

Monadnock Regional School District (MRSD)
School Board Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting, Swanzey, NH

Members Present: Kristen Noonan, Winston Wright, Lisa Steadman, Colleen Toomey, Scott Peters, Betty Tatro, Cheryl McDaniel-Thomas, Michelle Connor, Eric Stanley, Karen Wheeler, Brian Bohannon, Nick Mosher and Dan LeClair.

Administration Present: L. Witte, Superintendent, J. Rathbun, Director of Curriculum and Student Assessment, C. Woods, Director of Student Services and J. Morin, Business Administrator.

Also Present: L. Aivaliotis, Recording Secretary

“We collaborate not just to teach, but also to engage and educate every student in our district in an environment that is challenging, caring and safe, while fostering life-long learning.”

1. **Call to Order at 7:00 PM:** S. Peters called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no public comments.
3. **CELEBRATE MRSD:** L. Witte reported the district held a Retirement and Career Award event on May 13, 2021. The event was held under the tent at the MRMHS. There were a few Board Members in attendance. It was a wonderful evening. Photos will be posted to the web page shortly. She congratulated the honored staff for their years of service to the district.
4. **MATTERS FOR INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION:**
 - a. **Operations/Superintendent’s Report:**
 - i. **Update on Return to In-Person Learning:** L. Witte reported the students returned to full in person learning on May 3, 2021. Today the students were dismissed early due to positive COVID cases. We are working with DHHS. The high school and the middle school will shift to full remote in order for us to identify and sort things out. We will remain full remote for 48 hours which we are able to do without asking the State. There was a segment on the 6:00 PM News. They said it was an outbreak. DHHS has not identified it as an outbreak. She was surprised by the report. We are planning on returning on Friday. She mentioned that all of the cases were reported by families or individuals. It was asked about the number of staff not vaccinated. L. Witte reported 10% of all staff have not been vaccinated. She also explained the Prom was held this past Saturday and there were increased cases prior to the Prom. The students

will continue to wear masks. There are also home test kits available. DHHS will accept verbal reports by phone, update tracker and trigger contact tracing. With the home kits the parent will be asked to report and send the test to DHHS, a negative test will require a lab verification.

L. Witte explained the NHIAA stated masks are not necessary in athletics. She received that information and had also contacted ConVal. The following Board motion was requested:

Athletics: Masks will not be required on the field of play as it relates to athletics. When teams travel to other Districts for competition all athletes and staff will follow the guidelines of the hosting fields related to masking. When teams participate in NHIAA related playoff tournaments all athletes and staff will follow the guidelines of the tournament related to masking. Daily Operations: The use of masks outdoors will be limited to occasions when physical distancing (3 feet) cannot be maintained. The use of masks indoors and on buses will continue as currently implemented. If large outdoor events present challenges with physical distancing, the District may continue to require the use of masks.

K. Wheeler arrives. The Board discussed the motion request. **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to update the current mask policy (Daily Operations) with adjustments proposed by the administration. **SECOND:** E. Stanley **DISCUSSION:** N. Mosher mentioned parents understood masks were being required and they were comfortable with sending their students back to school. NHIAA is not a specialist on disease. K. Wheeler agrees with N. Mosher. We made a motion to make parents feel trusting. C. McDaniel-Thomas is not in favor of this motion. B. Tatro is not in favor of the motion. She asked if they are required to wear masks in the dugout. L. Witte explained they are wearing masks during athletics. K. Wheeler said there are a lot of gray areas with reducing the restrictions. It is stressful for those who want to wear them. N. Mosher said MRMHS is full remote with masks. He fails to see the logic. K. Noonan would suggest a friendly amendment and remove the first bullet. N. Mosher would agree. **VOTE on Daily Operations:** K. Noonan-yes, W. Wright-yes, M. Connor-no, N. Mosher-no, B. Bohannon-no, D. LeClair-yes, C. McDaniel-Thomas-no, E. Stanley-yes, C. Toomey-yes, S. Peters-yes, L. Steadman-yes, K. Wheeler-no. 7.591/0/0/5.409 **Motion passes.** **MOTION:** L. Steadman **MOVED** to update the current mask policy (Athletics) with the adjustments proposed by the administration. **SECOND:** E. Stanley **DISCUSSION:** K. Wheeler agrees with N. Mosher all of the cases are going up. These motions are not good for students, staff or parents. D. LeClair said we have been following the NHIAA on the baseball field. It is hard to breathe with masks. There is no need for masks with the fresh air. The transmission rate is very low. L. Witte said some districts are different when we have other teams they are reluctant to follow the rules. B. Tatro said we could be putting our staff at risk. L. Steadman said this motion pertains to the field of play. Other schools do not require masks. We do not have the advantage on the field of play. L. Witte explained we are coming up to the end of the season. K. Wheeler said we voted to require masks. We have 75 kids being quarantined and 7 cases. L. Witte said athletics are suspended during quarantine. **VOTE:** K. Noonan-no, W. Wright-no, K. Wheeler-no, M. Connor-no, N. Mosher-no, B. Bohannon-no, D. LeClair-yes, C. McDaniel-Thomas-no, E. Stanley-yes, B. Tatro-no, C. Toomey-no, S. Peters-yes, L. Steadman-yes. 4.239/8.761/0/0. **Motion fails.**

