

# REVISED Oyster River Cooperative School District

## Regular Remote Meeting Minutes

February 17, 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,

**STAFF PRESENT:**

**GUEST PRESENT:** Zoe Selig, Marlise Hyde, Tessa Lippman, Paige Burt, Mia

Tom Newkirk read the following statement:

As Chair of the Oyster River Cooperative School Board, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

*a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:*

We are utilizing Microsoft Teams for this electronic meeting. All members of the School Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # 1-603-766-5646 and ID Code 461362#, or by clicking on the following website address: <http://www.orcsd.org/stream>

*b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:*

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Microsoft Team or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the ORCSD Board Agenda for 02/17/21.

*c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access:*

If anybody has a problem, please call 603-280-4202 or email at: [orcsd-video@orcsd.org](mailto:orcsd-video@orcsd.org).

*d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:*

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that **all votes** that are taken during this meeting shall be done by **roll call vote**.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance and to state if you are alone. A roll call vote was then done with 7 Board Member present

A call to suspend the meeting due to a technology issue from 7:02PM – 7:04pm occurred. The meeting resumed with changes to the agenda

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

Tom Newkirk stated that under Section VII – Superintendent's Report we are moving the Antiracism Committee Update on Policy ACA as the first report out, and we are removing the Schoology Report from this agenda and moving it to the March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

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

### **III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Tom Newkirk asked Superintendent Morse if there was any public comments submitted. There were none.

### **IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

#### **Motion to approve the February 3, 2021 regular meeting minutes:**

**Revisions:** None

**Brian Cisneros moved to approve the February 3, 2021 regular meeting minutes as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed with a roll call vote of 7-0.**

#### **Motion to approve the February 17, 2021 non-public meeting minutes:**

**Revisions:** None

**Brian Cisneros moved to approve the February 3, 2021 non-public meeting minutes as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed with a roll call vote of 7-0.**

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

**A. District:** None

**B. Board:**

Michael Williams stated that there is a lot happening including the CDC recommendations for school governance. As a district we are hitting most of the points well and credit goes to the nursing staff and district leadership for that. The most notable not happening is screening testing program. We have made a lot of progress with the number of students in school especially for the middle and high school, we now need to look at the elementary level.

Yusi Turell stated that we have turned a corner with all students having the option of in-person learning. She suggested after the elections the Board come back together for a possible formation of an elective committee for fall planning.

Tom Newkirk spoke about taking a walk over the bridge that has been dedicated to Kenny Rother and remembering how much of an impact he had on the community and the Board.

### **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 stated that there is a disconnect between the state and county rates. Durham is high due to the return of UNH students and cautioned that high counts can lead to a high spread and should be monitored. He stated that we are in control of our contact tracing but bringing more students in will

challenge the system. In terms of staffing capacity, we are still trying to hire the Board approved positions and we are hiring substitutes, but overall, we are in a good place.

He additionally relayed that there is now a COVID dashboard on the website and gave recognition to Josh Olstad for putting this together.

Todd asked the Board if they had any questions about the Covid Metric.

Denise Day asked how we are doing this week with transmission affecting the schools?

Todd stated there are a few in quarantine, mostly at the high school as this is the most populated school. We are aligning well with what the CDC is asking us to do.

As there were no additional questions Todd moved on to the Star testing update.

#### Update on STAR Data

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 versus hybrid students. He stated that we have just completed the winter testing. He referred everyone to the memo in their back up. To begin he stated that variables play a role in the data and one being family choice to keep their child remote versus balanced academic groupings. The percentage of remote family participation was 70% compared to the in-person at 85%. He went on to state that the elementary level is the only testing that could be done as the middle and high school is far too fluid to make the comparison. Overall, we did see an 8 -9% growth.

Todd asked the Board if they had any questions.

Yusi Turell stated that she was the Board member requesting this information and thanked Todd for researching and providing the comparison of information in the back up.

