

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT #37

March 31, 2021

The Regular Meeting of the School Directors of RSU #37/ MSAD #37 was held at Narraguagus Jr./Sr. High School on Wednesday, March 31, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. to consider and act upon the following items of business:

Board Members Present: Jeffery Beal, Chris Chartrand, Steve Dunham, Shelby Greene, Beth Hartford, Grace Kennedy, Ronald Kennedy, Gary Magby, Debra Murphy, Tiffany Strout, and Mark Wright

Board Members Absent: None

Other persons present: Ronald Ramsay, Denise Vose, Lorna Greene, Todd Emerson, Mary Ellen Day, Susan Meserve, Ron Green, Lucille Willey, Maria Frankland, Lori Mathews, David Mathews, Eric Brooks, Robin Pineo, Suzen Polk-Hoffses, Melinda Reynolds, Candy Tucker, Amanda Kowolski, Alexandra Loukas, Yvonne Hayward, Donna Haire, Kandi Robertson, Ashley Cirone, Dawn Fickett, and other citizens

MINUTES

A. INTRODUCTORY BUSINESS

1. **The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Vice-Chair Debra Murphy.**
2. **RE: APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 24, 2021**
ACTION: Motion by Mark Wright, second by Jeffery Beal, and voted (792-yes, 97-abstentions) to approve the minutes of the February 24, 2021 meeting as printed. (Hartford abstained as she was absent from that meeting.)
3. **RE: REPORT—SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS (Including Legislative Updates)**
INFORMATION: Supt. Ramsay presented a plaque to Charles Peterson, Jr., who retired from board service this month after 39 years. The Superintendent expressed his appreciation to Charlie for his dedication to this district for such a long period of time.

Supt. Ramsay noted that we have nine weeks of school left, two before April vacation and seven after. The last pupil day is June 11th.

The board received copies of several resignation/retirement letters: Keith Newman, Robin Newman, Donna Raineri, Linda Smith, and George True III.

Lucille Willey, Director of CWCIT, presented information on the program. She noted that when she sat on the committee to apply for the FEDES grant to get the new center up and running she never dreamed she would end up as director. She said she is enjoying her job very much, even though there is a lot to learn. Seeing the kids come in every day and be engaged in the programs is very rewarding. There are currently 9 programs under CWCIT: Culinary Arts and Building Trades at Machias Memorial High School; Aquaculture at Jonesport-Beals High School; Criminal Justice and Health Occupations at Narraguagus High School; and Automotive, Diesel Mechanics, Early Childhood, and Welding at the new site in Columbia. Our teachers all bring a lot of experience in the fields they are teaching. There is a lot going on and it is all exciting to see!

Lori Mathews, Transportation Director, presented information on the CDL/School Bus Driving Academy that is being offered in partnership with WCCC. She and another transportation director are teaching the class to eight students. They have completed the 43 classroom hours required and are now working on the 16 driving hours each will need to become licensed.

4. **RE: REVIEW OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

INFORMATION: Supt. Ramsay noted that we were in good shape at the end of February. We have a bigger balance right now than normal just because of COVID and not being able to do some things we've done in the past. It means we should have no problem with our balance forward or with funding the two outside articles we discussed at the budget workshop last week.

5. **RE: ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS** (Including Professional Development, ESEA, and G/T)

INFORMATION: Susan Meserve reported an enrollment of 116 at Harrington, with 108 attending and 6 doing remote. They have 14 boys and 15 girls participating in Peewee basketball. She chaired the virtual Washington County Spelling Bee with a student from Milbridge (Shelby Dunbar) winning it. Grade One students became published authors with a book they wrote entitled Friendship at the Zoo. Grade Two also wrote some stories and shared them virtually on the school's Facebook page.

Lorna Greene noted that DW Merritt has 94 students with 80 currently attending and 14 doing remote. The 3rd quarter ends Friday. There are 11 students taking individual band lessons with Mr. Milazzo. Peewee is running with 9 boys and 6 girls. Sixteen students are participating in EdGE after school. **PD**—On March 18th staff participated in virtual Learning Club meetings updating student assessments. **ESEA**—We have applied for funding to run a Title I Summer School and are waiting to hear if we will get it. Schools have been holding Parent/Family Nights. There are 192 students district-wide receiving Title I services. **G/T**—Virtual field trips through the Zoom Zone continue. She is working on a partnership with the Maine Outdoor School to provide some virtual experiences for G/T students.

