

# Oyster River Cooperative School Board

## Regular Meeting Minutes

August 17, 2022

DRAFT

**SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT:** Michael Williams, Denise Day, Brian Cisneros, Dan Klein, Yusi Turell, Heather Smith

**ABSENT:** Matt Bacon

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:** Paige Burt

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Dr. Morse, Suzanne Filippone, Sue Caswell, Misty Lowe, David Goldsmith, Jay Richard, Rebecca Noe

**STAFF PRESENT:**

**GUEST PRESENT:**

**CALLED TO ORDER at 7:00 PM by Michael Williams**

### II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

**Brian Cisneros moved to approve the agendas written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed 6-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

### III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Deanna Pilkenton of Durham, a parent of four in the district, spoke on behalf of the Be SMART initiative. As a healthcare provider and professor at UNH, she stated that guns are now the leading cause of death of children in the United States. Deanna provided statistics, such as there is nearly one unintentional shooting per day in ages 18 and under; 1,200 children and teens die by gun suicide each year, most often using guns belonging to a family member; and 76% of school shooters used firearms acquired from the homes of parents or close relatives. The Be SMART initiative is a non-political, non-partisan information campaign supported by both gun owners and non-gun owners nation-wide. It stands for "Secure guns in your homes and vehicles", "Model responsible behavior", "Ask about unsecured guns in other homes", "Recognize the role of guns in suicide", and "Tell your peers to Be SMART." She urged the board to use the schools as an easy way to reach the community to raise awareness of gun safety.

Jennifer Lyon of Lee, a parent of five in the district, stressed the importance of discussing safe gun storage at home to the adults of the community. She shared with the board a sample letter along with handouts, websites, links, and agencies that can be provided to families. Jennifer said that school districts across the country have begun to proactively send materials home to parents and guardians informing them of applicable firearm storage laws and firearm secure storage best practices, including Maine and New Hampshire. Jennifer urged the board to take action as a district to pass or adopt a school board resolution in support of secure gun storage education.

Loren Selig of Durham, a parent of two in the district and a former teacher, spoke in support of Deanna and Jennifer stating that any steps the district can take to mitigate gun violence are good steps. She cited members of our own OR community, including a 5<sup>th</sup> grader, having lost their life to gun suicide. She stated a simple concrete action like the Be SMART program can be put into place by the school system to help make a difference. She let the Board know that if they need more information to decide whether to put it in policy that she and other concerned citizens can return with a PowerPoint presentation, and they can help share the information at school events by tabling and providing handouts. She said according to many religious traditions, if you save one life, you have saved the world, and by enacting the Be SMART program think of how many worlds we just might save.

Timothy Horrigan of Durham, an alumnus of the old ORMS and State Representative of Durham, shared the following initiatives he will work on if re-elected: 1) Providing free menstrual products in school bathrooms, 2) Providing free school meals to students (he said the state can afford it and a subcommittee in Concord is looking into it), and 3) Legislature around guns in schools.

#### IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**Brian Cisneros moved to approve the August 3rd, 2022 Regular & Non-Public Meeting Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day.**

Denise Day made the following revision:

In the Non-Public Meeting Minutes Dr. Morse was present in-person not via telephone.

**Motion passed with correction 6-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

#### V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

##### A. District –

David Goldsmith of Moharimet provided the following upcoming dates & events:

Aug. 22<sup>nd</sup> – New Family Night (grades 1-4) 6-7pm

Aug. 29<sup>th</sup> – Kindergarten Open House 6-7pm

David shared that at Moharimet new air handlers in the library and a new retaining wall and fence at the entrance of the playground are in their final stages of completion. Building walk throughs are taking place and all safety procedures are being reviewed with police and fire departments as well as first responders. David said classrooms are ready and teachers are excited for the opening of school.

Jay Richard of ORMS provided the following upcoming dates & events:

Aug. 23<sup>rd</sup> – ORMS Grand Reopening 11-1pm

Aug. 29<sup>th</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Meet & Greet 4-5pm

Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> – Open House for grade 5 from 5:30-7pm & grade 8 from 6:15-7:45pm

Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup> – Open House for grade 6 from 5:30-7pm & grade 7 from 6:15-7:45pm

(Teachers will discuss methods of communication & grading at open houses)

Jay shared that the new playground is complete and the final step of adding wood chips will occur soon. He has met with the fire department to review emergency plans and to schedule drills. Supply lists are available at the ORCSD website or you can [click here](#) to access them by grade level & team. ORMS has welcomed over 20 new families during its new student orientation.

Rebecca Noe of ORHS reported that on Aug.19<sup>th</sup> new teachers took part in a district-wide meet and greet followed by a building tour to learn about the layout and culture of their assigned school.

