Coakley, Board Member; Ms. Mackenzie Murphy, Board Member; Ms. Ellen Wilson, Board Member; Mr. Lee French, Board Member; Ms. Gina Groff, Board Member; Ms. Rachel Paepke, Board Member; and Ms. Michelle Mackay, Board Member.

Mr. Mower noted that the remaining Budget Committee members were unable to join the meeting and were excused.

Chair Rothhaus commented that it appeared that the Merrimack School District would be receiving less funding the following year and in the future.

Vice-Chair Peters stated the School Board's priorities were as follows:

- Social and Emotional Learning
- Competitive Pay and Benefits to Retain the Best Staff
- Increasing and Helping the Graduation Rate – Especially with Alternative Pathways to Graduation
- Technology Needs to be Met
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Facilities
- 2023 – 2024 Goals as a School Board was to Create, and Engage in an Inclusive and Collaborative District Culture built on Mutual Trust and Respect for everyone.
- Improve Learning Outcomes by Ensuring the Instruction is Responsive to the Needs of the Student Population.
- Have Facilities & Equipment that are Safe, Secure, Clean, Healthy, Current, and Appropriate for meeting the Educational Needs of Students & Staff.
- Have an On-Going Review of Existing Policies to Ensure they are Compliant and in Alignment with District Practices.
- 2023 – 2024 Budget Priorities
- School Safety
- Research-Based Reading Program
- Filling Open Teacher and Paraprofessional Positions with Appropriate Funding and Appropriate Student Needs
- Eliminate the Brentwood Building
- Analysis of Current Programs and Sources
- Capital Reserve Fund for Unforeseen Issues
- Possibility of having a Performing Arts Center
- Expanded Extended Learning Opportunities

b. Overview of Proposed 2023 – 2024 School District Budget

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated the complexity of building a school system budget was a difficult one as they want to meet the needs of every single child in the Merrimack School District. He said the district understood the need to recruit, hire, and retain extraordinarily highly qualified educators. Additionally, Chief Educational Officer Olsen said certain curricula needed to be renewed in various grade levels.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated to know how to improve a school district ask the practitioners who were paid to be with the children every day, and not read it out of a book. He also said he felt it was important to enhance their ability to provide academic support to students, especially for reading specialists.

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said one of the intended goals was to keep a close eye on enrollment numbers.

Chair Rothhaus stated that an important goal was regarding school safety, and they were going to ask the Budget Committee to provide the School Board with a little bit of grace as they wanted to do a full assessment of all of the schools. She said they would put anything possible on the Capital Improvement Plan.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the district had acquired $120,000 in grant money from the SAFE Schools Grant Fund. He said more funding may become available.

Mr. Mower said he felt it was important to have a diverse group of people who had a stake in the community making recommendations regarding the budget. He said the Budget Committee was well aware of how much had to be done.

Mr. Mower asked when they would see an opportunity for extended learning opportunities and when they would see an updated competency assessment. Chief Educational Officer Olsen replied that the extended learning opportunities would begin sometime in 2023. He said the competency assessments would likely take two to three years and he added that the hope was to bring in some facilitators who had considerable experience in developing competencies.

Ms. Groff commented that she would like to see standardized programs and was interested in seeing how the district would measure progress as each student learned at different rates. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle replied that the proposed budget included a request to transition students in grades kindergarten through grade 8 to a new progress monitoring tool called IReady.

Ms. Paepke asked if there had been a deep scrub of initiatives or things that had been important in the past but not currently as important, perhaps due to advances in technology and/or curriculum. Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell replied they had already taken some initiatives in terms of saving money such as installing LED lighting, but they were always looking for more opportunities. He noted one of the most important things to do was to keep up with the roofing projects.

Ms. Schoenfeld asked the School Board if any items were important but that were not included in the priority list. Chief Educational Officer Olsen replied that the entire curriculum change was an iterative process that had an impact on professional development, and materials & supplies appropriations. He also said that he would like to see more reading and math specialists at the lower levels. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said writing skills would be on her list of items to be addressed in the future.

Ms. Wilson commented that she felt there was a great deal of focus at the lower levels but there were significant deficiencies at the high school and asked if that issue was going to be addressed. Chief Educational Officer Olsen replied one of the changes the district was working on was the schedule and the hope was to find more time within the day to provide additional time that teachers could assist the students. Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle added that the high school was in the

process of going through its' NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) accreditation and the staff had gone through a lot of reflective work.

Ms. Murphy commented that she was happy to hear that the district would be hiring someone who would manage the extended learning opportunities. She asked if an Advisory Board would be formed that would consist of outside partners to advise how the extended learning opportunities would enhance what the student was learning in the classroom and how the opportunities would be assessed. Chief Educational Officer Olsen replied he would provide the Budget Committee with status updates as they went along.

Mr. Coakley commented that he was very much in favor of alternate graduation pathways such as performing arts. He also commented that he was happy to hear that the School Board was considering school safety to be part of the budget.

Ms. Murphy asked why the high school guidance counselor position was proposed as full-time as opposed to part-time. Chief Educational Officer Olsen replied that it was his opinion that the position of a high school guidance counselor should be a full-time position.

In conclusion, Mr. Mower stated that there were no redundancies in the administrative team, and he felt it may be beneficial to add to the existing administrative personnel. He also said there was money in the budget to deal with the Brentwood building and it would be prudent to raze it as soon as possible.

c. January Meeting Dates

Chief Educational Officer Olsen stated the following meetings were scheduled:

- January 4, 2023 – Budget Presentation – Food Service & the Elementary Schools (Including JMUES)

- January 10, 2023 – Budget Presentation – Student Services & Merrimack High School

- January 12, 2023 – Budget Presentation – Technology Library & Media Services, Maintenance, & Merrimack Middle School

- January 19, 2023 - Discussion School Board Budget Discussion

d. Deliberative Session Dates

Vice Chair Peters suggested the Deliberative Session be held on March 6, 2023; with a snow date of March 8, 2023. The School Board agreed by consensus.

e. Director of Graduation Pathways & Extended Learning Opportunities Role Description

Chief Educational Officer Olsen said he hoped to be able to eventually mesh a portion of the position with the Adult Education Program.

Board Member Hardy stated that the new position would be available to all students.

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept the Director of Graduation Pathways & Extended Learning Opportunities job description with the idea that it would begin immediately. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Chair Rothhaus pointed out that the funding could come from a three-year grant from the Department of Education. She said she was not sure if the title had to be Adult Education Director in order to receive the grant. Vice-Chair Peters said job descriptions could be modified so the Board could approve the position and later modify the description and/or title.

The motion passed: 5 – 0 – 0.

f. Other

There was no other new business to discuss.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. November 7, 2022 – Public & Non-Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to approve the public & non-public minutes from the November 7, 2022, meeting. Board Member Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 4 – 0 – 1. (Abstained – Board Member Hardy)

b. November 21, 2022 – Public Minutes

MOTION: Board Member Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve the public minutes from the November 21, 2022, meeting. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 4 – 0 – 1. (Abstained – Board Member Martin)

8. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Educator Nomination

- Ms. Justine Matte, Health Teacher, Merrimack Middle School

MOTION: Board Member Chair Rothhaus made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 5 – 0 – 0.

9. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

Chair Rothhaus stated that recently the Planning & Building Committee had met where they discussed their visions and possibly another field for the district.

Board Member Halter stated she attended a Budget Committee meeting and that Michelle Mackey was chosen to fill the vacant position. She said the committee also discussed their thoughts on the future of the Brentwood building.

Board Member Martin said the Healthcare Containment Committee had met on November 21, 2022, where they discussed three open Wellness Coordinator positions.

b. Correspondence

There was no correspondence to share.

c. Comments

Board Member Hardy gave "kudos" to the custodial staff at the high school. She said she thought they were doing a wonderful job. Chair Rothhaus also gave "kudos" to the Merrimack TV team.

10. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were no public comments.

11. ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 9:04 p.m. Board Member Martin made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 5 – 0 – 0.

Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack High School/Cafeteria
January 4, 2023

6:30 p.m. – Non-Public Session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) (b) (c) – Merrimack TV Training Classroom

- **Staff Welfare**

Present: Chair Laurie Rothhaus, Board Member Jenna Hardy, Board Member Naomi Halter, and Board Member Ken Martin. Also present were Assistant Superintendent for Business Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Amy Doyle, and Chief Educational Officer Olsen.

