

APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

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

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
April 15, 2021
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Adam Gauthier, Chairperson
Justin Clough, Vice Chairperson
Bea Douglas
Jessica Drouin (via Zoom)
Ted Mitchell (via Zoom)

Others Present: John Graziano, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Jessica Bickford, Director of Student Services
Melissa Brown, PMHS Assistant Principal
Derek Hamilton, PMHS Principal
Danielle Harvey, PES Principal
Kathy LeMay, PES Assistant Principal
Members of the Public (some via Zoom)

Chairperson Gauthier opened the meeting at 5:31 p.m.

II. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items was added to the agenda:

- School Board JBAB (Mr. Hamilton)

III. ACTION ON AMENDED AGENDA

On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as amended.

IV. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Clough to approve the minutes of the public meeting on April 1, 2021. Changes include: On page one, remove “via Zoom” from Ms. Bickford’s name and add it to Ms. Brown’s name; on page ten, first paragraph, change to “Nathan Vincent”; on page ten, paragraph four, change to “2020”; on page eleven, last paragraph, change to “Mr. Mitchell” and “Mr. Clough”. The motion was passed to approve the minutes as amended with Mr. Clough, Ms. Douglas, Mr. Gauthier, and Mr. Mitchell voting affirmatively and Ms. Drouin abstaining from the vote.

A motion was made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Clough to approve the minutes of the non-public session on April 1, 2021. Change spelling to “Ms. Douglas”. The motion passed to approve the minutes as amended with Mr. Clough, Ms. Douglas, Mr. Gauthier, and Mr. Mitchell voting affirmatively and Ms. Drouin abstaining from the vote.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

Scott Jackson stated he was curious about outside sports and suggested the Board consider allowing the students to play without masks. Mr. Gauthier stated that it is a New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) requirement for students to wear masks. Mr. Jackson stated his appreciation for the Board keeping up with the guidelines.

John Christakos stated he is on the Capital Improvement Committee and is interested in learning about the school’s capital improvement projects.

VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Hamilton stated that the Site Council is considering a change in how students are elected to be on Site Council. They are considering moving to some positions that represent classes and some at-large members. They are in the process of discussing these changes and hope decisions are made before the end of the school year.

VII. PES PRINCIPAL

A. Attendance

According to Ms. LeMay, letters have been sent to parents of students determined to be chronically absent.

B. Grants

Ms. LeMay distributed documents from the New Hampshire Department of Education that were used to gather information for the presentation made at the last meeting. She provided clarification on using money from grants for positions.

C. New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Report

Ms. Harvey asked the Board for their preference in reviewing the NEASC report before a presentation to the public before the end of May. Mr. Clough stated that he would like to schedule a work session early so that if a second session was required, there would be time. A work session was scheduled for April 20, 2021 at 6:00.

D. Request for Proposal (RFP) for Energy Performance Contract

Ms. Harvey announced that an RFP was posted for bids for the next set of the air filtration updates at PES using ESSR funds. Variable Refrigerator Flow (VRF) is being considered; this is different from the Energy Recovery Ventilation (ERV) used at PMHS, due to cost.

E. Behavior Update

Ms. LeMay provided an update on behavioral data .

F. Class Dojo

Ms. Harvey provided a presentation on Class Dojo, a platform that is used at PES to maintain communication with parents and families. She presented the website for the Board's reference. Ms. Harvey invited the Board to check out the FaceBook page, another mode of communication for families.

VIII. PMHS PRINCIPAL

A. District Newsletter

Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with a copy of the recent District Newsletter.

B. End of Year Events

Mr. Hamilton provided an overview of the end of year events including transition programs for elementary to middle school and middle to high school students, eighth grade awards night, senior awards night, and commencement. A shift to an awards night from a promotion of eighth graders is being planned. Mr. Hamilton described plans for senior awards night and commencement, which will comply with COVID-19 guidelines. The Board supported the proposed change for eighth grade awards night.

Mr. Gauthier asked how many students are on track to graduate; Mr. Hamilton stated it is twenty-five students projected at this time.

Mr. Clough asked for clarification on plans for seating at commencement. Mr. Hamilton reviewed several options being considered.

Mr. Gauthier stated his appreciation for the considerations being made for safe end of year activities. Mr. Hamilton will be communicating with families before the end of April.

C. Reopening Plan

Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with a copy of the district's reopening plan and an addendum for it. On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and second by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted unanimously to approve the addendum to the reopening plan.

D. Wednesday Schedule

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the changes being made to comply with the Governor's order that schools offer five days of in-person learning by April 19, 2021. Wednesdays will have the same arrival time and dismissal will start at 12:35. Discussion ensued regarding dismissal time on Wednesdays. Mr. Hamilton and Ms. Harvey explained contractual requirements that influence dismissal times.

E. School District Website

Mr. Hamilton stated that the website is in need of updating and redesign. This work will be happening over the summer. Mr. Hamilton invited Board members to provide suggestions and feedback. Mr. Gauthier asked what the cost of the website is and Mr. Hamilton stated he would collect that information for the next meeting.

Mr. Clough stated that the website has some broken links that need to be fixed. He also stated that the organization of meeting documents is not consistent and therefore, not easy to navigate.

