

RSU 56 Board of Directors Minutes
Amended Board Meeting Agenda- April 12, 2022-6:30pm
(This meeting will be held at Dirigo High School. The board meeting will also be available via zoom and livestream on the RSU 56 Facebook page.)

School Board Members Present: Barbara Chow, Bruce Ross, Marianne Young, Don Whittemore, Larry Whittington, Konstantin Aslanidi (left meeting @ 7:38pm), Tim Kelly, Carl Lueders, Joe Conron (Student rep)

School Board Members Absent: Angela Cushman, Angela Varnum, Natalie Sneller, Vacancy (Peru)

Staff Attending: Pam Doyen, Mary Dailey, Brian Keene, Cathy Arsenault, Charlie Swan, Andrea Palmer, Amy Gammon, Heather Gray, Brad Conant, Brad Conant, Gena Cloutier, Earl Couture, Julie Couture, Sara Thurston, Kenny Robbins, Lisa Hutchins, Jason Long, Heidi Broomhall, Beth Edwards, Aaron Arsenault, Brandy Bordeau, Michele Araujo

Also Attending: Marianne Hutchinson, DHS Students for Speech & Debate, DMS Students-Student Council, Bob Tropea

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Barbara Chow, Board Chair, opened the meeting at 6:30pm with the Pledge of Allegiance. Audience introductions were made. Everyone on zoom and Facebook live were welcomed.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

1. Motion to adjust the agenda to include:

VI New Business: Reading Program approval, Speech & Debate trip to nationals, Warrant articles to consider and Region 9 rep appointment

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

CONSIDERATION OF THE MINUTES

1. Minutes of the March 22, 2022 Board Meeting

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: T. Kelly

Opposed: L. Whittington, D. Whittemore

Not Voting: K. Aslanidi, M. Young

Motion Carried

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

COMMUNICATIONS

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. First Reading of Policy JICA Student Dress

Earl Couture spoke regarding what the TWKDMS Student Council presented to be considered for the policy to wear hats at TWKDMS be changed.

Proposal to allow students to wear hats at TWKelly Dirigo Middle School after the pandemic/mask mandate is lifted.

The members of the TWKDMS Student Council, at the behest of the student body, unanimously support a proposal to change district policy to allow students of said school to wear hats during the school day.

For the past two years students of the middle school have been able to wear hats while in school in order for some students to help keep the mask strings off of their ears. During this time the students have shown responsibility in not wearing hats that are offensive or disrespectful (which is in line with other school dress codes.)

The ability to wear hats is a small way that students can express themselves silently and also support their favorite teams (local, regional, national or international.)

This proposal will also allow students having a bad hair day to move past it and learn more comfortably.

There is an understanding that all hats worn in the school would need to be in good taste and of non-offensive nature.

This policy change would not apply the use of hoods during the school day. There is also an understanding that if the district policy is changed to allow hats, that this privilege could be taken away at any time by an administrator if the privilege is abused.

We, the members of the TWKDMS student council, ask that the district policy committee members take this proposal into consideration and allow students at TWKDMS to wear hats during the school day.

Thank you for your consideration of this policy change.

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: T. Kelly

Opposed: L. Whittington

Motion Carried

2. Approval of out of state travel for the DHS Speech and Debate Team as they travel to nationals. (Brad Conant and speech/debate team members.)

Speech and Debate Team 2022 Nationals Team Requests

1. The team requests permission to attend the NCFL Grand National Tournament in Washington DC on May 28-30, 2022. (With travel days May 26-31, 2022)

2. The team also requests permission to raise funds for this trip.

Background:

The Dirigo Speech and Debate Team qualified for 5 places at two different national tournaments. After examining the costs, scheduling, and effort required, the team decided to concentrate on going to the NCFL Washington D.C. tournament and forego participation in the NSDA Louisville tournament.

Costs:

Our estimated total cost for the trip is between \$4325 and \$4570. The variation is largely due to

our 3 alternates who could be called up to compete and therefore incur tournament fees and the fees necessary to acquire judges. The biggest expenses are transportation and tournament fees. This number includes approximately \$1600 which we would raise on our own to visit Hershey Park. Not included in the total are costs for substitute teachers which would be 2 teachers for 3 school days.

