

**APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD**

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

---

**MINUTES**

Pittsfield School Board Meeting  
May 6, 2021  
Pittsfield Middle High School

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Members Present: Adam Gauthier, Chairperson  
Justin Clough, Vice Chairperson  
Jessica Drouin

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 5:30 p.m.

**II. AGENDA REVIEW**

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Eighth Grade End-of-Year Event (Mr. Clough)
- Tuition Study Forum (Mr. Gauthier)
- NEASC (Dr. Graziano)
- Request for Proposal (Ms. Harvey)
- Drake Field Request (Mr. Hamilton)
- Resignation (Dr. Graziano)
- New Hires (Dr. Graziano)

**III. ACTION ON AMENDED AGENDA**

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

#### IV. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Drouin to approve the minutes of the public meeting on April 15, 2021. Changes include: on page six, paragraph five, add space between Ms. and Douglas; on page seven, paragraph one, change to Tracy Huyck, on page seven, paragraph two, change to Huyck; on page seven paragraph three, change to Huyck; on page seven paragraph six, add periods in Mr. Clough and Mr. Gauthier; and on page eight, paragraph two, add a period in Mr. Mitchell. The minutes were approved unanimously as amended.

A motion was made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Drouin to approve the minutes of the non-public session on April 15, 2021. The motion passed unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

A motion was made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Mr. Clough to approve the minutes of the public meeting on April 26, 2021. The motion passed unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

#### V. PUBLIC INPUT

Louie Houle apologized to the administration and the faculty for the fact that he has not been present at previous meetings. He is concerned about the way in which things were handled relative to the budget proceedings. He explained that he has only missed two school district meetings since he was in the fifth grade in Pittsfield. He stated his concern about the misinformation that was on Facebook. Mr. Houle stated that he hopes to attend future meetings and will pay better attention to the budget process in the future. He urged the Board to be “extremely fair” when selecting replacements for vacated Board positions.

#### VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

In the absence of Harrison Hill, Mr. Hamilton stated that the Site Council has not met since the Board’s last meeting. He anticipates updated information being presented at the next meeting of the Board.

#### VII. PES PRINCIPAL

##### A. Request for Proposal

Ms. Harvey stated that one bid was submitted for the HVAC system at PES. She reviewed the resume submitted by Energy Efficient Investments, Inc. Mr. Clough stated that because of the time constraints in spending the grant funds, he would suggest acting on the proposal. On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by

Ms. Drouin, the Board voted unanimously to allow Ms. Harvey to proceed with the proposal for the PES HVAC system with Energy Efficient Investments, Inc.

#### B. Attendance

According to Ms. Harvey, over the last two weeks, daily absences have fallen into a more regular pattern of fifteen to eighteen students out, some due to illness and others due to vacations. Efforts are made to reach out to the students and families who are chronically absent.

#### C. Kindergarten Registration

Ms. Harvey reported that there are currently eighteen students registered for Kindergarten next year. Kindergarten Camp is being organized for incoming students.

#### D. Budgeted Purchases

Ms. Harvey reminded the Board of the need to replace broken playground equipment and basketball hoops, all included in the budget. She stated that a stair climber, a bridge, and basketball hoops are needed. Dr. Graziano stated that he is estimating a \$600,000 surplus this year so the budget could sustain these expenditures. Mr. Gauthier reiterated that the purchases were budgeted items. Mr. Clough spoke to the safety of the climber and bridge. Mr. Hamilton explained that the new hoops would be more age appropriate for the students at PES. Ms. Harvey explained the previous quotes provided to the Board. On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the Board voted unanimously to purchase the climber, bridge, and basketball hoops.

### VIII. PMHS PRINCIPAL

#### A. Drake Field Request

Mr. Hamilton provided a copy of a request for the use of Drake Field for Pittsfield's Old Home Day. On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to approve the use of Drake Field for Old Home Day in July of 2021. Mr. Houle stated that the event would be cancelled if there were new concerns about COVID-19.

#### B. COVID - 19 Report

Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with data regarding COVID-19 cases. During the past week, there were three positive cases resulting in fourteen students and two staff members needing to quarantine.

#### C. Face Covering Statement

Mr. Gauthier asked for clarification regarding the wearing of masks in light of new guidelines being made public tomorrow. Mr. Hamilton stated that as of now, the use of masks is in the Re-Opening Plan and would be maintained until the Board made another decision.

