

Oyster River Cooperative School Board

Regular Meeting Minutes

June 7, 2023

DRAFT

SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT: Denise Day, Brian Cisneros, Dan Klein, Heather Smith, Matt Bacon, Tom Newkirk, Giana Gelsey

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE: Paige Burt

ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT: Dr. Morse, Suzanne Filippone, Catherine Plourde, Sue Caswell, Rachael Blansett, Rebecca Noe, Jay Richard, David Goldsmith, Misty Lowe

STAFF PRESENT: Sean Peschel, Sara Cathey

GUEST PRESENT: Ella Higginson (sophomore)

ABSENT:

I. CALLED TO ORDER at 7:00 PM by Chair Denise Day.

Denise announced it was Paige Burt's last night serving on the school board as the student rep. She recognized her commitment and regular attendance, as well as her informative updates and DEIJ work, particularly her design-thinking presentation on "Gender Equity." Denise gave Paige a token of appreciation on behalf of the Board and wished her well at NYU in the fall.

Dr. Morse stated that Paige is the epitome of student voice, and he appreciates the amazing job she has done.

Paige told the Board she enjoyed her experience and learned so much in one year as a student representative. She expressed gratitude on behalf of the students for having a voice and feeling empowered at ORHS.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Tom Newkirk made a motion to approve the agenda, 2nd by Heather Smith. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None provided.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Giana Gelsey made a motion to approve the May 17th, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes, 2nd Tom Newkirk.

Denise Day made the following revision:

For Policy IHAMA in the second paragraph, it should read "regarding the effects of alcohol and other drugs, misuse thereof, the hazards of using tobacco products." The misuse is referring to the alcohol and drugs, not the use of tobacco products.

Motion passed with correction 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

A. District

David Goldsmith of Moharimet said the recent "Day of the Forest", a themed day of enrichment, went very well and students enjoyed their participation on and off the school grounds. He thanked the community members and UNH professors for providing forest related presentations, and the Curriculum Enrichment Committee for designing the day's events. Regarding the 4th grade transition to the middle school, Jay Richard recently met with students and this Friday, June 9th, they will travel to ORMS for Step-Up Day. Fourth graders will be participating in a host of celebrations and activities made possible by parents and the PTO. On June 15th the students will participate in MOH Day, and the 4th Grade Recognition Night will take place that evening on the flat field, weather permitting.

Misty Lowe of Mast Way said everyone is feeling nervous, anxious, and excited since the end of the year is a busy and emotional time. Kindergarten screening took place and Interim Principal Bill Sullivan attended last night's Fourth Grade Parent Night. Upcoming activities include Step-Up Day at ORMS, a 4th grade breakfast and field trip, and field day. Mast Way alumni will be visiting on Thursday for their Senior Walk and retirement celebrations to say goodbye to some dedicated individuals will be taking place in the remaining weeks. Misty reported they are already busy planning for summer and fall.

Jay Richard of ORMS thanked the community and Durham Public Works for their involvement in the recent Service Palooza. A visit by the upcoming 5th graders will take place this Friday and it will include information from world language and music staff, sign up sheets, lunch in the Learning Commons and tours led by 8th graders. Next Monday on June 12th the 8th graders will visit the high school from 8:30-9:30am for their Step-Up Day. Next Wednesday there will be an 8th grade celebration on the high school field with pizza, a DJ, and the Kona ice truck. Planning for next year's 3-person and 2-person teams in 5th grade is underway.

Dr. Morse recognized Jay's 24 years of commitment and leadership to the school district, especially the last 14 years serving as Principal of the middle school. He wished him the best of luck in his career move to Concord.

Jay expressed his gratitude for working with many wonderful people, including leaders, administrators, students, and parents. While he looks forward to this new opportunity, he says he'll have Bobcat Pride forever.

Various Board members attested to Jay's leadership, noting his ability to handle issues throughout the years, his longevity, hard work, and dedication, and all his involvement with the new middle school and the smooth transition.