ii. Update on Students Continuing w/Remote Learning: L. Witte reported there is only remote learning on Wednesday and Thursday due to the COVID cases. As of May 3, 2021 the number of remote and full return learning are the same. K. Noonan asked how it is working with the remote students and the full return. J. Rathbun said there is no report and things are moving smoothly. Great teachers have stepped forward to help.

iii. MRMHS Report Cards: J. Rathbun presented a sample report card the teachers, administration and leadership have been working on. They worked on how to make a better report card for parents and students. The report card will report by grade and areas of competency. The benefit of the report card is to give a lot of information. They are very excited about this. K. Noonan said it was fantastic. She asked J. Rathbun to thank the teachers and staff for this. N. Mosher said he was a fan of this report card. C. McDaniel-Thomas said it looks great. W Wright said it was an excellent job. J. Rathbun said the goal is to have this in place in the Fall. This will align with the State assessment.

iv. 2021/22 Sports/EC Opportunities for Class of 2021: S. Peters would like to ask the administration if due to the fact the seniors missed a year of Extra-curricular activities if they might be allowed to come back after graduation and participate. L. Witte said this had not been discussed with L. Spencer. There are no athletic opportunities and she would have to reach out to the advisors. S. Peters would like to see a recommendation from the administration. L. Witte said they could be volunteers and would need a background check. She will check with L. Spencer.

v. Graduation Planning: L. Witte reported graduation is set for June 5, 2021 at 10:00 AM. School Board Members are welcome, please RSVP. There are 6 family tickets this year with a similar set up as last year. Families will sit together. E. Stanley said he has received emails from students about changing the date of graduation. L. Witte explained that L. Spencer met with some students. She also said there are emails on the opposing side. The date has been published. E. Stanley explained there are sporting events going on and some students need to make a choice. Have graduation on Friday. It was explained in previous years the NHIAA has changed the date for baseball games. S. Peters asked if we could petition the NHIAA. L. Witte said it would be L. Spencer who would reach out. B. Tatro suggested taping the speech for graduation and participating in the athletic competition. S. Peters said that is a great idea but would be an administration question. L. Witte said we could look ahead to the future. S. Peters will put the school calendar on a future meeting agenda. L. Witte agreed.

vi. Program Assurance: L. Witte shared the Program Assurances documents for all of the Title Grants with the Board. It needs to be signed and submitted. Sharing the documents is a requirement. We are obligated and required under the federal grants. L. Witte also let the Board know about the General Assurances that are submitted to a single audit and bookkeeping. She is informing the Board.

b. Policies for First Read:

i. BDA-R-update:

ii. IFE-retire:

iii. IFC-retire:

iv. IGAF, IHAM-recode IGAF to IHAM

v. IFD, IGD-recode IFD to IGD

vi. IGAF, IHAE-recode IGAF to IHAE: K. Noonan reported the committee

did review quite a few unnecessary policies and there are 4 policies the committee referred to the administration. Any questions email K. Noonan prior to the next meeting.