The current school budget for national tournaments is \$3300 and the team account has \$1800. In theory, we have all we need, but we would have little left for the next opportunity or to subsidize meals. At the moment, no meals are provided for in the budget. This is past practice unless we fundraise to subsidize the cost. Everyone on the team has tentatively agreed to this and we have donors willing to quietly help out anyone who cannot afford the cost.

Fundraising:

The objective is to provide money for this trip as well as to avoid totally depleting current team funds for future trips. Some meal subsidy is hoped for and might result if all goes well enough. The team has ideas about a Trivia night, quilt raffle, silent auction, yard work, among other ideas which they are developing.

Participation:

The total group is approximately 14 persons, 7 students and 7 adults. 4 students will be competing at the tournament with the potential of 2 alternates who could be called up. Teams must provide judges or pay for others to do it. The adults are mainly judging, coaching or chaperoning and include; 3 parents, 2 adult alumni, and DHS teachers Brad Conant and Rob Fenning.

Brad Conant, Speech and Debate Team Advisor

The board asked a few questions: The team will stay with Mr. Conant's brother who has a large house in MD.

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: T. Kelly

Motion Carried

3. Request for a year's leave of absence (Julie Couture)

Julie Couture came to the board to ask for a year's leave of absence to go back to school to finish getting her degree in Early Childhood-Special Education. She feels it would be in her best interest to take the year off to finish the classes and her clinicals. The district has not paid for any of her classes to this point and wouldn't be going forward. It has been paid through her husband's GI bill. She has been in the district for 7 years.

Motion: D. Whittemore

Seconded: L. Whittington

Motion Carried

4. Updated 2022-23 Budget Overview (Pam Doyen)

Pam gave a presentation on the updated budget overview

Key Considerations:

1. What's best for our students?
2. How do we support our current employees?
3. How do we respond to community concerns/desires?

Good News from the ED 279

Last year:

State share: 64.51%

This year:

State share: 68.53%

Total state allocation:
\$6,498,092.59

Total state allocation:
\$7,297,335.22
Up \$799,242.63

Health Insurance Increase: 0%

Adjusted Proposed Budget: \$13,215,140

Revised Proposed Budget to Budget Increase: 1.85%

\$ increase= \$240,361

Proposed Budget to Budget Increase Breakdown: \$85,983 (estimated)

Negotiated Increases: 2022-23

BGT	2%
Nutrition	2%
Ed-Techs	2%
CO/Tech	TBD
Secretaries	TBD
Administrators	2.5%
Teachers	TBD

Other (non-controllable) non payroll increases:

\$246,417.00

With Admin cuts of non payroll items: Overall increase was \$154,378

1. Audit cost \$3,800
2. Building Insurance \$10,022
3. Spec Ed (OOD and SEED) \$172,748
4. Heating Oil \$29,262
5. Gas/Diesel \$20,585
6. Electricity \$10,000
7. Misc. areas throughout the budget

Additional Faculty Leader at DES \$1538.00

Impact on our four towns at a 1.85% budget to budget increase:

<u>Town</u>	<u>Percent Increase</u>
Canton	3.528%
Carthage	-10.724%
Dixfield	-9.551%
Peru	-7.483%
	-6.876%

“Add-on” for the board to consider:

Ed-Tech at DHS to support Alt. Ed \$50,545.00

Would result in a proposed budget of: \$13,265,685- Resulting in a 2.24% budget to budget increase.

Impact on towns at 2.24%, 1.85% 1%, 0%:

	2.24%	1.85%	1%	0%
Canton	4.396%	3.528%	1.628%	-0.600%
Carthage	-10.065%	-10.724%	-12.166%	-13.857%
Dixfield	-8.625%	-9.551%	-11.578%	-13.956%
Peru	-6.677%	-7.483%	-9.247%	-11.316%

Total **-6.039%** **-6.876%** **-8.708%** **-10.858%**

Budget Timeline:

April 12, 2022: Board to vote on budget. (Additional warrant articles: additional subsidy, bus garage, etc.)

