

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

May 5, 2021

Draft

SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT: Michael Williams, Al Howland, Brian Cisneros, Yusi Turell, Dan Klein, Tom Newkirk, Denise Day (arriving after the approval of the agenda and before Public Comments).

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE: Megan Deane

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

STAFF PRESENT: Leslie Ayers

GUEST PRESENT:

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

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Brian Cisneros moved to approve the agenda, 2nd by Tom Newkirk.

Dan Klein made a motion to amend the agenda to add a Non-Public Session to discuss a personnel matter following section III. Public Comments for this meeting, 2nd by Al Howland. Motion passed 6-0, with Denise Day absent from the vote.

Motion to approve the agenda as amended passed, 6-0 with the Student Representative voting in the affirmative, with Denise Day absent from the vote.

Denise Day rejoined the meeting at 7:02pm.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Courtney Drew a freshman at the high school addressed the Board, speaking of the importance of the Chinese program being offered in the school district to students, for both educational and cultural purposes.

Non-Public Session – Personnel Matter

Michael Williams moved to enter non-public meeting session at 7:04pm in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II c – Matters which discussed in public would likely adversely affect the reputation of any person other than the public body itself, 2nd by Tom Newkirk. Upon roll call vote the motion passed, 7-0.

Chair Williams declared the School Board back in public session at 7:24 PM.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Brian Cisneros motioned to approve 4/21/21 Meeting Minutes, 2nd by Denise Day.

Corrections:

Denise Day added the following to her statement at the end of page 4 “A discussion followed in which Board members asked questions and expressed their concerns. Dr. Morse stated that Todd Allen and Leslie Ayers would repeat their presentation to the Board regarding their research into the possible expansion of the world language program. Denise Day asked Dr. Morse if they could include information regarding current class sizes for all the world language classes. She stated she is concerned about the implications for further world language expansion should the district hire two or more Chinese instructors.”

Yusi Turell had a correction on page 3 of the minutes to change the verbiage “to join in an effort to resist the bill should it be voted into power in New Hampshire,” to read “with a proposal to join in an effort to oppose the bill’s language as it is be considered in New Hampshire.” This correction was sent to Wendy as well.

Motion to approve 4/21/21 Regular Meeting Minutes as amended passed, 7-0 with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

Denise Day moved to approve Non-Public Meeting Minutes of 4/21/21, 2nd by Yusi Turell. Motion passed, 7-0 with Student Representative voting in the affirmative.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

A. District

David Goldsmith discussed the first five days of in-person and remote students at Moharimet went well, they are still working with students on transitions and procedures. David continued discussing that some remote students and teachers are coming back into the building and experiencing class time in the same room but with masks, have been talking with students about rules at home and rules at school and learning to change that up. The building has been loud and full of energy, lunch and recess are doing well. Parents are doing well with pickups and drop offs.

Tom Newkirk: What were the final numbers of remote versus in-person students?

David: I don't know the exact, around 30 remote students total, around 260 in-person student.

Misty Lowe discussed the first five days of in-person learning at Mast Way, as teachers are continuing to build new routines with the students. There are 328 in-person students, 60 remote students. Misty stated the transition continues to be an adjustment but is getting easier and little more normal every day. Misty continued stating the students are really happy and enjoying being physically in the school, and they are looking forward to the weeks ahead. Misty thanked the Lee Community Church for sharing their parking lot to help with the traffic flow, and the Lee Police Dept. in helping with the traffic flow for the first few days.

Jay Richard stated the middle school is having a lot of fun despite there still being some challenges. Jay stated the staff has been exceptional during the transition, very positive and enthusiastic, and over 90% of students are physically in the school.

Suzanne Filippone stated the high school currently has around 76% of students attending in-person. The high school has been working with parking and having an open campus, and a lot of events are picking up. Suzanne also noted a feeling of school spirit on the campus. Suzanne stated that dismissals have been the biggest challenge for the high school, and thanked all the parents for their patience, as well as Officer Nicolosi, Mike McCann and Mark Millikan for helping with the traffic flow. Suzanne also noted it is teacher appreciation week, everything the teachers have done during the challenging year was very appreciated.

