

## **APPROVED MEETING MINUTES**

**Thursday June 3, 2021**

**EPPING SCHOOL BOARD -Epping Town Hall/ Epping TV Channel 22/Zoom**

**6:30 p.m.**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Deborah Brooks called the meeting to order at 6:37 pm with the pledge of allegiance.

In attendance: Chair Deborah Brooks, Vice Chair David Mylott, Member Heather Clark, Member Ben Leavitt, Member Robin O'Day, Superintendent Furbush, Business Administrator Bonnie Sandstrom, Student Taya Morgado, and Student Emily Kelly.

### **SCHEDULED GUESTS**

#### a. Discussion of policy JBAB with School Psychologists and Counselors

Sara Wagner discussed the counselors' code of ethics. They do not out students. The current policy allows them to talk to the parents with student consent. They provide counseling to help the students navigate how to tell their parents and others. The counselors also check in to see how the student is feeling and help answer any questions that they may have. They make sure to honor and respect the students' timelines. Students tend to come out slowly. Protecting and supporting students is their number one priority. Robin asked about their code of ethics. Sara compared them to guidelines or an oath that they take. Based on the current policy, the counselors can't change the student's name on the record or written communications without the student getting a legal name change. People can still refer to them with their preferred name and pronouns though. The counselors will help students talk to their parents if the student asks. In terms of students coming out to their families, guidance offers support. Sara went through the different options of how guidance can help. After the family is notified, the family is referred to professional resources if they wish. The counselors offer support no matter what. Ben asked what would happen if a parent reached out about a student who hasn't come out to their parents or guidance yet. The counselors would talk to the student first before getting back to the parent. They are not allowed to out the student. The counselors would go through the current policy with the parent and student. They can refer them to outside counseling. If guidance has been previously involved, they would still pause the conversation and check with the student first. If

the policy requires counselors telling the parent, they will follow the policy, but they said that it would be a real ethical dilemma for them. The counselors would like the policy to give them flexibility and discretion. Deborah expressed her opinion on the matter and thinks it's important for parents to be involved. Some students wouldn't feel safe to come out if the policy is changed. Superintendent Furbush came up with a waiver that would inform parents unless the student feels unsafe mentally or physically. Sara said that the waiver would make her feel more comfortable with the new policy. She's been a school psychologist for six years now. She has had seven or eight students come out during that time, and two of them didn't have supportive parents. The counselors are worried that once parent involvement is required that students will shy away, specifically middle school students. This would deprive them of any support or guidance during a confusing time in their lives. Heather thinks that parent conversations would only be happening when a name change is requested. She asked if they were seeing this at the elementary school. They haven't yet, but they would like any information regarding this topic in case there are students in the future who need support. It was suggested that a committee be formed to review the proposed policy. David agrees with forming a committee. Two out of eight students are still a large portion of kids who come from unsupportive families in that sample of students. He wants school to be a safe place for all students. David said that he would leave his workplace if they made him go against his ethics. Robin gave her opinion on the matter. She also said that the frontal cortex doesn't finish developing until a person is 28. If a student mentions self-harm, they are referred to the emergency room.

Student Patrick McTague asked several clarifying questions about the policy. Several parents and public attendees commended him for his bravery and said that he was well spoken. He also gave accounts from a handful of students who were unable to attend the meeting tonight. Patrick said that the Danville District, Timberlane, is 3x times larger than Epping, and they don't require parents being told. They have had no issues so far. He also noted that it is important for Epping to develop a plan before enacting a policy. Patrick asked if they've reviewed GLSEN's guidelines. Superintendent Furbush said that they have, but they are looking at other resources as well. Patrick pointed out that on page four of the guidelines, it notes that it is illegal to report or out the gender identity of the student. He said that he knows five transgender students, and three of them fear for their status at home if they were outed. This is a higher percentage than the number mentioned above. Below are some quotes from Epping students:

“This policy will result in more homeless students.”

“School should be supporting students.”

“I would personally feel uncomfortable coming out to my parents before I'm ready to do so. This can lead to stress which leads to depression.”

He read some statistics from the Trevor Project. If people from the community are respected, they are half as likely to have self-harming urges. 29% of the LGBTQ+ students become

homeless. A teacher spoke up anonymously and said that they're worried about the students and losing their job if they spoke up publicly against this. They highly disagree with the proposed policy. Patrick McTague said that the current policy is less flawed. He said that all five students in his network were happy with it, but yet none of them could find a single good thing about the new policy. He said that Prism is opposed to the proposed policy besides section two. There are 8-12 members in the Prism. He said that the proposed policy is unethical, dangerous, and unnecessary. He said that the professionals agree that this policy is wrong. He asked how this policy would change the parental relationship.

Connor, sophomore student and ally, said that one student, who recently came out to him, expressed their fear of this new policy. It could greatly negatively affect them. They are scared and need support and don't want the proposed policy to add stress.