May 10, 2022: Board to sign warrants

Budget Newsletter: Residents will receive a newsletter with the budget information.

May 24, 2022: In-person Budget Validation/Hearing at DHS, 6:30

June 14, 2022: School Budget Referendum vote in all four towns

Mary passed out town assessment sheets with all the numbers to see how the percentages were calculated.

Mary & Pam went over carryover and fund balance to explain how it affects anything. Mary said the 1.85% would not be lowered if any money from carryover was used. The only way that would be lowered is if there were things that were cut from the budget. There was a few questions in regards for clarification on the numbers.

5. Motion to approve the 2022-23 School Budget

Motion: B. Ross made a motion to approve the 2022-23 School Budget of 1.85%

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Not Voting: K. Aslanidi

Motion Carried

6. Motion to approve Amplify as the reading program to be purchased for DES (C. Swan & J. Long)

Charlie first spoke on the need for a number of years of having a consistent reading program.

Reading Program Review Process

Step 1: Get Organized

DES Reading Committee (RC) formed

Step 2: Agree on Priorities

Science of Reading and best practice PD for RC

Administrative book study

Discussions

Design of program review tool for evaluation

ESSER-F 3 Funding Allocation

Administrative Team Application Process

DES Reading Committee

Danielle Afari, Karolyn Buotte, Katie Chicoine, Julie Couture, Amy Gammon, Laura Johnston, Jason Long, Andrea Palmer, Jessica Swan, Charlie Swan

Consensus Priorities

Five Essential Elements of Reading & follow the latest "Science of Reading"

Engagement, intervention ready, PD support, comprehensive approach, writing, integrated content area vocabulary, strong phonics and phonemic awareness

Step 3: Initial Review

10 programs reviewed by committee

Multiple meetings

Scored and discussed

Top 5 selected for further review

Step 4: Full Review

Full samples gathered and reviewed

Admin meeting for publisher Q

CC discussion with each publisher

Quotes gathered

Step 5: Staff Committee Evaluation

~~Identify top 3~~ **Unanimous**

Step 6: Deep Dive!

Contact outside schools using program

Independent evaluation data

FULL Samples distributed to full staff

DES Faculty Leadership discussion

Admin and publishers meeting

Step 7: Recommendation to Board Committee

03/30/2022-Recommendation for Adoption

Step 8: Recommendation to Full Board

04/12/2022

Recommendation: Amplify CKLA

Why Amplify CKLA?

Knowledge: Knowledge; Vocabulary; Sentences; Connections; Gist- **Integration**

Skills: Sounds; Letters; Words - **Integration**

A. Gammon spoke on how short the school day really is to incorporate all the components that need to be taught and this program will give teachers pretty much all the language, reading, writing components, so everything in a nutshell. It will also add in some of the science and social studies standards. It will be more consistent between grade levels- All grades will be working on some of the same standards, common language, common subjects.

A. Palmer - For the K-2 group it came down to have a strong skill section but also a knowledge section. Giving them read aloud time and high quality books.

C. Swan- A lot on the committee liked that there were actual books in the hands of kids rather than a textbook material. That was a big highlight for a lot of the committee.

J. Long- Skills workbooks, in addition trade books - so every classroom will have its own set. We're also buying a set for the library. Also have a hard copy. Most of it is digital that will last a long time. Getting them ahead of time. Professional development cost is factored into this. This June, should this be approved, we have a trainer that will fly here to train all the teachers @ DES. The teachers will have this material over the summer to go over it. A trainer will be here in August for a refresher and in case we have any new people that come in for the school year. A followup session virtually for the October workshop day. Jason spoke about talking to a teacher downeast that is using this program and what got her most excited was after a year of using the program she could walk up to a 3rd grader and ask what they were learning about and they could tell her. The units are fully integrated.

L. Whittington: asked if it was an assessment tool or a Curriculum tool? Jason said it's a curriculum resource tool. It comes with tools that can be used for assessment. The district is not abandoning our own screening assessments.