Not Present: Ms. Lori Peters, Vice-Chair (Excused)
Ms. Kaitlyn Vadney, Student Representative (Excused)

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Rothhaus called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Joanne Grobecker, 27 Craig Drive, addressed the Board and thanked the School Board for all their work to ensure that every student in Merrimack received an appropriate education. She commented that at the last meeting, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said the district was going to implement the reading program "Foundations" across all of the elementary schools. She further said that she felt Merrimack would be a model for the state of New Hampshire surrounding literacy.

3. INFORMATIONAL UPDATES

a. Superintendent Update

Chief Educational Officer Olsen shared that there had been a major flood at the James Mastricola Elementary School as a result of a broken pipe. He said Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell, Mr. Tom Touseau, Director of Maintenance, Mr. Mike Dumais, Assistant Director of Maintenance, and their entire staff did a fantastic job addressing the situation.

b. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum Update

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle thanked Ms. Grobecker for her comments.

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle said she had sent some information out to staff regarding the Homework Policy and had also sent information out to the community.

c. Assistant Superintendent for Business Update

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell thanked all of the people involved with the clean-up as a result of the flood. He said the cost of the clean-up (including replacement of rugs, flooring, ceiling tiles, etc.) would be covered under the district's insurance less a $500.00 deductible.

d. School Board Update

Chair Rothhaus, on behalf of the entire Board, thanked the maintenance crews for their dedication in getting the school open after the flood.

e. Student Representative Update

There was no update to share.

4. BUDGET PRESENTATION

a. Food Service

Mr. Dave Dziki, Director of Food Services, was present to discuss the proposed budget for the Food Services Department. He said the Food Services Department was a self-supportive operation in that they received federal reimbursements and cash from parents paying for meals. He added they were experiencing supply-chain issues but noted they were part of the New Hampshire Buy-In Group, and they were in a locked bid for the next year.

Mr. Dziki reviewed questions from the School Board as summarized below:

Question

Board Member Halter: What products are more expensive this year?

Answer

Mr. Dziki: Most of everything has been more expensive this year. He said every year they had a surplus of commodities that were available to them from USDA funds, and this year they had $105,000 of which half could be used to buy fresh fruit and vegetables.

Mr. Dziki said one of the things he was asking for within his budget was the replacement of food warmers for the Reeds Ferry Elementary School and the Thorntons Ferry Elementary School. He added they were approximately over 30 years old.

Question

Board Member Halter: Are we going to have to raise lunch prices to keep up with the rising costs?

Answer

Mr. Dziki: Every year they reviewed PLE (paid lunch equity) tool and noted they raised the cost of lunch by .25 cents across the Board and he was hoping they would not have to raise them again this year. He said he felt it would be a big bonus to offer the students a free meal as part of their education.

Question

Chair Rothhaus: Would the district have the staff to offer a breakfast program and how much would it cost?

Answer

Mr. Dziki: It would benefit the free and reduced students. They did offer breakfast at the high school but if they did it in all of the schools he would likely have to hire additional staff. He said he was not sure if the program would be self-funded or not.

b. K – 4 Elementary Schools & James Mastricola Upper Elementary School

The following were present to speak on behalf of their budgets:

Ms. Bonnie Painchaud, Principal, Reeds Ferry Elementary School

Ms. Michelle Romein, Principal, James Mastricola Elementary School
Ms. Alisha Hansen-Proulx, Assistant Principal, James Mastricola Elementary School

Ms. Laura Livie, Assistant Principal, Reeds Ferry Elementary School

Ms. Julie DeLuca, Principal, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School
Ms. Brooke Ross, Assistant Principal, Thorntons Ferry Elementary School

Ms. Nichole Rheault, Principal, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School
Ms. Meaghan Fowler, Assistant Principal, James Mastricola Upper Elementary School

Ms. DeLuca said she would make opening comments on behalf of all of the staff present.

Ms. DeLuca said the elementary school 2023 - 2024 budgets continued to reflect the priorities established by the Merrimack School District and the School Board. She said they continued to invest in all academic disciplines, the arts, and social & emotional learning. She also said for the second year in a row they were offering co-curricular opportunities for students to participate in after-school educator-led enrichment activities.

Ms. DeLuca explained the budget included the addition of a grade 1 teacher at both Thorntons Ferry Elementary School and the James Mastricola Elementary School. She said they were also requesting a Unified Arts Physical Education Teacher at the James Mastricola Elementary School, and a request to add two grade 5 teachers at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School. She noted the asks were based on actual enrollment information.

Ms. DeLuca also explained that the budget also included requests for supplies, furniture, and texts due to a huge jump in inflation.

Ms. DeLuca reviewed questions from the School Board as summarized below:

Question

Board Member Halter: How are the new co-curricular programs going? What kinds of things are being offered, and how many kids are participating? Are they new programs or existing programs taking advantage of the new funding? Did the amount appropriated last year adequately fund those programs? Was it too much?

Answer

Ms. DeLuca: The teachers were very excited about the cool offerings that would be coming into place. There were two curriculum programs, the first session would begin in January, and would run for four weeks, and the second session would begin in March. She said programs being offered included basketball, dance, virtual cooking, baking, chess, animation, sewing, sign language, and French, et al. She added the programs were free and would be held after school.

Question

Board Member Halter: What is Project Safeguard?

Answer

Ms. Rheault: Project Safeguard was established in the 1980s. They were looking for something that would enrich children and families to meet the health curriculum and to learn about self-esteem and how to meet challenges in life. She said parents were invited to spend the day with the children and speakers were hired to have presentations and discussions with them. She added it was a great day, but it was expensive. Ms. Rheault said they had not had one since 2019 due to Covid. She said after they had the next one she would share the feedback with the School Board.

Question

Board Member Halter: I would like to hear more about the new Physical Education Teacher position, why is it needed? What will it look like having two Physical Education teachers?

Answer

Ms. DeLuca: To support the growth in student enrollment at Thorntons Ferry Elementary School and increase in the number of classrooms, they needed an additional Unified Arts Teacher. She said they selected a Physical Education Teacher because they wanted to make sure the offerings were equitable across all of the schools. She also said there was a direct correlation between physical education to academic and social & emotional learning.

Question

Board Member Martin: Can you please explain the cost increase in the line item for police details?

Answer

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell: The cost had increased, and it also depended upon the frequency with which they used police details.

Question

Board Member Martin: Why was there so little participation in professional workshops and conferences in 2022, even though some of them were offered online?

Answer

Ms. Romein: Covid certainly had an effect on the amount of participation but in addition to that, there were a number of workshops that were offered for free. She also said the needs of the district after the worst of Covid occurred, many teachers chose not to take a day away from being in-person and able to teach. She noted many administrators and teachers would take part in workshops in the current year.

Question

Chair Rothhaus: How many reading specialists do we currently have? How many students are currently reading below grade level, will those services be for all students, and what the job description would look like?

Answer

Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Doyle: There are currently five Reading Specialists in the district. She said they did not currently offer Tier 2 intervention. She also said the district currently had ten Title 1 tutors but noted there was a widening gap between Tier 1 and Title 1. She said a Reading Interventionist position would be best. She added that she did not think the one position would be able to help every single student who was reading below grade level, but it would be a coordinated effort to look at Tier 1 instruction, regular instruction, Tier 3, and those students that were somewhere in between.

5. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

6. NEW BUSINESS

Chair Rothhaus pointed out that the start time of the School Board meetings would be held earlier during the budget season, and would be announced at a later date.

7. OTHER

a. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports to review.

b. Correspondence

Chair Rothhaus stated that she received one piece of correspondence from a Merrimack woman who was very excited about the Pathway to Graduation position.

c. Comments

Chair Rothhaus said she felt everyone did a great job with their budget presentations.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Heather Robitaille, 45 Springfield Circle, addressed the Board and thanked the administrators for all of their work done on the budget proposals. She said she was whole-heartedly in favor of early intervention. She said she would like supporting documentation regarding the proposed budget to be made available to the public.

9. ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 8:28 p.m. Board Member Halter made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 4 – 0 – 0.

Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Town Hall – Memorial Room
January 12, 2023

Present: Chair Laurie Rothhaus, Vice-Chair Lori Peters, Board Member Jenna Hardy, Board Member Naomi Halter, and Board Member Ken Martin. Also present were Assistant Superintendent for Business Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Amy Doyle, and Chief Educational Officer Olsen.

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

3. BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

a. Maintenance

Director of Maintenance Touseau reported increased costs for building repair and the emergency retrofit lease for the unit ventilators and utilities.

Chair Rothhaus's questions for the maintenance department.

I read that it was difficult to calculate costs this year, can you tell me how you determined the increase of costs when you could not rely on data?