As there were no additional questions or comments pertaining to the STAR Data, Todd informed the Board that he is hoping to bring forward at the next meeting an update on the REACH program planning for the summer as a full program with most of the activities being outdoors.

Todd thanked the Board.

Tom Newkirk moved the meeting forward to Dr. Morse.

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

##### Antiracism Committee Update on Policy ACA

Dr. Morse began by stating that as a district that have worked on diversity and inclusion for the past 4 years, but additional work surrounding racism needed to be looked at and the existing policy needed revision and language changes to look at including stronger language surrounding racism. He introducing Tessa Lippman who is an ORHS senior who was an integral part of this committee and an articulate leader in our work on revising the Antiracism Policy ACA.

Tessa began by stating that she and some of the committee members have been working on this since the start of the year and will speak about what has been done and what they are hoping to accomplish. Tessa invited the committee members present to introduce themselves.

Zoe Selig is currently a sophomore who wants to create a more equitable environment for all, assist students of color find a safe and inviting space where they can feel comfortable.

Marlise Hyde also wants to create an equitable space for everyone and briefly spoke about what their committee has done so far to aid in this endeavor.

Paige Burt stated that they are working on making the environment as inclusive as possible, create a safe space and continued to work on the revised policy ACA to include stronger language.

Mai spoke of the current use of history and wants to include all aspects of history and not just certain areas not only at the high school, but all of the OR schools. We need a more equitable learning environment.

Tessa Lippman went on to state that they are advocating for the minority students. We need to expand measures and steps to include faculty and staff, strengthen the language condemning racism and demonstrate antiracism. She thanked Dr. Morse, Todd Allen, and the Board for listening to them. This work is important and ongoing and asked if anyone was interested in sitting in on one of their meetings to please reach out to her.

Dr. Morse asked Denise Day and Yusi Turell who were part of this important work if they had anything to add.

Denise Day stated that the students on this committee did a phenomenal job and that she values their leadership. This has created a positive momentum that has branched out to subcommittees starting up with communication and outreach to the community. It is very exciting to see.

Yusi Turell stated that it fits with the country and the story that it tells. It is clearing the way for students to get involved, and that this is an ongoing process. She thanked the committee for their ongoing involvement and support.

Dr. Morse asked Todd Allen and the Board if they had any questions.

Dr. Morse echoed what both Denise and Yusi had to say and that he is proud as the superintendent to have the opportunity to work with such gifted and vocal students who were instrumental in assisting with the revision to the current Racism policy and thanked them for being such active participants.

Tom Newkirk asked if this policy needed to be voted on tonight, or if it was going back to the Policy Committee.

Denise Day stated that the Policy committee worked on this and as there were a number of changes to the policy that it would go back to the policy committee with the revised changes first.

Tom Newkirk thanked the students for their passion and articulation to this issue and for their assistance with revising the current Racism policy.

The students left the meeting at 7:30PM.

### Candidates Night Update

Dr. Morse informed the Board that the PTO's have created a candidates' forum that will take the place of the candidates' night that was scheduled for February 23. The candidate's forum will be two nights and the first night will be March 2<sup>nd</sup> for the At-Large and Madbury candidates and March 4<sup>th</sup> for the Durham and Lee candidates. He went on to say that he hopes that the community will listen in and that we offered the services of Alexander Taylor to assist with the streaming of both of these events.

### Grandstands

Dr. Morse informed the Board that Jim Rozycki has a commitment letter in hand that guarantees delivery of the grandstands by mid-May and that they will be ready in time for use by the Seniors for their graduation.

Denise Day asked if the information surrounding the candidates' forum can be added to the District website.

Yusi Turell asked if the forums could be recorded and asked what the turn around time would be that the recording would be accessible to be viewed.

Dr. Morse asked Alexander if he could answer Yusi's question.

Alexander stated that the turn around time would be based on the length of the recording. He also stated that the streaming that will be used is exactly like this meeting tonight and is readily accessible for the community to listen in.