5. MATTERS THAT REQUIRE BOARD ACTION:

a. May 4, 2021 Minutes: MOTION: W. Wright **MOVED** to approve the May 4, 2021 School Board Meeting Minutes and Non-Public Meeting Minutes as presented. **SECOND:** K. Wheeler **VOTE:** 11.665/0/1.335/0. **Motion passes.**

b. Manifest: MOTION: B. Bohannon **MOVED** to approve the manifest in the amount of \$1,141,357.93. **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas. **VOTE:** 13/0/0/0. **Motion passes.**

c. Motion Regarding Teaching on Race, Religion, Politics, or Sexual Orientation: S. Peters explained D. LeClair had submitted a motion to the Board regarding race, religion, politics or sexual orientation. L. Witte explained if there are issues that are inappropriate we need to address them. We encourage students to report to the principals. S. Peters asked if we have policies that address this. He said they should be covered in the policy book or there should be legislation. L. Steadman said legislation wanted to keep teachers left or right, unbiased in the classroom. **MOTION:** D. LeClair **MOVED**

Motion #1: No employee in the Monadnock School District will teach any of the following that instills any form of race, gender, sex stereotyping including the concepts that:

- a. one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex;
- b. an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously;
- c. an individual should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment solely or partly because of his or her race or sex;
- d. members of one race or sex cannot and should not attempt to treat others without respect to race or sex;
- e. an individual's moral character is necessarily determined by his or her race or sex;
- f. an individual, by virtue of his or her race or sex, bears responsibility for actions committed in the past by other members of the same race or sex;
- g. any individual should feel discomfort, guilt, anguish, or any other form of psychological distress on account of his or her race or sex; or
- h. meritocracy or traits such as a hard work ethic are racist or sexist, or were created by a particular race to oppress another race: **SECOND:** C. McDaniel-Thomas.

DISCUSSION: D. LeClair has had conversations with parents and students. A student had an assignment but wanted to keep happy with the teacher. The student was afraid to speak out or give an opinion. Students learn at a younger age to respect the teachers. L. Witte said the district has several policies to voice their concerns. C. McDaniel-Thomas said she is not against this motion but sending it to policy is the right thing to do. M. Connor said the motion is lacking some of the points. L. Witte explained she has not heard any of these issues. B. Bohannon said the Policy Committee should review this. It is not appropriate now. **MOTION:** B. Bohannon **MOVED** to amend the motion #1 and refer it to the Policy Committee. **SECOND:** K. Wheeler **DISCUSSION:** D. LeClair asked about the process for the policies being referred to the Policy Committee. K. Noonan explained the Policy Committee is working on required by law policies, bulletin updates and then referrals from the School Board Members. She explained this will definitely not be looked at in time for the next meeting, maybe 1 or 2 months. D. LeClair feels that this is important and it needs to be addressed. B. Tatro said the Policy Committee should have a chance to review to see if there are duplicates. **VOTE on the amended motion:** 10.757/1.122/1.122/0. **Motion passes.**

MOTION: D. LeClair **MOVED** to support **Motion #2** Teachers or staff will not discriminate against a student on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or political ideology. Assignments and curriculum needs to be geared towards all arguments for and against a subject. Teachers, support staff and administration need to keep their personal opinions about curriculum, (current areas of study) to themselves and focus on the sources that a student used to retrieve their information. Teachers will give out examples of positive and negative arguments to all topic assignments. A teacher cannot grade on their personal belief on what is right or wrong, but solely on the facts provided by the student. Encourage sharing opinions for and against all topics without the fear of being ridiculed. Teachers or staff will never influence students by informing them of what their political ideology is. **SECOND:** S. Peters

DISCUSSION: N. Mosher said there are elements that he is deeply in favor of and others he is against. He could support certain ones but not as a whole. D. LeClair understands what N. Mosher is saying. K. Noonan said she feels parts of Motion #2 are in opposition. S. Peters said it is a very challenging motion. It was explained we do not vote on a motion the same night it is presented. K. Noonan said the paragraph has 4 different policies in it. **MOTION:** K. Wheeler **MOVED** to refer Dan's Motion #2 to the Policy Committee. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **DISCUSSION:** S. Peters asked for K. Noonan to invite D. LeClair to the discussion. **VOTE on the amended motion:** 11.665/0/1.335/0. **Motion passes.**

d. Budget Transfers: J. Morin presented two budget transfers requested by L. Spencer. The first transfer is in the amount of \$25,000.00 from the Teacher Substitute line to Summer School Salaries line. The second transfer is in three amounts: \$26,500.00 from Health Insurance, \$4,000.00 from FICA and \$9,800.00 from Teacher Retirement all from Regular

