

APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE
UNIT #51
PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD**

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
November 17, 2022
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Adam Gauthier, Chairperson
Sandra Adams, Vice Chairperson
Adam Cote
Sarah Duval
Molly Goggin

Others Present: Bryan Lane, Interim Superintendent
Derek Hamilton, PMHS Principal
Charlene Vary, Director of Student Services
Michael Wiley, PES Principal
Members of the Public

Chairperson Gauthier opened the meeting at 5:33 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Mr. Gauthier.

III. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Extra State Support (Ms. Adams)
- Updating Policies on District Website (Ms. Adams)
- Make up of Curriculum Committee (Ms. Adams)
- School Dances (Ms. Adams)
- Protocol for Policy DN (Ms. Adams)
- Drake Field (Mr. Gauthier)
- Capital Projects (Mr. Lane)

IV. ACTION ON AMENDED AGENDA

On a motion made by Ms. Duval and seconded by Ms. Goggin, the Board unanimously approved the amended agenda.

V. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The minutes of the November 3, 2022 meeting were considered.

Changes include: page 3, B, correct date to November 1, 2022, D, correct dates to November 8th and 10th; page 4, C, correct vote to 4-0-1, XI, A, and throughout the document, changed to “inquired of”; page 6, first paragraph update to “Mr. Delnero stated that he does not *feel* a child”; page 7, XI, A, correct spelling of keep.

On a motion made by Ms. Adams and seconded by Mr. Cote, the Board approved the amended minutes. 4-0-1 with Ms. Goggin abstaining.

VI. SITE COUNCIL

Annalissa Marcotte informed the Board that the Site Council has continued to work on the 6th grade participation and will be voting at the next meeting.

VII. PUBLIC INPUT

Erica Anthony paid appreciation to the custodial staff as well as the physical education teacher for their hard work to ensure that the elections that were held at PMHS went smoothly.

Jaime Koladish spoke to the Board regarding her thoughts on Policy JBAB. Ms. Koladish stated that she hopes that all students will not shun or discriminate towards one another, regardless of the policies in place. Ms. Koladish went on to state that she did not agree with some of the words used in the survey that was sent out, as she felt they were leading.

Micah Sayman read a letter that was written by a student within the District that was written in support of Policy JBAB.

Riley Naigle spoke as an ally of people doing whatever makes them happy. Ms. Naigle spoke about an incident that occurred at Drake Field, and the hatred towards members of the LGBTQ+ community that she witnessed.

Sabrina Smith inquired as to how many families the survey went out to.

Ms. Marcotte read a letter written by a student at PMHS that identifies as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, in support of Policy JBAB.

Sarah Cote stated that her children who are students within the District have expressed concern about sharing the bathrooms or locker rooms of their birth sex with students whose identified sex do not match. In situations where the other students may be undressing, her children are feeling uncomfortable. Ms. Cote further spoke on experiences that her children have faced when a staff member made them paraphrase the name and pronouns back to them of other students. Ms. Cote stated that her family has been threatened to have their church burned down for their stance on Policy JBAB.

Cara Peterson spoke as both a community member and a long term substitute of the District. Ms. Peterson explained that the only negative feedback she's been exposed to is coming from adults and not children.

Rachael Rao spoke regarding the bathroom options for students. Ms. Rao recommended that we have gender neutral bathrooms available to the student body.

Diane Rider commented on Policy JBAB, Ms. Rider stated that this month the entrant who won the Miss Greater Derry beauty pageant and took the scholarship money is not a biological female. This discriminates against biological females and is one of the logical outcomes of policies like JBAB which favor gender identity over birth sex.

Chris Smith addressed the Board to state his observations of feedback from the community. Mr. Smith stated that feedback being provided to the Board has no bearing on the policy in effect in school, and are that of a personal nature.

Lorrie O'Neill wanted to reiterate to the Board that the policy is directed to embrace, nurture and keep the students safe that would fall under the protections of this policy.

Ms. Koladish spoke on the JBAB policy again stating to be fair to the mentioning of de-transitioning that the very first step of transitioning is the affirmation model that is social affirmation so this policy just enables that. Ms. Koladish stated that the rates are up 4000% for students identifying as gender non-conforming, with students being impressionable at this age it is difficult not to get involved with something that may be considered trendy if we do not inform them vs. affirm them. She stressed that it is important for all children to feel safe with who they are but the concept of affirmation is at the center of the issue.

Ryan Rafferty spoke about his concerns on the surveys that were sent out to parents and students for feedback on Policy JBAB. Mr. Rafferty was disappointed that his family, neither adults nor children, were able to complete the survey and does not feel like their opinions can be taken into account because of this.

Nevaeh Snow advocated for transgender students' rights in the bathroom. Ms. Snow stated that she is a girl who likes girls and uses the girls' bathrooms. Ms. Snow went on to explain how that is no different than a transgender student using the same bathroom.

VIII. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

Ms. Vary spoke to the Board about the different types of paraeducators within the district. Ms. Vary stated the District has three levels of Paraeducators, and gave a description of what each of them do for roles and responsibilities.

IX. SUPERINTENDENT

- A. Mr. Lane informed the Board that the driveway repairs at PES have been completed.
- B. Mr. Lane informed the Board that the ventilation project at PES has begun.
- C. Mr. Lane addressed the Board about the concerns from the public regarding the surveys that were sent out on Policy JBAB. Mr. Lane explained the legal parameters in which he needed to adhere to make it possible to send them out to the students. Mr. Lane provided

statistics on how many parents and children replied to the Board and the details of the questions as well as the approval process he went through to send this out.

