

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

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

**PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD
MINUTES**

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
October 5th, 2023
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Adam Gauthier, Chairperson
Sandra Adams, Vice Chairperson
Molly Goggin
Adam Cote
Helen Schiff

Others Present: Bryan Lane, Superintendent
Derek Hamilton, PMHS Principal
Melissa Brown, PMHS Assistant Principal
Kristen White, PES Principal
Members of the Public

Chairperson Gauthier opened the meeting at 5:30 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:

Non-Public Session, RSA 193:A, C (Mr. Lane)
Bidding Policy (Mr. Gauthier)
Site Council Representatives (Mr. Hamilton)

IV. ACTION ON AMENDED AGENDA

On a motion made by Mrs. Adams and seconded by Mr. Cote, Mrs. Goggin, Mr. Gauthier, yes, Mrs. Schiff, yes, 5-0, the Board unanimously approved the amended agenda.

V. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The minutes from the previous meeting from September 7th, 2023 were considered and changes include:

Page 1, last sentence, correct to reflect that Mrs. Adams motioned and Mrs. Goggin seconded the motion; Page two, paragraph 1, the last sentence should read “and the *he* as a local business man, supports the motion, paragraph 4, correct to “*By consensus, the Board gave the Superintendent the go ahead*”.

On a motion made by Mrs. Schiff and seconded by Mrs. Goggin, the changes were approved, 4-0-1, with Mr. Gauthier abstaining.

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

Daniel Schroth spoke to the Board regarding the difference in Republican versus Democratic support in funding of schools and inquired as to whether or not they felt the Republican Party was to blame for the loss of school funding for private school institutions?

VII. SITE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE

Annelissa Marcotte spoke to the Board as the PMHS Student Site Council Representative. Ms. Marcotte advised the Board that they are currently working on restricting the site council since Mr. Courtney’s retirement at the end of 2023.

Mr. Gauthier asked if there was anything coming that the Board should be aware of.

Ms. Marcotte stated that there are none she is aware of.

VIII. PES PRINCIPAL

- A. MULTIPLICATION INSTRUCTION ACROSS GRADES – Mrs. White provided the Board with a summary as to how the staff at PES is instituting multiplication learning by grade level. Mrs. White spoke of different visual aids, computer applications (Freckle) and rhymes that they are using to help make this more fun and adhere to helping students of all learning capabilities gain the information.
- B. CURSIVE WRITING UPDATE – Mrs. White spoke to the Board regarding the different workbooks and methods that they are putting into place to assist students in their cursive writing skills. Mrs. White gave grade level updates on the status of this for the Board.
- C. STUDENT MANAGEMENT DATA – Mrs. White explained to the Board how the student behaviors and management of the data regarding these have been going since the opening at PES. Mrs. White spoke positively on the relationships and growth that she has witnessed with the students as they coming to the office, SSC, meet with our Guidance Counselor, Mr. Curtin, to receive push-in services to classrooms and educating the kids on the zones of regulation. Mrs. White has been working diligently on emotional regulation and self-awareness, as the foundation of these are critical in correcting these areas of need.

Mrs. White spoke about the weekly behavioral team meetings that are held and the push-in services that the team does with each of the grade levels. Mrs. White spoke as a new administrator and importance of educating the children about expectations and clear

- communication with the students and families to ensure that we are all working together.
- D. RECOGNITION - Mrs. White read a heartfelt letter of appreciation to the Board of our fantastic PES custodial staff, Peg Linderman and Randy Kelley, for the recent electrical shortage and their swift action in regard to ensure the safety of the building, the staff and the students.
 - E. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Mrs. White summarized the Professional Development that has occurred as well as what is scheduled for the staff at PES.
 - F. UPCOMING EVENTS – Mrs. White provided a Calendar of Upcoming Events.

Mrs. Goggin paid her appreciation to Mrs. White for her implementation of Writing Without Tears as she believes that this is a great program.

Mr. Gauthier inquired to Mrs. White as to how the behaviors have been so far this year on buses and in the lunch room.

Mrs. White spoke regarding the historical behaviors surrounding the students and buses. Mrs. White stated that the difference in the bus schedules and ride/sit times affected the kids. Mrs. White explained that with the clearer expectations that are being conveyed to the kids and the shorter bus times, there have been less behaviors related to the bus.

Mrs. White additionally stated that there have been very few instances of behaviors in the lunchroom and that she will include this data for the next meeting.

Mr. Gauthier inquired as to the PTO dance that is scheduled for October 20th and as to whether or not a theme has been set.

Mrs. White does not believe that this has happened yet and that it should be presented for the next Board meeting.