C. Lueders: asked what is the name of the reading program we have now? Jason said we don't have a reading program. We have a bunch of "islands of excellence". We have a curriculum standards that are supposed to be taught at each grade level and some common units that are taught at different grade levels. C. Lueders: so this is a one time purchase with fees every year? Jason: We are able to take possession with a one-time purchase enough to cover us for six years. Our technology license will extend out six years, we will have enough workbooks averaging 60 kids per cohort per year for six years.

B. Ross: Asked what happens after the 6 years are up. Jason: With a program you don't really know how well it worked till after using it for 3-4 years. You can't tell what's going to change in 6 years so you can't make a purchase too far into the future. After speaking with other principals, after 6 years our teachers will be very confident in what they are doing. There will be certain skill books that will be used and we will probably need to plan to order those. There is money in the budget each year for workbooks. Excited to give teachers everything they need, after the last two years of trying to figure everything out on the fly.

L. Whittington- After 6 years if you find it's not doing what you want can you opt out? Jason- Yes..and you can't really tell how well a program is until after at least 3-4 years. Add to that the reality of Covid...Jason would like 6 years of information.

B. Chow- How much is the technology piece of this? Jason- Only as much as you want it to be. Everything that is being purchased is coming in hard copy also. It's coming in as digital accessible but not primarily digital. There are real books...another thing that's going to be done is hand writing.

Jason said he would come back and share information about the program once it is being used.

D. Whittemore: asked how much the program was. Pam: It is about \$140,000 coming out of ESSERF not local funds.

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: L. Whittington

Motion Carried

7. Motion to include the following warrant article: Shall the School Board be authorized to transfer amounts exceeding 5% of the total appropriation for any cost center to another cost center or among other cost centers for the 2022-2023 fiscal year, provided that transfers shall not be permitted to increase the authorized school budget?

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: T. Kelly

Motion Carried

8. Motion to include the following warrant article: Shall the School Board be authorized to transfer up to \$500,000 from available fund balances to the Capital Reserve Fund to build a bus garage. ~~addition; and to expend up to \$_____ from said Capital Reserve Fund to build a bus garage addition?~~

Note: Approval of this article will not increase the RSU's operating budget or increase the amounts to be raised by each RSU town.

Pam gave an explanation on this: The bus garage addition did not go out to bid but they received a quote on what it would cost to build. It came in at significantly more than what was anticipated. The estimated cost of this bus garage from H.E. Callahan was \$1,000,950.00. We clearly do not

have that kind of money to put right now into a bus garage. I would however, encourage the board to do at least part of this next warrant and just motion to include the transferring \$500,000 into Capital Reserve for a potential bus garage and leave it at that and we'll keep adding to it until we can afford to put it up with no additional expenditures out to our four towns.

C. Lueders: Can we look around to get another quote? Pam: Kenny is already looking around and also reaching out to Callahan to see what else can be done. I believe we should start the process of saving for it. C. Lueders: Should we put it out to bid? Maybe someone that is actually going to build it?

B. Chow: Asked if the process was still going to go ahead at some point. Pam: said it would still move forward but just not at this time. Would be in the best interest of the district to still have a bus garage and be on our own. Just put some money aside to start saving for it.

Kenny R: spoke on the costs of the estimate that had come in and will still move forward possibly looking at other types of buildings to get the cost lower.

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

9. Motion to include the following warrant article: Shall the School Board be authorized to transfer up to \$200,000 from available fund balances to the Technology Reserve Fund?

Note: Approval of this article will not increase the RSU's operating budget or increase the amounts to be raised by each RSU town.

D. Whittemore: Asked Brian how much was needed for technology. Brian explained that it would depend on which school the equipment needs to be updated. For DES it would be around \$350k For DMS & DHS around \$200k.