Denise Vose reported that we have 144 students with IEP's, 18 students with 504 plans, and many referrals that are being processed.

Mary Ellen Day noted that Narraguagus has 284 students. They have held Zoom meetings for incoming 7th and 9th graders. Academic Award and Fall/Winter Sports Award Ceremonies were recently held in-person. Numbers were limited, but parents were able to attend by breaking the students up into smaller groups. Volleyball is finishing up just as Baseball and Softball begin. Eric Beal was named the DAC Coach of the Year, and we had several of our players named as DAC All-stars.

6. **RE: SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- a. **Athletics/Student Activities**
- b. **Curriculum & Instruction**
- c. **Negotiations & Grievance**
- d. **Policy & By-laws**
- e. **Facilities, Maintenance, Safety & Transportation**

INFORMATION: None of these committees have met this month.

7. **RE: AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**

ACTION: Motion by Mark Wright, second by Beth Hartford, and voted (unanimously) to table this article as there are no adjustments necessary tonight.

B. **OLD BUSINESS**

None

C. **NEW BUSINESS**

1. **RE: APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENT OF DEBRA MURPHY AS INTERIM BOARD CHAIR**

ACTION: Motion by Grace Kennedy, second by Bethany Hartford, and voted (851-yes, 90 abstentions) to approve Debra Murphy as Interim Board Chair. (Murphy abstained.)

2. **RE: ELECTION OF INTERIM BOARD VICE-CHAIR**
ACTION: Motion by Ronald Kennedy, second by Chris Chartrand, and voted (889-yes, 52-abstentions) to elect Mark Wright as Interim Board Vice-Chair. (Wright abstained.)

3. **RE: ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBER TO FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE**
ACTION: Motion by Ronald Kennedy, second by Chris Chartrand, and voted (833-yes, 108-abstentions) to elect Tiffany Strout to the Finance Subcommittee. (Strout abstained.)

4. **RE: APPROVAL TO OPT OUT OF THE CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM**
ACTION: Supt. Ramsay noted that the law for this program (LD 577) was enacted in June of 2019 and requires school districts to participate in the program providing afterschool snacks/meals if at least 50% of the students in the district qualify for free or reduced-price lunches AND offers an afterschool enrichment activity that is open to ALL. It is important to note that the district does not have such a program, as our afterschool program currently in place is not open to all grade levels.

To participate in CACFP, the district would need to start an afterschool enrichment program that was open to all. We believe this would be cost-prohibitive, especially since we already have the EdGE program in place and provide free snacks to all participants of that program.

Motion by Mark Wright, second by Grace Kennedy, and voted (unanimously) to opt out of the Child and Adult Care Food Program for 2020-2021 as recommended.

5. **RE: APPROVAL OF EXTENSION OF 1-YEAR ADMINISTRATIVE CONTRACTS THROUGH 2022**
ACTION: Motion by Grace Kennedy, second by Mark Wright, and voted (unanimously) to approve the extension of the following 1-year administrative contracts through 2022:

Dow, Susan	NJSHS-Jr. High Asst. Principal (stipend position-Sept-Aug)
Fickett, Dawn	Assistant to the Superintendent (July-June)
Gray, Samantha	Social Worker (Sept-Aug)
Green, Ron	Maintenance Director (July-June)
Hayward, Yvonne	Speech Pathologist (Sept-Aug)
Latham, Edward	Technology Assistant (July-June)
Martin, Tracie	NJSHS Athletic Director (stipend position-July-June)
Mathews, Lori	Assistant Transportation Director (July-June)
Patryn, Elisabeth	Occupational Therapist (Sept-Jun)
Seeley, Kassidy	Speech Pathologist (Sept-Aug)
Smith, Ronald	Technology Director (July-June)
Tozier, Amanda	Part-time School Nurse (Sept-Aug)
Trafton, Charlene	Food Services Director (Sept-Aug)

6. **RE: HIRING SUBSTITUTES**
ACTION: Motion by Chris Chartrand, second by Mark Wright, and voted (unanimously) to approve the following substitutes as recommended by Supt. Ramsay: Danielle Maillet and Rylea Steeves as substitute teachers and Todd Moores as substitute van driver.