Director of Maintenance Touseau responded this is not going to be a typical year. The maintenance budget is an increase of 15% increase on top of known costs.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell added the Eversource distribute charge will be increasing. The supply cost is locked in at 10 cents per Kwh until the year 2027. He also noted the additional 72 unit ventilators all use electricity.

How many full-time and part-time staff do you have? Do we have a high turnover rate and are we over understaffed?

Director of Maintenance Touseau responded there are 43.5 positions in the maintenance department including himself. Currently there are 33 custodians (27 of 33 work second shift) plus 6.5 maintenance positions. He reported 13 open custodian positions and 1.5 open maintenance positions. The maintenance department is very understaffed.

Vice Chair Peters' questions for the maintenance department.

100-4600-40-8459-08, Girls' Softball Dugout – Can we move this to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)? Reasoning, the field is part of the master plan and new field development considerations so we don't want to invest where it may need to be changed or moved.

Director of Maintenance Touseau responded to qualify for placement on the CIP the cost of the item must be a minimum of $100,000. It could be included as part of the future master plan. This item may be removed from the 2023-2024 budget due to other priorities.

Board Member Hardy's questions for the maintenance department.

I do not see repairs/upgrades/maintenance for the high school Little Theatre anywhere in the budget (maintenance or otherwise.) Are there things in the Little Theatre that need to be updated or maintained to be useable?

Director of Maintenance Touseau explained that the Little Theatre received a recent upgrade to LED lighting.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell reported that funds from the high school "school improvement account" from the current budget (2021-2022) will be used to make needed upgrades to the Little Theatre.

Board Member Halter's questions for the maintenance department.

100.2620.40.8433.08 - Some of the tractors and mowers are very old – at what point will we need to look at replacement?

Director of Maintenance Touseau responded that the older tractors are functioning at a high level. They are well maintained and replacement parts are still available. He noted a new lawn mower to replace a 2001 mower has been on back order since March 2021.

100.4600.62.8451.08 - Would like to point out that track resurfacing and gym floor sanding are one and three years overdue, respectively.

Director of Maintenance Touseau responded the middle school gym floor needs to be resurfaced.

How did the 2021-22 budget meet or not meet the maintenance needs of the district? How is 2022-23 looking so far? Are there any big projects that are overdue, or about to become due that we should be aware of?

Director of Maintenance Touseau responded O'Gara Drive and the high school parking lot needs work. These are large items on the CIP and will be discussed at a future meeting.

Board Member Martin's questions for the maintenance department.

Brentwood - Are we proposing close to $8,000.00 ($7,023.00) to provide water, heat, and electricity to a building that we do not use?

Director of Maintenance Touseau responded yes.

b. <u>Technology/Library/Media</u>

Director of Technology/Library/Media Pelletier addressed several similar questions regarding the technology/library/media department from different board members.

Director of Technology/Library/Media Pelletier reported that budget year 2021-2022 and some of 2022-2023 was a discovery process. Many of the library accounts were adequate however, there were some accounts that were significantly over budget. The areas where it was difficult to meet the needs within the budget parameters were technology in the classroom, software licensing, and networking/server infrastructure.

Director of Technology/Library/Media Pelletier reported that he inventoried and documented all the technology and equipment within the district. The current inventory is worth approximately 5.7 million dollars that will cost approximately 6 million dollars to replace. The replacement plan will occur over time. The first cycle of the replacement plan will be the most expensive. He explained without new equipment the technicians will spend their time chasing broken equipment rather than moving forward.

Director of Technology/Library/Media Pelletier stated that much of the technology budget was listed on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which will be discussed at a future meeting.

Vice Chair Peters noted that Merrimack High School's accreditation report from New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) listed technology as an area in need of attention.

Board Member Halter's questions for the technology/library/media department.

100.2222.36.8641.07 - This has been level funded for three years. When was the last increase? How has inflation affected our book purchasing, are we buying fewer books or have prices been relatively stable?

Director of Technology/Library/Media Pelletier responded ten years ago the book budget was $40,000 it is now $35,000. The price increase has not been astronomical; however, availability has been a factor.

100.2222.36.8646.07 - Why was this underused in 2021-22? How is 2022-23 looking?

Director of Technology/Library/Media Pelletier responded print availability due to supply chain shortages made it harder to get periodicals and magazines. Currently we have expended $2,164 this year.

100.2222.36.8649.07 - I notice that we didn't use this in 2021-22. Have we or do we expect to use it in 2022-23?

Director of Technology/Library/Media Pelletier responded right now we are assessing and sorting out what is no longer being used in our media room. There is older audiobook technology on cassettes and other forms that need to be either converted into digital format or repurchased. We are also looking into replacing and adding more Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) equipment.

100.2221.36.8810.07 - What organizations and associations are we members of?

Director of Technology/Library/Media Pelletier responded American Association of School Librarians (AASL), Consortium for School Networking (COSN), NH Society for Technology in

Education (NHSTE), NH School Administrators Association (NHSAA) and Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

100.2221.36.8815.07 - Are there any plans to attend professional development opportunities this year or next?

Director of Technology/Library/Media Pelletier responded South By South West Conferences (SXSW EDU), NHCTO Conferences, MassCUE Conferences, and the Christa McAuliffe Technology Conference.

Board Member Martin's questions for the technology/library/media department.

100-2222-36-8646-07 - Is there a continued need for physical periodicals/magazines in 2023?

Director of Technology/Library/Media Pelletier responded yes, it is expensive to get online subscriptions to all magazines and periodicals that are not used by all students. It is also good to have physical copies for computer screen relief and for those who prefer to read from paper.

c. Merrimack Middle School

Chief Educational Officer Olsen introduced Middle School Assistant Principal Kathleen Hoppa to the Board.

Vice Chair Peters' questions for Merrimack Middle School.

100-2725-13-8519-21, Science Field Trips – How many buses does this expense include? Why did this increase by $400 but Athletics transportation (100-2724-24-8519-21) the same as last year?

Middle School Principal Caragher responded the budget covers six busses for science field trips. The athletic transportation is level funded.

Line items, mostly "supplies" increased by 10% generally. Have you seen this increase in all these areas or is this protection in case they increase by 10% given that inflation is 8%?

Middle School Principal Caragher responded certain items cost more than and others. The 10% increase, across the district, was a result of not knowing where inflation would impact budgets.

100-1410-20-8610-21, Co-Curricular Supplies/Awards – Are these supplies in addition to classroom supplies teachers use? What does it mean "other supplies" when supplies are already mentioned? What grants have been pursued that the school board asked all schools to see for co-curricular activities in last year's budget meetings?

Middle School Principal Caragher responded the middle school received a grant for the FIRST (Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) program.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell added the high school received a grant for the FIRST Robotics Team. There are not many grants available that support co-curricular activities.

100-1420-24-8610-21 – Could you explain how your uniform replacement cycle plan works?

Middle School Principal Caragher responded the replacement of team uniforms is systematic and logical. Age and wear and tear are factors.

Board Member Hardy's questions for Merrimack Middle School.

Board Member Hardy spoke to the inequitable funding between sports and co-curricular activities within the district. Mrs. Hardy hopes that will be address in future budgets.

Chair Rothhaus supports promoting the drama and arts programs.

Board Member Martin stated that most students do not participate in sports. Placing resources in drama, FIRST, etc. will help those programs grow and attract more participants.

Board Member Halter's questions for Merrimack Middle School.

What are the class sizes and teacher schedules like at the middle school?

Middle School Principal Caragher responded there are between 22 and 24 students per class. There are approximately 90 students in each team.

100.1113.13.8739.21 - What is the condition and age of the microscopes being replaced?

Middle School Principal Caragher responded the ability to find parts to repair broken microscopes is limited. Some microscopes are ten years old. The goal is to order replacement microphones regularly.

100.1207.41.8114.21, 100.1220.41.8112.21, 100.1255.25.8114.21 - I noticed that we spent much less than budgeted in 2021-22 on Title 1 tutors and para-educators. I'm assuming that it's because of difficulty staffing these positions. If there are other reasons please explain. Are we similarly understaffed this year, and what if any plans are we making to hire enough staff in 2023-24?

Middle School Principal Caragher responded that the middle school did not have a Title 1 tutor last year due to lack of applicants. There is a Title 1 tutor at the middle school this school year.

100.1410.20.8130.21, 100.1410.20.8610.21 – How are the new co-curricular programs going? What kinds of things are being offered, how many kids are participating? Are they new programs or existing programs taking advantage of the new funding? Did the amount appropriated last year adequately fund those programs? Was it too much?

