

Oyster River Cooperative School Board
Regular Meeting Minutes

April 7, 2021

DRAFT

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

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: James Morse, Todd Allen, Sue Caswell, Jay Richard, Misty Lowe, David Goldsmith, Catherine Plourde, Suzanne Filippone

STAFF PRESENT:

GUEST PRESENT:

I. CALLED TO ORDER at 6:30 PM by Michael Williams

Chair Michael Williams moved to enter nonpublic session at 6:31 p.m. in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II (b) - The hiring of any person as a public employee, 2nd by Denise Day. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 7-0.

The Board returned to ORHS Auditorium at 6:57 PM.

Michael Williams called the meeting to order at 7:00.

Al Howland moved to open public hearing at 7:02 pm to discuss the ESSER II Funding, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

Discussion:

Sue Caswell described ESSER II Funding, as well as how the funds must be approved by the Board to move forward.

Tom Newkirk: Does approving this motion also approve the position?

Dr. Jim Morse: Not approving the position itself, it will give us an idea of where we are. Gives us the opportunity to bring in a fourth counselor at the middle school.

Al Howland moved to close public hearing at 7:03 pm, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

Brian Cisneros moved to authorize the superintendent to sign the ESSER II Funding Grant, 2nd by Denise Day. Motion passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Brian Cisneros moved to approve the agenda, 2nd by Michael Williams.

Megan Deane requested Student Representative Report be moved up before discussing All-In plan.

Motion to approve agenda as amended passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Denise Day moved to approve School Board Workshop Minutes from February 24, 2021, 2nd by Dan Klein

Denise Day: Correction on p. 4, under her comment, Denise Day would like to add, "if they did not agree with the timeline for the opening"

Yusi Turell: Correction on p. 5, would like to remove "existing" from statement

Motion to approve School Board February 24, 2021 Workshop Minutes as amended. Motion passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative

Michael Williams moved to approve School Board Workshop Minutes from March 10, 2021, 2nd by Yusi Turell.

Yusi Turell: Correction on p. 2 – should read, “wedded to an idea” not “vetted to an idea”

Dan Klein: Heading should be changed to read “School Board Workshop Minutes” not “Additional Meeting Minutes”

Motion to approve School Board Workshop Minutes from March 10, 2021 as amended. Motion passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative

Denise Day moved to approve School Board Regular Meeting Minutes from March 17, 2021, 2nd by Michael Williams.

Denise Day: Correction on p. 2 – Denise did not abstain from vote for herself as Vice Chair; believes vote should have been 4-3, with Brian, Tom and Yusi voting in the negative.

Michael Williams: I went back to watch the video to be sure I had this right. For Chair, my suggestion is to strike where vote is 2-4-1 and say, “voting results were 2 in favor with Tom Newkirk and Brian Cisneros voting in favor,” in the next paragraph, “Voting results were 4 in favor with Dan Klein, Yusi Turell, Al Howland, and Michael Williams in favor, Denise Day abstain” and then for the Vice Chair, “Michael Williams asked for vote for Denise Day as Vice Chair, voting results were 4 in favor with Dan Klein, Yusi Turell, Al Howland and Denise Day in favor, After Michael Williams stated this was a majority and would not need an additional vote, Michael Williams, Tom Newkirk, and Brian Cisneros did not vote as a majority had already been declared.”

Tom Newkirk: I just had two name corrections on p. 3, it’s Liz Whaley and Dean Roger Ritvo from UNH

Yusi Turell: Correction on p. 5, clarification that “Yusi Turell suggested making April 20th a remote day, with teachers planning asynchronous lessons in case they are out sick”

Motion to approve School Board Regular Meeting Minutes from March 17, 2021 as amended. Motion passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

- A. District - None**
- B. Board – None**

VI. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA

Michael Williams asked the Board if there was a request to remove anything from Unanimous Consent Agenda?

Denise Day – Would like to remove the Motion to Approve Friday, June 18, 2021 as the last day of school until after we have the conversation of school reopening.