#### D. Exhibition

Mr. Hamilton provided information relative to Exhibition Night, scheduled for June 3, 2021. Due to COVID-19, visitors will not be invited into the building, but an alternative way of sharing student work with the community will be utilized.

#### E. Transition Planning

Mr. Hamilton provided information about plans for transition of students from PES to PMHS and middle school to high school.

Mr. Clough raised his agenda item of the eighth grade end-of-year event. He asked for clarification on the plan. Mr. Hamilton explained that some eighth graders may need more time to fulfill requirements to move to grade nine. Rather than excluding the students who need more time, the event will be more of an awards night. Mr. Clough opined that he sees the eighth grade ceremony as being a “rite of passage” and is concerned that the lack of recognition for moving up to grade nine for those students who have worked diligently to keep up. He feels that by “watering down” the event it will not acknowledge the hard work of those who have succeeded in fulfilling requirements. Mr. Clough asked Mr. Hamilton to reconsider the eighth grade promotion event.

Mr. Gauthier asked how this change compares to the senior class. Mr. Hamilton stated that the students who have not completed requirements for graduation will not be participating in graduation events. Mr. Gauthier opined that receiving a certificate of promotion is a “big deal” for students and is concerned about the change. Mr. Gauthier reiterated Mr. Clough’s request for reconsidering the eighth grade promotion event.

Mr. Hamilton stated that the intent was not to eliminate the acknowledgement of students’ work. He said that there will only be about ten to fifteen students who will be completing promotion requirements by the end of the year. Only about a quarter of the class would be participating in the traditional promotion event.

Mr. Clough stated that he is in favor of helping the students who need more time and assistance to complete the requirements. However, Mr. Clough would like to have Mr. Hamilton consider a better option for recognizing the students who have completed the requirements for moving to grade nine.

### IX. PMHS ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

A. Concord Regional Technical Center

Ms. Brown explained that a virtual program preview day was offered in February providing an overview of CRTC. Seventeen first-year students applied from grades nine and ten. Ten students were accepted into their requested program, two students were conditionally accepted with improvements in their grades, and five students received letters of regret with encouragement to apply again next year.

B. Class of 2021 Update

Ms. Brown explained that there are thirty-three students in the class of 2021. She provided some details regarding an out-of-district student, two early completers, two individual plans for students who will require more time to complete graduation requirements, six students being monitored and plans developed, and eight students pursuing the HiSet, the high school equivalency test.

C. Scholarships

Ms. Brown provided information relative to the national, state, and local scholarships that are available to seniors.

D. Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)

Ms. Brown stated that in March, three students took the ASVAB. Mr. Clough asked for clarification regarding the ASVAB. Ms. Brown explained that the test is an aptitude test developed by the Department of Defense, providing an interest assessment and planning tool to help young adults explore a career in the military. A Zoom meeting was held to assist students in understanding the results of their testing.

X. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES - No report.

XI. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. Assurances

Dr. Graziano explained that there is a June 30, 2021 deadline for the approval of assurances that will allow the district to receive federal grant funds. He will be providing the Board with further information in a subsequent meeting.

B. Recognition

Dr. Graziano explained that Sarah Carson was featured in an article in the Concord Monitor.

### C. Resignations

Dr. Graziano reviewed resignations received from Sheila Dupere, administrative assistant in the SAU; Jacob Bass, high school teacher; and Jacqueline Kipp-Linxweiler, high school special education teacher. On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the resignations of Ms. Dupere, Mr. Bass, and Ms. Linxweiler with regret.

### D. New Hires

Dr. Graziano nominated Heather Galley as a grade three/four teacher at PES. On a motion made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Mr. Clough, the Board voted unanimously to approve the hiring of Ms. Galley.

Dr. Graziano nominated Abbey Filiault as a K Plus teacher. On a motion made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Mr. Clough, the Board voted unanimously to approve the hiring of Ms. Filiault.

### E. Tuition Study Committee

Dr. Graziano stated that the Tuition Study Committee will be sponsoring a public forum on Saturday, May 8, 2021 at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Gauthier suggested that the location of the meeting be moved to the gymnasium due to the anticipation of the number of people planning to attend. Dr. Graziano confirmed that a Zoom option will be provided, but Mr. Hamilton warned the Board that the acoustics in the gymnasium are not conducive to a Zoom option. He suggested that a Zoom option not be offered if the event is going to be in the gymnasium. Efforts will be made to provide a video recording of the meeting for those people unable to attend.

