

**Oyster River Cooperative School District
Regular Meeting**

February 21, 2018

ORHS Library

7:00 p.m.

SCHOOL BOARD: Denise Day, Brian Cisneros, Tom Newkirk, Kenny Rotner, Dan Klein, Al Howland, Michael Williams, and Student Representative: H.J. Wilson

ADMINISTRATORS: Sue Caswell, Todd Allen, Superintendent Morse, Catherine Plourde, Suzanne Filippone, and Andy Lathrop

There were 15 members of the public present.

I. CALL TO ORDER: By Tom Newkirk at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MANIFESTS:

Payroll Manifest #16: \$908,601.87

Vendor Manifest #17: \$176,799.90

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Dan Klein moved to add to the agenda a conversation about using the high school as a polling place during voting, 2nd by Al Howland. Motion passed 7-0 with the Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

Kenny Rotner moved to add sports announcements before public comments, 2nd by Denise Day. Motion passed 7-0 with the Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

Andy Lathrop commended Noah Strout for winning the state wrestling championship. He also commended Olivia Colarusso for qualified for NHIAA meet of champions in Alpine Skiing. Congratulations to them.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Maria Barth from Lee expressed disappointed on the recent vote on football. She respects and acknowledges the science. Maria feels that the Board ignored the science on head trauma with football. The future depends on our actions.

Keith O'Brien of Lee spoke about the cell phone policy review. He appreciates the time and effort of the Board. What is the benefit of the current cell phone policy? And how does that benefit outweigh the risks? Do our children need phones in the classroom to achieve academic success? We as a District need

to answer these questions and make the right decision to ban these phones at the middle school.

Yusi Turrell spoke as a parent of two children in elementary school. She feels that smart phones for the kids would be a distraction in the middle school. She wants to know why the phones are more beneficial than a distraction at the middle school and is asking them to be banned during school hours.

Amy Sterndale of Durham spoke about the cell phone policy review. She feels that the process the District went through when looking at the school start time policy was great and hopes that the same process will be used with cell phones in the schools. Amy would like to see the schools stay as equitable safe sanctuary for children during the day and would like cell phones out of the schools from bell to bell.

Ian Flescher's wife Kathy Collins spoke on his behalf. He is a middle school teacher in Portsmouth where cell phones are not used during the school day. This eliminates the distractions that goes along with them. For children with social anxiety, they don't have their phone, but they can go to the library. He is urging a phone free school day policy. Kathy Collins of Durham thanked Mast Way and Moharimet for participating in Community Reads. There were three sessions that were attended and thoughtfully participated by teachers. She is also in favor of a cell phone ban at the middle school.

Jen Preval has two children in the District feels that public education should be free and equal to all students. If there are students without cell phones, there is inequity and pressure on those students. Jen supports a ban on cell phones at the middle school.

John Pologie has three students in the District. He feels we need a policy that is for both managed devices and personal devices. John feels that we need to build a policy that will grow with technology. The District needs to determine what is acceptable and what is not along with consequences. Boston Public Schools has one policy K-12.

Jon Bromley from Durham spoke and has two children in the District. Increasingly and appropriately the District is focusing on the wellness of students in the District. What is the District's role in helping to shape kids in the focus of technology? We need to treat this cell phone discussion like any

other curriculum discussion. What practices should be enacted in order for children to have the healthiest behavior with technology? How is technology affecting our students on a social and emotional level? He is suggesting to thoughtfully consider what kind of relationship do we want our children to have with technology and plan backwards from there.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve the 1/9 Public Hearing: Denise Day moved to approve the minutes of January 9th, 2nd by Al Howland. Motion passed 7-0.

Motion to approve 1/17/18 regular and nonpublic meeting minutes: Brian Cisneros moved to approve the regular minutes of 1/17/18, 2nd by Denise Day.

Revision: January 17th minutes: Page 3 Paragraph two line three insert “unified” before coaches.

Motion passed 7-0 with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

1/17 Nonpublic Minutes: Al Howland moved to approve the 1/17 nonpublic minutes, 2nd by Brian Cisneros.

Addition: The Board unanimously approved the annual evaluation of Superintendent Morse and directed Tom Newkirk, Denise Day, and Dan Klein to make the final editing change so that the evaluation could be shared with Dr. Morse at the February 21, 2018 meeting.

Motion passed 7-0.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS:

A. District: Suzanne Filippone of the High School announced that on March 21st, PSATs will be held for Sophomores and SATs for the Juniors. The 9th graders will be involved with a wellness fair and grade 12 students will have a Community Service Day.

