

**Oyster River Cooperative School Board
Regular Meeting Minutes**

January 19, 2022

DRAFT

SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT: Michael Williams, Denise Day, Brian Cisneros, Tom Newkirk, Al Howland, Yusi Turell, Dan Klein

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE: Olivia Gass arrived at 7:21pm

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Jim Morse, Suzanne Filippone, Sue Caswell, Catherine Plourde, Rebecca Noe, John Webb, Felicia Sperry

STAFF PRESENT:

GUEST PRESENT:

ABSENT:

I. CALLED TO ORDER at 7:00 PM by Michael Williams

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Denise Day moved to approve the agenda as written, 2nd Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Michael Williams went over the outline of the public comment process.

Alexander Fenton, an ORHS student and resident of Durham, shared statistics and evidence from scientific studies regarding mask wearing. He spoke about potential health consequences which include breathing in too much CR2, changes in blood chemistry, oxygen deprivation, neurological damage, and other side effects like headaches and dizziness. Alexander read a list of NH schools that don't require a mask mandate, stated the U.K. cancelled their mask mandate and said students in other states have a choice of wearing a mask. He asked the board to let the students in our schools have a choice.

Bruce Fenton of Durham spoke about armed men being called to the last meeting and that he brought in something more powerful while holding up a "FREE HUGS" poster. He told the board they don't have moral authority and that 3 miles down the road parents can choose whether their child wears a mask. Bruce spoke about young children experiencing a lack of hugs, smiles, and human connection, which are an important part of human development. He asked Dr. Morse and other Board members for a hug. He told the board they might not like his words that parents should have a right, and hugs will beat their violence.

Emily Liu, an ORHS student and resident of Madbury, brought to attention the Lunar New Year which is an important holiday for her and 20% of the world. She said it is a central aspect to the Asian culture celebrating and marking the beginning of the lunar calendar, which is based off the cycles of the moon. She said this contrasts with the Gregorian calendar, which is based off the solar system and its relation to the sun. She said the Lunar New Year is important to her, and she would like to have a day to be at home to celebrate it with her family with no harmful implications to her academics. She said this holiday is comparable to Christmas and while she is not looking for a district wide day off, she'd like to see it recognized as an optional holiday for students who want to celebrate with their families.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Denise Day moved to approve the January 5, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes, 2nd by Yusi Turell.

Brian Cisneros submitted the following revision:

On page 6 add “for school officials” at the end of the sentence regarding the January 21st 3pm final tour of the Middle School.

Motion passed with correction 7-0.

Denise Day moved to approve the January 5, 2022 Non-Public Meeting Minutes #1, 2nd by Brian Cisneros.

Denise Day made the following revision:

The meeting was held in the guidance conference room not the music room.

Motion passed with correction 7-0.

Denise Day moved to approve the January 11, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes, 2nd by Brian Cisneros.

Motion passed 7-0.

Michael Williams moved to approve the January 5, 2022 Non-Public Meeting Minutes #2, 2nd by Dan Klein.

Denise Day made the following revision:

The meeting was held in the guidance conference room not the music room.

Motion passed with correction 7-0.

Michael Williams moved to approve the January 11, 2022 Non-Public Minutes #1 and #2, 2nd, Denise Day.

Motion passed 7-0.

Michael Williams made the following revision:

For meeting #1 add Dr. Morse’s presence for the discussion of legal advice.

Motion passed with correction 7-0.

Michael Williams asked Mr. Fenton to replace his mask and Mr. Fenton did not. Michael asked him to sit in the separate viewing room for unmasked audience and he did not.

Michael Williams called for a brief recess and resumed the meeting after 5 minutes.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

A. District

Rebecca Noe of ORHS announced there was a schedule change for the next 2 weeks and there are two upcoming virtual events for the community: Vaping Unveiled on January 20th at 6pm and Suicide Prevention on January 27th at 7pm. She said the Coffee House is currently on pause, but the Mouth of the River publication is still available in print.

B. Board

Tom Newkirk said he will be going to Concord to testify against House Bill 1255 which affects what could go on in teaching of history. He felt it is disturbing how unclear this bill is.

