

REVISED 10/12/21

Oyster River Cooperative School Board  
Regular Meeting Minutes

September 15, 2021

DRAFT

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

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:** Olivia Gass

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Jim Morse, Suzanne Filippone, Sue Caswell, Catherine Plourde, Jay Richard, Rebecca Noe

**STAFF PRESENT:**

**GUEST PRESENT:**

**ABSENT:**

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

Michael Williams informed the listening audience that we could possibly lose the live feed due to the extreme inclement weather and if that happens, we will hopefully be back on within 5 minutes and if not, it would still be recorded.

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Michael Williams asked to move the Mask Protocol for School Board Meetings to follow after Section III - public comment. There were no other suggested changes.

**Brian Cisneros moved to approve the agenda as amended, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed, 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

Mask Protocol for School Board Meeting – moved from Section VIII

Michael Williams opened the meeting by addressing the Mask Protocol for School Board meetings that was moved from Section VIII and he referred to the memo that he had written that was in the backup.

Dan Klein stated the board meetings should follow the district protocol for mask wearing for their Board meetings.

**Dan Klein made a motion for board and all attendees to follow the district protocol that is in place at the time of the meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day.**

Al Howland asked if someone who wished to speak but were immune compromised, watching live, or refused to wear a mask, that public comment be set up remotely for them.

Michael Williams and Dr. Morse will establish procedure and protocol for the next meeting.

Tom clarified if there was a termination date for the motion.

Dan Klein restated the Board would follow district protocol for the entire school year.

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

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

**Denise Day moved to approve the regular meeting minutes from September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros**

##### **Corrections:**

Michael Williams submitted the following revisions:

Sue Caswell reported out on the DOE25/MS25 and that they are due today and is looking for the Board to authorize, approve and sign the DOE25 and MS25.

Brian Cisneros made a motion to authorize the Board to sign both the DOE25/MS25, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Denise Day. Motion passed, 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

Michael Williams moved to approve the unanimous consent agenda: to affirm the hiring of an ORHS Chinese Teacher and to approve ORMS Fall Coaches for the 2021-22 school year, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Yusi Turell. Motion passed, 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

Michael Williams moved to affirm the hiring of a Moharimet Kindergarten teacher, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed, 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.

Tom Newkirk made a spelling correction on page 6--"reminded" in Denise's comment.

**Motion passed as amended, 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

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

##### **A. District:**

Rebecca Noe stated two weeks ago the high school started a new tradition called Bobcat of the Week. She recognized three students, Jingxuan Guo, Leonardo Li, J Ruml who received National Merit Scholarships. Also, Spirit week is coming up with events including a Hypnotist, Mr. Bobcat & an outside spirit rally. She is very excited about these efforts to gather the community together.

Jay Richard stated the middle school will be holding virtual open houses for parents, which will be recorded and reposted for later viewing. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents will be invited to attend in person with a RSVP. The soccer fundraiser and open house for alumni's will be on Friday, 9/24 from 3:30 – 5:00 and Saturday, 9/25 from 11:00 – 2:00 PM.

##### **B. Board:**

Tom Newkirk made a comment about the K-4 World Language program and generated questions for the Board to consider:

- 1) Are we in favor of a K-4 World Language Program?
- 2) Which languages do we support?
- 3) What result in proficiency do we expect?
- 4) What intensity of instruction should be achieved? Is one teacher per school a workable model?
- 5) In consideration to the length of the day, if we're adding something what are we taking out? A longer elementary school day would need to be negotiated with the Guild.
- 6) When should the program start?

7) How integrated should the languages be throughout the school day? For example, would vocabulary be reinforced by teachers during the day?

Denise Day shared her appreciation for getting newsletters from the different schools.

## **VI. DISTRICT REPORTS**

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

Suzanne Filippone spoke about the professional development focus on multi-tiered systems of support, specifically Tier 2/3's targeted instruction with identified students. She thanked the community and the Board for their support in having students back in the building since it is integral to their work.

