

APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 30, 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. Election of School Board Officers & Committees

Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to nominate Heather Clark as the School Board Chair. Seconded by Member Robin O'Day. VOTE: 4-0-1. Motion carries.

Heather thanked everyone for their support.

Chair Heather Clark made a motion to nominate Ben Leavitt as the School Board Vice Chair. Seconded by Member Robin O'Day. VOTE: 4-0-1. Motion carries.

Committee Assignments:

Budget - Robin O'Day

Paraprofessional Negotiations - Robin O'Day, Jen Jacoby

Policy - Robin O'Day

Wellness - Jen Jacoby

District Steering - Heather Clark, Jen Jacoby

Emergency Management - Heather Clark, Robin O'Day

Fields & Facilities - Heather Clark, Julie Knight

Late Start - Julie Knight

Safety - Ben Leavitt

Technology - Ben Leavitt

Elementary School PTO - Ben Leavitt

Middle School PTO - Julie Knight

SST - Heather Clark, Robin O'Day

Selectmen Representative - Heather Clark

There was a general discussion about the working group between the Budget Committee and School Board.

b. Curriculum Data Review 2022 and Goals for 2023 - Krista Stalzer, Curriculum Director

Krista spoke about some accomplishments that have been made this year. She mentioned the literacy audit which took place in 2019 and was a main reason behind a lot of this work. Some highlights she mentioned were professional development (PD) regarding reading, 35 participants in Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training, the purchase of “decodable” books, community involvement in literacy events, grant-funded work with literacy expert Marianne Nice, strengthening of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) process, and development of a multi-year literacy plan. She outlined the literacy plan and the goals set for each year. The 2022-2023 goal is to increase background knowledge through PD and training. For 2023-2024, the goal is to continue building background knowledge and explore new curriculum materials.

There was a general discussion about the current curriculum/reading programs being used. Krista emphasized that currently they have to use pieces of different programs to best meet the needs of students, but the goal is to implement an all-in-one solution by the end of 2025. Ben asked if there were multiple options for providers of an all-in-one solution or if the selection was limited. Krista said that there are a lot of options and that each one has its strengths and weaknesses. As a follow-up, Ben asked if the plan is to supplement the all-in-one solution with another program to cover those weaknesses. Krista believes the weaknesses can be addressed through changes to instruction. Heather asked if the all-in-one programs have been around for a while or if they are new. Krista mentioned that there is a mix of new and old programs, but the one that is currently rated the highest is a newer program. The Board wishes to avoid a program that is yet to be tested.

The 2024-2025 goal is to align the curriculum, instruction, and assessment materials. Lastly, the 2025 goals are to finalize all literacy components and implement the new literacy plan.

She mentioned that a lot of the work is focused on the Elementary School since that is where students are taught reading. She emphasized that literacy is a focus District wide and spoke briefly about the work being done at EMHS to support literacy. There was a brief discussion about EMHS English Lab. Jen asked if the students were awarded additional credit for the lab portion. Principal Mazzone said they are awarded an elective credit, not an english credit.

Krista also spoke about the Universal Design of Learning (UDL). They have been utilizing free PD from the State and holding UDL groups on four in-service days. She also mentioned the work being done in regards to instruction including: meetings with the Great Schools Partnership, establishing a definition for the term “deep learning”, and holding classroom walkthroughs to observe and identify current strengths and weaknesses. She spoke about mentors and induction. She mentioned this was the first year of the mentor program. They

were able to learn a lot in the first year. Krista noted that she held working lunches during in-service days where all of the mentors were able to network, ask questions, and provide feedback. She also created a Google Classroom with resources for mentors.

Heather asked if there is a list of experienced teachers who are interested in becoming mentors for the next year. Krista said that the teachers who are interested and meet the requirements reached out to be put on the list. She then matches those teachers to new staff members as they are hired.

Krista briefly discussed the topic of collaborative team time and department time. At EES, the collaborative team time was focused on literacy and math. At EMHS, it was decided that the department chairs needed their own meeting to help better support their staff. The focus of department meetings has been curriculum alignment.

Krista also spoke about the 2022 Federal Accountability Data from the NH SAS and SATs. She gave a summary of the data and highlighted some key takeaways. The District saw increases in the percentage of students who scored "proficient" in all three tested subjects when compared to the 2021 data. She then gave a breakdown of the different grade levels and how each scored compared to previous years and the statewide averages.