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

10. Motion to include the following warrant article: 1. In the event that the Regional School Unit receives more state education subsidy than the amount included in its budget, shall the School Board be authorized to use 25% of the additional state subsidy to increase expenditures for school purposes in cost center categories approved by the School Board; to use 25% of the additional state subsidy to transfer to the Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of maintenance of plant and minor remodeling; and to use 50% of the additional state subsidy to decrease the local cost share expectation, as defined in Title 20-A, section 15671-A(1)(B), for local property taxpayers for funding public education as approved by the School Board?

B. Ross: Asked why wouldn't we do an equal percentage across all 3 categories? Pam responded that the Board can do what they want. As Superintendent she just feels that it is a good gesture to give 50% back to the taxpayers and then 25%, 25%. The Board can decide what they want to do.

Motion: C. Lueders made a motion to keep it the same: 25, 25 & 50%

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

11. Motion to include the following warrant article: Warrant article to ask for voter approval to sweep unallocated funds that exceed _____ % (up to 9%) of budget into a flexible contingency fund. *For 2022-2023, school boards may carry forward unallocated fund balances of up to 9%*

of the prior year's budget. This was recently increased from 3%.)

Pam explained that this is new this year. There was a change in what schools can bring forward. They can bring forward up to 9% in fund balance. This warrant article would ask the voters to approve the sweeping unallocated funds that exceed 9% into a flexible contingency fund.

Mary explained further, she contacted the lawyer and it is something they put into place simply as a vehicle to move anything above that 9% that the state allows into the flexible contingency fund and that fund can be used for emergencies. If it is used for anything else you still need to go out and get voter approval to spend that money. Now that the Board has voted (as long as the towns people vote) for the \$500,000 & the \$200,000 we will be below the 9% , so it wouldn't be necessary this year.

B. Ross: Is this something that is voted on each year? Mary: This is the first year but yes certainly it could come forward again next year to address.

D. Whittemore: Could we just leave it at the 3%? Would it hurt anything? That has been working and it might show that we're trying to keep things down.

Mary: I would recommend that we don't include it at all. Pam: I agree with Mary, since it was just voted to put the \$500k & the \$200k it won't exceed the 9% so it is not needed anyway. You don't have to do it but as your Superintendent I wanted to bring it to your attention.

Motion: B. Ross made a motion to not include this in our warrant articles.

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

12. Motion to reappoint Wayne Thurston to the Region 9 board.

Motion: B. Ross

Seconded: C. Lueders

Motion Carried

OLD BUSINESS

1. COVID cases update (Pam Doyen)

Pam showed a slide from 3/21/2022-4/11/2022

2 Students out of school for COVID in the last 3 weeks since we met

4 teachers out, 3 as positive and 1 under close contact but opting to stay out because it was a close contact and they had some symptoms.

If you test positive for COVID you have to be out for 5 days. When you come back, day 6-10 you need to wear a mask.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent's Report:

As was noted earlier, Mary & I have attended Carthage and we've attended Dixfield select board meetings. I now have a date for Canton, the 28th.

Reminder, Graduation is June 10th so board members are invited.

36 ½ days left of school. The final student day is currently June 13th. The last day is an early release day.

We get students home and get staff together. We'll be on the football field, weather permitting on that afternoon. We do have a lunch and then all of our retirees are honored and door prizes are drawn. If you have anything you would like to donate, feel free to let me know.

Administrator's Report: Jason Long

TWKDMS: Winter/Spring 2022 Building Report

TWKDMS: Enrollment Update

	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Total
Oct Enrollment	55	62	54	171
Apr Enrollment	58	61	55	174

Since July 1st, TWKDMS has had 13 students withdraw/move and 16 students enroll. Two students are enrolled in the Western Maine Remote Academy. Enrollment is steady.

Attendance Data

	Grade 6 W22/W21	Grade 7 W22/W21	Grade 8 W22/W21	Total W22/W21
Truant, Paused or Resolved	0/8	4/6	4/15	7/29
Truant, Active	1/ 3	1/ 4	0/1	2/8
Warning, Improved or Resolved	1/ 7	4/ 11	2/8	7/ 26

Currently, TWKDMS has 2 active truancy cases, 8 paused cases, and 7 students that have received warnings. However, due largely to COVID-19 procedures, 36 students are on track to be identified as chronically absent by the end of the year (this includes the 9 truant students.)