Dr. Jim Morse stated that Coe Drive is not working well, although the number of students on the school buses is right where they want it to be the result of that is the traffic and the number of parents needing to drive is higher. Dr. Morse also added a reminder to anyone that may be driving on Coe Drive that if the bus lights are flashing, they need to stop, the fine for passing a flashing light school bus is quite large. Dr. Morse also asked drivers to please leave early or later, and be patient as the buses are loading, as safety is a primary issue during this time.

B. Board

Tom Newkirk encouraged the finance committee to look at the hourly rate of substitute teachers as they look at the budget for next year. Tom stated substitute teachers are rare now and a lot of districts have increased their pay, the district needs to keep up to make the job look attractive. Tom also cautioned against the pay getting stuck.

Dr. Morse: That is a really good thought, substitutes are rare right now, some school districts have doubled their pay in order to build their lists again. The comparative analysis will show the pay matches, but we need to do something significant to attract more substitutes.

Brian Cisneros: I just completed a salary survey on substitutes I can bring to the finance committee.

Yusi Turell extended a commendation to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion students for the organization of the candlelight vigil for Ma'Khia Bryant and the victims of police brutality held in front of the high school on April 23, 2021, and complimented them on their creation of a space for reflection and connection. Yusi continued to thank teachers and staff for helping to make it possible: Vivian Jablonski, Andrea Drake, Jaclyn Jensen, Mike McCann, and Marek Filip. Yusi also thanked Scott Vogel, Durham Parks and Recreation, Oyster River Cycle & Sport, UNH volunteers, Officer Nicolosi for their help with the bike skills workshop held for students at UNH. Yusi gave kudos to the Mouth of the River journalists and advisors on their inspiring and thought-provoking articles.

VI. DISTRICT REPORTS

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

Todd Allen started by stating the COVID Metrics were left off the agenda but can be found on the website, and Durham cases have dropped immensely, which is very positive news.

Summer School Update

Todd stated that summer programming is still a work in progress as teachers are focusing on returning kids to school, but there are four types of summer programs: Extended School Year, REACH Program, MTSS, and Enrichment-type programming.

Extended School Year (ESY) happens every year and is written into IEPs and was developed to identify and meet the IEP. At this time, most families know already if their child will be participating, the district just needs to know how much of the program will be in-person and how much will be remote.

REACH program has expanded capacity but is still full. Rachel from Durham Parks & Recreation is working to provide afternoon care.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is relatively new for the summer, and there will be teams at each building to monitor and help reach kids' needs, as well as help identify which non-special education students need additional, and they are hoping it will primarily be in-person this year.

Enrichment-type programming is trying to look at areas where kids are looking to refine their skills, particularly in mathematics for Middle School and High School students, will also help to fill in any gaps between the classes. There has been a call put out to the teachers for what gaps they feel there are in what they were able to cover this year.

Michael Williams: How is the staffing?

Todd: Still a challenge we're working on. REACH staffing is good, ESY staffing is generally pretty good, MTSS is a little more challenging because it is so fluid, Credit Recovering program has the same teachers that we anticipate coming back each year. The people expressing interest in the more passion projects are willing to do it.

Michael: Is lunch a component for this?

Todd: Yes, free lunch out of Mast Way for everyone involved will be available.

Al Howland: I have been pushing the lunch program because Doris has been working so hard this year.

World Language Presentation

Todd went through the highlights of the World Language Presentation given to the board in 2019, and discussed some important components needed to be understood prior to the board making a decision on the Chinese program.

Leslie Ayers discussed the goals within the three more popular models used when teaching world languages in schools. Leslie also discussed the recommendations for the language programs and the benefits of a K-12 proficiency-based World Language Model and how it teaches students to be lifelong communicators.