Michael Williams moved this item to Section IX – Actions.

Michael Williams moved to approve the Unanimous Consent Agenda as amended by removing the vote for last day of school, 2nd by Denise Day. Motion passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

VII. DISTRICT REPORTS

E. Student Representative Report (Moved as per amended agenda)

Megan Deane stated that students feel strongly about keeping Wednesday as a relearning day, and that the Governors’ mandate may provide flexibility as to what a 5-day All-In model looks like for the school

district. She also stressed the importance these Wednesdays have for students in all age groups and wants to advocate for the students to have that considered.

A. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Todd Allen stated the registration for the REACH program opened last week and within 24 hours had reached 60% capacity and is now currently at 85% capacity. The afternoon program with Durham Parks and Recreation was filled in 24 hours.

Todd stated that UNH announced they will not have Camp Wildcat or other summer programming this year. The district is exploring the use of Mast Way to see what can be done to expand capacity. Durham Parks and Recreation is also trying to expand their programs, and combined hoping to add more camps where they can accommodate the numbers. There is currently a waiting list for additional families that may be interested.

Todd then stated the second round of vaccines for faculty and staff is taking place on April 19, and April 17 there will be a closed-pod vaccination clinic for high-school aged students from ORCSD, Barrington, Somersworth, and some private schools in Strafford County. A survey will be sent to students that are of age to receive the vaccine to gauge the potential number that would be interested, and the Strafford County Regional Health Board will send out a flyer when more details are available. Any students that are minors must have a parent present when the shot is being administered. More logistical details are still in the working stages.

B. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Morse started by commending Todd Allen and Rachel Gasowski on their work with REACH and turning it into the robust program it is now. Dr. Morse also commended Todd for his relentless follow up with the Strafford Board of Health after they started discussing closed pod vaccinations for students, and for calling every day to check the status.

Update Assistant Superintendent Vacancy Timeline

Dr. Morse then stated there are 22 applications for the Assistant Superintendent position. The Screening Committee will bring that number down to 5 or 6 people, interviews will be set up in the upcoming weeks and the process is following the timeline put out by Dr. Morse. There will be an evening for organizational purposes, two nights of candidate interviews via Teams. Two finalists will be interviewed on-site as they are taken through the district, and the nomination will be presented at the first School Board meeting in May.

COVID Guidelines Update

Catherine Plourde referenced the PowerPoint and reviewed the travel guidelines regarding wearing masks, testing, and public interaction for both domestic and international travel as currently recommended by the DHHS. Catherine reviewed the newest changes in quarantine periods when students have others in the home that have been exposed to COVID-19, and that students visiting colleges will not need to quarantine. The District will be adhering closely to DHHS guidelines as it will be easier to enforce, and risk factors will continue to be monitored closely and adjusted as needed. Updated travel guidelines have been uploaded to the District website along with the various safety guidelines and office procedures.

Dr. Morse continued his report, stating that there has been an agreement reached with the Teachers' Guild regarding students returning to school. The Teachers' Guild will present the agreement to their members and it will be on the School Board's agenda for review on April 21, 2021.

Dr. Morse discussed Governor Sununu's Executive Order for students to return to school on April 19, 2021 and the difficulty it has caused the District as there are 750+ employees, teachers, and childcare workers receiving their second Moderna vaccine that day. Dr. Morse has written to the Commissioner attesting the schools cannot open on that day as the administration of the second shot is time sensitive. Strafford County Public Health reports approximately 20% of adults get ill after the second vaccination shot, and the PSATs will be administered at the high school on April 21, 2021, creating the potential to leave the District without enough faculty and staff to supervise the students for multiple days.

Chair Williams asked the Board if they had any questions.

Tom Newkirk asked if the elementary schools and the middle school would attend school as normal although the high school had PSATs.

Dr. Morse stated it was something the District could try but it would be hard without knowing the number of people that could be sick from the shot.