Mr. Clough asked if there has been further information from another district who expressed interest in attending school in Pittsfield, to which Dr. Graziano reported there had not.

### F. Capital improvements

Dr. Graziano provided an explanation of the capital improvement fund. Given the anticipated surplus of \$600,000, he suggested the Board may want to consider moving some excess funds to the capital improvement fund.

### G. Snow Days

Dr. Graziano explained that there has been only one snow day. He went on to explain the number of days required by the State of New Hampshire. He asked the Board that Friday, June 18th be the last day of school, instead of Monday,

June 21, 2021. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the last day of school as June 18, 2021.

#### H. End of Year Celebrations

Dr. Graziano suggested to the Board the idea of hosting a celebration for the people who may be leaving the district. Mr. Clough agreed that the idea was a good one and suggested doing it outside to ensure the health and safety of participants.

#### XII. SCHOOL BOARD

Mr. Gauthier stated that ten letters were received stating interest in filling the two vacant positions on the Board. He suggested that a meeting be scheduled during which the ten interested people be asked to come in for a conversation with the Board. The members of the Board agreed May 12 at 5:30 in the Lecture Hall at PMHS. Mr. Clough thanked the people in the audience who had sent in a letter of interest. Dr. Graziano praised the level of interest within the community.

#### XIII. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

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

#### XIV. PUBLIC INPUT

Jody Cunningham stated that she has an eighth grade student with whom she had to work very hard during the school year. She explained that when the change was made to have students participate in scheduled Zoom classes, her daughter did much better and worked more independently. Ms. Cunningham expressed her concern that those students who worked hard throughout the year to keep their grades up would not be recognized for their accomplishments.

Tracy Huyck asked if Ms. Brown has been notified of the Rotary scholarships. Ms. Brown stated that there are fourteen local scholarships of which the Rotary is one.

Ms. Huyck asked if the students who receive letters of regret or are waitlisted are given reasons for this determination. Ms. Brown stated that grades are a factor and it is very competitive due to the number of seats available. Ms. Huyck asked if there is assistance that can be provided to students who are trying to gain entry in CRTS.

Louie Houle suggested arrangements be made for students to participate in Concord High School programs, such as advanced placement classes. He suggested they ride the bus that takes students to CRTC.

Heather Elliot asked for clarification on the wearing of masks. Mr. Gauthier stated that the students will be wearing masks until further notice. She stated that a Zoom option for the Tuition Study Committee forum would be appreciated. Mr. Clough stated that it is not safe to have the meeting in the Lecture Hall where Zoom is possible if there are numerous participants. Ms. Huyck asked if there was a possibility of recording the session in order for people to view the event.

Girard LeDuc stated his concern about maintaining social distancing during the forum if held in the lecture hall. He suggested Zoom is a good way to promote the participation of more people in the process.

#### XV. SCHOOL BOARD (continued)

Ms. Harvey explained that on the first Saturday in June, a public forum is scheduled to share the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) report with interested community members. Administrators had wanted to wait for the appointment of new Board members before formally sharing the report with the Board, although members have received copies. Ms. Harvey stated that the intent of sharing information with the Board was to provide the rich information in the report so they could more effectively share information with the public. The administration wanted to walk the Board through the report before the greater community, as a courtesy.

Mr. Clough stated that an incredible amount of time has been spent on the development of the NEASC report and would like to give it full attention. He asked for an explanation of the importance of the document. Ms. Harvey explained that the standards set by NEASC are used to assess the district. The document is guiding the work of the district. Mr. Clough opined that the document is of utmost importance and deserves full attention of the Board. Mr. Gauthier asked if the administration would be available on May 12, 2021 for a work session. Mr. Hamilton explained that they thought that the new Board members would be appointed tonight and then could be included in the NEASC discussion. Mr. Gauthier suggested interviewing the people interested in Board appointment on Monday, May 9, 2021 and having a work session on the NEASC report on Wednesday, May 12, 2021. There was agreement with this plan.

#### XVI. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School Lecture Hall.

#### XVII. ADJOURNMENT



On a motion made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Mr. Clough, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Gray Chassie  
Recording Secretary