Todd discussed the action steps would be adding three full-time positions to the World Language Department: One at the Middle School, and one at each elementary school. Todd cited this recommendation from the committee came from a time when the Confucius Institute was still functioning and thriving, and the committee has updated the information now. Todd recognized that the district has not committed to a K-12 World Language program and adding the positions at the elementary schools would be necessary. Todd continued to pose a few questions for the Board to consider when discussing the Chinese program, which included the data of students in Spanish, French, and Mandarin courses, as well as the staffing numbers for the courses, as well as discussed the addition of one World Language teacher at the middle school, and one teacher each at Mast Way and Moharimet. Todd also discussed One World Language (OWL) as an option, as well as Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS).

Dr. Jim Morse thanked Leslie for her hard work on the program during her sabbatical in 2019. Dr. Morse referenced a scenario given in to the Board members in their weekly packet, and the different ways the district could potentially fund the Chinese language program. Dr. Morse discussed a potential three-year plan of moving from soft to hard funding, and suggested pursuing grant funding for one Chinese teacher and fund one Spanish teacher at same time, and a locally funded Chinese teacher. Dr. Morse then discussed the financial commitment needed to take this on and the grant money we can use from the after-school program.

Tom Newkirk: Where does the grant come from?

Dr. Morse: It comes from the non-profit organization supporting Chengdu University.

Tom: Is this located in China?

Dr. Morse: Yes.

Tom: How much do we know about this organization?

Dr. Morse: We know very little about this organization, we just know they exist to support the university. We don't know much about the funding source except Yige is confident he can generate that funding for us to move forward.

Todd: And it is defined as a non-governmental organization as well, so it is defined separate from the Chinese government. There is a question of where the funds ultimately come from, but legally it is defined as a non-governmental organization and a non-profit.

Yusi Turell: To me one of the most meaningful pieces of information is that 2 of the 3 current teachers from China wish to stay, and there is certainly an uncertainty of what role would the non-profit play in selection and development in teachers before they arrive here, but we have known quantities for next year at least.

Denise Day: Thank you very much for all of the work, I really appreciate the comprehensiveness. The question I have is how many sections in high are taught by one World Language teacher?

Leslie: Typically teach 5 classes

Denise: If we are anticipating Mandarin students at level five, is there a teacher that can teach that at the high school? We don't want to get into a situation where we need two teachers at that level at the high school.

Leslie: It's possible, as long as we have five levels and one section at each level.

Dr. Morse: When the numbers are low, we may combine level five with level four to make sufficient students to be serviced by the teacher.

Todd: In terms of changes, when we talk about the proficiency-based model, we would be incorporating that across the program. When middle school students move into the high school there would be a cohort that would following its way through. I can't imagine there would be a need for more than one person at the high school for that.

Denise: We could potentially have Barrington students that would want to start Mandarin. Trying to think long-term and avoid surprises or needing more teachers.

Leslie: To speak to curriculum aspect of combining classes – it is possible. If we get into the situation where we don't have enough teachers, we can build the curriculum, so it does not repeat for students and combine two levels.

Brian Cisneros: An issue that we have had over the years is that we do not have space in fifth grade for an additional language. We are building a new school, but that is, at best, March 2022.

Dr. Morse: Our World Language teachers at middle school are using the third floor as a teacher prep area and they have moved into classrooms to teach World Language and the teachers are essentially rotating, and we can do that with Chinese too.

Brian: You have said there is a shortage of French teachers, and less kids taking French. What about hiring a French teacher and expand that?

Dr. Morse: French in New England is a heritage language, and the further the generations go out, Canadian French influence on Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont has lessened. Spanish has increased because like Mandarin, Spanish has taken over the world and French still more provincial.

Leslie: There is a perception that French is not as widely spoken but French is huge in business and it used across the world in some major organizations like the Olympic Committee and NATO, so I think more and more students are realizing it has potential to be an important language to them, and our French teachers are working hard to make sure French stays alive.

Brian: Regarding the funding source for this program, it was said that a non-profit is non-governmental in China, but everything is governmental in China with that style of government, so I am really accepting that.

Dr. Morse: Neither are we.

