

# Oyster River Cooperative School District

## Regular Meeting Minutes

February 3, 2021

DRAFT

**SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT:** Dan Klein, Tom Newkirk, Denise Day, Michael Williams, Al Howland, Yusi Turell, Brian Cisneros. **Student Representative:** Megan Deane

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** James Morse, Todd Allen, Sue Caswell, Suzanne Filippone, Catherine Plourde

**STAFF PRESENT:**

**GUEST PRESENT:** There were 7 members in the audience.

**CALLED TO ORDER at 7:00 PM by Tom Newkirk**

Tom Newkirk stated that under Section VII – Superintendent’s Report we are removing the Request for a UNH Survey for Middle School Students.

### II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

**Brian Cisneros moved to approve the agenda as amended, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed with a vote of 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

At this time and before he introduced public comment, Tom took a moment to read a section of the OR policy on civility; reminding the audience that all speakers are to conduct themselves in a civil manner. Obscene, slanderous, defamatory, or violent statements will be considered out of order and will not be tolerated. He also reminded the audience that the time limit needs to be followed and that there is even an electronic timer that goes from green to yellow to red when the time is up. He additionally stated that the School Board is the audience. When someone is speaking during public comment it is to the Board not the audience.

### III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Hugh Gallagher from Barrington stated that he has 2 students in Oyster River and that he appreciates all of the work done by the Board and administration and supports having children back in school.

Jill Piparo of Lee echo’s what was just stated and is thankful that children will be returning to school and is grateful that is happening.

Allison Jumper has three children in the schools, and they have wonderful teachers and support staff. She is asking for more in-person contact time for the elementary level and stated that other parents are in agreement and read some comments.

There were no additional public comments.

### IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

**Motion to approve the January 20, 2021 regular meeting minutes:**

**Revisions:**

Denise Day requested that on page 4 under Barrington in the first paragraph, last sentence to replace “and” with “any”. On page 8 paragraph 6 replace, “She stated that only 291 would come back in a week or two.” With “She stated that with only 291 willing to come in February, would the lost classroom time be worth it.”

Michael Williams stated that at the very end, the adjournment was not a roll call vote. He also suggested that a separate vote for non-public minute approval was not needed as they were included in the regular minutes.

**Brian Cisneros moved to approve the January 20, 2021 regular meeting minutes as revised, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed with a vote of 7-0. Student Representative voting in the affirmative.**

**Motion to approve the January 20, 2021 non-public meeting minutes:**

**Revisions:** None

Brief discussion about a vote being needed or not. Tom Newkirk stated they will make a second motion.

**Al Howland moved to approve the January 20, 2021 non-public meeting minutes as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Klein. Motion passed with a vote of 7-0. Student Representative voting in the affirmative.**

## **V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS:**

### **A. District:**

Dr. Morse reminded everyone that the Deliberative Session was happening tomorrow evening and outline the protocol that will happen. He stated that the music room will be set up with audio and visual for non-mask wearing individuals, and that the gymnasium will also be set up as an overflow room with audio and visual. The Moderator will be including all rooms in his count for votes.

### **B. Board:**

Yusi Turell brought to the Board's attention the hard work that has been done by the teachers and students in planning for Black History Month. She encouraged all to review the events scheduled on the calendar.

Denise Day stated that she fully supports the teachers and the hard work that they are doing.

Michael Williams stated that as we continue to consider the right way to increase in person school opportunities without making significant compromises on precautions. Two of the words that he tries not to use in talking about the pandemic are "safe" and "fear". He prefers to talk about "risk" and "precautions." We will never arrive at a common definition for what is safe because risk is never zero. Fear is an emotion and decisions that are made to mitigate risk are not necessarily done out of fear, and that some lives are impacted more than others.

He stated that he is proud of the work we have done and is also aware of missteps along the way. He additionally stated that he is grateful for a community that constructively holds us accountable and to continue to communicate with us.

