

APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT #51
PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD**

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
September 2, 2021
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Adam Gauthier, Chairperson
Justin Clough, Vice Chairperson
Jessica Drouin
Molly Goggin
Diane Rider (via Zoom)

Others Present: Bryan Lane, Interim Superintendent
Jessica Bickford, Director of Student Services
Derek Hamilton, PMHS Principal
Kathy LeMay, PES Assistant Principal
Michael Wylie, PES Principal
Members of the Public (in person and via Zoom)

Chairperson Gauthier opened the meeting at 5:32 p.m.

II. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Reopening Plan (Ms. Goggin)
- Curriculum Review (Ms. Rider)
- Hiring (Mr. Lane)

III. ACTION ON AMENDED AGENDA

On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Goggin, the Board was polled and voted unanimously to approve the agenda as amended (Mr. Clough, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Ms. Goggin, yes; Ms. Rider, yes).

IV. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Ms. Goggin and seconded by Mr. Clough to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2021 meeting. Changes made include: page seven, paragraph four, change “Googin” to “Goggin” and on page seven, paragraph five change “Gautheir” to “Gauthier”. The Board was polled and voted unanimously to approve the minutes as amended (Mr. Clough, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Ms. Goggin, yes; Ms. Rider, yes).

V. PUBLIC INPUT - None.

VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Matthew Swenson was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Gauthier reported from communication with Matthew the recent activity of the Site Council.

VII. PES PRINCIPAL

A. New Hires

Mr. Wiley provided the Board with a list of newly hired individuals including Christine Marks as Kindergarten teacher, Lynn Tiede as literacy interventionist, and Erin Fortier as secretary.

B. First Week Successes

Mr. Wiley provided the Board with a synopsis of opening days including an improved arrival and dismissal plan and the Wednesday morning welcome. Staff and students are settling in, according to Mr. Wiley.

C. Calendar of Upcoming Events

Mr. Wiley noted that professional development providers, Mike Anderson and Kathy Collins, would be at PES on September 9, 10, 20, 21, 2021. PES will celebrate International Dot Day on September 15, 2021.

D. PES Images

Mr. Wiley offered pictures of students and their work.

VIII. PMHS PRINCIPAL

A. Opening Days

Mr. Hamilton provided the board with information relative to the opening days of school including extended advisory blocks to address logistics and time for team and community building activities. School-wide assemblies were held to

introduce new staff members and for advisory groups to present their representation of the PMHS slogan for the school year - *Together We Achieve*.

B. Staffing Update

According to Mr. Hamilton, Martha Carnes has been hired as the new science teacher and Laurilee Hurley has been hired as the new 11/12 special education teacher. Open positions include the middle high school guidance coordinator and a middle school paraprofessional.

C. Staff Workshop Days and Professional Development

Mr. Hamilton shared an agenda from the staff workshop days on August 25 and 26, 2021. He informed the Board that the professional development block focused on emergency management procedures and next Wednesday will focus on behavior management procedures and school district policies.

Mr. Gauthier asked if the sixth grade was part of PES or PMHS, according to the NH Department of Education. Mr. Hamilton said that this is still unclear. Mr. Gauthier asked if the sixth graders were able to take the in-town bus. Discussion ensued regarding the logistics and transportation requirements. Mr. Hamilton stated that he is following Board policy and will often take individual circumstances into consideration.

IX. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES - No report.

X. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. Opening of School

Mr. Lane thanked the administration for their work to open schools, including the Open House event. He stated the events were well organized and well attended.

Mr. Lane addressed the faculty on their first day back in school.

B. SAU Staff

Mr. Lane stated that Sheila Dupere is no longer available and her replacement, Sara Zinn, will begin her duties on September 7, 2021. Sally Blanchette officially ended her duties on August 30, 2021, but has offered to come back to work with Dawn Lemieux to help when needed.

C. Hiring Update

Mr. Lane provided the Board with the resumes of people hired over the past few weeks including Erin Fortier as PES secretary, Christine Marks as Kindergarten

teacher, Martha Carnes as high school science teacher, Laurilee Hurley as PMHS Flex Program supervisor, Lynne Tiede as Title I literacy interventionist, and Erika Hines as PES Flex Program supervisor.

D. Negotiations

Mr. Lane provided the Board with a copy of the memo he has sent inviting the Education Association of Pittsfield to begin negotiating.

E. COVID-19 Update

Mr. Lane provided the Board with the *State of New Hampshire Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) School & Childcare Toolkit*. He explained the protocols that will be followed when there are incidents of Covid-19 identified. Mr. Lane will work with the administration and the school nurses when there are incidents identified.

Mr. Lane admitted that he had made a mistake in following the Pittsfield School District Reopening Plan but changed his decision and explained the mistake to the parents impacted. Ms. Goggin thanked Mr. Lane for his correction. She asked for clarification of the plan relative to students who are exposed to Covid-19, which was provided by Mr. Lane. Ms. Goggin questioned the possibility of requiring masks when there is a case of a student who is self-monitoring after exposure. Mr. Lane stated that he will engage in a discussion with the administration and school nurses and make recommendations at the next Board meeting. Mr. Clough stated that flexibility is warranted if conditions change. Ms. Goggin stated that a decision-making matrix is helpful to the people who are making the decisions on a day-to-day basis. Mr. Clough suggested placing a link to the *State of New Hampshire Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) School & Childcare Toolkit* on the district's website. Ms. Goggin suggested clear communication with families about a non-family contact incident.

Mr. Lane commended the maintenance staff, stating that they have done a tremendous job of making sure the buildings were clean and ready for the opening day.

F. Legislative Update

Mr. Lane provided the Board with a 2021 Legislative Update from the Soule, Leslie, Kidder, Sayward & Loughman group.