Rebecca Noe of ORHS updated the Board of recent events, including a well-attended prom, a Coffee House with a last performance by Mr. Milliken and Mr. McCann, Art & Science Showcases, Design Thinking student presentations, and a first-time Career Signing Day that included members of the Dover Chamber of Commerce. Two students signed with the Naval Shipyard and one with Tri-City Dodge. Rebecca recognized Paige's "Gender Equity" Design Thinking presentation which exemplified student passion and expertise. During this week's Senior Week students will participate in a Thomas Leighton cruise, a Canobie Lake Park trip, Senior Walks at the elementary and middle schools, as well as an evening of recognition on June 8th. Scholarship Awards will be given at 5:30pm followed by Senior Awards at 7:00pm in the auditorium. Graduation will be held on Friday, June 9th inside the UNH Whittemore Center at 6pm. The lobby will be open at 4:30pm and seating will start at 5:00pm. A newsletter with maps, parking, and logistics will be available soon.

Rachael Blansett, DEIJ Coordinator, provided the following updates: The last middle school BIPOC meeting took place last week. She is excited to keep it going for next year and she will use student feedback to develop future topics. Junior Sophia Duyon and sophomore Abigail Trojan have been selected as the student participants in the *True Leaders in Equity* partnership with UNH. This yearlong extended learning opportunity will begin July 10th-13th in Maryland where Sophia and Abigail will connect with students across the nation to begin their work. The last DEIJ Committee meeting was held and featured student work, including Paige Burt's presentation on "Gender Equity" and Maya Grainger's presentation on "Lack of Empathy & Diversity in the STEM Field." This summer 20 faculty members will be engaged in a summer reading group discussion around the book [DEI Deconstructed: Your No-Nonsense Guide to Doing the Work and Doing it Right](#) by Lily Zheng.

B. Board

Heather Smith shared that the Design Thinking presentations were amazing to see, and she was inspired by the students' passion.

Denise Day recognized the culmination of all the schools' hard work as the year ends. From music to art to science to design thinking, she gave a huge congratulations to all the students, adults, teachers, paraeducators, and coaches who were involved.

VI. DISTRICT REPORTS

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

Suzanne Filippone provided a professional development update announcing that this summer faculty will engage in Tier 1 work targeting all students and levels of learning, MTSS work, collaboration and integration within the social studies and science departments, artificial intelligence and policy work, a DEIJ book discussion, and a book discussion on Turning to One Another: Simple Conversations to Restore Hope to the Future by Margaret Wheatley. She thanked Janet Martel for all her hard work setting up the online logistics to make these trainings possible.

Student Presentation – ELO UNH Internship {Ella Higginson/Sean Peschel}

Suzanne introduced Extended Learning Opportunity Coordinator, Sean Peschel, and acknowledged the amazing job he does engaging students with the ELO program.

Sean explained that Extended Learning Opportunities or ELOs are student driven, student focused, and student designed educational experiences that take place inside and outside of Oyster River High School. They enhance and expand upon the educational journey ORHS offers through exposure - academic and career related field trips, through exploration - independent coursework, advance studies and informational interviews, and through experiences - job shadows and internships. An ideal ELO team consists of the student, the coordinator, a mentor teacher, and a community/industry partner.

Sean introduced student spotlight speaker, junior Ella Higginson, who truly exemplifies a model ELO student, and ORHS Science faculty member Sara Cathey, who embodies exemplary characteristics and attributes in her role as mentor teacher. Ella is here tonight to present her learning under this year's theme "Discover the Possibilities."

Ella described her ELO experiences to the Board in a slideshow presentation. She began her first ELO as a sophomore with a Seacoast Science Center Marine Science Fellowship on periwinkles and marine biology. This school year she completed a UNH Lab internship on oceanography and marine biology and next year she will participate in a UNH Lab internship on genetics, marine biology, and RNA sequencing. During these past two years she has had the opportunity to design and run her own experiments, conduct fieldwork, work in a lab, and complete 15 different projects with the collaboration of over 10 professors and students. Ella shared an important lesson she has learned, which is to always be aware and make note of any unusual samples. While working with live samples she said it was initially nerve-wracking, but facing unexpected challenges and the pressures of using actual samples over time has increased her comfort level.