To do the best we can to reach every learner in the current environment, we must continue to offer a full remote option, an in-person services, as well as the preferred modality to as many students as possible. This means that we should continue to work within the limits of our occupancy

requirements this year, and that is where the interest in ways to make the best use of the contact time we do have comes from – whether that be how Wednesdays are utilized or other options.

So, in this spirit and context, he appreciate the many volunteer hours that continue to go into this work, as well as the work of the building level teams.

**VI. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA:** None

**Motion to approve the agenda items listed under the unanimous consent agenda:**

**VII. DISTRICT REPORTS:**

**A. Assistant Superintendent Reports:**

COVID Metric

Todd Allen began by referring everyone to the most recent COVID Metric in their folders. He briefly outlined his conversation with Dr. Ward and shared that the overall trending is positive. He also updated the Board on the recent state change for contact tracing and the increase in the district's portion for this. He briefly reviewed the staffing capacity and that it is generally working quite well.

In terms of the Star testing data and the question posed by a Board member at the last meeting pertaining to whether there was a difference in test scores for remote verse hybrid students. He will be able to answer that question and will report out at the next meeting.

Todd will report out on the middle school update as both Jay and Bill are out due to being quarantined. Todd read from Jay's update. He stated that it was a great start and for the majority it was like a first full day of in person school since last March. He went on to report that the staff and students have been great with following all COVID protocols including lunch. 80% of families have chosen to send their student in for the new in person model. Jay gave kudos to the nursing, custodial, school nutrition and transportation staff for all of their preplanning, set up, and smooth transitions. The only unfortunate event that happened was one grade 7 team missed out due to COVID concerns.

Todd asked the Board if they had any questions.

There were questions pertaining to transportation and the percentage of students taking the bus, and how the scheduling is doing between the elementary and middle school runs.

Dr. Morse explained that Lisa Huppe is a gifted scheduler and has been putting in a tremendous number of hours including weekends to coordinate these schedules. She has worked over 200 routes to meet the needs of our students.

Tom Newkirk thanked Jay for his attitude toward this change and his eagerness to get this going. He expressed his appreciation for getting this off the ground.

Todd Allen returned to the podium to request approval from the Board to convert the workshop days in March and May to instructional days and to move the workshop days to the end of the calendar.

**Al Howland made a motion to convert the workshop days in March and May to instructional days and to move the workshop days to the end of the year, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with a vote of 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

Todd thanked the Board.

### **B. Superintendent's Report:**

Dr. Morse began by updating the Board on the prior request for UNH assistance with testing. He stated that he has been in contact with Chris Clement from UNH and was advised that in the latest UNH plan, aiding the school district was included, however the current plan is in the hands of the UNH attorneys and is being held up due to liability. Dr. Morse stated that when he is given an answer, he will get back to the Board. He additionally stated that he was unable to provide a cost at this time, however he could report that it was lower than the first time.

Snow days was another updated that he wanted to give the Board. He referred back to a memo that was sent out in November to the district that clearly defined what criteria he would use to call a snow day or a remote day. He was comfortable with the last snow day decision that he made and that this allows for control over the calendar.

Electric Buses is the next area that he wished to update the Board with. It was determined at the last finance committee meeting that everyone involved in the discussion raised various concerns about buying an electric bus. Both Sue and Jim were not comfortable with the financing being presented and that additionally this was not the right time to make this purchase.

### Barrington Letter

Dr. Morse advised the Board that they have approved Drummond and Woodsum to act as legal counsel for this matter.

### Instructional Strategies Committee Report

Dr. Morse began by stating that not only did this committee complete their work and draft a report, but also the same happened with the Concurrent Committee who will have their report in front of the Board for the next meeting in February. He went on to state that he appreciated Michael's comments tonight and also to thank both Todd and Tom for all of their assistance in reviewing and finalizing this report. Additional thanks were given to Kim Felch, Anne Golding, Janet Martel, Kathy Pearce, Jay Richard, Mike Anderson, Suzanne Filippone, Audrey MacKenzie, Josh Olstad, Catherine Plourde, and Jennifer Snow for all of their expertise shared in the development of this committee throughout the process and their time and effort put in to complete this report.