Brian: I am concerned about that funding pretty seriously and also the fact that we are building this up at a big rate, we really need to dig into this with the finance committee because this is really going to start adding on to a time when we have a big bill coming in for the middle school. If we start adding people in, and the middle school may require more staff or teachers. Although it's simple on paper it's looking pretty big and that's what I'm concerned about.

Megan Deane: This is very complicated, but to give the perspective, it is important to have the language options. If the Board does not vote on this world language plan tonight, please keep this in mind for the future and future meetings.

Al Howland: I appreciate the aggressiveness, but I want to separate out the crisis management of the Mandarin program from the bigger vision. We always knew the middle school would open up a space for expansion, my personal preference would be to attack the grant program right away. I would feel more comfortable stabilizing the Mandarin funding first and then look at a Spanish teacher in the Fall, and then we will have the space. Personally, I think we should use VLACS with a known source for the high school than to use the soft money. In terms of competencies Julie has been a big mentor in getting the Chinese Program going and is actually in charge of the program, it would fit more into our competencies and the money is assured. It gives us breathing room with not having to worry about the staff. For the other teacher at the middle school, how do we come up with the money ourselves to pay for that? In FY 22-23 the Chinese teachers we need are built into the budget and then the Spanish teacher is built into the budget. I don't feel comfortable using the soft money for this three-year transition. I know it comes at a cost and won't be done as quickly, but it give us more stability in the long run.

Denise Day: To clarify, are you suggesting we use the grant for the Fall, 2021-22?

Al: No, not at all.

Tom: What is your suggestion?

Al: For the high school we can use VLACS, which is free. The question becomes how do we handle the middle school which is 26-34 students sitting there. The real funding in our proposal would be coming up with the middle school. That would buy us stability, we would move away from the soft money, we would already be self-funding the program from grades 6-12 and then that gives us the span of the budget process to think

through the repercussions of this and make sure we can stabilize the Mandarin program for 6-12. Jim has already said he thinks there is grant money for the after-school program. This will also let us talk about how to do the fifth-grade teachers, the teacher under 21-22 would then move to 22-23. Our big push would be how to come up with the funds for the teachers and staff we currently have

Dr. Morse: Just to clarify Al, are you saying we go forward funding Mandarin teachers with local funds by reassessing our 22-23 and using VLACS?

Al: I am saying we have to fill the hole for this Fall using money that somehow, we shift from the 22-budget coming forward. My thought process is that you use a combination of VLACS and self-funding a teacher to fill that hole.

Brian: I believe that is what we talked about in the finance committee was taking capital improvements and moving it up to this year to free up funds for next year to pay for that.

Yusi: And that was \$200,000 available?

Al: \$180,000

Yusi: We've all received so many letters from parents and students regarding a program that was an uncertainty a few years ago about community interest is now not an uncertainty. And that has been for a program that has rotating teachers that have carrying degrees of training and English proficiency before they come here, and we've still been able to see the interest. I think we are all at the point where we recognize that there is a demand in wanting to support that, no one is talking about pulling the program. The question is, how do we do that? I too am apprehensive about having a new non-profit partner, not because it could be a propaganda machine or any of the criticisms of the Confucius Institute that we didn't see locally, but that we heard nationally. My concern is that this program, this kind of program of selecting and training teachers to come teach in the US in a K-12 environment is not the focus or competency of this organization, we just don't know it. There's the challenge now of how do we ensure quality, especially if there is going to be continuing turnover. We are lucky because instead of just losing two teachers and needing to fill them locally, we have the opportunity to apply for this grant. We are doubly lucky because the two teachers that have been with us want to stay. My concern with the non-profit is we don't know who's going to be coming, is there going to be turnover, are there going to be quality issues, but we know what we would be getting if we go for the funding, at least in the short term. I don't think we should do both of the teachers in that form because I think we need to transition to self-sufficiency and we need to hire a teacher we know is going to work well with our other World Language teachers. I think next year it makes sense to have two Mandarin teachers, one we hire for, one we continue through grant funding, recognizing that the quality of that grant-funded teacher is going to be high because that teacher is willing to stay. Then the questions becomes do we bring it down to fifth grade for all languages and would we bring in a Spanish teacher to make that possible.