Rebecca shared that both the new nurse's suite and the small conference room/front staff eating area in the old nurse's office are almost complete. The multi-purpose room will continue to serve as a stage and as a large conference room through the means of a huge foldout wall that is soundproof and contains a whiteboard. A portable projector will be housed there, and the space will be available to administration and staff, as well as teachers to hold class meetings. The remaining three AC units will be installed in three weeks and the tennis court construction is currently on hold until materials arrive. Rebecca stated that safety procedures have been reviewed with local police and fire departments, and the front entrance to the office will now contain an added security feature for access through the second set of doors.

Misty Lowe of Mast Way stated that four new teachers toured the building, and she had an enjoyable time orienting them to the school.

Misty shared that the only new construction at Mast Way was the addition of doors from the library to the computer lab which is complete. She has reviewed safety procedures with Chief Dronsfield, and they will continue to hold their quarterly safety meetings throughout the year. She stated how wonderful it is that Lee police officers and responders stop in often to provide a positive presence while eating and visiting with the

students. Misty said new locks have been added to exit doors around the building and new camera software has been installed. She said they will continually look at ways to improve overall safety.

Catherine Plourde shared that the summer program went very well and thanked Jay Richard and Bill Sullivan for hosting K-12 at ORMS. Students receiving services or participating in credit recovery were able to work in a conducive learning environment with air conditioning, plenty of space, and access to technology. Next year the summer program will continue to be held at ORMS and the field and playground will also be accessible. Regarding employment, Catherine shared that they are actively hiring for 10-12 para openings across the district. Hourly rates range from \$15-18 with the possibility of \$.50-2.00 extra per hour for having a degree or related field experience. She stressed that experience is not required, training is offered, and those with direct experience will be compensated. Hours range from 6.5-7 per day and there is some flexibility for part-time positions. Health benefits and courses through Granite State College are also advantages to the contract. Anyone interested in a para position should call the SAU office at 603-868-5100. Also, there has been a change in staffing to the special services department due to the resignation of the assistant director at Mast Way. Assistant Directors will include Brian Ryan at Moharimet, Brittany Prendergast at ORMS, Melissa Jean at ORHS and Catherine Plourde at Mast Way for the duration of the school year.

**B. Board** – None provided

## **VI. DISTRICT REPORTS**

### **A. Assistant Superintendent/Curriculum & Instruction Report(s)**

Suzanne Filippone shared that the Summer Reach program held at Mast Way was a huge success. Approximately 100 students participated each week. They were able to expand the activity offerings and provide free breakfast and lunch. She thanked Parks and Rec director Rachel Gasowski, principal Misty Lowe, as well as staff from food and nutrition and transportation for all their efforts. Suzanne said they will aim to expand the activity offerings next year too.

On August 19<sup>th</sup> sixteen new faculty met with administration, technology coordinators, and building principals to receive general policy and procedure information as well as school-issued laptops. On August 24<sup>th</sup> new staff will receive curriculum and instruction and assessment training specific to their building and on the 25<sup>th</sup> tech integrators will provide training in Schoology, PowerSchool and other tech platforms. There will also be additional training on the 25<sup>th</sup> for SAU staff, IT, School Nutrition, and Transportation around such topics as Title 9, suicide prevention, sexual harassment, and bullying.

#### Summary of Revisions for School Handbooks for each school

David Goldsmith highlighted a few changes at Moharimet, such as the drop-off/pick-up routine which will be similar to the pre-COVID procedure used. Drop-off will begin at 8:50am using the Madbury Church parking lot. Drivers will stay in cars and students will get out and walk the path to Moharimet while being supervised by staff. Student pick up will begin at 3:25pm using the vestibule by the front office, which is weather protected, and the doors will remain safe and secure. Students will be checked out by adults and brought outside to meet their parents under the pyramid atrium. Parking is available in three lots: the Town Hall lot, the Madbury Library lot, and the Recreation Lot. Parking will not be allowed in the Moharimet Parking Lot during the AM and PM times when buses are present. Another change is the addition of restorative practice language for bus conduct and student conduct/discipline to focus on problem-solving, making amends, and apologizing.

Some other handbook revisions include school start/end times, food costs, visitors and volunteers, and the addition of a School Motto.

Misty Lowe said the K-4 changes listed by David will be similar at Mast Way, however, their drop-off/pick-up will remain the same since they have established a formal agreement with the church, and it works well for their school.

Jay Richard said the front doors of ORMS will open at 7:50am and no earlier to keep the building safe and secure. The biggest change to the student handbook is language describing the code of conduct and discipline procedures, which now reflect the district vision of restorative practices. Jay said this changed mindset should foster communication and problem solving that will help students learn, grow, and move forward. This will also be similar to ORHS to insure consistency for students throughout their middle school and high school years.