Some key areas for answering the questions of what does great teaching and learning look like are: Students feel a strong sense of competence, students have a strong sense of belonging, students (and teachers) have autonomy, learning should be deeply engaging, learning is relevant, and learning is safe and joyful.

Dr. Morse went on to state that the use of best teaching practices, whether in person or remote are critical to the success of students.

There are five practices that should be considered in any lesson. Those being: a theme based, project based or multi-day lesson, strategic use of teacher contact time with students, whether it be through office hours, bobcat time, or other means, providing parent with resources so they know who to easily contact if they need support for their child, the use of multi model presentation tools that engage every learner, and time for teachers to share and develop best practices. An additional theme would be that of providing time for students to read independently. Dr. Morse went on the state that the final recommendation of the committee is to share this report with district educators and ask that building level governance task forces take responsibility for implementation.

Dr. Morse asked the Board if they had any questions.

Al Howland asked what could be done as a Board within the current fiscal year to facilitate this. Also, looking toward summer, how could we use the summer to put these practices in place.

Tom Newkirk stated that the overhanging recommendation is teacher time talking to other teachers. He also suggested book clubs and reading at home. How can we be more strategic checking in with kids?

Megan Deane spoke of ways that students advocate for themselves, she understands that there are different types of learners, and that for students not knowing where to find the resources, are now feeling more comfortable to ask for them.

Dr. Morse agreed that we need to take the initiative and that we make a lot of assumptions especially at the high school level. Some students need adults to structure the outcome.

A brief discussion ensued, and Al Howland stated that we need professional development for parents. They have been forced into a role that they are not accustomed to and how do we provide them support.

Dr. Morse invited Suzanne Filippone up to the podium to begin her presentation for the proposed high school model. He went on to say that the model being presented tonight has strong support from parents, teachers, and students. He went on to state that he reviewed this model with Guild leadership and against the current MOA, and that this model is not in violation. He is hoping for a start on March 8, 2021.

### High School Model Presentation

Suzanne began her presentation by reviewing the feedback from the AM/PM Model and stated that they did go back and connect with additional families which resulted in 726 out 837 responses. The results of this was that 47% of families and 9% of students who were strongly in favor of moving to an AM/PM Model. Discussion with faculty and the task force made it evident that they are not in favor of the AM/PM Model due to the loss of instructional time. This resulted in the 50% Full Day Model she is presenting.

Suzanne reviewed her power point by providing what the return to 80-minute class schedule would look like again dividing the alphabet in half for the in-person and remote breakdown. She also broke down what an individual student schedule would look like. She continued her presentation with what this will look like in practice for the teachers and ended with what this will look like in practice for students.

Suzanne went on to explain that they are planning on juniors and seniors having an open campus for their lunch time with parent permission. This would be an hour and would allow for students to leave for lunch. She has spoken with both Doris and Lisa for their input to this model and that they will be able to accommodate.

Suzanne asked the Board if they had any questions.

The Board asked what the possible make up of a class could look like, would this model provide for material coverage, if there is flexibility if quarantine is needed, if the March 8<sup>th</sup> date is a possibility and how would the school communicate this information so that a timely response is generated. There was a question pertaining to lab work and whether the same lab would be repeated the next day or if a different lab would be done, and additional clarification surrounding lunch and mask removal concerns and what the flexibility would be for those that did not want to remove their masks. Will targeted learners still be allowed the access to the building as needed with other students coming in and also how this was affecting the vocational students that attend other school.

Suzanne and Dr. Morse were able to provide the answers to all of the Board inquiries and with no further questions a motion was made.

**Al Howland made a motion to approve the 50% Full Day Model, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed with a vote of 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

The Board asked a few clarifying questions pertaining to the model.

Dr. Morse stated at this time the only change to an existing model is that he asked both David and Misty to investigate a full day model for first grade

#### Preparation for Communication Workshop

Dr. Morse suggested that we follow the same format as other workshops by the Board sending their questions to Wendy and then Tom, Michael and he will structure the workshop as effective as possible. He asked if questions could be submitted by this Friday at the latest.

