

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, February 2, 2023, 7:00 PM
EPPING SCHOOL BOARD
Epping Town Hall/ Epping TV Channel 22/Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Heather Clark called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm with the pledge of allegiance.

In attendance: Chair Heather Clark, Vice Chair Ben Leavitt, Member Robin O'Day, Member Julie Knight, Member Jen Jacoby, Superintendent Furbush, Business Administrator Christine Vayda, Student Carly Sanborn, and Student Jacob Twombly.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

SCHEDULED TOPICS

a. Security SAFE Grant Update and Proposals - Tom Rup and Joe Parzych

Tom gave a brief overview of the grant and also stated that the District recently applied. The District was awarded \$75,000 through this grant. This money can be used to upgrade the security camera systems, upgrade door locks at the SAU building, and upgrade emergency lighting. Ideally, they will work with one company to tackle all of these security related projects; this will improve troubleshooting and make it easier to coordinate any repairs. The project went out to bid, and they have narrowed it down to three companies: PELMAC, ENE, and Intervale. PELMAC and ENE have both done other schools in the region. Intervale mostly deals with commercial settings and has not done much public sector work but is looking to branch out.

Tom gave a high-level overview of the different security projects. First, he spoke about the Digital Video Recording System. The current system is 12 years old and is unable to record more than 10 days of footage. Upgrading the system would allow them to record up to 30 days worth of footage. The second project he spoke about was the installation of outdoor strobe lights on the school buildings. These would allow staff/students entering a building to know if there is currently some type of emergency situation. The third project is to upgrade the door locks at the SAU building to a keycard system with an intercom. The door lock project is the highest priority.

Julie noted that the proposals didn't include the full \$75,000. Tom mentioned that there is a fourth project they would like to use the grant money for; however, it has been difficult for them to find someone to do the work. The fourth project will be to install windows in the vestibules. The grant is being split between the four projects with \$30,000 being used for the camera upgrades and \$15,000 for each of the other three projects.

Robin asked about the subscription aspect that is listed in one of the proposals. Tom explained that it is a hybrid system where a piece of it is online and requires a paid subscription.

There was a general discussion about a future Service-Level Agreement and if there would be any fees associated with it. Tom explained that the agreement would cover all the items in the proposal and would not have a fee associated with it unless they wanted to include service for other items not in the proposal.

Heather asked if the outside strobes would be for only the Elementary School and Middle High School, not the SAU building. Tom said that is correct as they are focusing on the door access at the SAU building.

Tom, Joe, and Christine met with PELMAC and feel that they are the top choice for these projects.

Robin stated that the newly installed system needs to be maintained properly in order to get the most benefit from this grant.

Heather asked about the timing of the projects and if they would take place when school is in session or during school vacations/after hours. Tom said that there is flexibility and feels that both the SAU building and the outdoor strobes can be completed during school hours.

Member Robin O'Day made a motion to accept the Security Proposals from PELMAC as presented. Seconded by Vice Chair Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

b. Program of Studies - Chris Mazzone

Principal Mazzone spoke about the goals for the Program of Studies. The first goal is to provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum for all students. He spoke about how they can accomplish this goal by offering more interesting classes, increasing rigor, and updating graduation requirements. He also spoke about how grading is handled for classes taken outside of the building, such as SST. Students in SST classes are given a grade for each semester or quarter but are not given credit until the course is completed.

Julie spoke about how she is very excited that this process has been a team effort and that they were able to bring the Program to the Board so early in the year. She noted that there were no significant changes to the Program but that the biggest change is the addition of new classes. Julie mentioned that they did make a change to the Program in regards to the GPA for students who take Advanced Placement courses outside of Epping High School. This GPA has been changed from a 0.5 GPA to a 1.0 GPA. They feel that it is unfair to only award half of a point since the College Board determines the curriculum for all Advanced Placement courses.