Parent Nicole is happy that the students stood up. She mentioned that ACLU NH said that the Dover District truly has a comprehensive transgender student policy. She said that the ACLU is an expert on this matter. She said that the Dover and Durham Oyster River policies are identical. She wants parents to be involved in the process.

Cody Belanger shared his thoughts on the matter as well.

Heather said that the Danville District has some helpful resources in their policy. Robin asked if there is a specific time frame that this needs to be resolved by, and there isn't one.

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to move this topic to the next meeting. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

The Board gave Taya a goodbye gift and thanked her for her time. They wished her the best in her future endeavors.

#### b. Tech Infrastructure Upgrades - Brenden Collins

He went through the purpose, quote, and reason for each of the technology infrastructure device upgrades. The devices include a new firewall for network security, storage area network, virtual hosts (x2), SAN switch, infrastructure switches (~x10++), infrastructure switch power supply (~x20++), and a UPS (x2+). Brenden said that all these upgrades are needed. These upgrades can be potentially covered by current and future grants. Superintendent Furbush thanked him for all his time and hard work. David thanked him as well and said that he did a great job. David also asked a clarifying question about the grants. Additionally, the new Technology Director will have a chance to look over the proposed upgrades before any changes are made. Brenden collaborated with the new Director on some of his proposed upgrades, and they both agreed. The initial grant

is good until 2023, so the timeline for upgrades is slightly flexible. He just wanted to inform the Board of these potential changes, so no motion is needed.

c. Nature's Classroom/Washington DC Trip - Susan Gualtieri

Principal Gualtieri summarized the typical Nature's Classroom trip. It will be 3 night/4 day stay at Camp Cody in Freedom, NH from 9/28-10/1. It will cost \$325 per student. She listed the different activities that the camp offers. Additionally, they offer a few scholarships for families in need. She said that the middle school wants to give families enough time to plan and save for this trip. She likes to have a parent meeting before the end of the school year to discuss the trip.

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to approve the Nature's Classroom New England trip at Camp Cody from 9/28/21 to 10/1/21. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

David asked about the families in need. Parents can self-identify and reach out to the school if they need help. The school sometimes pays for part of the trip for families who need it. Robin donated \$400 to students who may need some extra help. The Washington, DC trip was not discussed tonight. However, the district is planning to go with EF Tours again this year.

d. EES, EMS, EHS Principal Highlights

Principal Ernest congratulated the seniors. He also showed some pictures from prom. He went over the important end of year dates. He said that the PD days for teachers are currently being planned. He also thanked the Student Leadership Council for planning Fun Day. He also mentioned the Sophomore Movie Night. David will be helping Principal Ernest pass out the diplomas at graduation this year.

Principal Cantagallo said that the school store supplies are out now. There is a pizza party coming up. Additionally, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade celebration will be happening soon. She gave a shout out to a student for their presentation on dyslexia. She thanked the Boy Scouts for their work on the picnic tables. They will be working on traffic patterns and car lines for next year. She noted how many nominations they have tonight and said that they're busy with hiring. She also mentioned the preschool parade.

Principal Gualtieri invited the Board to the upcoming middle school graduation. The middle school recently had a virtual author visit. She mentioned the three students, grades 5-8, who were recognized as Scholar Leaders. NELM recognizes outstanding students. The students each got to choose a teacher to go to dinner with them and their families. Two music teachers and one librarian were chosen. The middle school music department will be holding an outdoor music concert on 6/10 at 6:30 pm. She also mentioned the NH SAS testing and STAR testing.

## **POLICY**

### a. JBAB - Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students - 2nd/3rd Read

There will be further conversations about these policies. A motion was made earlier in the meeting to discuss these policies at the next meeting.

### b. JBAB-R - Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Procedures - 2nd/3rd Read

There will be further conversations about these policies. A motion was made earlier in the meeting to discuss these policies at the next meeting.

## **PERSONNEL**

### a. Retiring of Deborah Booth - EMS Art Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the retirement of Deborah Booth, EMS Art Teacher, with regret. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

### b. Resignation of Maggierose Bennion - EES Grade 1 Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the resignation of Maggierose Bennion, EES Grade 1 Teacher, with regret. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

### c. Resignation of Travis Chase - EES 3rd Grade Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the resignation of Travis Chase, EES 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Teacher, with regret. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

d. Resignation of Laureen Hughes - EES Title I Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the resignation of Laureen Hughes, EES Title I Teacher, with regret. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

e. Resignation of Heidi Langlais - EES Title I Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the resignation of Heidi Langlais, EES Title I Teacher, with regret. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

f. Resignation of Kerstin Rossel - EES Library Media Specialist

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the resignation of Kerstin Rossel, EES Library Media Specialist, with regret. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

g. Nomination of Kelley Lehman - EES Grade 1 Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the nomination of Kelley Lehman for the EES Grade 1 Teacher position. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

h. Nomination of Jennifer Potts - Grade 6 Language Arts Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the nomination of Jennifer Potts for the Grade 6 Language Arts Teacher position. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

i. Nomination of Kayla Duxbury - EES Grade 3 Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the nomination of Kayla Duxbury for the EES Grade 3 Teacher position. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

j. Nomination of Elizabeth Koutroubas - EES Grade 4 Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the nomination of Elizabeth Koutroubas for the EES Grade 4 Teacher position. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

k. Nomination of Michelle Wood - EES Grade 3 Teacher

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the nomination of Michelle Wood for the EES Grade 3 Teacher position. Seconded by Vice Chair David Mylott. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

l. Nomination of Thomas Rup - Technology Director

**Vice Chair David Mylott made a motion to accept the nomination of Thomas Rup for the Technology Director position. Seconded by Member Heather Clark. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