There were no additional questions and Dr. Morse invited Suzanne Filippone to join in and update the Board on the high school status for a March 8<sup>th</sup> start.

Suzanne began by stating that they are still reaching out to parents and that there are still 45 families that they need to connect with. She stated that if you take out those 45 families; the current percentage for students returning in person is 58% and that 42% has chosen to remain remote. She went on to state that even if the additional 45 families are included in the percentage, she does not believe that it will change very much.

The administration team has been working with faculty and that there is a mix of interest in the different types of instructional practices. They are continually meeting through department meetings; lunch and learn where the faculty is sharing strategies and the practices that people are using.

She went on to say that she will be sending confirmation emails out over vacation week, they are hiring substitutes, purchasing technology, and setting up rooms. They are also working on methods so that classrooms are correct for the number of students. They are also working on the different methods of what coverage is needed for the different teachers who need to split. They are working on classroom and building readiness, safety procedures and parking. She informed the Board that they will have a

live meeting for families after vacation, there will be more professional development opportunities for faculty. They are working with transportation and school nutrition, and students will meet with faculty during their advisor period.

Suzanne asked the Board if they had any questions.

Yusi Turell asked if there was a possibility to work to match the 58% classroom size with creative jiggling to 50% for students to come in each day

Suzanne stated that they do not have the ability to bring in students every day due to class shifting and moving, it has a ripple effect. There is a higher freshman rate of participation in some classes that drop off as the grade level increases.

Tom Newkirk asked if parents would be required to give a definite commitment for student return.

Suzanne stated that they would need to give a definite commitment and the high school would send a confirmation.

There were no additional questions and Tom moved the meeting to the next agenda item.

#### Concurrent Teaching/Learning Report

Dr. Morse began by stating that this has been an amazing experience meeting so many educators throughout the state and that people were very forthcoming and honest. We did interviews with 27 teachers and 6 administrators representing 15 districts across 6 states. We had a virtual roundtable discussion on January 26 with 23 participants, including 11 educators we had not interviewed previously, and 3 new districts represented. Todd and I did 3 elementary and 1 middle school classroom observation of teachers teaching concurrently. We did a brief survey of OR residents with concurrent teaching experience with 27 respondents, of which 17 were PK-12 teachers. There was a review of the online training resources that were developed by administrators and consultants nationally.

The major finding was that we rely heavily on teachers making the decision. Teacher's choice. Which was not the original thought for concurrent teaching, and which also led to the term blended learning which is teachers making decisions based on where they are and the need to meet the needs of their students.

Dr. Morse moved on to the charge for this that is in the Board back up which states: Research other districts' experiences with concurrent teaching and to conduct a feasibility study for ORCSD - including technology platforms, instructional strategies, support for teachers and students, and possible models for voluntary implementation by individual teachers. The working group will present its findings to the Board on February 3, 2021. The Superintendent will invite the Guild to nominate members to the working group, which will also include parents, administration, and Board members.

Dr. Morse went on to state that originally it was thought that there would be a need for additional technology. In truth a second monitor and a microphone would be needed to pull this off. There would also be the need for a larger broadband capacity. This would need to be monitor the demands of this system.

He also stated that the success of these model is effective teaching strategies made by teachers in a classroom. The model takes more time and energy and the general assumption from teachers was that it is possible and for some this is too much. What we need to do is a close read using the lens of equity. How do we deliver equitability for all of our students? We will utilize NH Listens for our K-12 staff. Additionally, we do have some interest at the high school in implementing this option and they will have the support of the administration. We are not dictating that teachers have to do this.

Tom Newkirk asked that when you surveyed the schools, did you find this model used in middle school or primarily in the high school?

Dr. Morse stated that it is used in all levels, but older students are more successful.

Todd Allen stated that other variables that we learned is that the division of in-person to remote made a difference.