Heather asked what determines the "proficient" score. Krista explained that in order to be considered proficient, a student must score a three or higher on the NH SAS. She also noted that there is a different threshold for the SATs, but she did not have the specific numbers. There was a general discussion about the proficiency levels across the District, State, and Country. Heather asked if the increase in the literacy scores can be attributed to the focus on literacy instruction and curriculum or if more data is needed. Krista said she would like to have one more year of data to see a trend, but she believes the improved scores are evidence of the work being done to strengthen literacy.

Ben asked Krista if she could explain some of the skills that are needed to be shown on the tests to achieve a "proficient" score. Krista said that the test blueprints are available online and describe what needs to be demonstrated to obtain each score. As a follow-up, Ben asked if there was data available that shows how students performed in each individual skill. Krista explained that she is able to view how students scored in each skill area, but performance on individual questions is not available. Ben also asked if the areas where students haven't performed well in the past have been seeing improvement due to the work being done to strengthen literacy. Krista said she would like to see the next set of data points from the upcoming May tests to really be able to see a definitive trend.

Krista discussed the math scores and noted that scores are much lower than in science and reading. She believes that key components of the math curriculum for certain grade levels were taught during the pandemic which may have caused some gaps. Her priority in the subject of math is to help fill in those gaps. Heather asked Krista how she plans to do so. Krista said that teachers are incorporating math into other areas such as morning meetings. She also hopes to be able to hire a math specialist at the EMHS level in the near future. There was a general discussion about how to fill the gaps and improve test scores in math. Heather asked if the

ESSER Funds could be used to create programs that would allow for more exposure to math. Superintendent Furbush stated that they do have ESSER Funds for one more year; however, they do not allow for flexibility outside of the plan that was previously submitted. He did mention that there were some funds still available for PD and tutoring which could be focused on math. Krista mentioned the use of Title II or Title IV grants to fund a consultant-like math specialist position for the District.

There was a general discussion about the correlation between literacy and math scores. Heather mentioned that in the past, there were after-school clubs and activities that involve math and asked if they were still happening. Krista said she is unsure of what after-school activities are still happening, but there is a focus on meeting the needs of all students with instructional time. Heather asked if they were currently moving EES students to different grade levels to meet their needs, so students who are ahead in math can continue learning new material. Krista said they do not currently do this with EES students. She stated that they are utilizing small group instruction, so those students who are ahead are given more challenging/new material. There was a general discussion about moving students to classes that fit their learning level instead of keeping them in their grade level. Jen noted that the ideas are great, but there are many more challenges than most people may think with implementing them. Heather agreed with Jen and said that the recent and ongoing work with the master schedules should hopefully make this easier to accomplish in the future.

There was a general discussion about the math curriculum. Heather asked Krista if she knew the age of the current math curriculum. Krista said it is 12 years old.

Ben asked Krista about the goals for the potential future math specialist. She said she would like for them to act as a consultant in a supporting role similar to what they have in place with a reading specialist.

REPORTS

a. Student Reports

Carly and Jacob highlighted some of the recent and upcoming academic and extracurricular activities. They also spoke about the recent Districtwide Concert and congratulated everyone who was involved. They mentioned that the Prom Committee decided to move the deadline for tickets to April 7th. This choice was made due to the venue requesting an estimated number of students who will be attending. They also spoke about the Senior Class Officers meeting regarding multiple aspects of Graduation. They highlighted other recent and upcoming extracurricular activities. Heather asked what the theme for Prom was this year and where it was being held. Jacob said that the theme is the enchanted forest, and it will be held at LaBelle Winery in Derry. Superintendent Furbush asked if either Jacob or Carly had attended the New England College Student Leadership event. Jacob said he attended, and felt it was a good experience and there were some good ideas to bring some positive change back to the school.

b. Principal Reports

EMHS

Principal Mazzone spoke about the ongoing transition to the course selection process for students this time of year. He also talked about a recent event where parents and students were able to come and ask questions about graduation requirements, course selection, etc. He displayed the Elective Course website and gave a brief overview of it. Mr. Mazzone also mentioned the upcoming course selection fair where students can get additional information about the courses they are planning to take. He spoke about the nomination of Karen McCallion and provided some more detail on her selection as a finalist for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Mr. Mazzone also gave an overview of recent theater, arts, and music events. The highlighted events included: The Addams Family Musical, the Unified Arts(UA) Showcase, and the "Music in Our Schools Month" Concert. He also thanked everyone who was involved in organizing these events. There was a general discussion about the interview process for the Assistant Principal position. Heather asked that notification be sent to the Board regarding the date and time that the Assistant Principal finalists will be addressing the faculty and members of the public. Mr. Mazzone said that he will be sure to send the Board multiple notices as the date gets closer. Heather also stated that she has been on the Electives website and said it is incredibly well done and is a helpful resource for parents and students. Ben also mentioned that he thought the website was fantastic and is interested in hearing the feedback on it. He also likes the idea of the course selection fair and hopes that can drive up numbers in some classes. There was a general discussion about the "Music in Our Schools Month" Concert and the UA Showcase. The Board and Mr. Mazzone recognized everyone involved in these events for their dedication and effort to make everything so successful.