Catherine updated the Board on the current data from the Metric chart. She stated that we are still not fully staffed and have a very small pool of subs. She shared that the principals across the schools are doing an amazing job utilizing their staff and paras for coverage. Regarding plans for extended absence, if a classroom teacher is in quarantine, the teacher can still provide Zoom instruction with a sub in the physical classroom. Students quarantining will use Bobcat/Flex time for extra support when they return.

Brian Cisneros asked for clarification of the Local tracing metric. Catherine stated that it is backwards and thanked Brian for mentioning it.

Dr. Morse asked Catherine to update the Board on the S.A.S.S.

Catherine shared Dr. Chan's comments regarding Strafford County, which includes large concerns about clusters occurring in schools. There are 23 active clusters in school with 135 infections in students and 11 in staff. He urges schools to have substantial mitigation layers, mask wearing, vaccinations & screening in order to respond to a cluster, all of which our schools have in place. Catherine has posted this information to the site.

Catherine also spoke about the S.A.S.S. (Safer at Schools Screening) program's commitment to provide weekly testing to all families & staff who consent. The goal was for 250 to sign up and right now the district has 248 consents for students and 33 for staff. A schedule will be provided to families next week. Parents & staff can continue to opt in at any time, however, Thursdays will be the cut off for signing up to participate in the following week's screening. Most participants are from the elementary & middle school grades, which makes sense since the initiative helps target unvaccinated populations.

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

Dr. Morse began by sharing his sincere gratitude to Brenda Worden who sent lunch to the central office as a thank you for all their seen and unseen efforts and read her letter to the Board. This act of thoughtfulness was very much appreciated by the entire Board.

He announced his Fall town meetings will be taking place in Madbury on Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> at 9am, in Lee on Sept. 20<sup>th</sup> at 6pm, and in Durham on Sept. 27<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

Dr. Morse informed the Board that he, Brian, Al, and Dan are going to be doing a lot of night meetings for fall negotiations and that they will have limited availability during this time.

#### Lunch Program

Dr. Morse spoke on behalf of Doris Demers reporting that the lunch program is seeing amazing results, even exceeding pre-covid numbers. All the schools are seeing an increase in meals, with the middle and high schools seeing much higher amounts than previously. As a result of the

federal government grant, lunch and breakfast costs are covered, and milk comes with the meals. This has been a great turn around in the food service program.

### Bus Run Status

Dr. Morse stated that approximately 1,200 students are being bussed with 10 less drivers. This is close to pre-covid numbers which typically ranged from 1,200-1,400. He shared with the Board that Andy Lathrop wrote a letter thanking Lisa Huppe for squeezing in some transportation for athletics. Unfortunately, until more bus drivers are hired there aren't enough drivers for this to occur on a dependable basis.

### ConVal Lawsuit

With regards to the ConVal lawsuit, Dr. Morse stated there is a lot of work to be done reproducing reports by Sept. 28<sup>th</sup> to prove there was not adequate funding by the state for the schools.

Dr. Morse introduced the new School Board Records Keeper, Karyn Laird and explained that she is also the administrative assistant at the high school for special education.

### Strategic Plan Board Review

Dr. Morse spoke about the DEI restorative justice initiative that will aim to teach students to take responsibility for their behavior with their peers. Adults will guide students through a process of understanding the feelings of all parties involved in an issue. The hope is that kids will develop empathy and understand that words hurt.

Dr. Morse shared there has been modest success in hiring efforts to achieve a more diverse faculty. Recently, the Board made additions to their custodial and bus staff, as well as the hiring of two Chinese teachers who are Chinese by birth. The Board is further along in their goal than they were three years ago.

Al Howland commented on the critical housing shortage in our area that is making it difficult for people to relocate to the community.

Dr. Morse commented that creating a welcoming and supportive atmosphere is part of the impact too.