Denise Day: I cannot go along with a proposal for fifth grade Mandarin unless French and Spanish are also offered at fifth grade. We haven't heard from any parents of Spanish students because it's not an issue. If we only offer Mandarin in fifth grade, we will get letters from parents on why we don't offer Spanish and French at that level. If any language is offered in fifth grade then it needs to be all the languages.

Michael Williams: Does adding one Spanish teacher allow all three languages in fifth grade?

Dr. Morse: Yes

Todd: That is if we still have the same number of Mandarin teachers we have had.

Michael: Does that assume one FTE Mandarin teacher at the middle school or more?

Dr. Morse: One at the middle school and one at the high school.

Yusi: And even with the 2.0 that is still a little bit more than would be needed at the middle and high school so there's a little extra if we have two Mandarin teachers to continue the elementary after school without investing in additional staffing.

Brian: Is the dual certified teacher certified all the way down to fifth grade?

Todd: It is just done as World Language, not by level.

Michael: What comes out of fifth grade to add world language in?

Jay Richard: We shift the schedule so there is a smaller amount of time for some core time, works well in 6, 7, 8 grade, it would work for grade 5 to shift their schedule too. We just need to prioritize where we want to put things and how we want to do it.

Dr. Morse: Basically, the fifth grade would mimic the sixth grade.

Jay: Maybe it would be a few days a week in fifth and sixth grade, and it would be balancing the staff to make sure our kids are set up with the teachers.

Michael: In regard to the elementary school positions laid out in years two and three, how does that work if we hire one and then the other the next year?

Dr. Morse: The first year is using that person's talent to analyze our current curriculum, not necessarily to do direct instruction. There may be some, but it will largely be to see how we can integrate into the system and not add onto our students.

Michael: So, in this model that program would not start until the 23-24 school year.

Dr. Morse: The first year is putting the plan together and the second year the partner would join and the plan would be in place.

Michael: I agree with Denise regarding the fifth-grade position. I don't think we're at a place tonight where we should be acting on the whole plan. Another issue I see is funding the Mandarin teachers in the 21-22 school year by shifting some capital expenses into this year's budget means that when we get to the 22-23 school year, we would have to build in whatever position or positions we added for the coming school year plus whatever is in 22-23.

Al: With a rising CIP to fill the middle school.

Michael: I am fully supportive of maintaining the 6-8 Mandarin program, I do not think this is the right time to add the fifth-grade position. I am open if we think seeking grant funding for the first year is the right way to go.

Tom: Do we have assurance that if we get grant funding, we can continue with at least one of the teachers that is currently working in the school?

Yusi: That is our assumption, yes, from speaking with Yige.

Al: Is it possible for us to provide the funding to get that teacher ourselves?

Yusi: My understanding is we would open that position to candidates and perhaps one would choose to apply.

Al: If we are going to go through all this to push in CIP, I would rather us fund it.

Yusi: You mean two teachers?

Al: Yes. I think we should take the steps to ween the program in and it will become a budget goal on how we integrate this. It gives us time in the fall to work through a lot of logistics. We are not there yet; I'd rather stabilize the immediate problem of Mandarin and we can come back in the Fall and this will be one of our goals. I'd rather bite the bullet now and put the funding in and give us the most control possible.

Megan Deane: Of all things that should be prioritized, having the existing Mandarin program would be pretty huge to students.

Michael: How do we feel about the grant funding aspect versus direct local funding.

Denise: I just want to clarify, are you saying we will not have any of the languages in fifth grade, just 6-12 the three languages?

Michael: I'm trying to separate the two discussions.

Al: We are just trying to stabilize what would have happened if Confucius Institute had not stopped. We're trying to save what we already have.

Denise: But right now, aren't they doing Mandarin in fifth grade?