Instruction to Social Worker benefits. **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve the budget transfers as presented by the Administration. **SECOND:** N. Mosher **VOTE:** 11.879/0/0/1.122. **Motion passes. (B. Bohannon missing from vote)**

e. **2021/22 Community Relations:** The 2021-2022 CRC Charter was presented to the Board. **MOTION:** C. McDaniel-Thomas **MOVED** to approve the 2021-2022 CRC Charter as presented. **SECOND:** D. LeClair. **VOTE:** 10.544/0/0/2.456. **Motion passes. (E. Stanley and B. Bohannon missing from vote)**

f. **2021/22 Extracurricular Charter & Goals:** E. Stanley presented the renewed ECC Charter to the Board and the 2021/22 ECC Goal: The Extracurricular Committee will study the current Extracurricular programs at the MRSD and will identify ways to increase student participation in either clubs, activities or athletics. **MOTION:** E. Stanley **MOVED** to renew the Extracurricular Charter and approve the proposed Extracurricular Goal for 2021/22 as presented. **SECOND:** K. Noonan. **DISCUSSION:** E. Stanley explained the committee was afraid there is a lack of participation. The main goal is to increase participation. The spreadsheet shows a large number of students participating and clubs but are they all active. **VOTE:** 11.665/0/0/1.335. **Motion passes.**

g. **2021/22 Full Board Goals:** The Board reviewed the 2021/22 Board Goals. The first goal is to develop the elementary school renovation plan by completing milestones, the second goal is to host listening sessions for parents and the general public and goal three is to examine the progress quarterly in specific grades in the areas of Math and ELA. **MOTION:** S. Peters **MOVED** to approve the Board Goals developed at the May 18, 2021 Board Meeting. **SECOND:** B. Bohannon **VOTE:** 12.787/0/0/.213. **Motion passes.**

S. Peters explained K. Barker will be attending the Education/Technology Committee Meeting to revisit the timeline.

h. **2021/22 Superintendent Goals:** L. Witte will be presenting a draft of Superintendent Goals at the next Board Meeting.

6. SETTING MEETING'S AGENDA:

- a. **Calendar for graduation**
- b. **Administration Recommendation for Seniors**
- c. **Superintendent's Goals**

7. **Public Comments:** K. Noonan reported there were a few people in the District who were nominated and won the title of Real Heros, Superintendent Witte and Wendy Chamberlain. She said they were well deserving individuals. She thanked both of them.

Harrison Ryan, a Senior at MRMHS had emailed the administration, Superintendent and S. Peters and asked them to change the time of graduation. He did not get a response from his emails. Some of the Seniors are in the Meet of Champions as well as baseball and softball tournaments. He is frustrated. He said it is unfair to have to make a choice. S. Peters thanked Harrison for his comments. *N. Mosher leaves.*

8. 9:18 PM Non-Public Session Under RSA 91-A:3-II (b): MOTION: B. Tatro **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3-II (c): Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely adversely affect the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. **SECOND:** K.Wheeler. **VOTE:** 12.787/0/0/.213. **Motion passes.** *B. Bohannon leaves the meeting.*

9. 9:26 PM Non-Public Session Under RSA 91-A:3-II (b): MOTION: K. Noonan **MOVED** to enter into Non-Public Session under RSA 91-A:3-II (b): The hiring of any person as a public employee. **SECOND:** L. Steadman **VOTE:** 11.672/0/0/1.328. **Motion passes.**

10. ADJOURNMENT: MOTION: M. Connor **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 PM. **SECOND:** K. Wheeler **VOTE:** 11.672/0/0/1.328. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted,

Laura L. Aivaliotis
Recording Secretary

VOTING KEY: Yes/No/Abstain/Absent