Last week 36 students and faculty were trained in the Bystander Training Program. This is a high school curriculum violence prevention and healthy relationships program as part of our 10th grade Advisory Program. The training took place at UNH on February 15th and 16th.

Suzanne Filippone is proposing that graduation be held on June 8th. There are 960 required hours for 12th graders and without any further snow days, they will have 996.5 hours completed.

Al Howland moved to have Oyster River Graduation on June 8th, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 6-1 with Michael Williams opposing and the Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

Catherine Plourde, Director of Student Services, reported that the District had an Indicator 11 check: Timeliness of initial evaluations 2016-17 reporting year. They had a 100% compliance level this year for the fourth year in a row.

B. Board:

Denise Day discussed Community Reads. There are lots of activities for students and families. She encouraged everyone to look at their website and to check out some of their activities.

Denise appreciates all the community members who have come out to speak this evening. They have gotten a lot of feedback on the survey that was sent out.

Michael Williams would love to have a sense of where we are headed with the device policy. He would like some more clarity on these discussions.

Kenny Rotner talked about the summer program, Camp Reach. The program has been very popular. Kenny urged parents to keep an eye out for information and sign-ups for this summer program.

Kenny Rotner would be in favor of having a Board table discussion on devices. He would like to see the Policy Committee tasked with crafting a policy that represents the entire Board. It is the Board's responsibility to look at the pluses and minus. This is a big discussion and he thinks that it should be made at the Board level.

Al Howland attended the meeting for 8th grade students going into the high school next year. How does a six or seven class schedule fit and what is best for them. There is a lot of decision making that needs to go into picking class schedules.

VI. DISTRICT REPORTS

A. Assistant Superintendent/Curriculum and Instruction Reports:

Todd Allen reported that an email went out to all families that the Camp Reach Catalog will be out in mid-March. He urged parents to be on the lookout for it. It is a popular program and will fill up quickly.

Sabbatical Leave: Todd Allen reported that the Sabbatical Committee is recommending Chris Hall's sabbatical for next year. The Committee was very impressed with his proposal and feels that it could be a sustainable change over time. This Sabbatical pays .50 salary and the District hires a long-term substitute for the school year, so in effect, the cost to the District is about the same.

Kenny Rotner moved to accept his proposal that was reviewed and recommended by the Sabbatical Leave Committee, 2nd by Denise Day. The Policy itself in selecting the criteria could use some fine tuning. He suggested that the Committee through and offer some tweaks to make it a better document. Motion passed 7-0 with the Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

Football: Andy Lathrop provided a football update: There are three committee that the football proposal needs to go through to play in the fall. The proposal was approved by the first committee. On April 11th there is a classification committee. If it clears that then it goes to the NHIA council on May 17th. They will know at that point if they will be able to play in the fall.

B. Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Morse attended a unified basketball game this evening. It was a great thing to see. He encouraged everyone to find time to attend a game.

Superintendent Morse talked about Manifest Educational Hardship and a student who was struggling in their own current system. These requests now require Board approval. There is a student in another system who is being bullied and is asking the Board to transfer the student into the District. The District is willing to pay the tuition for the student. Superintendent Morse is recommending approval of this student being tuitioned into the District.

Denise Day moved to approve the student moving into the District under the manifest educational hardship, 2nd by Dan Klein. Motion passed 7-0 with the Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

Superintendent Morse discussed preparedness in light of the recent school shootings. They have reviewed their emergency plans. They reached out to homeland security regarding the modular and how to make it safer. Because the modular cannot be made completely safe, it has been decided to shut the modular over February vacation. The classrooms will be packed and to have them operational on the Monday after vacation.

The District has been approved for the \$572K grant to redo the front of Mast Way to make it a safer entrance under the public school infrastructure fund. This will be a major improvement.

Superintendent Morse is recommending that March 23rd and May 25th no longer be professional development days and revert to student days.

Denise Day moved to revert March 23 and May 25 back to student days, 2nd by Michael Williams. Motion passed 7-0 with the Student Representative opposing.

Strategic Plan: Superintendent Morse reported that the focus group went extremely well. They added in a student focus group.

The Middle School Facilities Committee is right on target and doing great work and will be ready to report in May or June.

Orchard Drive: They have not received any bids to date on the Orchard Drive property.

C. Business Administrator: None

D. Student Senate: The Student Representative reported that the Model UN Team went to a conference at BU. The Student Senate has been discussing the national walkout on March 14th. Emily Allison, an Oyster River Student, creates the Cultural Bulletin. It is a monthly bulletin with religious holidays and international events to educate both students and the community to promote diversity.