Yusi Turell asked about updates to the website and Jay said the information is in process and the staff/team directory and counseling pages will be fully updated for start of school. Heather Smith suggested including suicide information in the handbook.

Rebecca Noe highlighted the changes to the ORHS handbook, some of which include a new daily schedule, excessive absences protocol, a new dress code renamed "School Attire", and school nutrition updates. She spent time discussing the new discipline procedures based on restorative practices and provided an example for the board. If a student is caught vaping in school, they report to the office and go home for that day, rather than receive a 5-10-day suspension. The next morning, admin. holds a reentry meeting with the student and parents to discuss how to move forward. All parties sign a contract that includes participation in an educational component, such as attending Breath NH presentation; community service; and meeting with the Licensed Drug and Alcohol Counselor a minimum of 2-3 times. Lastly, a reflection is completed in which Rebecca asks the student what they thought of the process and if they think it could help them stop vaping. She said she focuses on real dialogue that will encourage the student to be honest with not just her but themselves. Rebecca also stated that in all discipline matters students have due process and their side is listened to when there are conflicting matters between students and/or faculty.

Denise Day asked about the block change which had previously been A, B, C, D and Rebecca said the blocks will be Blue or White 1, 2, 3, 4 and this numerical change helped with the back-end work in PowerSchool to make class selection and schedule changes easier.

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

### August 23, 2022 Middle School Grand Opening Update

Dr. Morse reminded the listening audience that the ORMS Grand Opening Ceremony will take place on Tuesday, August 23<sup>rd</sup> from 11-1:00pm. A ribbon cutting, speeches, refreshments, music, and tours will be part of the celebration.

### Opening of School for 2022-23:

#### **Preparation for Opening School**

Dr. Morse had each principal provide an update of building preparations during their district report.

Dr. Morse discussed safety as a priority to the opening of school as a direct result of the Texas school shooting and the associated report of failings. The state added six new criteria for school safety, and he is in the process of working with chiefs and deputies from Durham, Lee and Madbury; the school resource officer; and the technology director to meet all requirements. He plans to also meet with the chief at UNH for a comprehensive community approach to keeping the schools safe. Dr. Morse said he appreciated the gun safety efforts driven by parents at tonight's meeting and within the community. He agreed that it complements the district focus, and he will continue the conversation.

Regarding staffing, Dr. Morse said the district is in good shape, even with a few late resignations and openings as a result. He has already received applications and is in the process of interviews. The district currently has 25 bus drivers with an additional two receiving training for an October start date. Dr. Morse said he also plans to hire two spare drivers to avoid ever having a bus driver shortage.

Dr. Morse recently approved a list of coaches at the request of Athletic Director Andy Lathrop.

**Enrollment**

Dr. Morse said enrollment numbers continue to remain as expected with no surprises. Any new families with a kindergartner or a 4<sup>th</sup> grader may be placed at the school other than where they live due to high numbers in those grades. He credited Misty and David for balancing the needs and making decisions that benefit both the families and schools.

**COVID Update**

Catherine Plourde explained the new state changes according to CDC recommendations, which NHDHHS supports. If you are sick with a fever, you will stay home until you are fever-free. If you test positive for COVID, you will isolate for days 1-5 and you are not required to test after day 5. On days 6-10 you can return wearing a mask as long as you are fever free. Another change is that you no longer must quarantine with a positive exposure, whether you are vaccinated or unvaccinated. Catherine confirmed that there will no longer be SASS testing or COVID testing at school, and nurses will be urging families to go through their healthcare providers for testing. If you have difficulties seeking a test, reach out to a school nurse for assistance. The district has plenty of masks that will be available to all students and staff who choose to wear one or may need one upon returning from a positive case. If you have healthcare coverage, tests are available at no cost, and free test kits are still available by [clicking here](#).

Other changes include snacks being allowed in classrooms and cafeterias being back to normal with no social distancing. In fact, all social distancing measures will be gone at school, however, enhanced cleaning protocols in buildings and busses will continue. Air handling and ventilation is in place and good hand washing techniques will continue to be taught and practiced.

**Review of ORMS/ORHS Master Schedules**

Jay Richard and Rebecca Noe collaborated to create a master schedule that mostly aligns between the two buildings. They said the faculty feel good about it and it will be easier for students and staff going back and forth between the buildings. Both schools will follow the same Blue and White schedule, which includes Flex and Advisory time, to create commonality between middle and high school. Rebecca said that students who attend CTE classes in the morning will have Advisory & Flex available to them in the afternoon. The middle school will start the year with three lunches (a transitional 5<sup>th</sup> grade only lunch) and the high school will have three lunches all held in the cafeteria.