Heather asked if there were students who took AP courses but did not take the AP exam. Julie responded that rarely there is a student who will take the course but not the exam. Superintendent Furbush asked if those students who didn't take the exam were doing so because of the cost or a lack of preparedness. Julie said that the most common occurrence is a student will pay the non-refundable deposit for the exam then when it is time to pay the remainder they back out because they do not feel prepared. She also mentioned that if students are experiencing financial hardship the fee will be waived. Heather also asked if there has been any thought about

requiring all AP students to take the exam. Both Principal Mazzone and Julie said they have not given it much thought at this point, but it can be discussed more going forward.

Julie spoke about a change made to the course load. All grades 9-11 will now be required to enroll in 7 credits per year, and seniors will now be required to enroll in 6 credits. The goal is to get more students into more classes and to try new things.

Julie Knight asked if the high school schedule will continue to be a block schedule. Principal Mazzone responded that it will continue to be a block schedule as it is now.

Superintendent Furbush asked how they handled the creation of new courses with the same number of staff. Julie answered that they removed some classes that were not meeting the needs of the students and replaced them with new ones. Principal Mazzone also added that they are utilizing staff outside of their traditional roles. They are also increasing class sizes to free up blocks for teachers to be able to offer more interest based electives. The new subjects of the new electives are based on feedback from teachers and students. A new tracking form has also been included so students can track their credits and GPA.

Julie listed the new course offerings which include: Film Production, Printmaking, Food Choices, American Pop Music, Music of Video Games, Wilderness First Responder, EMT Training and Certification, Computer Essentials, International Business, Non-Fiction Film Studies, and Drama Studies.

Robin mentioned that she liked how these courses were all hands-on learning experiences that teach life skills.

The Student Aid program has also been updated to prioritize students who are on related career paths.

Julie Knight asked how the Student Aid program was reported on transcripts. Julie answered that currently it is listed as a class. Julie Knight said she felt that since this is more like an internship it could be listed as an extended learning opportunity to make it stand out. Heather agreed that this would be a great idea since some students go straight to the workforce. Julie Knight also asked about a Financial Literacy course. Julie mentioned there is a similar course, Business and Personal Finance, which will be taken in Junior or Senior year.

There was a general discussion about teaching students how to write resumes, dress for interviews, and interpersonal skills.

Julie Knight also asked if there is a minimum number of enrolled students needed to run a course. Principal Mazzone explained that they don't have a set number, but they look at each class on a case by case basis.

Jen asked if there was any opportunity for the Middle School students to take these new courses. Julie answered that it would depend on the individual student and their schedule, but it is possible.

Ben asked if, since there is a note stating not all of the courses will be offered every year, they would be able to list what courses will not be offered in that school year. Julie said they can split the electives ahead of time and offer half in one year and half in the other. The way she has done this in the past is to base it off of the number of students enrolled. Principal Mazzone added

that they could also have students pick their top three choices to minimize disappointment. There was general discussion about picking classes and deciding what classes will be offered year to year. Julie also mentioned that a site has been created that lists the course name, a description, and a picture related to the course to help students and parents know what the courses are about.

Heather asked if the name “Middle-High School Diploma” could be changed to “Epping High School Diploma”. Principal Mazzone said they will update the name. Heather also asked if the “Diploma of Distinction” requirements could be listed first to help make students strive for that goal. Principal Mazzone and Julie agreed that would be a good change. Heather noted that many other schools require Physical Science as the 9th grade science course, and Epping currently has Biology (Physical Science is 10th grade). Principal Mazzone and Julie said this is a decision that the whole team would need to be involved in and would require Biology to not be offered for one year, and everyone in 9th and 10th grade would take Physical Science. Heather also asked why the Computer Science, Financial Literacy, and Career Exploration subjects are not listed in the Planning a Course of Study and the Four-Year Course Planning sheets. Principal Mazzone and Julie noted that certain classes aren’t requirements for all grades yet, but they will be added to the course planning documents next year. Heather asked if the grade awarded after the completion of competency recovery work was the course grade or just for the one competency. Julie answered that current practice is that the grade is the course grade. Heather asked a few other questions about the draft Program of Studies and discussed solutions/answers with Principal Mazzone and Julie.