E. Other: None

VII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

SB-193 Dan Vallone, Policy Director at Reaching Higher, discussed legislation of SB-193 in the House of Representatives. They need to vote on it by March 14th. It is a statewide educational savings account program in which these dollars could be used in respect to educating their child. There are six states that have them approved. There are three bills that deal with school choice right now: 1492 Manifest Educational Hardship. The bill lowers the standard for Manifest Educational Hardship. 1368 an expansion of the tax credit program and SB 193.

Tom Newkirk asked if this does pass will there be a lawsuit challenging this. Dan replied that no matter the decision, this is a contentious issue and a lawsuit will be filed.

Homework/Coursework Survey Results: Todd Allen reported on the homework/coursework survey. There will be a Board workshop on March 28 to discuss homework.

Purpose and structure of the survey:

The purpose of the OR homework survey was to gather a baseline of information regarding perceptions of student workload and to use this data in guiding discussions about best practices with regards to homework and other related issues.

The questions asked went beyond homework to look at how students spend their time outside of school. Homework time vs. structured activities vs. free time.

Questions were asked of parents and students about homework stress and coping strategies.

Data was collected from teachers about the nature and volume of homework they assign.

A similar survey was implemented via SurveyMonkey with MS/HS students, teachers and parents.

The survey was sent out to parents three times over a 2 week period.

Students were asked to do the survey during their Advisory period.

Teachers were invited to participate via email by building principals.

60% of students participated.

54% of parents participated.

81% of teachers participated.

There is a direct correlation between high school students reporting 3 plus hours of homework each night and percent of students taking 7 courses.

Todd reviewed the results of the survey with the Board.

Homework on weekends and vacations:

60% of students and parents report regularly having an hour or more of homework on weekends.

66% of teachers report never assigning homework on weekends.

57% of both parents and kids report regularly doing homework on vacations.

89% of teachers report never assigning homework on vacations.

ORHS Course Load for Fall 2017:

In the 9th and 10th grade 32% of students are taking 7 classes in 7 periods

In the 11th and 12th grade 25% of students are taking 7 classes in 7 periods

Brian Cisneros asked about the stress levels of students. Todd replied that kids are not doing the minimum workload. Dan Klein talked about our educational culture around homework. Are there teachers that would like to assign less but feel that the expectation is to assign a certain amount?

Todd Allen also discussed that the teachers in the middle school are in teams and can coordinate how much homework is given, but in high school the randomness of classes doesn't allow for coordination of how much homework is given.

School Board Self Evaluation: This will be a conversation at the next meeting.

Dan Klein noted that with an election coming up and the recent events in Florida he feels that there needs to be a discussion that in NH the federal law banning firearms is unenforceable because of a prevailing state law. On election

day, the school is being used as a voting place. For a Presidential election, voting day has traditionally been a teacher workshop day. Regarding a discussion on safety, that decision had been based on traffic. Superintendent Morse noted that this is an issue. One solution could be to establish wards and precincts. He has spoken to Todd Selig about this previously and would include him in any future conversations around this.

VIII. ACTIONS:

A. Superintendent Action: None

B. Board Action:

Motion to approve Moharimet Maternity Leave from April 2018 to end of year:

Denise Day moved to approve the Moharimet Maternity Leave from April 2018 to the end of the year, 2nd by Michael Williams. Motion passed 7-0.

Motion to approve HS Spring Coach/Volunteer HS

Chasia Warshow Girls JV Lacrosse: \$2,660

Volunteer: David Grieve First Robotics Mentor

Denise Day moved to approve the above nominations for High School Coach and Volunteer, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.

Policies:

Policies for Second Read/Adoption:

Advanced Course Work/Advanced Placement Courses: IHCD

School District Credit Cards, Procurement Cards: DGD

Kenny Rotner moved to approve the above list of policies, 2nd by Dan Klein. Motion passed 7-0.

IX. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES:

Policy Committee will be bringing information back for the 3/21 School Board Meeting to present the cell phone survey results.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

XI CLOSING ACTIONS:

A. Future Meeting Dates: March 7th and March 21st Regular Meetings at the ORHS Library 7:00 p.m.

XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3 II (a)

Superintendent Evaluation moved to Next Meeting

NON-MEETING SESSION: RSA 91-A2 {If Needed}

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn: Al Howland moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 p.m. 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully yours,

Laura Grasso Dobson
Recording Secretary