- D. Mr. Lane presented the audience and the Board the t-shirts that were made for the seniors to present to the first graders with their year of graduation 2034, printed on them.
- E. Mr. Lane let the Board know that he met with the Budget Committee the previous night and has been working with them in the process of creating the budget.
- F. Mr. Lane provided the data of the state testing.
- G. Mr. Lane provided a copy of the District's long term capital improvement needs.

X. SCHOOL BOARD

- A. Mr. Gauthier stated the service for the Drake Field dumpster needs to be put on hold for the Winter.
- B. Ms. Adams stated that she has noticed that some of the revised policies have not been uploaded to the District website and this needs to be done.

Mr. Lane stated he would ensure this would be handled.

C. Extra State Support

Ms. Adams inquired to Superintendent Lane if he knew what the extra amount of support the District would be receiving.

Mr. Lane stated he would be provided with that information shortly.

D. School Dances

Ms. Adams inquired as to what the security and/or chaperone situation is for school dances.

Mr. Lane stated and confirmed with Mr. Hamilton that there is not police presence at the dances, but there are chaperones.

Ms. Adams stated that it may be worth a cover charge to students in order to raise the money to have police presence at school dances.

Ms. Rao commented that the middle high school doesn't have a much needed School Resource Officer on the premises, let alone security for dances.

E. Policies – First Reading

- i. IK, Earning of Credit
- ii. IGDJ, Eligibility Requirements
- iii. JLCE, Emergency Care and First Aid

F. Policies – Second Reading

- i. Policy JICH, Drug and Alcohol Use by Students, accepted as written.
- ii. Policy ADB, Drug-Free Workplace, accepted as written.
- iii. Policy IKFA, Early Graduation, change Dean of Instruction to Administration, on a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Goggin, the Board approved the amended policy, 5-0.
- iv. Policy GD, Support Staff, on a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Goggin, the Board approved the amended policy as presented, to take effect on July 1, 2023, 5-0.

G. Policies – Sixth Reading

- i. Policy JBAB, Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students, Ms. Duval would like to state for the record that she is still in support of keeping Policy, JBAB, in effect, Ms. Adams would like to see the Policy rescinded, Mr. Cote stated his disappointment with the suggested revisions provided and would like to continue to see revisions made, Mr. Gauthier stated that he sees points on both sides, and would like to continue to work towards a policy revision, Ms. Goggin also supports revisions and does not want to see it rescinded, policy tabled for further work towards acceptable revisions through a live, working GoogleDoc.

XI. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Budget Committee Representative – Ms. Adams
- B. Drake Field and Facilities – Mr. Gauthier
- C. Negotiating Team –
- D. Foss Family Scholarship – Sarah Duval

XII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, December 1, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School Media Center.

XIII. PUBLIC INPUT

Mr. Smith addressed the Board in regard to their work on Policy JBAB and the progress that's been made towards revision vs. rescinding. Mr. Smith expressed concern that if Policy JBAB was rescinded to be absorbed by revising another policy, that the work would still need to be done in revising those policies to avoid ending up in the same situation.

Ms. Anthony circled back to the discussion on test scores. Ms. Anthony voiced her disappointment in the current staff for pointing fingers to place blame on previous employees for the current state of the District. Ms. Anthony went on to state that she was also disappointed in the School Board for not taking responsibility for the District's current status and believes that it has a lot to do with the culture and the climate that is Board directed and driven. Ms. Anthony recognizes that the District has had massive budget cuts over the past few years and that plays a huge part into bringing the District to where it is due to departing staff that couldn't afford to stay with the District. Ms. Anthony believes that this is the time for the District to come full circle on the Tuition Study, make a decision and focus on what's coming as well as ways to improve. Ms. Anthony stated that she feels standardized testing is antiquated and that most colleges aren't using SAT scores anymore. Ms. Anthony stated that the problem is much bigger than standardized test

scores and it always has been.

Ms. O'Neill thanked the Board for the continuous work on policy revision that she's witnessed over the past few weeks. Ms. O'Neill stated she has observed great growth and synergy with the Board and how they navigate difficult situations and decisions.

Mr. Rafferty requested that the working document that the Board will use to make revision discussions be made available to the members of the public. Mr. Rafferty also requested that in part of the revisions to be made, he believes that there needs to be language added to include the parents of any children who are brought in for disciplinary actions under violations of Policy JBAB. Mr. Rafferty stated that in an educational facility that teaches biology, having a Policy such as JBAB, that allows students to choose their gender, goes directly against science.

Farah Lavigne voiced her opinion that rescinding Policy JBAB, would indeed be discriminatory towards that population of students.

Ms. Koladish directed the Board and Administration to provide more transparent data on state testing results in regard to those students who opt out and how it affects the overall District scores.

Victoria Marcotte addressed the audience and thanked the students who were brave enough to show up to the Board meeting to support the review of Policy JBAB.

Mr. Rafferty stated that he believes Policy JBAB goes directly against fact.

Ms. Rao directed the Board to take into consideration that the rescinding of JBAB will likely cause an increase in the already ongoing bathroom issues.

Ms. Marcotte brought an example of a teacher who refuses to address a student by their legal, documented name.

Chairperson Gauthier also thanked the students that showed up and let them know that they are always welcome to attend the meetings.

Ms. Rider asked the Board if teachers at the high school are instructed to ask students their preferences on pronouns as well as if they were aware of teachers we are practicing this.

Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Lane stated this was not accurate and they are not aware of any teachers doing this.

Ms. Peterson thanked all of the students that showed up to support Policy JBAB.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ms. Goggin and seconded by Ms. Adams to adjourn the meeting. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Zinn
Recording Secretary