**C. Business Administrator** – None provided

**D. Student Representative Report**

New student representative Paige Burt reported that the Counseling 101 event had good attendance and the next two events on August 20<sup>th</sup> include 101 Application in the morning and afternoon, and Introduction to High School in the evening. On Thursday, August 25<sup>th</sup> the Freshmen Orientation will take place from 8:30-12:00pm and will include pizza provided by the Durham Police Department. The first day of school will have a different schedule with advisory first. Paige said fall sports have begun and the campus is busy. She is looking forward to an improved Senior Core with more space and new tables and chairs. Also, the cafeteria's three lunches will have new tables and chairs set up in the traditional spacing prior to COVID.

**E. Finance Committee Report** – None provided (Meeting next week)

**F. Other:** None provided

**VII. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA**

Chair Michael Williams asked if any items needed to be discussed separately and there were no objections from the board.

- Affirm the hiring of the high school Science Teacher.

- Affirm the hiring of Flex school Nursing Position.
- ORMS Maternity Leave of Absence.

**Michael Williams made a motion to approve the 2022-2023 Hiring of the High School Science Teacher, Hiring of Flex School Nursing Position, and ORMS Maternity Leave of Absence, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 6-0 with the student representative in the affirmative.**

### **VIII. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS**

#### Barrington Tuition Agreement

Chair Michael Williams proposed to the board that they reach out to Barrington to start a conversation since they are at their 10- year term agreement and are entering the 4-year window for termination. He explained that the contract extends by one year automatically and indefinitely unless a school terminates. Denise Day and Brian Cisneros were in favor of starting a conversation to see if each school is satisfied and/or requests any changes.

**Denise Day made a motion for Chair Michael Williams to reach out to Barrington to open conversation regarding our contract, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 6-0 with the student representative in the affirmative.**

#### Community Request – Gun Safety

Dr. Morse was very supportive of the gun safety initiative and commended parents for coming forward with this aspect of gun safety.

Denise Day had concerns about the parent acknowledgement letter that asks for a signature to be returned to the school. She does support the letters in whatever capacity they are sent out and the information being available in the handbook. Brian Cisneros echoed the same feelings. Michael Williams felt there are different directions that the district can go to provide the material. Dan Klein appreciated the parents initiating the topic and felt it was important to get the information out, however, he did not see the value of the signature. Yusi Turell was in support of using the school as a conduit to reach parents and wondered if the material would be age appropriate for kids or just adults. When asked when the information should be delivered, Dr. Morse felt fall was a good time since it would be hunting season, but also felt it was important to deliver the message year-round given the number of school shootings that have occurred in the nation. Yusi suggested the initiative “Hold My Guns” as another form of information to provide to families. It allows anyone facing mental health or suicidal ideation to turn their guns over to a free holding place.

Michael Williams wondered if decisions regarding gun safety information should require board action. Board members felt that the administrative authority should be granted gun safety matters with no action required from the board.

#### MOU for School Camera Access by Law Enforcement during a crisis

Michael Williams stated that the board had met in several non-public sessions regarding school camera access by law enforcement during a crisis. He was pleased with the very narrow focus that came of the outcome and thanked Dr. Morse for his diligence.

**Brian Cisneros made a motion to authorize the Superintendent to enter into an agreement with the Local Law Enforcement Agencies for the District for camera access by Law Enforcement during an emergency situation, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heather Smith. Motion passed 6-0 with the student representative in the affirmative.**

### **IX. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES**

Manifest Committee reviewed the following Manifests.

Payroll Manifest #3 \$247,709.48

Vendor Manifest #4 \$176,045.33

## **X. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Jennifer Lyon of Lee appreciated the board listening to the gun safety presentation and holding a conversation about how to deliver the information to the community. She trusts Dr. Morse to put the information out but urged the board to make it a policy of permanent practice so that regardless of the superintendent the material is given out by the district.

## **XI. CLOSING ACTIONS**

**A. Future Meeting Dates:** August 31, 2022 – Manifest Meeting – SAU Conference Room 3:30 PM  
September 7, 2022 – Regular Meeting – MS Recital Hall 7:00 PM  
September 21, 2022 – Regular Meeting – MS Recital Hall 7:00 PM

## **XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: 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.

**Michael Williams made a motion to move to Non-Public Session at 8:45pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 6-0 by roll call vote.**

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

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

**The School Board reserves the right to take action on any item on the agenda.**

**Heather Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:44pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 6-0.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Karyn Laird, Records Keeper