There was a general discussion about Middle School students taking High School level courses and how it appears on transcripts.

Member Julie Knight made a motion to accept the Middle-High School 23-24 Program of Studies as presented with comments. Seconded by Vice Chair Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

POLICY

a. IGE - Parental Objections to Specific Course Materials or Requirements - 2nd/3rd Read

Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to approve Policy IGE - Parental Objections to Specific Course Materials or Requirements as amended. Seconded by Member Julie Knight. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

b. KE - Public Complaints About School Program, Staff, and Students - 1st Read

Superintendent Furbush explained there are only a few minor language changes with this policy. This policy was moved to a 2nd/3rd read at the next meeting.

PERSONNEL

a. Nomination of EES Digital Learning Specialist - Leanne Chauvette

Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to accept the nomination of Leanne Chauvette for the EES Digital Learning Specialist position. Seconded by Member Robin O'Day. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

REPORTS

a. Student Reports

Carly and Jacob discussed what some of the different classes are working on. They also gave an update on recent and upcoming extracurricular activities.

Julie Knight asked how the information included in these reports is captured. Carly and Jacob answered that they usually just ask other students what they are currently working on and what activities are coming up.

b. Principal Reports

EES

Principal Murphy highlighted some current events at the Elementary School. The recent Parent Advisory Meeting went well. They discussed school safety, the whole-school meetings, and also remote learning days. Audio recordings and meeting minutes are available for those who could not attend. At the recent whole-school meeting, the Epping Eagles students gave a talk about their recycling program and also spoke about what the Epping Eagles do. At the whole-school meeting, they also played "Simon Says" as a way to demonstrate good listening skills. At the next meeting, they are going to show a slide with words that explain why students are getting recognized. The hope is for all students to be able to look at these words and reflect on times when they demonstrated them.

Julie Knight commented that her son is starting to associate that every morning begins with a morning meeting. She also asked if the morning meetings are reducing the number of tardy students.

Principal Murphy also spoke about the Responsive Classroom Approach which is centered on building key skills in students. The morning meetings are implementing this approach to continue building these skills at a larger scale. Currently, they are looking into training first year and second year teachers in this approach.

Heather asked if the teachers who have been here longer are already trained in this approach. Principal Murphy said that some of them are already trained, and hopefully they can continue training more teachers.

Principal Murphy spoke about work that is being done to meet their goals. They have been working hard to incorporate the work-study practices into the morning meetings. Teams of teachers are being given time to discuss what the student-led conferences will look like in the Spring. They are also practicing how to guide the conversations for these conferences. Lastly,

she spoke about the PLC goal for the school. The teachers assessed themselves in the Fall and will reflect on their skills in the Spring.

She also talked about how the students have been participating in snowshoeing and sledding throughout the Winter. They recently had their second active threat drill, and it went really well. The main focus of these drills is avoiding and listening to the adults they are with.

Principal Murphy gave shoutouts to multiple staff members for their dedication to the students, willingness to help, professionalism, and for constantly going the extra mile.

Julie Knight commented that she would ask for about a week's notice for any upcoming deviations from the normal schedule. Principal Murphy said they can definitely highlight these upcoming dates in the future.

EMHS

Principal Mazzone talked about the master schedule and how they are making the most of the students' time. A draft schedule has been shared with the building leadership team for feedback. He spoke about the work-study practices experience at both the Middle School and High School levels. The Middle School students seem to be understanding the importance of these practices and are genuinely involved. Some High School students are viewing it as just another requirement; however, some students are enthusiastically participating. He also talked about how Yearbook may become a course in the future as it has been difficult to run it as a club. He mentioned that the student achievement reports were recently delayed due to a software issue at SST.

Principal Mazzone said the Parent Advisory Council went well, and they were able to have some great conversations. He values the honesty and feedback.