### **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS**

a. Student Reports

Emily discussed what the different classes are working on. They discussed Game Day. They said that Spanish Honors Society had their last meeting of the year today. The girls said that prom was great. They mentioned the sophomore class outdoor movie night. They said that the high school held their first Haiku Contest which gave students the opportunity to show off their creative writing skills. The seniors have their last day of classes tomorrow. The elections for the junior class representative are coming up; there are four students in the running so far. Additionally, the junior class received a \$500 donation from Aroma Joe's for helping taste test and name Aroma Joe's new drink. They also discussed the senior prank. The Board wished Taya the best.

b. Superintendent's Report

All spring sports teams finished their seasons.

### **FINANCIAL BUSINESS & DISTRICT SERVICES**

a. Loan Agreement for Middle/High HVAC Bond

The Board needs to sign the document by 6/21, and the amount cannot be changed after that point. The ventilation cannot be covered by the CARES grant, and she explained why this is the case. David clarified that the CARES money can still be used elsewhere. MB Mechanical has

started the HVAC work already. Superintendent Furbush commended Bonnie for all her hard work. Robin also noted that the district could not have waited any longer for this project.

**Vice Chair David Mylott made a motion to allow Chair Deborah Brooks to sign the HVAC Loan Agreement contract. Seconded by Member Heather Clark. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

b. Right to Know Law - Dave Mylott

David described what the law does. It dictates what the Board can do during a meeting versus when they are not in a meeting. It says when the Board is allowed to have a non-public meeting or non-meeting. It provides the rules to keep the Board transparent and open. It requires minutes for every meeting. It requires that meeting information be posted 24 hours prior to a meeting. There was a discussion about advisory committee meetings and how they should be handled. They will determine which committees are considered advisory; Heather asked Superintendent Furbush to help with this. He mentioned scenarios where minutes are not required during non-public or non-meetings. He also discussed emergency functions and which events qualify. Additionally, Board members aren't allowed to talk about deliberative matters in private; they don't do this anyways.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

a. Public Minutes for May 20, 2021

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the Public Minutes from the May 20, 2021 meeting as written. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

b. Non-Public Minutes for May 20, 2021

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept the Non-Public Minutes from the May 20, 2021 meeting as written. Seconded by Member Ben Leavitt. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

**MANIFEST**

a. Payroll Manifest #24

**Member Heather Clark made a motion to accept Payroll Manifest #24 dated 5/28/21 in the amount of \$459,221.14. Seconded by Member Robin O'Day. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Parent Jordanne Sargent noted how many resignations there were from the elementary school. She mentioned that a handful of the teachers openly said that their reason for leaving wasn't about the money. She said that it is very sad that the teachers felt they needed to leave the district.

Mr. Hodgeman argued why masks are bad. He gave a handful of reasons. He doesn't want students to have to wear masks next year. The Board said that no decisions about this topic are going to be made at this time.

Catherine Coolidge discussed her worry about teachers resigning and the Board's limited response to the matter. The Board can't legally discuss personnel during public meetings. They said that they are not disregarding this issue.

Parent Amy Hodgdon echoed the concerns about personnel.

### **COMMENTS/OTHER**

Ben said that the Board received an email from Mr. Charkowski about the Budget Committee's goals for next year. He has a meeting scheduled with him and Superintendent Furbush next week to discuss cost per pupil. The Budget Committee has a meeting coming up at the end of the month, so the Board should let him know if they have any questions for the Committee. Ben talked to the Superintendent about continuing the district's culture and climate work. This topic will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Robin will be attending the next Board meeting on Zoom. She said that the SST graduation was beautiful.

Heather said that the Zoom meeting option will continue to be offered for the near future. She mentioned the upcoming band concert. The Middle School PTO will be sending out information about helping out with Field Day soon. Additionally, the PTO will be postponing their elections until next fall. Staples in Stratham will be donating some supplies to Epping; she thanked them. She also congratulated the seniors.

David doesn't want the Zoom option to continue forever.

**NEXT MEETING TO BE SCHEDULED**

a. June 17, 2021 - Regular School Board Meeting

**NONPUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3, II**

A Non-Public Meeting is scheduled for June 3, 2021 following the public meeting. (a. Personnel - personnel update)

**ADJOURNMENT**

**A motion was made to go into a Non-Public session and adjourn the meeting shortly thereafter at 10:35 pm. VOTE: 5-0. Motion carries.**

Respectfully submitted,

Dagny Wilkins

School Board Secretary