Denise Day told the listening audience that the communication survey went out and if anyone has not received a postcard about it to contact the SAU office or go to the link- <https://tinyurl.com/orcsdsurvey>. She expressed appreciation to community members for taking the survey and providing feedback.

Yusi Turell thanked the 65 participants who took part in the first Building Bridges event. She remarked that although it was virtual, it was still great to see faces and exchange dialogue in a meaningful way. The second event will feature perspectives of educators on January 26 from 6:00-7:30. Advanced registration is required to receive a zoom link.

V. DISTRICT REPORTS

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

COVID METRIC

Catherine Plourde stated the metrics are the same from last week due to the holiday. New cases, percent positive, ICU capacity and staffing capacity all remain in the substantial range. She said the district recently received an increase in sub applicants and is hopeful it will help grow the sub pool. Regarding absenteeism, schools are in a better situation than post break. Catherine reported that Suzanne coordinated the recent booster clinic ran by EMS McGregor and staff and 312 vaccines were administered for half the day at the middle school and half the day at the high school. She said the district does not anticipate offering any more clinics at this time, and encouraged families to seek Rite Aid, CVS, Walgreens and their medical providers for vaccines and boosters. She anticipates Moderna to have a vaccine for 4–6-year-olds available in March and to expect Strafford Health to coordinate with physicians' offices.

Catherine stated that effective tomorrow the district is shifting the isolation guidelines per DHHS's latest update. Dr. Morse will issue a memo outlining all the information and it will all be posted online under the COVID 19 section along with the DHHS document. An outline of the DHHS and district update is as follows:

- (1) COVID positive quarantining has gone from 10 days (unless experiencing a fever) to a minimum of 5 days (unless experiencing a fever and you'd continue to isolate). Staff and students are strongly encouraged to test on day 5 and home tests will now be accepted.
- (2) Quarantining after an exposure if you are unvaccinated or not up to date on vaccines has shifted from 20 days to a minimum of 10 days. Testing is required 5 days after exposure. This 10-day period is extended if you develop symptoms or test positive.
- (3) You do not have to quarantine if you are vaccinated or tested positive in the last 90 days unless you develop symptoms.
- (4) Home tests kits will now be accepted. You'll need to provide evidence with student/staff name, date & picture of the test. You'll want to check your insurance provider to get reimbursed for store bought kits and currently the state is offering free kits.
- (5) Masking is still recommended. N95 and K95 masks are most effective, while loose cloth masks are reported as being less effective.

Catherine let the audience know the nurses will be looking at lists to check who can come out of isolation or quarantine and to please be patient so they can work through it quickly.

Tom Newkirk asked the status of current absenteeism and Catherine said the high school numbers will be cut in half with students coming out of quarantining, but there's not a big decrease in one of the elementary schools. She's hoping by next week to see lower numbers.

MTSS/SEL PRESENTATION – PART 2

Suzanne Filippone presented on part 2 of the 3-part series on Assessing and Monitoring Student Growth. She focused on SEL & MTSS-B with an emphasis on Tier 1 Interventions. She reminded everyone that SEL has been a district wide focus for the past year with multi-tiered systems of support in place to promote student learning and wellness. Suzanne said this year's school-wide initiatives have largely been around transitioning students back for full day learning since social distancing and mask wearing have become the new "normal." She said the pandemic is still impacting social emotional factors and by using the Casel standards they are revisiting and reassessing where students are emotionally. Suzanne identified evidence-based focus areas used by the district to support this transition, including Open Circle, Advisory, Connect Training, as well as classroom and school wide expectations of behavior.