Dan Klein thanked Yusi for getting this initiative going and also appreciated how thorough this report is. He is also appreciative to the teachers who do not work in this district but is willing to assist with this. How they have the courage to explore new initiative, new methods and navigating the common denominator.

Denise Day stated that she understand the importance of professional development time, but we just voted to take away 2 PD days and in particular the March date and is wondering if there will be a need to add that additional time. Do we have the time teachers need to be able to implement this successfully?

Al Howland spoke about all of us wanting to return back to normal, but we have minimized some of the problems that we faced when we were all in such as scheduling and homework. With the pandemic we have provided flexibility and it would be great to incorporate the office hours and at home homework help utilizing the technology to extend this school day.

Yusi Turell wanted to take a moment to acknowledge other members of the committee who worked countless hours to make this report possible. They were Allison Jumper, Laura Vittoriso, Carla Wiles-Stasko, Darren Scople, Brian Cisneros, Janet Martel, Doug Hoff, Jon Bromley, and Sara Cathey.

There was no further discussion on this topic and Tom moved to the next agenda item.

#### Central Office Administration Agreement

Dr. Morse began by stating that at the Board direction he took the current ORAA guidelines and created a separate negotiated agreement for the central office administrators: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, and Business Administrator. He went on to state that they were the last group that did not have any agreement to follow.

Michael William asked what does this replace?

Dr. Morse stated that it is not replacing anything, we assumed the benefits for ORAA applied to these three positions they were just never put in writing.

Michael Williams asked if the Board's negotiation team were involved in this process.

Dr. Morse stated that this was a directive from the Board, but we can go back if you want.

Denise Day clarified that what was put in writing was basically what was in practice.

Dan Klein asked if there were an appreciable difference that we should be aware of.

Dr. Morse stated that there were no appreciable differences and that it just reflects the roles of the Assistant Superintendent and Business Administrator.

Michael Williams stated that we may not have had a specific agreement for the Assistant Superintendent and Business Administrator, but the Superintendent does. How does this interact with the Superintendent's contract?

Tom Newkirk clarified that these were recommendations for next year.

Michael Williams stated that there are items in this that are reflecting current practice, but this merits discussion among the Board before we vote on this.

Tom Newkirk clarified that this would be a non-meeting to discuss a negotiated agreement.

Brian Cisneros stated that as someone who writes these contracts for a school district that this is more in depth as far as benefits and that all are in line with these positions and does not see anything out of the ordinary.

Al Howland stated that we have time at the next meeting to discuss this during a non-meeting.

Dan Klein stated that this is worth looking at and questioned that there was no time urgency to approving this tonight.

Tom Newkirk asked if they were thinking to go through this line by line.

Dr. Morse stated that we could do a side by side comparison of the language lifted from ORAA.

Tom Newkirk asked Michael Williams if the side by side comparison was what he was looking at.

Michael Williams stated that he wanted to look at the Superintendent's contract and also section 8 the contract renewal provision.

Denise Day stated that it would be worthwhile to have a non-meeting to discuss the concerns and also how we wish to proceed.

Tom Newkirk confirmed with the Board that they would have a non-meeting on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### **C. Finance Committee Update:**

Al Howland reported out to the Board that while he was presenting at the Deliberative Session, he watched the audience and saw confusion on their faces.



He took it upon himself to write up a Budget Process that covered the steps taken and how the information is gathered and used to create a budget. He also stated that he put this on the Durham Town Website as informational. He suggested that at the next Finance Committee meeting this could be used as a template as to how the budget process works.

Brian Cisneros stated that he read this report and that it was a good explanation and appreciate the time that he took to create this.

Tom asked Al if this could be put on the district website.

Denise Day stated that she has not seen this document and that if this is to go up on the website it should be approved by the full Board. If this is representing the Board then the Board should see it.

Dan Klein stated the Denise made a good point and to make it clear to the public the Board should read through it and then make a simple motion to approve at the next Board meeting.