Michael Williams asked if a job description would be developed and a time frame for when this could happen for Dr. Morse's requested DEI coordinator position.

Dr. Morse stated that it be created sooner rather than later, ideally before budget.

Yusi Turell shared her pleasure in having a strategic plan and sees benefits of it reaching into the curriculum as well.

### Sustainability Report

Maggie reported that four teacher coordinators from the schools assisted in drafting the sustainability report, which is grounded in a lot of research and input from the community & parents. They continue to build as they go, and its momentum is due in large part to the strong community support.

Denise Day shared how impressed she is with the thoroughness of the sustainability report.

Yusi Turell commented on the remarkable efforts that have been witnessed as it has evolved from grassroots to a district wide coordinator.

Maggie stated a school-based model grounded with relationships will move the work forward, have the most impact, and will sustain change.

Dr. Morse thanked Maggie and the community members for putting their best practices forward.

#### Middle School Grade 5 Foreign Language Proposal

Dr. Morse briefly explained to the Board the work the Jay has done on this and asked Jay to report out on his proposed schedule.

Principal Jay Richard spoke about the addition of world language and music at the middle school emphasizing that scheduling is always the challenge. The only program not 5-8 is world language and the community & students are very excited for this opportunity. He stated the world language staff created a plan that will be implemented on September 30<sup>th</sup>. He credited the Board for the considerable improvements the world language program has seen over the past 10 years.

Jay went on to explain that like the high school, he'd like an alternating A/B schedule to begin this year and be transitioned to the new middle school. He explained that a master schedule fits into the greater scheme of coordinating the two schools. He is excited for the opportunity for the middle and high schools to collaborate so students can transition up or down. The physical location of the two schools provides advantages for vertical alignment of subjects, like what is already occurring with math.

Denise Day asked if other middle schools follow that kind of scheduling and wondered if it was "developmentally appropriate" for this age group.

Dr. Morse explained that middle schools were doing block scheduling prior to high schools and that it was originally developed at the middle school level.

Tom Newkirk asked if the number of teachers needed would vary according to language choices given to students.

Jay explained that typically 70% of students take Spanish, 20% take French and 10% take Chinese, and since half of the staff are dual certified in French & Spanish, he doesn't see any issues with staffing.

Michael Williams asked if there was a plan to coordinate with Barrington for the middle school students coming over.

Dr. Morse stated that this has already happened as the OR World Language teachers met with Barrington to help establish their program.

Jay explained that this point was already defined, and they have reached out to our school.

Al Howland asked when we'd expect to begin this change and collaborate the block scheduling at the middle school with the high school.

Jay answered this fall with a total change in 2022.

### **C. Business Administrator**

No report given.

### **D. Student Representative Report:**

Olivia reported that the transition at the high school has been overall good. She shared there is an issue with the traffic in the morning. There is a backup dropping kids off causing students to arrive late to class, and she'd like attendance to be considered as a result. Olivia thanked the student leadership for all the great work they have done for spirit week and the planning of extra activities outside of school. She also said there has been a great turnout for fall sports. Players enjoy having the fans watch and fans are excited to be at the games.

### **E. Finance Committee Report:**

Al Howland began by sharing the finance committee's projected numbers for new spending:

Two positions for world language - \$180k

DEI coordinator (full time position) - \$100-125k

IT (laptops) - \$70,000k

Custodians (more will be needed at the middle school) 100k

He stated the goal of the budget is to scrutinize new spending. As the revenue and the shared revenue fluctuates, a refined budget goal for October will focus on what the new spending will be for the world language and DEI positions and balancing what's in the CIP.

Denise Day asked to revisit the bond payments on buildings and how it will impact what we have for everything else in the next budget discussion.

Tom wanted to consider increasing the compensation for substitutes.

Al assured the Board a more refined set up of what the drivers are will be established for the Board to review.

The Board had a brief discussion on the budget.