F. Policy JBAB

Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with a copy of Policy JBAB, Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students. He shared a letter that will be made available to students and families explaining the policy. Mr. Hamilton explained that modifications have been made to provide students with appropriate rest room options. Mr. Gauthier stated that he would like time to fully consider the changes proposed for Policy JBAB. Ms. Douglas asked if the district's attorney had been contacted; Mr. Hamilton stated that the attorney has weighed in on the practices being implemented. Mr. Clough asked what students' response has been to the changes; Mr. Hamilton stated that students have noticed changes and that it creates an opportunity for there to be conversations with students to raise awareness of all students' needs. Mr. Clough stated that from his perspective, changes have been viewed as positive by students. Mr. Hamilton clarified that

Policy JBAB requires no changes at this time and is being used to guide practices being implemented. The Board provided Mr. Hamilton with affirmation that procedures are on track; they made suggestions to clarify the letter being sent to families.

X. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

A. Medicaid

Ms. Bickford explained that the special education team went through a mock audit of the Medicaid process, which highlighted what case managers were doing well and where they needed to improve. Overall, documentation and practices were found to be sound.

Ms. Bickford provided accolades to Beth Colon-Pagan, special education administrative assistant, who is leading the effort to secure doctor orders that allow the district to bill for services. Mr. Gauthier asked if families could be utilized to secure orders; Ms. Bickford said that often it takes families longer to get the appropriate signatures.

B. Spring Happenings

Ms. Bickford outlined tasks that make the spring a very busy time for the special education department.

XI. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. Tuition Study Committee

Dr. Graziano stated that Ross Morse will be moderating the Saturday morning forum that has been scheduled. He is confident that the forum will help to gather more information for the Board.

B. School Board Training

Dr. Graziano stated that the NH School Board Association (NHSBA) provides training opportunities for Board members. Members can contact NHSBA to register for training sessions. Dr. Graziano offered to help Board members if they encounter any difficulties registering for training.

C. Tuition Request

Dr. Graziano reminded the Board that they decided at the previous meeting to pay the tuition for a student to attend an animal science course and that the Board had asked him to research liability for the student transporting herself. He explained

the ways in which the situation can be handled, including having permission from the parent in the file.

D. American Rescue Plan Act

Dr. Graziano thanked the Board for approving assurances related to the American Rescue Plan Act.

E. Senior Trip

Dr. Graziano wished the seniors well on their trip starting on Friday, April 16, 2021.

F. Staff Vaccinations

Dr. Graziano stated that staff will be receiving vaccinations on Friday, April 16, 2021.

G. Letter of Resignation

Dr. Graziano stated he has received a letter of resignation from Meg Foehl, preschool teacher at PES. On a motion made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Clough, the Board voted unanimously to approve the resignation of Ms. Foehl.

H. Administrative Leadership Team Options - No discussion.

I. Roles and Responsibilities of School Board and Superintendent

Dr. Graziano provided the Board with policies relative to the role and responsibilities of the Board and superintendent.

J. Letter of Commendation

Dr. Graziano read a letter of commendation written to Cindy Caravella, Jessica Strohl, Mike Curtin, James Cobern, Jessica Bickford, Danielle Harvey, and Derek Hamilton thanking them for the work they have done to help make decisions to keep students, staff, and families safe during COVID-19.

Mr. Gauthier thanked people for their hard work. Ms. Douglas stated that she appreciates the hard work by the Steering Team and administration during this time of the pandemic.

XII. SCHOOL BOARD

XIII. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Budget Committee - Mr. Clough
- C. Drake Field & Facilities - Mr. Gauthier
- D. Negotiations – Ms. Douglas and Mr. Mitchell
- E. Foss Family Scholarship Foundation – Ms. Drouin

XIV. PUBLIC INPUT

Tracy Huyck asked about professional development provided on Wednesday's early release day. Ms. Harvey explained that professional development is provided to the entire faculty, unless a person completes a request to have their training differentiated. She explained that teachers need a minimum of seventy-five hours of professional development within a three year period and that the time is used to train staff in school- and district-wide initiatives.

Ms. Huyck asked at a student's individual education program (IEP) if parents are required to assist in asking their medical providers for documentation. Ms. Bickford stated that permission to bill Medicaid is a blind process in order to secure the confidentiality of parents relative to Medicaid eligibility. She stated that sometimes families will assist in the process but are not required or expected to do so. Ms. Huyck asked what happens when a family has regular insurance. Ms. Bickford stated that the Medicaid process is in place for Medicaid only; private insurance is not part of the Medicaid to School program.

Ms. Huyck stated that she thinks the public is going to want to see the tuition rates that other districts are proposing. Dr. Graziano stated he is aware that people will be interested in that information and he will be prepared to provide information at the forum.

XV. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

Mr. Gauthier stated that a discussion by the Board will be necessary relative to personnel.

At 7:11p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Douglas to enter into a non-public session under the authority of RSA 91-A:3 (c) to discuss personnel matters. The Board was polled and voted unanimously to enter into a non-public session (Mr. Clough, yes; Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes).

At 7:27 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Mr. Gauthier to exit from a non-public session. The Board was polled and voted unanimously to exit the non-public session (Mr. Clough, yes; Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes).

XVI. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School Lecture Hall.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Adam Gauthier, the meeting was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Gray Chassie
Recording Secretary (via Zoom)