#### **D. Business Administrator:**

Sue Caswell stated that she usually does this at the last meeting in January, so this is information as of the end of January. She stated that she has not reclassified the \$434K from the state so there is \$400K more than noted. She also stated that we are well ahead of where we were last year at this same time.

The Board asked about the special education lines, the technology lines, whether we have encumbered monies already and if she had a sense of the fund balance for the end of the year.

Sue Caswell stated that we have encumbered the utilities and that she believes that we will be over \$1M. She also stated that the grandstands will come out of that.

#### **E. Student Representative Report:**

Megan stated that she met with the senate today and that they are still planning more activities leading up to the March 8<sup>th</sup> date. She stated that the students are excited. They had senior day last week and it was awesome. They are planning more senior activities including the junior/senior gala. They are also continuing the Black History month activities.

#### **Other:**

### **VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

#### Communication Workshop

Dr. Morse began by stating that there are three different levels to this: immediate, short term, and long term. The charge is the immediate issue and is very simplistic and doable. Dr. Morse read the charge:

The charge of the committee is to lay the foundation for a more uniform and user-friendly strategy for communication at all levels of the organization (classroom, building, and district) and to look at communication from the user experience.

The Committee will consist of, but not be limited to, community members with expertise in communications, the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, a building level administrator, the director of technology, a technology integrator, and a classroom teacher.

There are several people in the district with communication expertise and forming this committee with different levels of expertise represented would lay the foundation for this work.

Tom Newkirk stated that this is a reasonable first step and a good start.

Michael Williams was agreeable.

**Michael Williams made a motion to approve the communication charge as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Yusi Turell. Motion passed with a roll call vote of 7-0.**

## **IX. ACTIONS**

**A. Superintendent Actions:** None

**B. Board Action Items:**

**Discussion:**

### List of Policies

Denise Day explained the changes to the sustainability policy.

Michael Williams asked if there were specific goals that they wanted to achieve with this.

Dr. Morse explained that this was the first policy that he wrote when he started and like the racism policy and as time goes on the language needs to change and be updated. There is no specific objectives this just brings it up to date.

There was a discussion surrounding the fourth bullet that states: Facilitate and increase the awareness that sustainability is affected by social, economic, and cultural elements/factors (e.g. racial injustice, food insecurity, wealth distribution)

Tom Newkirk asked if this could still be passed as a first read.

Dr. Morse asked Yusi to capture her thoughts surrounding this bullet and to send to him so that he could share with the Policy committee.

**Denise Day made a motion to approve the Policy ECFA - Sustainability, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Klein. Motion passed with a roll call vote of 7-0.**

## **X. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:**

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

Denise Day and Dan Klein reviewed the manifests.

Payroll Manifest: #17 \$927,615.24

Vendor Manifest #18 \$2,804,063.77

Denise Day stated that she has a new Durham representative that she is asking the Board to approve for the Long-Range Planning Committee.

**Denise Day made a motion to appoint Heather Smith as the Durham Representative for the Long-Range Planning Committee, 2nd by Michael Williams. Motion passed with a roll call vote of 7-0.**

Denise went on to say that they are still looking for a Madbury Representative and if anyone was interested to contact her.

Tom Newkirk asked the Board members if they were going to do the middle school walk thru on February 26<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM.

**XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None

**XII. CLOSING ACTIONS:**

- A. Future Meeting Date:      3/3/21 - Board Workshop – 6:00 PM ORHS Auditorium  
   3/17/21 – Regular Board Meeting – 7:00 PM ORHS Auditorium  
   3/31/21 – Manifest – 3:30 PM SAU Conference Room.

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

- Superintendent Evaluation

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

**Tom Newkirk moved to enter into nonpublic session at 8:40 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, 2nd by Denise Day. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 7-0.**

Chair Newkirk declared the School Board back in public session at 9:08 PM.

**IV. ADJOURNMENT:**

Brian Cisneros moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 PM, 2nd by Dan Klein. The motion passed with a roll call vote of 7-0.

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