Dr. Morse: No

Todd: It's available as an after-school program in fifth grade. Two things I want to quickly share: The grant funding doesn't necessarily have to be part of the relationship with Chengdu University. It's a way to pay for it so that we don't have to, but the partnership can exist if we are willing to fund the cost of the teachers coming over. The grant is about providing a mechanism for us to fund it. I want to point out many of the emails you have been receiving from community members that are supportive of the program are elementary parents, which are only offered Mandarin, I think you'll see the more passionate supporters are in that level. We need to take into account the after-school program.

Yusi: Michael you asked directly about the grant, and Al you talked about making the shift, however there are a few reasons not to do that. I think we need to talk about making a shift with the fifth-grade program even if we are not making a decision on that tonight. As part of the strategic plan, we're working toward a K-12 program and that's a gap. Beyond that, we've heard there's a shortage of Chinese teachers available, if we are suddenly trying to fill two positions, we are putting ourselves in a position of possibly hiring in haste. We have strong teachers that have come through the Confucius Institute but if we open for two positions, we might be locking ourselves in, whereas if we stage it we might have greater opportunity to get really strong long-term candidates. The final reason to bring one local and the other through the grant is to be able to stage it. Going through the non-profit we're not sure what we're getting, we're not sure of what the training is, in the short-term we know what we're getting.

Michael Williams motions to authorize the hiring of two Mandarin Chinese teachers for the middle school and the high school starting with the Fall 2021 School Year that will be funded locally, and additionally to seek grant funding to support staffing for the after school elementary program, 2nd by Al Howland.

Denise: Just to clarify that the Mandarin teacher, the two teachers, one would be teaching 6-8 grade at the middle school and the other would be teaching grades 9-12 at the high school?

Dr. Morse: Conceptually it may be possible if we do not get the grant to have them do some of the after-school piece.

Yusi: To clarify – the proposal moves toward three Mandarin teachers next year, two hired locally and one through the grant?

Dr. Morse: I don't think so.

Michael: Yes, two Mandarin Chinese teachers for the middle school and high school that are funded locally, and seeking additional grant funding for additional staffing for the after school elementary program. So we would fund 6-12 Mandarin locally part of our regular staffing, the elementary programming we would seek additional grants for the funding to make that happen. We would also not be hiring an additional teacher to facilitate the expansion of World Language to all fifth graders at this point in time.

Tom: Is the agency that is finding these teachers, is an afterschool program the type of program that grant would fund?

Dr. Morse: I don't know. This is a vehicle of funding that Yige had mentioned to us and I don't know the specifics.

Yusi: In the past, our teachers had needed to show a certain number of hours worked not solely through the after-school program in order to get their visas. I want to hear other thoughts on the non-profit relationship and also the number of teachers because I think we can get to what the Mandarin program needs with only two FTEs. One should be funded locally and one through the grant and keep the same teachers we've had. Why the third teacher?

Michael: With the numbers in grades 6-12, it seems it doesn't merit two FTEs, based on the number of sections its more than one teacher, not quite two, but I'm not sure that would cover down to the elementary program.

Todd: The reason for two teachers at the middle school, it's the number of classes being taught, even though the numbers are smaller. It's more than a full-time load. This was the first time we've had four teachers because they were reporting being overworked because of their after-school commitments, running the after-school program, and all the UNH commitments on the weekends were stressing them out.

Tom: If we open these positions up, would the teachers here now with the Confucius Institute be able to apply for those positions with their Visas?

Dr. Morse: My understanding is yes. But if we continue hiring from China, that will fall onto us instead of the Confucius Institute handling it, if we hire locally, we won't have that problem.

Todd: There is also a potential certification issue we would have to deal with if we do not have an exchange of sorts.

Michael: The proposal is to hire three Mandarin teachers, the third only with grant money. Are we ready for a vote?

Motion passed 7-0 with Student Representative in favor.

Megan Deane: My apologies to interject, however I must leave early and would like to do the student rep report now if possible?

Michael: Yes.

Megan stated that each day since returning to school has become more and more normal, and in speaking with a parent, the parent stated that their student is used to school again already. Megan continued describing that the novelty of going to school is starting to kick in and students are becoming more excited to be back in school.