Denise Day stated that although many parents want their kids back in school, it would be terribly unfair to ask teachers to come back if they are not at their full potential, and that she is in favor of starting kids back at school later in the week.

Denise Day asked what would happen if the District refused the Governor's order.

Dr. Morse stated that he had spoken to the lawyers and nothing would happen to the School Board Members or the schools, but that he could be subject to a fine and up to a year in jail. He has yet to hear from the Commissioner on whether or not the Governor will support the decision to start later in the week.

Denise Day asked if Suzanne had enough staff to support administering the PSATs.

Suzanne Filippone stated she had enough staff and they were still trying to determine where the students would take the exam to accommodate the proper distancing.

Brian Cisneros stated that a lot of schools are in the same situation with waiting for the second shot, and that the order is giving us a little more leeway this time.

Yusi Turell stated the 19th and 20th are obvious days off but is concerned regarding the elementary school students. She is worried of the potential side effects of the students having a 5-day weekend, coming back for two days, and then being out on vacation for 9 days.

Michael Williams asks if Dr. Morse would like to proceed with follow ups from the previous meeting.

Dr. Morse stated he revisited Megan Deane's report last week to answer Dan Klein's question regarding the advantages and disadvantages of Wednesday as re-learning days. The information was included in the Board's packets and he left it up to the Board whether or not they wanted to revisit that topic.

Dr. Morse stated Jay Richard has been working with music staff regarding options to offer music in the middle school, and that the specialized PPE for this to happen would cost thousands of dollars.

All-In K-12

Jay Richard stated he has been working with Jarika Olberg and the music staff to determine how the students will participate in music. Currently the options are to do music outside or move the students up to the high school.

Megan Deane stated that on April 22nd there will be student musicians at the coffee house and that only 50 tickets would be sold to keep the seating numbers low.

Dr. Morse stated that he was initially unsure if students would be able to have direct instruction from World Language teachers due to students all taking different languages and having to cross paths, and was excited Jay had come up with a solution.

Jay Richard stated the solution was for the students to cohort by Team, and travel to the appropriate teacher on the team.

Dr. Morse praised Jay's tenacity, and stated Catherine Plourde and the school nurses would continue to monitor the health reports each week.

Jay Richard stated he has consulted closely with Catherine and the nursing staff to create a plan everyone felt comfortable with.

Dr. Morse moved to discuss the issue of how to interact with remote students if they lose the advantage of having Wednesdays for re-learning. He credited Suzanne and Jay with creating remote office hours at the end of each instructional day for students as an alternative to relearning Wednesdays.

Jay Richard stated the office hours would be daily from 2:35 PM to 3:05 PM, and teachers will be able to reach out to those students if they need extra help.

Dr. Morse invited Suzanne Filippone up to the podium to discuss update on Wednesdays.

Suzanne stated there are a few different ideas she is working on with the faculty, as they are working with a few different schedules the students may have. Due to the different schedules they may need to block off time to ensure kids and faculty have time for lunch.

Dr. Morse invited Todd Allen to the podium

Todd thanked Lisa for her problem solving with the transportation and busing issues in the district. He stated that the district currently has 16 buses and 16 vans and will need a minimum 40 minutes between runs to clean the buses. He discussed the adjusted start and end times for the schools to help keep the number of students on the buses low.

Michael Williams called for questions from the Board.

Denise Day asked when the expected deadline was to get information from parents via survey.

Todd Allen stated they are reaching out to families to have information by Monday so Lisa can finalize the bus routes.

Yusi Turell asked if there is an advantage to families handling their own transportation if they are on the fence regarding busing or driving.

Dr. Morse stated that there is a big advantage and that many other districts are having this problem as well as there is no way to provide social distancing on a bus. Drivers will keep windows open for circulation, students and drivers will wear masks, but any parent that can help with transportation would be greatly appreciated.

Tom Newkirk stated the most crucial decision is whether or not Wednesday, April 21 is a remote day.

Denise Day stated she will not support the vote for Wednesday (4/21) to be an all-in day, as it is not fair to our teachers or kids. Stated the best way for the students to return will be for Wednesday as an asynchronous day.