The Board discussed Schoology and if there would be an opportunity to play around with the program prior to the workshop.

Dr. Morse stated that he could get Janet Martel and Celeste Best to help walk through it.

#### **A. Finance Committee Update:**

Al Howland update the Board on the latest from the Finance Committee. He began by stating two questions. How much these model costs and where the money was coming from. The \$173K came from the subline. He went on to state that we are on track for the \$400K obligated to the towns. The Bond came in lower and we had the health insurance refund.

One area that we were unaware of was the additional need for network hardware and equipment for the new middle school. Additionally, a fiber optic cable will need to be run from the middle school to the service building. The cost was not built into the original specs. The ERate bid is out there now and will come back in March to the Board for approval.

The Board asked why this was not included and if we could use the contingency fund.

Dr. Morse stated that this was not part of the building construction and that we have a list of items that the contingency fund can be used for and that he can share this list with the Board. An example of items on the list is to purchase playground equipment.

There was no additional discussion and at this point (9:02 PM) Tom Newkirk called a five-minute recess.

The meeting resumed at 9:07 PM.

**D. Business Administrator:** None

**E. Student Representative Report:**

Megan stated they have concluded the second semester and that it went as good as it could have. She reported out the camera usage by students has increased and that the teachers have encouraged this and students are more comfortable doing this. She went on to state that the school has been actively working on scheduling outdoor events such as skating parties, sledding days, and snowshoeing events in an effort to try to increase students' times together. She reminded all that it is Black History Month and that there are a lot of events and activities planned and that these events are being relayed through the school announcements.

**Other:**

## **VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

### Discussion on the Fall of 2021

Dr. Morse stated that a lot a prework needs to begin for fall planning. By then we hope that staff will be vaccinated and that we could have a much different opening to school. Are we designing a system for the fall to include a remote option and if so, we would have to identify staff needs for that option. Brian Cisneros stated that this is 7 months away and a lot can happen between then and now. Kids have been out so long, and we have kids in crisis and the way to find that out is face to face contact with teachers. We need some normalcy.

Yusi Turell asked about families with higher risks. What other decisions need to be made. What are the if nots to be decided by August 1<sup>st</sup>?

Dr Morse stated that if we plan for a remote option it would mean back to one teacher for some subjects. If we are able to bring in the vast majority of students, we would have to define what that would look like. Structing for the fall begins now with the wisest course being preparing for some level of remote, prepare a hybrid model with VLACS. Core classes at school, non-core classes with VLACS.

Tom Newkirk asked what process we would follow.

Denise Day asked if the high school model is successful, could we use the same model for all.

February 3, 2021

Dan Klein stated that this is a difficult decision for the Board to make and we don't have the option of have this conversation outside of a meeting. We are following the CDC guidelines and watching how things are trending. Everything discussed is relevant in planning and making decisions.

Michael Williams stated that the goal for fall would be to have everyone in. Take conservative option and plan framework to include in-person to remote and bring back to the Board in May and then provide direction in June.

Dr. Morse clarified with the Board that the smartest course would be to plan some remote and how to achieve that at each level and provide the framework and solutions. He will move forward with the guidance that the Board has given him.

#### Consideration of Acquiring Bleachers for Senior Graduation

Dr. Morse began this conversation with a review of what transpired last year for the high school graduation. It was a successful graduation that lasted 8 hours. We can have a different experience for our graduating class this year if we acquire bleachers for an outside graduation on our field. He went on to state that Suzanne has made inquires for renting tents and that as in the past these are expensive and not large enough to accommodate the number of participants. He is bringing back the proposal that is currently in the CIP for 1000 seat bleachers. He sat with Sue Caswell, Jim Rozycki and Todd and identified resources in the existing budget that would allow the purchase of these bleachers for this year's graduation. If the Board is agreeable to this proposal, this would need to be approved tonight so that a purchase order can be processed and allow for enough time for delivery and set up.