Chair Michael Williams declared a five-minute recess at 9:12PM. Meeting resumed at 9:17PM.

B. Superintendent's Report

Before the recess, Dr. Morse informed the Board and viewers at home that the school district is working with Strafford County Health to offer vaccinations to students 12 years of age and older, and more details will be given once available.

Dr. Morse reminded the public of the Forum next Wednesday in the High School Auditorium, and it will be streamed, and a separate remote forum will be planned for those uncomfortable coming onto the school property. Michael Williams stated the Forum will be formatted as a dialogue with members of the public, dialogue specific to a student or personnel matters will not accepted, each member will have three minutes to propose their question, each Board member will be give two minutes to respond to provide 10 minutes maximum for each public member. Dr. Morse reminded the public of the Diversity, Visibility, and Standing Together in Oyster River forum is to take place on May 25 in the High School Auditorium and all are invited to attend. Dr. Morse expressed excitement regarding the Forum as it is timely and an issue that hasn't been spoken about and we want to be sure all our groups are represented strongly, there will also be a presentation by UNH professor Monica Chu. There will be 3-foot distancing and masks will be required.

Assistant Superintendent Nomination

Dr. Morse discussed the difficulty in finding a suitable replacement for Todd Allen, as Todd has become important to him as not only a colleague but friend. Dr. Morse stated that he could not think of a better candidate to fill the position than the current high school Principal Suzanne Filippone. Dr. Morse continued by describing Suzanne as a

strong and powerful advocate for students and committed to providing equity for students in the district, as well as being familiar with the Strategic Plan. Dr. Morse described the process that led to Suzanne's nomination, including the screening committee, interview committee, parent, staff, community, and student involvement in the process. Dr. Morse nominated, with great honor and pleasure, Suzanne Filippone to the position as the next Assistant Superintendent of the School District

Denise: I was in on the interviews and we had incredibly strong applicants and Suzanne stood out.

Denise Day moved to appoint Suzanne Filippone as Assistant Superintendent, 2nd by Tom Newkirk.

Discussion:

Michael: Is there any other input from those that served on the committee?

Tom: We have seen Suzanne in so many different circumstances and seeing the grace in dealing with criticisms and developing plans. It is the same Suzanne that we see in the interviews but her knowledge of the system and the confidence other principals and administrators have in her, it was an obvious choice.

Yusi: I'll add that it was a chance to see a range of candidates, and in many cases if you asked about a curricular decision, the response was regarding meeting standards or passing state expectations, and it really stood out to me that Oyster River has a greater meaning than just meeting the basement level of external standards. It was inspiring to recognize the strength of our administrative team and to continue that with Suzanne's leadership.

With no further discussion, Chair Williams called the motion to a vote.

Motion passed 7-0.

List of "B" Policies for Annual Review

Dr. Morse began by speaking to the use of emails by Board members and commended the Board on keeping those communications strictly to Board business, also reminded the public that all agenda deliberation happens during the meeting and never over email.

Michael Williams moved to acknowledge the annual review of the B policies as noted in the agenda, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.

Fall Planning - Begin Discussion

Dr. Morse began by addressing questions the Board had posed to him at the last meeting. Regarding UNH's intent to open in the Fall, they are intending to open traditionally should all factors warrant that, with remote still being developed should it need to be executed. Regarding ESSER funding, it can be used for summer funding. Regarding home school and remote populations, more than 90% of the middle school students have returned to school and all indications show that number growing through the Fall, with the same happening with K-4 level. Dr. Morse stated the home school survey has been sent, and the remote students will be surveyed to see what their intent is for the fall. Dr. Morse discussed with the Dover Superintendent working together if they have a remote option, then expanded to Strafford Services regarding providing remote learning options and they are all very interested. Dr. Morse will bring forward more answers as more information is obtained, including from next week's Forum and the remote forum.

Brian: Regarding the Fall, are we going to discuss going back to our normal process as a Board for our meetings?