7. **RE: APPROVAL OF NARRAGUAGUS JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM OF STUDIES FOR 2021-2022**
ACTION: Motion by Beth Hartford, second by Mark Wright, and voted (unanimously) to approve the NJSHS Program of Studies for 2021-2022.

8. **RE: CONSIDERATION OF 1ST READING OF SCHOOL NUTRITION PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

ACTION: Supt. Ramsay noted that the Food Service program had a recent procurement review, and we were told by the State that we needed to have this procedure in place to be compliant. It deals with purchasing of items for the food service program through competitive bidding or comparative purchasing.

Motion by Ronald Kennedy, second by Mark Wright, and voted (unanimously) to approve the 1st reading of the School Nutrition Procurement Procedure and Code of Conduct.

9. RE: APPROVAL OF CHANGE TO SCHOOL RE-OPENING PLAN

ACTION: Supt. Ramsay noted that the board had asked him about getting students back to school in late fall. Conditions prohibited it then, but now we can do so and still maintain the guidelines as required by the state. He and the administrative team began looking at ways to make this happen back in January. Principals were asked to talk with staff and parents to get input into the change, and then a plan was developed to have the elementary schools return to 5-day in-person instruction beginning the Monday after April vacation. There would no longer be remote Wednesdays. Extra people will be hired to help teachers with the remote students that don't come back to school for the rest of the year. Narraguagus would resume 4 days of in-person instruction for all students that want to come back (instead of the current 2 day in-person, 2-day remote schedule they have now). Wednesday would continue to be a remote day for NJSHS just because of the number of students that are completely remote (80+). The high school does not have the space currently to allow for all students to return in-person while maintaining the 3-foot social distance requirement. Transportation will resume five days a week as will breakfast/lunch.

He also noted that at least 60% of our staff have been vaccinated. Some are done and some have one shot left. It is likely even more will be done by April vacation. We are not mandating staff to be vaccinated but anyone who wants the vaccine should have been able to get it by then. Adding one more day of in-person instruction certainly does not increase the risk of infection when teachers are already seeing those students up to four days a week presently. We have had relatively few cases and have been able to contain them through quarantines.

Robin Pineo, President of the Teachers' Association, spoke on behalf of teachers. She noted that the remote students need as much, if not more, assistance from teachers. The association is requesting that the elementary schools be allowed to continue in their current configuration of four in-person days and Wednesdays as remote days, while the junior/senior high school be allowed to increase to four days of in-person instruction with Wednesdays remaining remote to help students not attending in person. If the board is not in support of that, the Association offered some alternatives: don't allow any remote students; don't allow any new remote students; or have Wednesdays be half-days for in-person with the other half of the day for teachers to work with remote students.

Suzen Polk-Hoffses shared a letter from Elyssa Johnson, elementary art teacher, requesting that we remain in our current configuration at the elementary schools as it is already difficult to plan lessons for all the remote students with a full-day to do so on Wednesday. Without that day, it will be even more difficult.

Mark Wright noted that it comes down to quality of education. Remote learning is not as good as having our students back in person five days a week. Supt. Ramsay agreed. He also shared his concern and that of the administration that we need to have the expectation that we will be back in session five days a week the fall. If we start now, students and parents will be ready to do so in September; if we wait, it will be harder to get some students back at all in the fall. He appreciates all the dialogue and realizes it is an emotional issue. He noted that he had reached out to schools all around us to see what they were doing and most of them are back in session five days a week with no additional help for staff to take care of their remote students. We are offering to get whatever help teachers feel they need. It won't be perfect but will be better than not having help to return.

Ron Kennedy noted that if we don't get kids back to school, we are failing both the students and our taxpayers that are expecting us to provide a quality education to students.

It was moved by Mark Wright, second by Jeffery Beal, and voted (534-yes, 407-no) to approve the change to the school reopening plan with Elementary Schools resuming in-person instruction five days a week beginning Monday, April 26th, and the Jr./Sr. High School resuming in-person instruction four days a week beginning Monday, April 5th. The initial vote count was 437-yes, 504-no, which meant the vote failed.