Middle School Principal Caragher responded the clubs are student and staff driven. Examples of current clubs are animation club, quiz bowl, drama club, hiking, student council, middle school TV club, ski club, Merrimack Middle earth, arts programs and after school help.

I noticed that aside from things that I expected to cost more due to inflation (supplies, transportation, utilities, etc.) and the salaries noted above, that this budget was completely level funded, and in a lot of cases has been since 2021-22. This makes me wonder if there are lines that are over-funded, and do we have a plan for when the things that have been level funded for years start to cost more? Or is there a pattern/strategy in place already that I can't see because I only have three years to compare? Textbooks in particular.

Middle School Principal Caragher responded that if an account is over expended, other accounts will be reviewed to cover the overage. He noted the significant increase in the furniture budget was for cafeteria tables. That account was over expended last year.

Board Member Martin's questions for Merrimack Middle School.

MMS 8600, 100-3000-28-8611-21 - Clarification on what this line is for.

Middle School Principal Caragher responded the choral budget is shared with the band and instrumental budget.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Heather Robitaille of 45 Springfield Circle expressed her appreciation to everyone for a thoughtful review of the budget She is anxious to hear more about the master plan. She supports a performing arts center.

5. ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 7:50 p.m. Board Member Martin made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Hardy seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 5 – 0 – 0.

Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Town Hall – Memorial Room
January 17, 2023

Present: Chair Laurie Rothhaus, Vice-Chair Lori Peters, Board Member Jenna Hardy, Board Member Naomi Halter, and Board Member Ken Martin. Also present were Assistant Superintendent for Business Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Amy Doyle, and Chief Educational Officer Olsen.

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

2. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

3. BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

a. Student Services

Director of Student Services Heather Barker and Director of Student Wellness Fern Siden presented the student services budget.

Director of Student Services Barker reported a 3.5% increase in the 2023-2024 student services budget due to the increased costs for placements, contracted related services and the increased number of students being served. The pandemic led to an increased number of students being referred and difficulties with hiring of staff.

Chair Rothhaus's questions for the student services department.

8122-06 (SEL Salaries) – In the summer of 2022 we spent $21,720 on SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) summer programming. I would like to know how many students attended the K-12 programs. What was the goal of the program and did we do an evaluation of the program. I am interested in the results. Explain the increase of funds in this budget line.

Director of Student Services Barker responded the student services budget reflects an increase of two staff members for the summer programming to accommodate additional students next year. Last summer 32 students in grades K-8 participated in summer programming. Another 34 students received targeted transitional supports. All ESY (Extended School Year), Title 1, GET SET and 8.5 programs received push-in supports. The K-8 programming received positive feedback from parents and staff.

8324-06 (Parent Engagement) – Explain the increase in costs.

Director of Student Services Barker explained that the Promising Futures Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Exploration Grant ended. $5,000 was added to the budget to continue family engagement programs.

Director of Student Wellness Seiden hopes to continue to expand family engagement programming to align with family interests.

Vice Chair Peters' questions for the student services department.

Why is the psychology testing service budget doubling?

Director of Student Services Barker responded an increased in the number of referrals and number of students in special education needing triennial evaluations and/or psychology services. Nine hundred (900) hours of neuropsychology services with a contracted service provider were added to the high school budget line due to increased requests for outside neuropsychological evaluations. A contracted person will allow for fewer outside evaluations and a quicker turnaround time rather than waiting 12 to 24 months for an outside agency.

Director of Student Services Barker reported the current fourth grade class has a large number (30%) of students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) due to reading deficiencies.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Doyle explained the reason for two additional 5th grade teachers is to support these students next year in fifth grade.

Why is the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum budget doubling?

Director of Student Wellness Seiden responded an upgrade to the curriculum used in grades K-4 and the purchase of an SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) universal screening tool.

Board Member Hardy's questions for the student services department.

Page 1 - $60,000 for contracted Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) services. Can you provide specifics as to what this is? What types of contracted services?

Director of Student Wellness Seiden responded an increase in needed mental health prevention and early intervention supports at the high school. Examples include at-risk students, support for students with substance abuse needs that are interfering with education, supports for students in crisis or adventure-based counseling program.

Board Member Halter's questions for the student services department.

100.2213.41.8240.06, Specialized Staff Training - Why was the amount spent so high in 2021-22? Was that an anomaly, should we be budgeting more here?

Director of Student Services Barker responded the increase was an anomaly. Non-violent crisis intervention (CPI) licenses lapsed during the pandemic. This account will be used to re-train the trainers who will re-train staff to bring licenses up to date.

100.2140.41.8331.10, 100.2140.41.8331.20, 100.2140.41.8331.30, Testing - Elementary and middle schools used half or less of the budgeted amount in 2021-22. I am curious why, and if we are closer this year and expect to be next year as well? I am also curious why the amount requested for the high school is so much higher than last year? What sort of testing does this cover?

Director of Student Services Barker responded we did not underspend at the elementary and middle school and overspend at the high school. Because we were short staffed across the district, personnel were working at one level testing and supporting IEP teams at other levels. Previously we did not have people crossing grade span levels, so we had not encounter this. Encumbered funds from the high school line should have been moved to the elementary and middle school lines.

The testing consists of all IEP related evaluations such as new referrals, triennial evaluations, and consultation related to the review of outside evaluations.

100.1200.41.8562.30, Tuition - Will all of the 12th graders be done next year, or will some of them still need services until the age of 22?

Director of Student Services Barker responded a small number of students will continue in the 18 to 22-year-old programs. We have accounted for their services and programming in the budget.

100.1200.41.8563.30, Tuition - What does "Costs Submitted for Special Education Aid" mean?

Director of Student Services Barker responded the school district submits meticulous special education costs that exceed a mandated threshold per the State of NH. The State of NH returns a percentage of that money spent back to the district, formerly known as catastrophic aide.

This financial assistance for special education costs, the cost to the district for implementing the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) during the preceding school year must exceed 3.5 times the estimated state average expenditure per pupil.

100.2329.41.8810.06 - What associations and organizations are we members of?

Director of Student Services Barker responded Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), New Hampshire Association of Special Education Administrators (NHASEA), Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), New Hampshire School Administrators Association (NHSAA), Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), New Hampshire Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (NHASCD), and Global Schools Leadership Alliance (GSLA).

b. Merrimack High School

Chair Rothhaus's questions for Merrimack High School.

Last year you spoke of researching and implementing a 4 by 4 block schedule. Could you please update the board on this proposal? This would align with the school board goal of increasing graduation rates. It would also offer a savings to the school district.

Principal Steve Claire responded a scheduling team has been meeting monthly since the summer to create a proposed schedule.

Please be prepared to give board members a graph of the number of teachers we currently have in each discipline. Please highlight all required courses. Please be prepared to answer questions on current class sizes. Do we have classes running with less than 10 students? What are the classes? Do we have classes under 15 students? How many paraeducators do we currently have working at the high school?

Assistant Principal Zampieri responded the various department heads and the guidance department will review class enrollment numbers and determine what classes will be offered. Staff availability and certification are considerations. Student safety and the state requirements drive the number of students per class. Currently there is only one class with 30 students.

Explain the 504 Coordinator position at the high school. How many students have a 504? Do we work with the middle school to align the transition? Who writes and oversees the compliance of 504's.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Doyle responded currently the 504 coordinator is a contracted service position working with middle school and high school students. The 504 coordinator position is included in the proposed budget as a new position within the guidance department.

100-2723-07-8510-30 - How many students currently are enrolled in the Nashua North, Nashua South and Alvirne programs for the college technical programs. What do we presently do to make sure all students have this opportunity?

Principal Claire responded 10 students attend programs at Nashua High School North, 16 student attend programs at Nashua High School South and 31 students attend programs at Alvirne High School in Hudson. Students have an opportunity to visit the programs and submit an application for a program. Program participation is determined by the receiving school. The guidance department regularly promotes the various programs in private conversations with students.

Board Member Hardy suggested the vocational programs be shared with parents through the high school email distribution list.

Chair Rothhaus asked if the demand for participation in vocational programs was higher than the number of students accepted into programs.

Principal Claire responded yes.

100-1410-20-8610-31 - How much is for co-curricular supplies and who is responsible for this budget line?

Principal Claire responded Assistant Principal Hanlon, who was unable to attend the meeting, is responsible for the budget line. All requests were funded last year.

Sports-Athletics - Same questions and issues I raised last year regarding the baseball budget vs the softball budget. It's 50 years of Title IX. Why is baseball receiving $2,400 more than softball?