TWKDMS NWEA Math: Percentage of "Met" Winter Growth Goal

Jason went over a graph he did showing the percentage of where students landed for Meeting Math goals From 2020-2021 to 2021-2022 the percentages did not change very much.

A lot has to be attributed to the teachers. It has not been an easy time

TWKDMS NWEA Reading: Percentage of "Met" Winter Growth Goal

TWKDMS Alt Ed NWEA Math: Percentage "Met" Growth

First year of stand alone with Alt Ed program. The Alt Ed population did very well. Still not a good year. The students in this group exceeded what was expected.

Core academics out of the way in the morning. Then do many alternative ed learning activities in the afternoon. They have done many cool activities and learning.

Percentage of Projected Growth Met: **125% (65.8% school)**

TWKDMS Alt Ed NWEA Reading: Percentage "Met" Growth

Percentage of Projected Growth Met: **128% (64.1% school)**

Ave Daily SWIS Referrals Per Month: Comparison

2021-2022 to 2018-2019

12 (up from 6) students are currently on a Tier Two CICO Plan, 2 (up from 1) student with ICMPs.

All staff have received monthly training on Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI)

Winter/Spring Clubs & Activities

Student Council	Yearbook
Speech & Debate	Skiing
Early Act Club (Rotary)	Drama Club
Civil Rights team	Technology Club
Positive Cougar Club (RVHCC)	Basketball
Craft Club	Unified Basketball
Band & Chorus	Track
Jobs for Maine Graduates	Baseball/Softball

Wrestling Champs and 80+ students signed up for spring sports in a school with just over 170 kids

Special Events

Winter Celebration Day (December)

Remember Rally (February)

Snowball (March)

Black Mountain Celebration (March)

Wrestling & Unified Rally (March)

Amelia Moore: Grit (April)

Slugger's Reading Challenge (April)

Upcoming

Jason Tardy: Anti-Bullying (RVHCC)

8th Grade Transition

Spring Science MEA & NWEAs

8th Grade Social

Take What You Need Yard Sale- A lot of families might need things but don't feel comfortable coming to get things so by having a yard sale "take what you need, Pay what you can" might make them feel better about it.

8th Grade Class Trip

Step Up Days

End of Year Activities

Summer School (positive trend)

B. Chow asked about the truancy and how it affects the freshman coming in and what that transition looks like. Jason: it's a mixed bag. It would be something for the Dropout Prevention committee to look at.

Stipended and Coaching Positions:

Tanya Perreault- DHS V Softball

Jessica Robbins- DHS JV Softball

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Student Representative Report- Spring sports is starting with both baseball & softball having scrimmages yesterday. Amelia Moore came and spoke. Prom coming up on May 7th. AP Exams coming soon & 1st round of SAT's also on May 7th. A lot coming up
2. Policy Committee- Met 4/12 Going over more policies around law changes, which can be challenging looking at 3 different policies for each one.
3. Finance Committee- Met 4/1- Good meeting-Mary: A typo, that came to the attention of the auditor, in the audit report. Page 40 was corrected and Mary gave the Board members a corrected copy of that page.
4. Curriculum Committee- A. Cushman not available- The committee did meet and Jason went over what was reviewed.
5. Building & Grounds Committee- Not met
6. Negotiations Committee- Finished 1 contract - waiting to hear from the bargaining unit to see if they have ratified it. Once they do that it will be brought to the Board. Also have 2 other groups that will be meeting with the Committee.
7. Personnel Committee- N. Sneller not available

8. Ad-hoc Committee)1st Thursday of each month, via zoom)- Met last Thursday in person. Went really well. Reviewing what are the goals, what do we want to accomplish. E. Couture will come and present what we think we have done.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

M. Young- It's good to be here. Thank you. Barbara, you and I need to discuss committees, at another time.

ADJOURNMENT

1. Motion to adjourn

Motion: M. Young

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

Meeting adjourned at 8:33pm