Tiffany Strout asked if it was possible to have the high school go to 4 days of in-person instruction and the elementary to 4.5 days, with Wednesdays being a half-day as requested by the Teachers' Association. Grace Kennedy noted we are almost to the end of the year; why change now. We should just keep it as is and then go to 5 days a week in September. A lot of discussion followed. Supt. Ramsay noted that if the board wants to reconsider the article, they will need to have a 2/3 majority vote to do so.

Susan Meserve and Lorna Greene both noted that they have plans in place and are ready to go back five days a week with additional support for teachers to help with remote learners. Parents want their kids back in school five days a week as well.

Ron Kennedy questioned the results of the initial vote. A second roll call was taken, and it was determined that one of the initial votes was recorded incorrectly as a "no" vote instead of a "yes" vote. The vote was recounted with a result of 534-yes, 407-no, meaning the initial motion to approve the change to the school reopening plan with Elementary Schools resuming in-person instruction five days a week beginning Monday, April 26th, and the Jr./Sr. High School resuming in-person instruction four days a week beginning Monday, April 5th did pass. ("Yes" votes: Chartrand, Murphy, Wright, R. Kennedy, Beal, Hartford; "No" votes—Magby, Greene, Dunham, Strout, G. Kennedy)

10. RE: CONSIDERATION OF CHANGE IN GATHERING RESTRICTIONS

ACTION: Supt. Ramsay noted that the Governor's Office has released changes to the restrictions on gatherings based on the square footage of the space being used while still meeting the 6-foot social distancing requirement. We have been following the state guidelines, and if we continue to do so, this will allow us to have activities that some people can be present at such as award ceremonies, athletic events, and graduation. We would still adhere to the limits based on the new guidelines.

Motion by Mark Wright, second by Beth Hartford, and voted (unanimously) to approve the change in gathering restrictions to be consistent with the current state guidelines from the Governor's office.

11. RE: EXECUTIVE SESSION--NEGOTIATIONS

ACTION: Motion by Chris Chartrand, second by Ron Kennedy, and voted (unanimously) to enter Executive Session to consider negotiations for the Superintendent pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(A). Those included in the session will be the Board and the Superintendent.

Entered Executive Session at 9:18 p.m. Came out of Executive Session at 9:36 p.m.

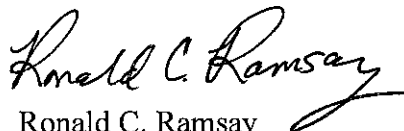
12. RE: APPROVAL OF SUPERINTENDENT NEGOTIATIONS FOR 2021-2022

ACTION: Motion by Grace Kennedy, second by Shelby Greene, and voted (unanimously) to approve a 2.75% increase to the Superintendent's salary for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, as well as allowing him to apply 2.25% of his mileage and/or health insurance allowance to salary for those two years.

13. RE: ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Motion by Ronald Kennedy, and voted (unanimously) to adjourn the meeting at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Ronald C. Ramsay
Secretary to the Board

MEETING SUMMARY, March 31, 2021

A. Introductory Business:

2. APPROVED minutes of the 2/24/21 regular meeting;
7. TABLED agenda adjustments;

B. Old Business:

None

C. New Business:

1. APPOINTED D. Murphy as Interim Board Chair;
2. ELECTED M. Wright as Interim Board Vice-chair;
3. ELECTED T. Strout as member to Finance Subcommittee;
4. APPROVED opting out of CACFP for 20-21;
5. APPROVED extension of 1-year administrative contracts for the following: Dow, Fickett, Gray, Green, Hayward, Latham, Martin, Mathews, Patryn, Seeley, Smith, Tozier, and Trafton;
6. HIRED substitute teachers-D. Maillet and R. Steeves; hired sub van driver-T. Moores;
7. APPROVED 2021-2022 Program of Studies for NJSHS;
8. APPROVED 1st reading of School Nutrition Procurement Procedure and Code of Conduct;
9. APPROVED change to school re-opening plan (back to 5 days a week elementary and 4 days a week NJSHS);
10. APPROVED following Governor's guidelines for gathering restrictions;
11. EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss negotiations with the Superintendent;
12. APPROVED negotiations with Superintendent for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023.