Principal Claire responded baseball has a higher budget because they must wear caps, per New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA). Softball does not have that requirement. There are three baseball teams compared to one or two softball teams.

Last year I was assured that all teams are treated fairly and equal. Why do we rent space for some programs and make other programs pay for pre-season use through fundraisers? Why is lacrosse always funded at $750 when soccer is at $3,000? The games are very similar.

Principal Claire responded all teams are treated fairly. Soccer balls are more expensive than lacrosse balls and are replaced more often. Space is rented for only those teams that cannot practice onsite or use a town facility. Bowling, swim, alpine ski, ice hockey and indoor track require rental space. Rental space for soccer is needed for home games only, not practice, during the months of August and September only in order to preserve the high school field.

Principal Claire will have a conversation with Athletic Director Mike Soucy regarding rental space needs for the lacrosse team.

100-1113-13-8641-31 - Explain how the district determines the need for new textbooks. Are these textbooks all online currently?

Assistant Principal Zampieri responded that there is no set rotation plan and online support is not available. Additional biology textbooks are needed; however, the current books are not available to purchase. The new textbooks will be a class set with online component.

Vice Chair Peters' questions for Merrimack High School.

Why are we purchasing so many hard copies of the English novels when the software has all the texts we would want?

Assistant Principal Zampieri responded the online program did not have all the novel titles required by the English department. It was decided to reduce the budget for the online program and use the savings to purchase lost books and purchase new contemporary novels.

Is there a regular uniform replacement schedule at the high school like there is at the middle school?

Principal Claire responded uniforms are replaced every 2-5 years. Replacement uniforms for football are the only uniforms in the budget. All other replacement uniforms are provided by the patrons.

Why is the Social Studies Field Trip budget significantly higher?

Assistant Principal Zampieri responded last year a U.S. History class offered a field trip to all students. The cost of that field trip was more than the budgeted amount. More students will participate in additional field trips next year.

Board Member Hardy's questions for Merrimack High School are.

Page 3, Athletics - I think I asked this last year, but help me understand again why Scoreboard and announcers are paid. Why are these not volunteer roles (as it is with soccer, for example)?

Principal Claire responded current scoreboards require technical training prior to operating.

What is the police detail for at football and basketball games and why is that cost so much higher for basketball than football (when it looks like it is the same number of games)?

Principal Claire responded that the police attend the events for safety. There are fewer football games than basketball games.

Page 17 - Co-curriculars (non-sports) at the high school receive $16,000. How is that broken up between all the various non-sports clubs/co-curriculars that run at MHS? (I would like a breakdown of how that money was actually expended last year, for example.)

Principal Claire responded that Assistant Principal Hanlon would have the answer to this question.

It was noted that students in the band program receive a penalty if they are absent from band to participate in a sports event that conflicts with a band event. All agreed that situation needs to be reviewed.

Principal Claire responded new equipment for the Little Theatre is being purchased this year with money from the high school improvement account.

Assistant Principal Zampieri stated Assistant Principal Hanlon is the administrator for co-curricular activities and Ms. Hanlon plans to ask the clubs what they need.

Vice Chair Peters stated a drama teacher does not fall within the fine arts department. She supports future conversations about what a fine arts department looks like.

Board Member Hardy spoke to the inequitable funding between sports and co-curricular activities within the district. Mrs. Hardy hopes that will be address in future budgets.

Board Member Halter's questions for Merrimack High School.

Equipment – Why are some classes purchasing new equipment and others are not (calculators, headphones, flash drives, etc.)?

Principal Claire responded that math and science departments asked for a class set of calculators.

Board Member Martin's questions for Merrimack High School.

MHS 8700, 100-1108-08-8739-31 - What equipment are you looking to replace in the weight room?

Principal Claire responded frayed cables in one of the weight machines. It is a safety issue.

Board Member Martin supports the purchase of new drums for health and safety issues.

c. Districtwide

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell explained that the district portion of the budget approximately $30 million dollars consists of contractual obligation, retirement incentive, testing and scoring, contracted services, support staff improvement, contracted services for software, advertising, audit, legal services, transportation, health insurance, New Hampshire retirement, dental insurance and debt service. He noted the bond for the middle school would be paid off next year.

Assistant Superintendent Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment explained how iReady would be used to meet the Board's goal to maximize student learning, identify and systematically fill learning gaps. iReady will replace STARR and other tools.

Vice Chair Peters' Districtwide questions.

How many teachers have resigned/retired since August 2021 and how many have been hired?

Chief Educational Office Olsen responded 55 teachers resigned or retired, 40 teachers were hired, 4 vacancies remain.

Board Member Halter's Districtwide questions.

100.5221.00.8930.00, Transfer to Food Service - What is this line item is for?

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded food service is a special revenue fund and self-supporting. Moneys received from the state are equal or greater than the food service expenditures. In the event of a food service deficit or there is a need to purchase equipment, money could be transferred through this account.

100.2318.01.8330.01, Legal - Why did we spend so much on legal services in 2021-22? I understand if it is not possible to answer this question in public session. Are we looking to be closer to the budgeted amount this year?

Chief Educational Officer Olsen responded legal services can vary greatly from year to year. Much of the costs are special education related.

100.2213.45.8240.00, 100.2213.45.8241.00, 100.2213.45.8242.00, 100.2213.45.8243.00, (Sup Staff Improvement, Program Prof Staff 3.1A, Workshops/Undergrad 3.1B, Graduate Studies 3.1C) - What are these spent on, and why were they so underspent in 2021-22? Are we looking to be closer to the budgeted amount this year?

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded the amounts are contractual.

100.2310.00.8430.00, School Board Contingency - What was this used for and why are we cutting it?

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell responded during covid years he put $100,000 in that account in the event funds were delayed getting to the district. He will not continue to use that line.

Board Member Martin's Districtwide questions.

Board Member Martin reported all his questions were answered.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS

There was no public comment on agenda items.

5. ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 8:45 p.m. Board Member Martin made a motion to adjourn. Board Member Halter seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 5 – 0 – 0.

Merrimack School Board Meeting
Merrimack School District, SAU #26
Merrimack Town Hall – Memorial Room
January 19, 2023

Present: Chair Laurie Rothhaus, Vice-Chair Lori Peters, Board Member Jenna Hardy, Board Member Naomi Halter, and Board Member Ken Martin. Also present were Assistant Superintendent for Business Matt Shevenell, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Amy Doyle, and Chief Educational Officer Olsen.

Not Present: Ms. Kaitlyn Vadney, Student Representative (Excused)

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Heather Robitaille, 45 Springfield Circle, addressed the Board and said she was whole-heartedly in agreement that SEL (Social & Emotional Learning) was a vital piece of the student's education and shared the desire for community synergy in Merrimack, however, she said a comment was made at the January 17, 2023, School Board meeting that she was disappointed in. She said the words used seemed to be in contrast with the goal of harmony.

Chair Rothhaus said that Mr. Shawn Croteau, a teacher at the elementary school had passed away and she requested that the School Board hold a moment of silence.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. Brief Discussion on State Budgeting

State Representative Rosemarie Rung addressed the Board and said that the state had a constitutional responsibility to provide an adequate education for its children. She said the state defined that in terms of money.

Representative Rung said adequacy was defined on a per-pupil basis which was $3,786.00. (if a school district had 1,000 pupils, they would receive 1,000 x $3,786.00. She further said four things were added to that number; how many students participated in the free and reduced lunch program which was multiplied by $1,893.00; how many students were in special education which was multiplied by $2,037.00, how many students that English was not their primary language which was multiplied by $740.00; and how many third graders who scored less than proficient in reading and that was multiplied by $740.00. She said the above numbers were what the state considered the total cost of an adequate education. Representative Rung stated that the state used "two primary buckets" to provide funding; the Adequacy Grant which came out of the state's Education Trust Fund, and SWEPT (Statewide Education Property Tax) which was a number that the state determined how much money was to be raised to support education, beyond the Adequacy Grant. She said they took that money and divided it by the total value of property in New Hampshire to come up with a tax rate. She added, however, that the state tax rate had nothing to do with the calculation of the Merrimack tax rate.

Representative Rung explained that in 2021 the state lowered the amount of SWEPT monies to $263,000 million which dropped the tax rate because they were collecting $100,000 million less than they had previously. She said Merrimack would see $2 million less in the SWEPT revenue. She said the state increased the Adequacy Grant to make up the difference.

Representative Rung said she was working with her colleagues on the Finance Committee to look at innovative ways to address the needs of local districts beyond the constraints of the formula.