**F. Other:** None

## **VII. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA**

**Michael Williams moved approve ORHS Fall Coach & volunteer for the 2021-22 school year, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed, 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

## **VIII. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS**

Mask Protocol for School Board meetings – Moved to follow Section III – Public Comment

Budget Goal

Michael Williams made a comment that we did not yet have enough information to set a budget goal at this meeting,.

Board Resolution on Teaching About Race

Tom Newkirk read his revised resolution for Board approval.

Denise Day thanked Tom for all his hard work.

**Yusi Turell made a motion to accept the Oyster River School Board resolution on teaching about race and discrimination, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Klein, Motion passed, 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

### 360° Feedback Process in Superintendent's Annual Evaluation for Discussion

Michael Williams stated the 360° Feedback Process will include feedback from staff & community partners that interact directly with the superintendent. He sees it as an important tool for looking at not only the current superintendent but down the road at the future new superintendent. Ideally the surveys would be sent out by end of October.

Denise Day shared concerns about collating the data, removing names and the amount of work for individuals.

Michael felt it was important to include names on feedback and collating data could be easily done electronically.

Brian stated the survey process would be over a short period of time, that by Oct.20<sup>th</sup> surveys would be out and then collected by end of December. The results would get back to the Board for January.

Michael said he will create questions to bring to the Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Yusi shared she hopes the process supports a culture of community, provides the framework for what we want in a new superintendent and is clear on our rationale.

Michael clarified the survey would have three contributing groups: The Board, Peers (including town administrators), and staff (leaders of schools, department heads & collective bargaining). He explained the rationale is that it is not a public survey, so it will not go to all staff or all the community. Michael said he will work with Brian and Tom to bring a first cut of questions to the next meeting.

**Denise Day made a motion for Michael, Tom & Brian to work on developing the questions to inform the 360° feedback process for the superintendent's evaluation, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros, 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 #4 Total is \$862,590.04

Vendor Manifest #6 Total is \$910,830.46

Denise Day stated the policy committee did meet and the policies will be presented at the next Board meeting, including the FF-R Naming of Facilities procedure and Policy BEDH- Public Participation at Board Meetings. There will be a public hearing at the beginning of the next Board meeting on BEDH.

Denise shared that serving on manifest is going to be up for rotation. Her and Tom will continue until the end of this month, and Denise is happy to continue serving on manifest. She encouraged others to think of taking a turn and if they are interested, they can let Wendy know.

Yusi Turell updated the Board on the equity & anti-race committee. The first meeting since summer break will be next week. She shared there are increasing internal and external

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resources. The intern did excellent work collecting data and there is increased interest in all stakeholders. The committee will be coordinating round table discussions and opportunities to engage with the community and Board. Yusi made mention that it's the first day of Yom Kippur and the second day of Hispanic Heritage month to recognize the diversity in our community.

Tom Newkirk stated the policy on use of email is very restrictive since it only allows email to be used to schedule meetings. He wondered if this policy is too restrictive and if it should be changed.

Michael Williams will make the email policy an agenda item and Dr. Morse suggested that we involve Attorney Graham to be a part of the discussion.

Michael Williams also stated that the NHSBA released their conference material surrounding Policy BEDH and that it was very informative and suggested that it be sent to the full Board to review.

## **X. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

There were no public comments.

## **XI. CLOSING ACTIONS**

- A. Future Meeting Dates:** September 29, 2021 Manifest Meeting – SAU 3:30pm  
October 6, 2021 Regular Meeting – ORHS Library  
Public Hearing on Policy BEDH – ORHS Library  
October 20, 2021 Regular Meeting – ORHS Library  
October 28, 2021 ½ Day Budget Workshop – Durham TC Chambers

## **XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3 II {if needed}**

### **NON-MEETING SESSION: RSA 91-A2 I (a)**

- Strategies or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining.

## **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

**Al Howland moved to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:42pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed, 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

The School Board and Superintendent moved into a non-meeting session at 8:52pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Karyn Laird  
Records Keeper