Elementary school psychologist Felicia Sperry talked about MTSS and social/emotional learning with the younger students. She explained a triangle diagram of the 3 Tiers. She said 100% of students receive Tier 1 support in the form of behavior & social skills instruction and 80% of these students develop these skills. At risk students who need the additional supports of Tier 2 benefit from check in/check out, social skills groups, small group counseling, and restorative justice circles and conflict resolution. Felicia explained Tier 3, which affects approximately 5% of the population, offers individualized interventions for students with more intense and chronic needs. Individual therapy, a behavior intervention plan and a crisis response are examples of supports that may be used. Felicia stressed that when a robust Tier 1 is in place there will be fewer students identified for Tier 2 or 3. She said differentiation plays a role in tier 1 to meet all student needs. By creating school wide expectations students know what they are expected to do, by having trained staff evidence-based programs are imbedded into the curriculum, and by using problem solving techniques teachers are managing issues before needing to go to the principal. Felicia said teachers reports, attendance numbers, nurse visits, and climate & behavior of students are some of the data used to guide Tier 1 supports. She stated that post remote learning there have been lots of reports of students not knowing how to be together, especially in the lunchroom, and the school has been addressing this area through Tier 1. She said at the Middle School level counselors have been doing monthly lessons to get ready for the big move and go over the expectations around this transition. Lunch behavior issues also surfaced at the middle school and counselors revisited social expectations with students, which is another example of Tier 1 support in the school.

John Webb, director of school counseling at ORHS, shared about SEL & MTSS-B with adolescents. He said *#better together* highlights the high school's focus on creating community again. He said an on-call counselor is available at any time to any student and advisories/flex times are addressing SEL learning through topics of anti-bullying, stress management, and healthy relationships. He said Community Partners will be providing mental health support in a program called "Thriving and Surviving Thru a Pandemic" and community events, such as Vaping Unveiled, and Connect Suicide Prevention (previously used to train staff) will be available to parents. John said the high school is collecting data from students through a Youth Risk Behavior Survey and from staff in an SEL survey. He reported that the number of safety issues, which are student idealizations of hurting themselves, have risen from 18 for last year to 25 for the first half of this year. He said although this number is high, the counseling department is embracing this knowledge with the realization that students have a need and the department is meeting this need, and he said it is encouraging that students are reaching out. John thanked the board for their support of social and emotional learning.

Brian Cisneros asked about behavior issues at the high school. Rebecca Noe said that there is a consensus that student behaviors and the culture of the school are changing with most differences being shown in the Freshmen and Sophomore classes. She said the upper-class are brainstorming ways to address it and model it. She said the older kids have open lunches so any modeling during that time is less available and they are seeing behaviors in Freshmen that they've never seen before.

Yusi Turell asked where the MTSS weakness is and how the board could help. Felicia responded that there are no snarls, rather they are in the beginning stages and experiencing the growing pains of a systematic process. John encouraged the board to keep supporting their community events.

Suzanne finished the presentation stating there will be vertical alignment with SEL, similar to curriculum, so students understand terms and expectations used across the schools. For example, there is talk about using Restorative Circle at the middle school, which follows Open Circle at the elementary school. In their framework, the district will continue to look at what they already have and are doing and connect it to evidence based practices. In February the final part of the series will focus on Interventions.

B. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Morse explained the Contingency Funds memo stating Andre Kloetz, the Building Contractor, was conservative with the construction budget and is comfortable releasing funds in the amount of \$513,570. He noted money has been already set aside for demolition. Dr. Morse stated the building was recently tested and

they are waiting for the fire department's response to whether a booster is critical, which would cost \$150,000. The Building Committee and Dr. Morse met and reviewed items that were initially cut and determined ones that are essential and ones that provide the greatest advantage to students. They set aside \$96,124 for six car and two bus charging stations and \$150,00 for the potential booster, leaving \$363,570 to spend on student-centered enhancements. Some include indoor furniture and equipment such as soft furniture for the library, pedestal desks for the classroom, and theatrical lighting & microphones for the Concert Hall, as well as exterior furniture and equipment for a playground, outdoor sports, and the library patio. Denise Day stated that her priority would be items for the concert hall. Dr. Morse stated Jay Richard will continue to fundraise for a playground and the additional equipment purchased will help expand it out. Dr. Morse credited Mr. Kloetz for his experience and cost-effective decisions, such as finding less expensive materials without compromising durability. Another update was the delay of the new interactive boards for the classrooms which will not be available for the opening. Dr. Morse and Josh are looking at existing items to bring over for the time being. He explained the global chip shortage has caused a supply chain issue and it's out of the vendor's control.