4. BUDGET PRESENTATIONS

a. Work Session

Chair Rothhaus commented as the Board moved forward, the purpose of the School District's budget was to create and implement a financial plan that would support appropriate funding for all programs benefitting all students while balancing the Merrimack community's ability to pay its taxes.

MOTION: Vice-Chair Peters made a motion to reduce line item 100-4600-62-8451-08 – Repair Maintenance – Remove the girls' softball dugout in the amount of $54,553.00 to see it back in the budget the following year. Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Chair Rothhaus said she felt the Board should support the dugout. Vice-Chair Peters replied she supported it as well but there was a $775,000 debt payment left on the middle school that they would not have the following year. Board Member Martin said he agreed with Vice-Chair Peters.

The motion passed: 3 – 2 – 0. (Nay – Chair Rothhaus & Board Member Hardy)

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell proposed the following budget cuts:

1. $239,00 from various salary lines due to rehires.
2. $12,000 in Technology Infrastructure Improvement – Replace only half of the Cisco telephones.
3. $30,000 in Technology Infrastructure Improvement – Some computers were still viable.
4. $20,000 in Technology Infrastructure Improvement – Could do without 2 fewer servers.
5. $63,000 in Technology Infrastructure Improvement – Reduce the number of switches to seven.
6. $25,350 in Furniture Replacement – Reduce the number of replacement furniture.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell said the total proposed cuts (1 through 6 as listed above) including the proposed cut of $54,553.00 for the dugout was $443,903.00.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Shevenell commented that the proposed cuts would not compromise the education of the students or have a significant impact on the teachers. He also added that the proposed cuts would not be "kicking the can down the road."

MOTION: Board Member Martin made a motion to accept the cuts as proposed by the administration. Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 5 – 0 – 0.

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept the revised budget for the 2023 – 2024 school year in the amount of $88,329,636 and to provide it to the Budget Committee. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 5 – 0 – 0.

b. Warrant Article Discussion

ARTICLE 1: To elect all necessary School District officers for the ensuing year. (Vote by ballot.)

ARTICLE 2: Shall the Merrimack School Board be authorized to accept on half of the district, without further action by the voters, gifts, legacies, and devices of personal or real property which may become available to the district during the fiscal year.

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept Warrant Article 2 as presented. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 5 – 0 – 0.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the District approve the cost items included in the collective bargaining agreement reached between the School Board and the Merrimack Teachers Association which calls for the following net change in salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels over the amount paid in the prior fiscal year:

Year	Estimated Amount
2023 – 2024	$1,205,797
2024 – 2025	$1,272,070
2025 – 2026	$1,230,198

and further raise and appropriate the sum of One Million Two Hundred Five Thousand Seven Hundred Ninety-Seven Dollars ($1,205,797) 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?

MOTION: Vice-Chair Peters made a motion to accept Warrant Article 3 as presented. Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 5 – 0 – 0.

ARTICLE 4: 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?

MOTION: Chair Rothhaus made a motion to accept Warrant Article 4, as presented. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 5 – 0 – 0.

ARTICLE 5: Shall the district raise and appropriate a sum of $1,108,669 for the purpose of roof replacement at the James Mastricola Upper Elementary School?

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept Warrant Article 5, as presented. Board Member Martin seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 5 – 0 – 0.

ARTICLE 6: 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 $88,329,637, if not, the default budget was $87,167,947, which was the same as the previous years' budget, 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.

MOTION: Board Member Hardy made a motion to accept Warrant Article 6, as presented. Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 5 – 0 – 0.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

There were no comments from the public.

At approximately 8:22 p.m. Board Member Martin made a motion to adjourn. Chair Rothhaus seconded the motion.

The motion passed: 5 – 0 – 0.

1/30/2023

Policy Progress Chart

Policy Progress	1st Reading	2nd Review	3rd Review	Adoption	Comments
Pupil Safety and Bullying (JICK)	11/7/22	11/21/22		02/06/23	Updated from 2011
Availability and Dist. of Healthy Foods (EFA)	11/21/22	02/06/23			Replaces policy #9100 from 1979
Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect (JLF)	11/21/22	02/06/23			Updated current policy
Next in Line					
Student Use of Information Technology (JICL)					This is ready. Introduce with Policy EEAA
Service Animals (IMGA)					Update per A. Tamposi
School Choice: Access to Public School Programs by Nonpublic, Charter Schools or Home Educated Pupils (RSA 193:1-c) (JJJ)					8/31/22 new law
Non-Educational Surveys and Questionnaires (ILD)					Update per A. Tamposi
Procedural Safeguards Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability (ACE)					Update per A. Tamposi. Policy is vague.
Homework Policy (IKB) **protocols**					Protocol Needs Updating
Teacher Performance and Evaluation (GCO)					Priority Policy
Extended Learning Opportunities (IHBH)					Historical Society
Alternative Learning Plans (IHBI)					Priority Policy
Video Surveillance on School Property (EEAA)					Introduce with Policy JICL
Wellness Policy (JLCF)					Needs updating per NH Nutritional Department

Policy Progress	1st Reading	2nd Review	3rd Review	Adoption	Comments
Approved Policies					
Change of Class or School Assignment Best Interest and Manifest Hardship (JCA)	09/12/22	10/03/22	10/17/22	10/17/22	Complete
Student Records and Access (FERPA) (JRA)	09/12/22	10/17/22	11/7/22	11/7/22	Complete. Replaced Policies 3120 and 3150
Use of Physical Restraint/Seclusion (JKAA)	10/03/22	10/17/22	11/7/22	11/7/22	Updated from 2015
Public Participation at Board Meetings (BEDH)	10/03/22	10/17/22	11/7/22	11/7/22	Updated from 2007

Policy Progress	1st Reading	2nd Review	3rd Review	Adoption	Comments
Appendix Updates					
Suicide Prevention and Response (JLDBB)					December 2022

Priority Policies TO DO (10/27/22)

GBEF – School District Internet Access for Staff
GCO – Teacher Performance and Evaluation
IFA – Instructional Needs of Students with Different Talents
IHBAA – Evaluation Requirements for Children with Specific Learning Disabilities
IHBI – Alternative Learning Plans
IKE – Promotion and Retention of Students
IKFA – Early Graduation
ILBAA – High School Graduation Competencies
IMBC – Alternative Credit Options
IMBD – High School Credit for 7th and 8th Grade Advanced Course Work
JLC – School Health Services
JLCJ – Concussion and Head Injuries
JLCK – Special Physical Health Needs of Students

Other Policies to Update

- ACE – Procedural Safeguards Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability (Note: Alison Minutelli = vague, review, update)
- DIA - Fund Balance (Required)
- JICDD - Student Discipline Out of School Actions (Required)
- JICI - Weapons on School Property (Required)
- JICL – Student User of Information Technology (Introduce with EEAA)
- JLCF – Wellness Policy
- EEAA – Video Surveillance on School Property (Introduce with JICL)

Appendices/Procedures to Update

- BEDG-R - Access to Minutes and Public Records Procedures
- JLCG-R - Exclusion of Students from School for Illness Head Lice
- IHAM-R Health and Sex Education Exemption/Objectionable Course Material Opt Out Form (appendix)

PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION – BULLYING

Statement of Purpose, Intent and Scope

All pupils have the right to attend school and school-sponsored activities that are safe, secure and peaceful environments. Pupils should be protected from all forms of physical, emotional, and psychological bullying and cyber bullying.

Bullying in schools has historically included actions shown to be motivated by a pupil's actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry or ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical mental emotional or learning disability, gender, gender identity and expression, appearance, or other distinguishing personal characteristics, or based on association with any person identified in any of the above categories.

It is the intent of this policy to protect children from physical, emotional, and psychological harm by addressing bullying and cyberbullying of any kind in the district/schools, and to prevent the creation of a hostile educational environment. All pupils are protected under this policy, regardless of their legal status.

This policy applies to pupils, school district employees, school volunteers, coaches, and persons who have contact with pupils in connection with school classes, activities, and programs. However, only a pupil may be a perpetrator of bullying under this policy and RSA 193-F; allegations of bullying by staff shall be treated separately as a personnel matter. Bullying and cyberbullying outside of school activities or off school premises is subject to this policy as set forth herein.