Dr. Morse: We would like to continue in the Auditorium until the end of the school year, and then in the High School library in the fall, and transition to the new middle school in mid-winter.

C. Business Administrator – NO REPORT

D. Student Representative Report (moved to after Assistant Superintendent's Report at the last minute without vote)

E. Finance Committee Report

Al Howland: We were looking for guidance on two positions, Next week we will talk about where the Mandarin program money is coming from, clarify what the CIP looks like, and how we're using the ESSER funds for the new guidance counselor position, we'll lay out the piano cost.

F. Other: NONE

VII. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA

Denise Day would like to pull out the list of policies for second read to make very minor corrections.

Michael Williams moved to approve the unanimous consent agenda, including the motion to approve ORMS Activity Stipends, the motion to approve District Position Maternity Leave of Absence from 8/26/21 to 11/30/21, motion to approve two teacher resignations from the middle and high school, and motion to approve teacher nominations for the 2021-2022 School year, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.

Denise Day: Some very minor corrections that were left out. For BHC – Board-Employee Communications, we took out the word “should” at the end of the first paragraph to read, “school employees have the same rights as other speakers.” For ACA – Racism & Anti-Racism there was period left off of number four at the end of a sentence. For BCA – School Board Member Ethics, the word “clearly” was removed from 8.

Denise Day moved to approve list of policies as amended: BHC – Board-Employee Communications, ACA – Racism & Anti-Racism, and BCA – School Board Member Ethics with minor adjustments for second read and adoption, 2nd by Dan Klein. Motion passed 7-0.

VIII. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

Dr. Morse stated to the Board that Conval School District is suing the State of New Hampshire for not providing adequate funding for public education, and if this lawsuit is successful, the funding for every school could go up substantially. Dr. Morse continued by explaining Conval wants to expand their partnership to help spread out the cost of the lawsuit, and that if we were to join our cost would be about \$15,000 each year over two years, totally around \$30,000. Dr. Morse posed the question if this is how the Board wants to spend some of the legal fund, and stated he thinks it is worth participating in, as it is part of a larger social justice issue of schools providing far more funding to educate the students than the states are providing.

Brian: What is the goal, to redefine what quality education is?

Dr. Morse: Yes, and ultimately what the cost of that education will be.

Tom: Will this cost to participate be higher?

Dr. Morse: It will go down if more districts join the partnership.

Brian: If we can get legislature to define what adequate education is it will be a win. This has been a problem for decades and it's just going to come back.

Michael: What fiscal year would this apply to?

Dr. Morse: 2021-2022 and 2022-2023

Al: It is important for wealthier communities to step up, especially with the emphasis we put on social justice.

Tom: Also, a moral imperative to join in.

Yusi Turell motioned to join Conval, Mascenic, Monadnock and Winchester School Districts to challenge adequacy aid, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0.

IX. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES

Equity, Justice, and Anti-Racism Committee

Yusi: The committee is going strong, as we ween off of New Hampshire Listens leadership. The long term goal is to move toward District ownership, and the next step is to look at the diversity, equity, and inclusion portion of the Strategic Plan to be sure it is still aligned with the direction of the committee, and to think about the committee is coordinated and communicated moving forward.

Communication Meeting

Michael: The report is coming together, and we should be able to present it at the meeting on May 19.

Dr. Morse: Todd and I will review the report for the second meeting in May.

Dr. Morse: Advertising for the position for High School Principal will begin tomorrow

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

XI. CLOSING ACTIONS:

- A. Future Meeting Dates:** May 12, 2021 Public Forum – 7:00 PM – ORHS Auditorium
 May 19, 2021 Regular Meeting – 7:00 PM – ORHS Auditorium
 June 2, 2021 Regular Meeting – 7:00 PM – ORHS Auditorium

XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: Reputation of another individual.

Michael Williams moved to enter into non-public session at 9:57PM in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II c, 2nd by Brian Cisneros. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 7-0.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Brian Cisneros moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:43 PM, 2nd by Al Howland; Motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alexa Fusilier
Recording Secretary