Ella told the Board she loved going out to do field work and that it was her favorite part of the experience. She's also enjoyed working in a lab and can include using advanced lab equipment, such as a spectrophotometer, flowcam, google earth engine, and filtering systems to her skill set. She's done far more than she ever thought and is even more confident now in her decision to pursue a science degree. As a senior she will enter her third ELO to study what scientists have nicknamed the "Sea Squirt." She will be working in Newcastle and at UNH alongside Dr. Jenn Dijkstra and PhD student Madison Hurley. Ella thanked Mrs. Cathey, Mr. Peschel, and her family for making the experience possible, as well as the students and professors who have given her the opportunity to keep trying new things and learn.

Denise asked how much of the work can be completed in her day at ORHS. Ella said most of her work is done outside the school day since it requires her to be in the lab, but during her study hall she can type data into a spreadsheet and correspond with her lab group.

Dr. Morse commended Ella for her amazing work and dedication.

Sean informed the Board that there are approximately 60 students participating in ELO's in the following areas:

Career Exploration - 1

Independent Coursework - 43

Advanced Studies - 2

Curriculum Cycle Discussion

Assistant Superintendent Suzanne Filippone presented the “Curricula Review Cycle” slideshow to the Board with the purpose of increasing awareness of the cycle of curricula review at ORCSD. Suzanne explained that curricula review is a systematic approach to evaluating, reviewing, and revising curriculum using competencies as a design tool. It focuses on the allocation of funds on district priorities, and occurs within a specific time frame, yet it is also fluid. K-12 teachers, specialists, and leadership collaborate and reflect in multiple phases, and the cycle is designed for teachers teaching multiple content areas to focus on one area at a time. The cycle includes content areas that are grouped as follows:

Health/Science/WL
SS/Library/Counseling
PE/Art/ELA/Music
STEM/CS/Math

Phase 1 is evaluate and research, which includes the work of identifying goals, figuring out where the district is going and deciding how they are going to get there. Faculty looks at current foundational idea, such as the district vision and mission, the vision of a graduate, and the department missions along with the current curriculum. Research, which looks at frameworks, standards, and professional organizations, is a vital component for designing curriculum, competencies, and scope & sequence.

Phase 2 is reviewing, revising, and writing. Time is spent to discuss research findings, review curriculum, and identify gaps. It’s also a time to revise and write to develop instructional strategies and common assessments. Evaluating programs, resources, and professional development is also occurring. Teachers identify instructional practices for how the learning will look in the classroom.

Phase 3 is implementation, which incorporates developing and using assessments. They not only show what students can do, but they are a tool to see what educators are doing well and where teaching should go next. Expanding resources and professional development, monitoring implementation, and reviewing curriculum are all key components of this phase.

Phases 4 & 5 are effectiveness, which includes evaluating the ongoing work. Staff feedback is collected and all areas of work, including research, curriculum, resources, and assessments are evaluated, revised, and fine-tuned.

The curriculum cycle is an overlapping, collaborative, and reflective process. While work is done in phases at specified times, the overall purpose is to have continual improvement in the district’s curriculum.

Heather Smith wondered how the recent implementation of the Eureka math program affected the curriculum. Suzanne explained that it is the latest version of the district’s math program, and it has more instructional tools and assessments for faculty.

B. Superintendent’s Report

ORMS Recommendation for 3-person team and 2-person team. {Jay Richard}

It was acknowledged that due to the low numbers in the fifth grade, there will be a 3-person and a 2-person team. The 5th grade teachers will be given summer planning time to develop their teaching and learning experiences for next year.

Affirmation of Hiring

Board members received a memo containing the Guild Member List of Affirmation.