I. Definitions (RSA 193-F:3)

1. Bullying. Bullying is hereby defined as a single significant incident or a pattern of incidents involving a written, verbal, or electronic communication, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another pupil which
    a. Physically harms a pupil or damages the pupil's property;
    b. Causes emotional distress to a pupil;
    c. Interferes with a pupil's educational opportunities;
    d. Creates a hostile educational environment; or
    e. Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

    Bullying shall also include actions motivated by an imbalance of power based on the pupil's actual or perceived personal characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs, or motivated by the pupil's association with another person and based on the other person's characteristics, behaviors, or beliefs.

2. Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is defined as any conduct defined as "bullying" in this policy that is undertaken through the use of electronic devices. For purposes of this policy, any references to the term bullying shall include cyberbullying.

PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION – BULLYING

3. Electronic Devices. Electronic devices include, but are not limited to, telephones, cellular phones, computers, ~~pagers~~, social media, electronic mail, instant messaging, text messaging, and websites.

4. Perpetrator. ~~Perpetrator~~ Means a pupil who engages in bullying or cyberbullying.

5. School Property. ~~School property~~ Means all real property and all physical plant and equipment used for school purposes, including public or private school buses or vans.

6. Victim. Victim means A pupil against whom bullying or cyberbullying has been perpetrated.

7. Parent. Any reference in this policy to "parent" shall include parents or legal guardians.

II. Bullying or Cyberbullying of a Pupil Prohibited (RSA 193-F:4, II(a))

The Board is committed to providing all pupils with a safe and secure school environment on school grounds or at school sponsored events. This policy is intended to comply with RSA 193-F. Conduct constituting bullying and/or cyberbullying of a pupil will not be tolerated and is hereby prohibited. All staff members are required to intervene when they witness bullying occurring on school grounds or at school sponsored events.

Further, in accordance with RSA 193-F:-4, the District reserves the right to address bullying and, if necessary, impose discipline for bullying that:

1. Occurs on, or is delivered to, school property or a school-sponsored activity or event on or off school property; or
2. Occurs off of school property or outside of a school-sponsored activity or event, if the conduct interferes with a pupil's education opportunities or substantially disrupts the orderly operations of the school or school-sponsored activity or event.

The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

III. Retaliation or False Accusations Prohibited (RSA 193-F:4, II(b))

False Reporting

A student found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused another of bullying may face discipline or other consequences, ranging from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion.

A school employee found to have wrongfully and intentionally accused a student of bullying shall face discipline or other consequences to be determined in accordance with applicable law, District policies, procedures, and collective bargaining agreements.

PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION – BULLYING

Reprisal or Retaliation

The District will discipline and take appropriate action against any student, teacher, school administrator, school volunteer, or other employee who retaliates against any person who makes a good faith report of alleged bullying or against any person who testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding or hearing relating to such bullying.

1. The consequences and appropriate remedial action for a student, teacher, school administrator or school volunteer who engages in reprisal or retaliation shall be determined by the Principal after consideration of the nature, severity and circumstances of the act, in accordance with law, Board policies and any applicable collective bargaining agreements.
2. Any student found to have engage in reprisal or retaliation in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to, and including, suspension and expulsion.
3. Any teacher or school administrator found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation in violation of this policy shall be subject to discipline up to, and including, termination of employment.
4. Any school volunteer found to have engaged in reprisal or retaliation in violation of this policy shall be subject to measures up to and including, exclusion from school grounds.

Process to Protect Pupils from Retaliation

If the alleged victim or any witness expresses to the Principal or other staff member that he/she believes he/she may be retaliated against, the Principal shall develop a process or plan to protect that student from possible retaliation.

Each process or plan may be developed on a case-by-case basis. Suggestions include, but are not limited to, re-arranging student class schedules to minimize their contact, stern warnings to alleged perpetrators, temporary removal of privileges, or other means necessary to protect against possible retaliation.

IV. Protection of All Pupils (RSA 193-F:4 II(c))

This policy shall apply to all pupils ~~and school-aged persons~~ on school district grounds and participating in school district functions, regardless of their status under the law (including whether or not such pupil ~~or school-aged person~~ is a student within the District).

V. Disciplinary Consequences for Violations of this Policy (RSA 193-F:4 II(d))

The District reserves the right to impose disciplinary measures against any student who commits an act of bullying, falsely accuses another student of bullying, or who retaliates against any student or witness who provides information about an act of bullying.

PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION – BULLYING

In addition, ~~to imposing discipline under such circumstances~~, where appropriate, the Board encourages the administration and the school district staff to seek alternatives to traditional discipline, including but not limited to, early intervention measures, alternative dispute resolution, conflict resolution, and other similar measures.

VI. Distribution and Notice of This Policy (RSA 193-F:4, IIe)

Staff and Volunteers

All staff will be provided with a copy of this policy annually. The Superintendent may determine the method of providing the policy (employee handbook, hard copy, etc.)

The Superintendent will ensure that all school employees and school volunteers receive annual training on bullying and related district policies. Annual training of staff and volunteers is required under RSA 193-F:5.

Students

All students will be provided with a copy of this policy annually. The Superintendent may determine the method of providing the policy (student handbook, mailing, hard copy, District website, etc.). Students will participate in an annual education program which will set out expectations for student behavior and emphasize an understanding of harassment, intimidation, and bullying of students, the District's prohibition of such conduct, and the reasons why the conduct is destructive, unacceptable, and will lead to discipline. Students shall also be informed of the consequences of bullying conduct toward their peers. This training will be provided in age-appropriate language.

The Superintendent, in consultation with staff, may incorporate student anti-bullying training and education into the District's curriculum, but shall not be required to do so.

Parents

All parents will be provided with a copy of this policy annually. The Superintendent may determine the method of providing the policy (parent handbook, mailing, District website, etc.). Parents will be informed of the program ~~and the program~~ and the means for students to report bullying acts toward them or other students. They will also be told that to help prevent bullying at school they should:

1. Encourage their children to report bullying when it occurs;
2. Take advantage of opportunities to talk to their children about bullying;
3. Inform the school immediately if they think their child is being bullied or is bullying other students;
4. Cooperate fully with school personnel in identifying and resolving incidents.

PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION – BULLYING

Additional Notice and School District Programs

The Board may, from time to time, host or schedule public forums in which it will address the antibullying policy, discuss bullying in the schools, and consult with a variety of individuals, including teacher, administrators, guidance counselors, school psychologists and other interested persons.

VII. Procedure for Reporting Bullying (RSA 193-F:4, II(f))

At each school, the Principal or designee shall be responsible for receiving complaints of alleged violations of this policy.

Student Reporting

1. Any student who believes he or she has been the victim of bullying should report the alleged acts immediately to the Principal. If the student is more comfortable reporting the alleged act to a person other than the Principal, the student may tell any school district employee or volunteer about the alleged bullying. That employee should then forward the report to the Principal.
2. The Principal may develop a system or method for receiving anonymous reports of bullying. Although students, parents, volunteers, and visitors may report anonymously, formal disciplinary action may not be based solely on an anonymous report. Independent verification of the anonymous report shall be necessary in order for any disciplinary action to be applied.
3. The administration may develop student reporting forms to assist students and staff in filing such reports. An investigation shall still proceed even if a student is reluctant to fill out the designated form and chooses not to do so.
4. Upon receipt of a report of bullying, the Principal shall commence an investigation consistent with the provisions of Section XI of this policy.

Staff Reporting

1. An important duty of the staff is to report acts or behavior that they witness that appears to constitute bullying.
2. All District employees and school volunteers shall encourage students to tell them about acts that may constitute bullying. For young students, staff members may provide direct assistance to the student.
3. Any school employee or school volunteer who witnesses, receives a report of, or has knowledge or belief that bullying may have occurred shall inform the Principal as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the school day.
4. Upon receipt of a report of bullying, the Principal shall commence an investigation consistent with the provisions of ~~Section XI of~~ this policy.

PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION – BULLYING

VIII. Procedure for Internal Reporting Requirements (RSA 193-F:4, II(g))

In order to satisfy the reporting requirements of RSA 193-F:6, the Principal or designee shall be responsible for completing all New Hampshire Department of Education forms and reporting documents of substantiated incidents of bullying. Said forms shall be completed within 10 school days of any substantiated incident. Upon completion of such form, the Principal or designee shall retain a copy and shall forward one copy to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall maintain said forms in a safe and secure location.