Yusi Turell asked what others thought about the 21st.

Brian Cisneros stated he supports being in on Wednesday.

Al Howland stated he was conflicted with trying to follow the Governor's orders with the return, but on Tuesday (4/20) we would need to find out what is going on with the staff and where we stand. It's not ideal but we have 48-hours for emergency.

Denise Day stated that Monday (4/19) is a professional development day and will not count toward the 48 hours.

Michael Williams stated Thursday is best for students.

Dan Klein stated it makes sense to plan for Wednesday (4/21) off, but also does not want to plan for uncertainty. If we can plan for something with certainty, we should do it and plan for a Thursday start

Yusi Turell proposed a remote day with a plan for an asynchronous backup to allow students to have 3 days for the week, and there will be no need to worry about teachers being sick, and it holds instructional time while offering teachers flexibility.

David Goldsmith stated that from an elementary perspective, every process needs to be practiced and reviewed to transition kids back into school, and that we should want teachers in as much as possible.

Yusi Turell proposed the idea of having a half remote day or hybrid day.

David Goldsmith stated this would be yet another thing teachers would have to plan for, with never having a remote, asynchronous, half day it could build inconsistency for students.

Yusi Turell asked if this was something that could be done for the middle school or high school since they are used to these types of days.

Al Howland stated it would be difficult to plan a completely different setup for only one day.

Suzanne Filippone stated that if the high school is to have classes on that Wednesday, it would be a remote super bobcat day of some kind where kids are remotely shifting through their teachers. She stated she was unsure what that would look like.

Dr. Morse asked what will happen if we have a significant number of staff out.

Suzanne stated nobody would be able to greet the students because the administrators will all be administering the PSATs.

Yusi Turell asked what the downsides are of switching weeks with blue and white days.

Suzanne Filippone stated that with only seven weeks left, it will be challenging moving forward with curriculum, and there are also services that students are receiving on Wednesdays due to IEPs, and kids will need to be pulled from classes for their services.

Tom Newkirk made a motion to vote for an All-in Model beginning on Thursday, April 22nd, with the exception of the Sophomores going in for the PSATs on Wednesday, April 21st – 2nd by Denise Day

Discussion:

Yusi Turell asked for clarification on vote if she feels Wednesday should be asynchronous.

Michael Williams stated it will be an amendment to the motion, or a separate motion after the vote.

Dr. Morse stated it will be an amendment to the current motion.

Yusi Turell called for an amendment to the motion of All-in in-person day to start on Thursday, April 22nd in addition to Wednesday, April 21st being asynchronous for elementary schools, default to remote for middle and high school, with teachers developing asynchronous backups if teachers cannot work that day. There was No 2nd

Michael Williams put the original motion to vote; Motion passed 6-1, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative, with Brian Cisneros voting in the negative.

Yusi Turell asked to clarify if the change in start date added additional days onto the end of the year.

Dr. Morse clarified it will not.

Dr. Morse ended his report by discussing the Equity, Justice, and Anti-Racism Committee meeting and the Asian-American families from the community that attended to represent the community. Dr. Morse stated it was the most moving meeting we've had, and that he is proud of the District and of the leadership it has taken in providing a positive experience in our schools and on campus.

C. Finance Committee Report

Al Howland stated that in January a charge was put forward to the finance committee to look for funding in the budget for hiring more paraprofessionals, as well as wanting to give something back to the community from the fund balance. Al stated that next week there will be a meeting to discuss where the committee is, and they will bring back a recommendation of where they think the money should be distributed. Al also asked for the committee to reflect on what they did and did not do well and put forth a timeline on the budget process for the fall.

D. Business Administrator Report

Sue Caswell stated the Finance Committee will be meeting next week to view the budget and see if there are extra funds and what they suggest we do with them.

E. Student Representative: moved to beginning of District Report Section.

F. Other: None

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Last Day of School moved from Unanimous Consent Agenda

Michael Williams asked for clarification that Friday, June 18, 2021 will be the last day of school.