Tom Newkirk made a motion to approve the Guild Member List of Affirmation as presented, 2nd by Giana Gelsey. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

Hiring Process and Savings

Dr. Morse stated they are in a good place at approximately \$80k to the good.

C. Business Administrator – None provided.

D. Student Representative Report

Paige Burt stated that votes are still coming in for the election of class officers and it is likely that Maeve Hickok will be next year's school board representative. She recapped the most recent events stating that the Senior Art Show was amazing and featured very talented work, the last Coffee House was entertaining, and copies of the MOR magazine are still available. She gave a shout out to all the students who completed their ELO's and commended their passion and unique presentations. Paige also congratulated the Girl's Tennis Team for winning State Championships. Students have been enjoying Senior Week and look forward to the Senior Walk in which they will wear a button of their childhood picture so elementary teachers can recognize them. Paige concluded with two important topics of consideration for the Board:

1) She recommended the elective system be brought back to sophomores, which was the norm prior to the pandemic. She said it makes sense for freshmen to remain in classes with fellow students for a transition year, but she believes sophomores should be able to mix with higher grades. Teachers stated it can be helpful to mix ages and have upperclassmen model behavior and academic aptitude. Paige said students are concerned that there are electives no longer running due to a lack of enrollment and wondered if opening the elective system to sophomores would increase those sizes. Paige and her peers feel strongly that electives provide more choice which leads to more passion and higher levels of learning. She gave a shout out to Mr. Bromley for his Design Thinking Seminar, which will not be running next year due to low numbers.

2) Paige said this year's Mental Health Forum gave light to the fact that there are increasing numbers of mental health needs. She felt it would be beneficial to hire a licensed mental health counselor. She has noticed the high number of students waiting in the counseling office to see their counselor or the counselor on call. Since counselors are juggling a schedule of academic appointments, there are students waiting to be seen for emotional support. Also, students with academic appointments are pushed back since the number of students in crisis have gone up. It is becoming more and more apparent that there is a need for a licensed mental health counselor on staff and she encouraged members to consider this for next year.

Dr. Morse stated that the state-wide survey results show that 73% of parents expressed concern for the stress levels of students, and agreed a licensed mental health counselor is a future need for the Board to consider.

E. Finance Committee Report

Brian Cisneros shared that the Finance Committee met three weeks ago, and they are at the beginning stages of developing the calendar and groundwork for the next budget. They discussed the Fund budget, the food service revenue, turf field use, and normal drivers. At the November 15th Board meeting they will have budget recommendations.

F. Other – None provided.

VII. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA

- List of Policies for Second Read/Adoption: IHAH – World Language, IHAMA – Teaching About Alcohol, Drugs, and Tobacco and Deletion of current Policy IHAMA – Teaching About Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Abused Substances.

Chair Denise Day pulled out Policy IHAMA from the agenda for discussion.

Denise Day made a motion to approve Second Read/Adoption of IHAH – World Language, 2nd by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

Denise announced the substitution of the word “misuse” for “abuse” in the second paragraph.

Giana Gelsey made a motion to approve Second Read/Adoption of IHAMA with correction, 2nd by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

VIII. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

2023-24 Board Meeting Calendar

The Board made the following calendar clarifications: the first meeting in September is on Wednesday the 6th, the Feb 7th & 6th meetings should be in chronological order, and June 19th is a holiday.

Tom Newkirk made a motion to approve the 2023-24 Board Meeting Calendar, 2nd by Heather Smith. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

Superintendent’s Search Board Assignments

Denise Day made a motion to appoint Heather Smith as the point person and chair of the Superintendent Screening Committee, 2nd by Tom Newkirk.

Board members discussed whether appointing members for the Superintendent’s Search Committee should be done at the committee level or Board level. Brian Cisneros raised concern in appointing assignments by the school Board since it is normally done at the committee level. He worried it could be setting a new precedent. Tom Newkirk and Dan Klein felt that this particular committee was of a different kind, and it warranted the vote of the Board.