XI. SCHOOL BOARD

A. Curriculum

Ms. Rider stated that some districts have committees to review curriculum. She suggested that the Board form a committee to review curriculum within the district. Mr. Lane explained that typically there is a committee within the district that does a cyclical review of curriculum from preschool through grade twelve. He stated that usually recommendations come from the committee regarding curriculum to the Board for their approval. He pointed out that there is not a curriculum coordinator in the district. Mr. Lane also stated that the cost of changing curriculum has a potential financial impact, which is a good reason to review in a cycle, rather than all at once.

Ms. Rider asked for an explanation of past practice, which Mr. Hamilton provided. He explained that in the past work has been done to articulate curriculum, especially with the requirement of competencies. Ms. LeMay stated that when school-wide programs have been used as curriculum, they have been approved by the Board. Ms. Rider questioned the process of purchasing curriculum materials such as textbooks or online media. She suggested a Board member being on curriculum committees in the district. Ms. Goggin suggested that a process and cycle timeline be prepared by the Board. Discussion ensued regarding the level of overview the Board has over curriculum, given student centered learning and universal design for learning. Ms. Rider stated her opinion on how curriculum articulation relates to test scores and student proficiency. Mr. Gauthier suggested Mr. Lane be asked to begin the process by having a discussion with the administration.

B. Critical Race Theory

Mr. Gauthier stated that a citizen asked for Critical Race Theory to be added to the agenda for Board discussion. Mr. Lane began by explaining some fundamentals of Critical Race Theory. He explained the ramifications if a teacher were to project their personal opinions on students and the policies already in place that protect the rights of parents to object to books or other materials.

Mr. Gauthier asked the Board if the citizen requesting the topic to be discussed be heard. There was agreement and Clayton Wood explained his opinion regarding Critical Race Theory. Mr. Wood stated that he believes parents should be heard relative to what curriculum is taught and what materials are used to teach it.

Mr. Clough stated that he would like a clearer understanding of what the problem is in Pittsfield, specifically. He is willing to investigate if there is a specific issue in this community.

Ms. Rider stated that she appreciated Mr. Lane's comments and does not have any evidence that there is a specific problem in Pittsfield. However, she went on to explain the impact that has been felt across the country. Ms. Rider raised the issue of the 1619 Project and wondered if Mr. Hamilton asks social studies teacher applicants about their philosophy regarding it.

Ms. Goggin stated that she has participated in Critical Race Theory professional development. She stated that she thought the concern was more about the risk of utilizing divisive material within a teacher's content. She explained that the issue is about legal requirements relative to protected classes and comes from a recently passed law. Ms. Goggin suggested providing the district with professional development regarding Critical Race Theory to protect teachers and to inform the community.

Mr. Wood stated that he is upset that the curriculum being taught is not understood by parents of the students. Discussion ensued regarding the curriculum and Critical Race Theory. It was agreed that these are two separate conversations in which the Board should continue to engage. Mr. Wood stated that he has no evidence that there is a specific problem in Pittsfield but after hearing what is happening in other communities, he is concerned that there may be.

Mr. Lane explained that a new law has been passed requiring a *Civics Competency Assessment*.

Anne Marie Castle stated that she does not think it is appropriate to ask a teacher candidate what their belief is regarding Critical Race Theory; it is in violation of their rights. Discussion ensued regarding the task of teachers to teach curriculum, regardless of their personal beliefs.

Mr. Lane stated that he will contact the district's attorney for suggestions on training.

C. Additional Adequacy Funding

Mr. Lane shared the draft of the PowerPoint he has developed for the Public Hearing scheduled for September 9, 2021. The Department of Education estimates that \$239,527 of the funds will be available revenue for the 2022-23 school year under current law. It is unclear if the remaining \$119,169 would be available as revenue in the 2022-23 school year. Mr. Lane reviewed the administration's recommendation for proposed long-term expenditures including a library media specialist at PES, special education teacher at PMHS, administrative assistant for PMHS, reinstating a salary increase for four administrators that had been eliminated with the budget reductions, reinstated salary increases for nine full-year support staff, and district-wide technology equipment (six SMART boards, 20 laptop computers, replacement switches for connectivity and new computers and desk for the business office at the SAU).

Mr. Gauthier asked Robert Schiferly if he had any input. Mr. Schiferly stated that he was impressed with the draft and that it had answered the questions he had.

Ms. Goggin clarified and asked that it be reiterated that the requests are items that were cut from the budget, rather than new expenditure requests. Mr. Gauthier asked the administration for information about the replacement cycle for technology, which Mr. Lane agreed to investigate.

Mr. Lane asked Board members to provide him with any input they might have relative to the PowerPoint. Mr. Schiferly invited Mr. Lane to attend the meeting of the Budget Committee on September 8, 2021.

XII. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Budget Committee Representative - Mr. Clough
- B. Drake Field and Facilities - Mr. Gauthier
- C. Negotiating Team - Ms. Goggin and Mr. Gauthier
- D. Foss Family Scholarship - Ms. Drouin

XIII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, September 16, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School Media Center.

XIV. PUBLIC INPUT (Second Session)

Jodi Cunningham asked for information about contact tracing, which Mr. Lane agreed to provide.

XV. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

At 7:30 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Goggin to enter into a non-public session under the authority of RSA 91-A:3 (c) to discuss a student issue and a staff issue. The Board was polled and voted unanimously to enter into a non-public session (Mr. Clough, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Ms. Goggin, yes; Ms. Rider, yes).

At 8:15 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Goggin to exit from a non-public session. The Board was polled and voted unanimously to exit the non-public session (Mr. Clough, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Ms. Goggin, yes; Ms. Rider, yes).

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Goggin, the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Gray Chassie
Recording Secretary