Al Howland asked if there was still a limited number for maximum capacity of people at an event.

Tom Newkirk asked where the funds could be pulled from and reminded all that earlier in the meeting there was an additional funding request for \$170K for networking at the new middle school and that there is a lot of uncertainty in the current budget including the Barrington tuition issue.

Dan Klein verified that the cost was closer to \$190K and also questioned if the permitting process would be in time.

Megan Deane stated that she just looked up the capacity limit for an outdoor event and that she could not find any restrictions listed.

Michael Williams stated that this could be a huge positive to offer the Class of 2021.

Dr. Morse stated that they would not be purchasing the press box at this time, they could fund raise for that at a later date.

Brain Cisneros asked if we could dedicate the bleachers to the Class of 2021.

**Al Howland made a motion to approve the purchase of the bleachers, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Michael Williams. Motion passed with a vote of 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

Discussion to dedicated to both the class of 2020 and 2021.



**Brian Cisneros made a motion to dedicate the bleachers to the class of 2020 and 2021, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed with a vote of 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

Tabled Motion from January 20, 2021 Board Meeting

Brian Cisneros stated that since the motion below from the last meeting was resolved he is withdrawing his motion.

**Brian amended his motion to add state a week from Monday, Monday through Friday, unless excused by an already established accommodation such as FFCRA, FMLA, or ADA or exposed.**

**IX. ACTIONS**

**A. Superintendent Actions:** None

**B. Board Action Items:**

**Discussion:**

Approval of ORMS Maternity Leave of Absence

**Denise Day made a motion to approve the ORMS Maternity Leave of Absence, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Yusi Turell. Motion passed with a vote of 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**X. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

**A. Manifests Reviewed and Approved by Manifest Committee:**

Denise Day and Dan Klein reviewed the manifests.

Payroll Manifest: #16 \$1,340,891.63

Vendor Manifest #17 \$935,517.90

Denise Day informed the Board that the Long-Range Planning Committee is meeting remotely on Monday and are moving forward with developing a report. She stated that there are some openings on the committee and know that one of them is a Durham position and encourage anyone willing to be on the committee to contact her.

Tom Newkirk suggested that she look at some of the candidates that ran for the open one-year position.

Dan Klein reported out on his meeting with the NHSBA Delegate committee regarding the OR proposal and that it did not pass. He also stated that there was a challenge on the firearms proposal from last year. He briefly outlined both scenarios for the Board.

Brian Cisneros spoke briefly about SB198 and as a Board we should keep on top of this.

Yusi Turell reported out on the concurrent committee. She stated that they meet every Monday and outlined all that has taken place and that a draft report is being written and will be reviewed at their next meeting on February 8.

Dr. Morse spoke briefly pertaining to the Racism policy ACA that he and a small group are working on revising and will go before the policy committee at their meeting on February 11. He stated that this has been an amazing group of individuals that he is working with.

**I. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Jill Piparo stated that after hearing the outcome on the HS Model and the Bleachers she was happy. She asked if a modified version of the HS Model could be done for the middle school.

**XII. CLOSING ACTIONS:**

- A. Future Meeting Date:     2/10/21 – Board Workshop – 6:00 PM ORHS Auditorium  
                                      2/17/21 – Regular Board Meeting – 7:00 PM ORHS Auditorium  
                                      2/23/21 – Candidates Night – 7:00 PM ORHS.

There was a brief discussion surrounding Candidates Night and its format. Dr. Morse stated that we are working on this and will get back to the Board with updates.

**XIII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3 II C**

- Superintendent Evaluation

**NON-MEETING SESSION: RSA 91-A:2** {If needed}

**Michael Williams moved to enter into nonpublic session at 10:09 p.m. in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (c)** – Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting, **2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 7-0.**

Chair Newkirk declared the School Board back in public session at 11:10 PM.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT:**

Michael Williams moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:10 PM, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Klein. The motion passed with a vote of 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Wendy L. DiFruscio  
Executive Assistant to Superintendent of Schools