Motion passed 5-1-1 with the student representative voting in the affirmative. Brian Cisneros voted in the negative and Giana Gelsey abstained.

Denise Day made a motion to appoint Heather Smith, Brian Cisneros and Tom Newkirk to the Superintendent Search Committee, 2nd by Matt Bacon. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

NHSBA Resolutions

The Delegate Assembly will meet on October 5th to discuss any issues brought forth by the state’s public schools. If any Board member has an issue they feel should be discussed, they should notify this year’s rep, Giana Gelsey. Issues are due in writing by July 19th. Tom Newkirk encouraged the Board to think about the 306 Guidelines, which are ambiguous regarding the school Board’s authority for approving credits. Current language would allow flexibility for students to learn anywhere diluting the school Board’s authority to other agencies, such as private groups and social organizations. Tom will draft a resolution to present at the next meeting.

Consideration of Extending the Strategic Plan one additional year

Dr. Morse requested an extension of the Strategic Plan by one additional year. He said it will allow the plan to finish out over five years, so issues come to a natural conclusion, and it will offer a strong transition for the new superintendent to unify the district around a direction.

Heather Smith made a motion to extend the Strategic Plan one additional year to 2024-2025, 2nd by Giana Gelsey. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

Retirement Incentive for June 2024

Dr. Morse told the Board he would like to provide staff with the luxury of time to consider their retirement options. He would like staff to be aware of the incentive by the end of September, and this will also allow the district to anticipate savings as the year progresses.

Dan Klein recognized that a retirement incentive is an effective tool, but he is concerned with its repeated use and worries it could drain the district of the most experienced staff.

Dr. Morse agreed stating it was used last year, and it wouldn't be used this year if the district wasn't facing the last bond statement. On the other side of retirement, however, the district gains excellent new staff and assets to the district. There are 18 faculty that will qualify, and Dr. Morse confirmed with the Board that he would place a cap on the number of retirees that could opt for the incentive.

Brian Cisneros made a motion to approve a Retirement Incentive for June 2024, 2nd by Matt Bacon. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

IX. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES

The Manifest Committee met and completed the following manifests.

Payroll Manifest # 24 Total is \$724,132.04

Vendor Manifest # 24 Total is \$791,676.39

Heather Smith provided a year-end summary for the Sustainability Committee. They met on June 1st and discussed goals, where they are interested in going next year, their progress on waste and composting with plans to carry on, the success of the teacher presentations, and the well-received community dinners. They will meet with the new nutrition director to create a plan for next school year's dinners.

Giana Gelsey reported that the Wellness Committee met on 5/25. They reviewed the priorities of this year, which focused mostly on mental health supports for adults, namely teachers and staff, and discussed that priorities for the upcoming year will focus on mental health for adults and students. They decided to expand the committee to more community members, including the addition of two student members from the high school and possibly the middle school. They also discussed restarting or creating morning mental health peer support programs, as well as the need for more social programs for students. There is a question on whether wellness policy covers mental health for students, so they will also initiate a policy review to address the issue. An intersectional program with sustainability, which would promote drinking water for wellness, was also discussed as a possible integration with a reusable water bottle program. The committee is also looking at how to utilize the Health Trust opportunities.

Denise Day announced that Policy Committee meets tomorrow on June 8th.

Denise Day, Heather Smith, Tom Newkirk, and Brian Cisneros attended the Excellence in Education awards ceremony to accept the Best School Board award with Dr. Morse. They will travel to the annual NH School Board Association's Convention in October to give a presentation.

X. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None provided.

XI. CLOSING ACTIONS

A. Future Meeting Dates: June 21, 2023 – Regular School Board Meeting @ 7:00 PM MS Recital Hall

XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3 II {If Needed}

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

XIII. ADJOURNMENT:

Heather Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:00pm, 2nd Matt Bacon. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Karyn Laird, Records Keeper