Dr. Morse reported on the appeal of the Senate Bill 304, Decisive Concepts, stating all but two people testified for it to be repealed but it is unlikely to occur because the majority want to keep it. He said he and Tom Newkirk will be attending the meeting on the Loyalty Oath Bill.

C. Business Administrator – Sue Caswell asked the Board to sign three documents: 2022 MS22 Default Budget, 2022 Warrant Article, and 2022 MS26 Proposed Budget for the Deliberative Session.

Brian Cisneros made a motion to accept all three documents, 2nd by Dan Klein. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

D. Student Representative Report

Olivia Gass reported that the midterms were pushed back a week and there were split reactions among the students. Some were happy to have more time to study, meet with teachers for extra help and ask questions. She said it's good for students who were quarantining to have the time to get caught up. Olivia said the negative reactions were from students feeling the change came late on Friday and it caused confusion on due dates for projects. She thanked all those involved in setting up the recent booster clinic held at the middle and high school.

A. Finance Committee Report - No report given

B. Other: None

VI. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA – No items provided

VII. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

Discipline Policies Overview

Denise Day stated the policies were reviewed by our attorney and some changes were made regarding who has authority.

Denise Day made a motion to approve JIC – Student Conduct and JICD – Student Discipline and Due Process for first read, 2nd by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

Michael Williams thanked the policy committee for their work.

2022-23 School Calendar Approval

Rebecca Noe shared with the board the survey results from the current CTE families stating that 92 out of 136 leaned toward the Maine vacation week. Combining parent and student votes there were 46 voting for the ME/MA vacation week, 23 for the NH vacation week and 23 with no preference.

The board discussed the three versions of the calendars commenting on the days that don't align for the CTE program. Michael Williams said he appreciates all the correspondence on the calendar provided by the Guild and CTE families. Denise Day shared her concern with students having to decide between giving up their vacation or schooling and votes for an alignment with Dover. Dr. Morse stated the 3 CTE centers are trying to align as much as possible, but it's not 100% alignment and talked about the difficulty of the issue. Yusi Turell said it is difficult and wanted to hear from the CTE families and pointed out their alignment favors the CTE program. Michael said he leans toward version #3, so students go lighter into the start of school and don't go as long into June. Brian Cisneros agreed and is happy to support version #3 to avoid going on a Monday for the last day of school. Tom Newkirk favored version #3. Brian suggested moving the extra Teacher Workshop Day. September 13th was suggested, but some board members wondered if it made sense to take off a day Dover already has off, while others favored a TW day in September.

Denise Day made a motion to adopt the 2022-2023 School Calendar version #3 with the change of moving one Teacher Workshop Day on March 17th to September 13th, 2nd by Brian Cisneros.

Tom Newkirk asked if it was too early in September to have a TW, but Rebecca Noe said she only had about 90 minutes with staff since student orientation is also occurring the first two TW days. She said having another one in September would be beneficial.

Motion passed 4-2-1 with Michael Williams and Dan Klein voting in the negative, and Yusi Turell abstaining, with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

Michael Williams stated his disagreement with having a Teacher Workshop Day on a Tuesday in September and did not support the decision.

VIII. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES

The Manifest Committee met and completed the following manifests.

Vendor Manifest #16 \$849,595.95

Payroll Manifest #14 \$894,292.96

Denise Day said the Long-Range Planning Committee met and is ready to present to the Board on February 16th.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public comment

X. CLOSING ACTIONS

- A. Future Meeting Dates:**
- January 24, 2022 Superintendent Lee Selectman Budget Update 6:30 PM
 - February 2, 2022 Regular Board Meeting – ORHS Auditorium
 - February 8, 2022 Deliberative Session – 7:00 PM ORHS Auditorium

XI. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3 II (c)

- Superintendent Evaluation

Michael Williams moved to go into non-public session under RSA 91-A3 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, 2nd by Dan Klein. Motion passed 7-0 by roll call vote.

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The board moved to non-public session at 9:03pm

The board returned to public session at 9:49pm.

NON-MEETING SESSION: RSA 91-A2 I (a) {If Needed}

XII. ADJOURNMENT:

Brian Cisneros made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 pm, 2nd Michael Williams. Motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Karyn Laird, Records Keeper