He mentioned they are currently working on creating some type of documents to help new teachers become accustomed to the current practices and procedures. The recent turnover in staff has made the onboarding process more difficult, and this would help greatly. They are also utilizing faculty meetings as a way to gather feedback on what can be changed/improved upon.

Heather asked if the student leadership should be involved in identifying the inconsistencies in grading and processes. Principal Mazzone said that they will take their feedback into account, but first they are working to review documents to make sure everything that is being asked of staff is clear and easily understood.

Robin mentioned a recent webinar that highlighted common issues with competency based learning. She explained that one of the major topics discussed was the issue of teachers not understanding the competency based curriculum. She asked if this was an issue Principal Mazzone was seeing. Principal Mazzone said there are many staff members who understand this model, but there are inconsistencies in areas such as grading. He hopes to solve this with sustained leadership and through the development of guidelines and by giving staff the tools they need to succeed.

Principal Mazzone gave shoutouts to multiple staff members for their passion, dedication to the students, and for being tremendous assets to the school. He greatly appreciates everyone's efforts and willingness to help the kids.

c. Superintendent Reports

Superintendent Furbush talked briefly about the steps that will be taken to address the inconsistencies with the current grading system. He also thanked Principal Mazzone for his ongoing effort to address the concerns that have been brought up at the Parent Advisory Council or otherwise. He talked about how they have been taking steps to increase rigor, include classes from different areas, and offer things that interest students. He is very excited about where things are headed and to see how students like the newly offered courses.

Heather added that the Parent Advisory Council was excellent and was attended well. There were some new faces, and parents of students from all age groups were present. She felt it was a very positive experience to see the number of people who want to move the school forward and continue to help make improvements. It is a great opportunity for parents to be heard.

Superintendent Furbush talked about the budget video that went out and hopes everyone was able to watch it. They have been preparing for the Deliberative Session and will be showing the video and a PowerPoint.

He was able to meet with some emergency responders to debrief on the last time they opened up their warming center and also to discuss future openings.

Julie asked how that opening will be communicated to the residents. Superintendent Furbush said he will send it out via ParentSquare and from there word of mouth will spread the news. It will also be on the school's digital sign and social media. The Town has their own methods for relaying the information to all residents.

Superintendent Furbush also spoke about how the student-led conferences are being looked at as more than a one-time event. The hope is that they can be built upon and eventually lead to a capstone project during Senior year.

FINANCIAL BUSINESS & DISTRICT SERVICES

a. Deliberative Session

There was a brief discussion about what documents the Board wants to have presented at the Deliberative Session. The Board asked for a list of what has been presented previously, and they will provide feedback on what should be included.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Public Minutes of January 19, 2023

Approval of the January 19, 2023 Public Minutes was moved to the next meeting.

MANIFEST

a. Payroll deposited on January 20, 2023

Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to accept Payroll deposited on January 20, 2023 in the amount of \$359,971.46. Seconded by Member Julie Knight. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

BOARD COMMENTS/OTHER

Jen stated she is very excited to hear about the Program of Studies and is looking forward to some positive moves and good direction.

Ben had a recent Safety Committee meeting, and there were no major concerns which was good to see. He is also excited about the Program of Studies and values the insight from the administrators.

Julie echoed Ben and Jen. She was glad to see the Administrators in attendance and acknowledged the time and effort spent on the Program of Studies.

Robin encouraged the Board to watch a recent webinar sent out by the NH School Board Association. She also urged the community to take an active role in the upcoming Deliberative Session.

Heather highlighted the upcoming Senior Night games. She also spoke about the upcoming Penguin Plunge taking place at Hampton Beach. She added that the Deliberative Session will have babysitting available for those who need it. She also noted there are a number of positions open on various Boards and Committees.

NEXT MEETING TO BE SCHEDULED

a. February 16, 2023 Board Retreat

NONPUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3, II Non-Public Meeting is **scheduled** for February 2, 2023 after the public meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to enter a non-public meeting and to adjourn thereafter at 10:00 pm. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Wilkins

School Board Secretary