c. Superintendent Reports

Superintendent Furbush spoke briefly about upcoming events. He also shared an update on some safety-related items. He spoke about the relationship with local first responders and thanked them for sharing their knowledge and advice. He also talked about the training and practice being done with the Avoid, Deny, Defend system for both students and faculty. He mentioned that the Homeland Security audit reports had only minor suggestions. Work on the vestibules is currently being scheduled and the addition of strobe lights to the building exteriors is already scheduled. Other items that are currently in progress include the keycard access system upgrade at the SAU building and the upgrade of the security camera system memory. Lastly, he spoke about the reunification process. He mentioned the process was identified as a point of weakness but that great strides have been made to improve upon it. He reassured the community that safety is a top priority and continues to be worked on.

POLICY

- a. KE - Public Complaints About School Program, Staff, and Students - 2nd/3rd Read
Member Robin O'Day made a motion to accept Policy KE - Public Complaints About School Program, Staff, and Students. Seconded by Vice Chair Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

- b. KE - Form - 1st Read
Moved to a 2nd/3rd read at the next meeting.

- c. IHBA - Programs For Children With Disabilities - 1st Read
Superintendent Furbush stated that this is not a new policy; however, there is one significant change. The change being that schools are now responsible for providing programming for students with disabilities until they are 22 years of age.
Julie was surprised by the line in the policy stating that students who turn 22 years old during the academic year may be allowed to complete the year at the discretion of the Superintendent. She stated that she appreciates how important it is but also noted that it can be quite costly if a student has a birthday early in the academic year.
Moved to a 2nd/3rd read at the next meeting.

PERSONNEL

- a. Teacher Nominations List - 2023-2024
Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to accept the Teachers Nomination List for the Superintendent to move forward with contract issuance. Seconded by Member Robin O'Day. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

FINANCIAL BUSINESS & DISTRICT SERVICES

- a. Financial Report
Christine stated that they are still on target, and everything is looking good.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. Public Minutes of February 16, 2023
Member Robin O'Day made a motion to approve the Public Minutes of February 16, 2023 as amended. Seconded by Vice Chair Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.
- b. Non-Public Minutes of March 16, 2023
Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to approve the Non-Public Minutes of March 16, 2023. Seconded by Member Julie Knight. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

c. Public Minutes of March 16, 2023

Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to approve the Public Minutes of March 16, 2023. Seconded by Member Jen Jacoby. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

MANIFEST

a. Payroll deposited on March 10, 2023

Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to accept Payroll deposited on March 10, 2023 in the amount of \$210,138.47. Seconded by Member Jen Jacoby. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

b. Accounts Payable deposited on March 17, 2023

Vice Chair Ben Leavitt made a motion to accept Accounts Payable deposited on March 17, 2023 in the amount of \$502,608.59. Seconded by Member Jen Jacoby. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

BOARD COMMENTS/OTHER

Ben said he thought the recent concert and art show were phenomenal. He also reminded everyone about the Harlem Wizards game.

Heather encouraged everyone to attend the upcoming 80s-themed Murder Mystery Dinner and the Taco Tuesday fundraiser.

Julie is pleased to hear that work is moving forward on the vestibules. She also wanted to recognize the efforts put forth by everyone involved in putting together Literacy Nights.

Robin spoke about the importance of students reporting any suspicious or concerning posts made on social media. She encouraged students to tell someone as soon as they see something. She also encouraged parents to talk to their kids about this. Robin also spoke about upcoming educational bills that may be detrimental and asked everyone to read up on them and opinions can be given online.

NEXT MEETING TO BE SCHEDULED

a. April 6, 2023

NONPUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3, II Non-Public Meeting **is scheduled** for March 30, 2023 after the public meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to enter a non-public meeting and to adjourn thereafter at 9:36 pm. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Wilkins

School Board Secretary