Dr. Morse answered yes.

Denise Day moved to approve Friday, June 18, 2021 as the final day for this school year, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

School Board Committee Assignment Requests

Tom Newkirk moved to approve committee assignments as presented, 2nd by Yusi Turell. Motion passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

IX. ACTIONS

A. Superintendent Actions: None

B. Board Action Items

List of Policies

Denise Day asks to remove policy ACA – Racism, as changes were made, and the Policy Committee has not reviewed them. The Policy Committee will review at their meeting on April 8, 2021 and bring them to the next School Board Meeting for a first read.

Dr. Morse explained the purpose of the R procedures and that they are a place holder to ensure we are circling back to them.

Denise Day stated she had changes on the policy BEDB: In paragraph 2, the word “in” appears twice; In paragraph 3 – do we still distribute agenda items to the media?; In second to last paragraph: should say “the meeting” and not “future meeting”

Brian Cisneros recommends the Unanimous consent Agent be moved to the end of meetings so as to not pull items out.

Michael Williams advised not to do that due to public attending meeting and wanting to see the important stuff.

Al Howland stated that not too many things will be pulled unless they are smaller.

Dr. Morse stated the Unanimous Consent Agenda is newer to the body, but it can be moved until we find where it works best.

Brian Cisneros stated he likes having the Unanimous Consent Agenda.

The Board agreed to move Unanimous Consent Agenda below District Reports on future meeting agendas, as well as Action Items under Discussion Items.

Michael Williams asked if the Board wanted to vote on the Agenda tonight or see changes integrated first?

Brian Cisneros stated first read.

Denise Day moved to approve Policy BBAA – School Board Member Authority for first read, 2nd by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

Denise Day moved to approve Policy BDD – Board Superintendent Relationship for a first read, 2nd by Dan Klein. Motion passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

Denise Day moved to approve Policy BEDB & R & R₁ – Agenda Preparation/Format/Agenda Request for first read.

Dr. Morse asked Michael Williams if the Board could vote first and second read for this item, as the Body At Large has already fed the changes.

Michael Williams stated that he wanted to see the changes integrated prior to voting for a second read.

Denise Day's made a motion to approve Policy BEDB & R & R₁ – Agenda Preparation/Format/Agenda Request for first read, 2nd by Michael Williams. Motion passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

X. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES

Manifest Reviewed and Approved by Manifest Committee:

Denise Day and Dan Klein reviewed the manifest.

Payroll Manifest #21 - \$967,750.31

Vendor Manifest #22 - \$2,550,423.81

Michael Williams asked if there were any other School Board updates.

Yusi Turell stated that regarding our Equity, Justice, and Anti-Racism Committee meeting, it was very moving to hear their stories, and it was moving to hear how we can include Asian and Pacific Islander history and contributions into our curriculum. Others came forward to say they wanted to help sharing the history with the community. Yusi extended a formal invitation to the Board members for a forum to discuss the history and contribution of different groups within this racial group, at a soon-to-be-determined date. We want to learn and support members of our community.

Michael Williams stated the Communication Committee met last week and discussed district communications, and that currently the expert portion of committee is tying the two proposed actions together and should have updates for the Board in May.

Finance Committee is meeting next weeks and will provide updates at the next School Board Meeting.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

XII. CLOSING ACTIONS:

- A. Future Meeting Dates: April 21, 2021 – Regular Meeting – 7:00 PM ORHS Auditorium
- May 5, 2021 – Regular Meeting – 7:00 PM – ORHS Auditorium
- May 19, 2021 – Regular Meeting – 7:00 PM – ORHS Auditorium

XIII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION RSA 91-A:3 II (b) – Held at the beginning of the meeting NON-MEETING SESSION: RSA 91-A:2 {If Needed}

XIV. ADJOURNMENT:

Al Howland moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 PM, 2nd by Brian Cisneros; Motion passed 7-0, with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alexa Fusilier
Recording Secretary