IX. Notifying Parents of Alleged Bullying (RSA 193-F-4, II(h))

The Principal shall report to the parents of a student who has been reported as a victim of bullying and to the parents of a student who has been reported as a perpetrator of bullying within 48 hours of receiving the report. Such notification may be made by telephone, writing or personal conference. The date, time, method, and location (if applicable) or such notification and communication shall be noted in the report. All notifications shall be consistent with the student privacy rights under the applicable provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

X. Waiver of Notification Requirement (RSA 193-F:4, II(i))

The Superintendent may, within a 48-hour time period, grant the Principal a waiver from the requirement that the parents of the alleged victim and the alleged perpetrator be notified of the filing of a report. A waiver may only be granted if the Superintendent deems such a waiver to be in the best interest of the victim or perpetrator. Any waiver granted shall be in writing. The granting of this waiver shall not negate the responsibility of the school to adhere to the remainder of this policy.

XI. Investigative Procedures (RSA 193-F:4, II(j))

1. Upon receipt of a report of bullying the Principal shall, within 5 school days, initiate an investigation into the alleged act. If the Principal is directly and personally involved with a complaint or is closely related to a part to the complaint, then the Superintendent shall direct another District employee to conduct the investigation.
2. The investigation may include documented interviews with the alleged victim, alleged perpetrator and any witnesses. All interviews shall be conducted privately, separately and shall be confidential. Each individual will be interviewed separately and at no time will be alleged victim and perpetrator be interviewed together during the investigation.
3. If the alleged bullying was in whole or in part cyberbullying, the Principal may ask students and/or parents to provide the District with printer copies of emails, text messages, website pages, or other similar electronic communications. Pursuant to RSA 189:70, any production of student communications must be voluntary.

PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION – BULLYING

4. ~~A maximum of 10 school days shall be the limit for the completion of the investigation procedural steps.~~ Factors the Principal or other investigator may consider during the course of the investigation, including but not limited to:

   - Description of incident, including the nature of the behavior;
   - How often the conduct occurred;
   - Whether there were past incidents or past continuing patterns of behavior;
   - The identity and number of individuals who participated in bullying behavior;
   - Whether the alleged victim felt or perceived an imbalance of power as a result of the reported incident; and
   - The date, time and method in which parents or legal guardians of all parties involved were contacted.

5. The Principal shall complete the investigation within 10 school days of receiving the initial report. If the Principal needs more than 10 school days to complete the investigation, the Superintendent may grant an extension of up to 7 school days. In the event such extension is granted, the Principal shall notify in writing all parents involved of the granting of the extension.
6. Whether a particular action or incident constitutes a violation of the policy shall require a determination based on all facts and surrounding circumstances and, if the report is found to be substantiated, the Principal shall ~~include~~ provide a written final report to the Superintendent, which will recommend remedial steps necessary to stop the bullying ~~and a written final report to the Principal.~~
7. Students who are found to have violated this policy may face discipline in accordance with other applicable Board policies, including Board Policy JICD, up to and including suspension or expulsion. Students facing discipline will be afforded all due process required by law.

XII. Response to Remediate Substantiated Instances of Bullying (RSA 193-F:4, II(k))

Consequences and appropriate remedial actions for a student or staff member who commits one or more acts of bullying or retaliation may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension or expulsion of students and dismissal from employment for staff members.

Consequences for a student who commits an act of bullying or retaliation shall be varied and graded according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student, and the student's history of problem behaviors and performance. Remedial measures shall be designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the problem, protect and provide support for the victim, and take corrective action for documented systematic problems related to bullying.

PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION – BULLYING

Examples of consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Admonishment
- Temporary removal from classroom
- Deprivation of privileges
- Classroom or administrative detention
- Referral to disciplinarian
- In-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Expulsion

Examples of remedial measures may include, but are not limited to:

- Restitution
- Mediation
- Peer support group
- Corrective instruction or other relevant learning experience
- Behavior assessment
- Student counseling
- Parent conferences

In support of this policy, the Board promotes preventative educational measures to create greater awareness of aggressive behavior, including bullying. The Board encourages the Superintendent to work collaboratively with all staff members to develop responses other than traditional discipline as a way to remediate substantiated instances of bullying.

XIII. Reporting of Substantiated Instances of Bullying (RSA 193-F4, II(l))

The Principal shall forward all substantiate reports of bullying to the Superintendent upon completion of the Principal's investigation.

XIV. Communication with Parents Upon Completion of Investigation (RSA 193-F:4, II(m))

1. Within two school days of completing an investigation, the Principal will notify the students involved in person of his/her findings and the result of the investigation.
2. The Principal will notify via telephone the parents of the alleged victim and alleged perpetrator of the results of the investigation. The Principal will also send a letter to the parents within 24 hours again notifying them of the results of the investigation.
3. If the parents request, the Principal shall schedule a meeting with them to further explain his/her findings and reasons for his/her actions.
4. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and other law concerning student privacy, the District will not disclose educational records of students, including the discipline and remedial action assigned to those students ~~and~~ to the parents of other students involved in a bullying incident.

PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION – BULLYING

XV. Appeal

1. The procedures under RSA 193:13, Ed 317, and District policies establish the due process and appeal rights for students disciplined for acts of bullying. See Policy JICD, Student Behavior, Conduct, Discipline and Due Process.
2. The School Board or its designee will inform parents of any appeal rights they may have to the New Hampshire State Board of Education.

XVI. School Officials (RSA 193-F:4, II(n))

The Superintendent of Schools is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented. The Superintendent may establish additional procedures to facilitate the implementation of this policy.

XVII. Capture of Audio Recordings on School Buses

Pursuant to RSA 570-A:2, notice is hereby given that the Board authorizes audio recordings to be made in conjunction with video recordings of the interior of school buses while students are being transported to and from school or school activities. The Superintendent shall ensure that there is a sign informing the occupants of school buses that such recordings are occurring. ~~Please also~~ See Policy EEAA, Video Surveillance on School Property.

XVII. Use of Video or Audio Recordings in Student Discipline Matters

The District reserves the right to use audio and/or video recording device on District property (including school buses) to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all staff, students and visitors. Placement and location of such devices will be established in accordance with the provision of Policy EEAA.

In the event an audio or video recording is used as part of a student discipline proceeding, such video may become part of a student's education record. The Superintendent is authorized to contact the District's attorney for a full legal opinion in the event of such an occurrence.

Legal References:

RSA 193-F:3, Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention Act
RSA 570-A:2, Capture of Audio Recordings on School Buses Allowed
NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04(a)(8), Student Harassment

1st Reading:	December 20, 2010	1st Reading:	November 7, 2022
2nd Review:	January 24, 2011	2nd Review:	November 21, 2022
3rd Review:	February 7, 2011	Revised:	February 6, 2023
Adoption:	February 28, 2011		

MERRIMACK SCHOOL DISTRICT MONTHLY ENROLLMENTS 2022-2023

January 3, 2023

Enrollment On

December 5, 2022	PRE	K	1	2	3	4	Total	5	6	Total	7	8	Total	9	10	11	12	Total	ODP	HSS	TOTALS
MES	40	76	80	69	78	80	423														423
RFS	53	70	90	73	80	91	457														457
TFS	43	103	98	96	104	100	544														544
MUES								248	249	497											497
MMS											278	271	549								549
MHS														279	261	277	292	1109			1109
PR-12 Total																					3579
Student Services ODP**																			20		20
Home Study (HSS)																				121	121
Total	**136**	**249**	**268**	**238**	**262**	**271**	**1424**	**248**	**249**	**497**	**278**	**271**	**549**	**279**	**261**	**277**	**292**	**1109**	**20**	**121**	**3720**

**Out-of-District Placement

MONTHLY ENROLLMENTS 2022-2023

Month	*PRE	K	1	2	3	4	Total	5	6	Total	7	8	Total	9	10	11	12	Total	SSP	HSS	TOTALS
September 12, 2022	129	248	268	239	266	272	1422	248	249	497	277	271	548	278	265	278	303	1124	19	116	3726
October 1, 2022	131	248	265	239	263	272	1418	245	249	494	276	269	545	277	265	279	297	1118	20	115	3710
October 3, 2022	131	248	265	239	263	272	1418	245	249	494	276	269	545	277	265	279	297	1118	20	116	3711
November 7, 2022	132	248	268	237	263	271	1419	246	249	495	277	269	546	277	264	279	294	1114	19	118	3711
December 5, 2022	135	248	269	238	262	271	1423	247	249	496	278	269	547	277	262	278	293	1110	20	119	3715
January 3, 2023	136	249	268	238	262	271	1424	248	249	497	278	271	549	279	261	277	292	1109	20	121	3720

BUS SUSPENSIONS FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

	MHS	MMS	JMUES	MES	RFS	TFS
Fighting						
Vandalism						
Disrespect/Disruption						
Unsafe Behavior			1			
Other						
TOTAL	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**