Mr. Cote inquired to Mrs. White as to how receptive the staff has been with the changes being implemented at PES.

Mrs. White stated that with all change comes collaborative communication to ensure that these things are effective. Mrs. White shared that there is great synergy within the staff for a team effort to make sure these changes are working for the staff and students.

Mrs. Adams thanked Mrs. White for her enthusiasm and dedication to her position at PES.

IX. PMHS PRINCIPAL

- A. WEIGHT ROOM EQUIPMENT – Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with an action item request from a community member, Julian Pecorino, who would like to donate newer weight room equipment for PMHS. Mr. Hamilton stated that he believes that the donation would be of a value of or in excess of \$5,000, and brought up the Board's donation policy.

Mr. Lane stated that a donation of over \$5,000 requires a public hearing to accept the donation.

Mr. Gauthier inquired to Mr. Hamilton as to whether the donation was indeed \$5,000 or more.

Mr. Hamilton stated that he has only been provided with a quote so far.

Mrs. Adams stated that with recent Legislative changes, the policy was recently updated to reflect that donations of less than \$20,000 do not need a public hearing to be accepted.

On a motion made by Mrs. Goggin and seconded by Mr. Cote, the Board voted 5-0 to accept the gift of donated weight room equipment from the Pecorinos.

The Board as a whole thanked the Pecorinos for their generous donation to PMHS.

- B. HOMECOMING – Mr. Hamilton spoke to the turnout and success of the homecoming events that were put on by PMHS students and staff.
- C. COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY VISITS – Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with the update of in-state college and university visits that he is looking to have done between the end of September to early November.
- D. ON-LINE LEARNING – Mr. Hamilton included some general details for the policy regarding on-line learning. Mr. Hamilton explained the process of enrolling in an on-line course with the students' guidance counselor.
- E. PSAT/SAT EXAMS – Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with a summary of the PSAT/SAT Exams that are scheduled at PMHS. Mr. Hamilton explained that this is a voluntary exam that can be taken by junior and senior level students.
- F. NATURALIZATION EXAM – Mr. Hamilton explained the preparation process that PMHS started in the previous year to get our student body prepared for this exam. Mr. Hamilton provided methods of which the information will be provided and the test will be administered, which will be nine sections, one at a time.
- G. STUDENT MANAGEMENT REPORTS – Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with a summary of behaviors for September 2023 for PMHS.
- H. UPCOMING EVENTS – Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with a Calendar of Upcoming Events.

Mr. Lane spoke further on the on-line offering for the newly required Financial Literacy requirements in order to graduate. Mr. Lane stated that to be enrolled in an on-line course and the accreditation that must be in place for that institution in order for it to be accepted. Mr. Lane explained that the need for an application to enroll in this online course would be that same as any other program.

Mr. Hamilton stated that he has no applications to date.

Mrs. Adams asked if the students were aware of this.

Mr. Hamilton stated that he has not broadcasted that.

Mrs. Goggin stated this concerned her and asked to open it for a conversation as she does not fully understand the issue and wished to be more informed. Mrs. Goggin inquired as to whether or not the PragerU was a commercially funded program and not an educationally funded program, that has more of a business feel.

Mr. Lane stated that there is a religious undertone to the charter, but that there is no religious overtone or meaning within their curriculum. Mr. Lane stated that if this is something that the Board looks into and it is not something that they agree with, they are able to convey these concerns to the Board of Education.

Mr. Gauthier asks for clarification on the curriculum as it looks like fifteen-five minute videos, with an exam at the end and no instructor.

Mrs. Adams confirmed and added that they would be issued a half-credit upon passing of the test. Mrs. Adams read an article that this course was approved to meet the requirements of the newly added course, without classroom instruction time.

Mrs. Goggin asked if this course was something that we are requiring or offering the students to take, or if it is just part of all of the online offering that are available for them to choose from.

Mr. Lane stated that there are 5-6 on-line, accredited programs available that accessed by homeschool families and such, these programs do issue diplomas for graduation, which is why they're highly used.

Mrs. Adams asked for clarification as this is going to be a graduation requirement for our District as to what course it would fall under.

Mr. Hamilton confirmed this and that it is classified as a Business Education Course.

Mrs. Goggin asked if it would be appropriate to gather more information for this item for the next meeting to be better informed to be advocates for our students.

Mr. Cote also stated he would like to know what the exact requirements are as well.

Mr. Cote inquired to Mr. Hamilton as to his satisfaction with the behaviors and outcomes for the current school year to date.

Mr. Hamilton spoke positively about the beginning of the school year and the referral numbers being the lowest that he has seen in year. Mr. Hamilton stated that the feeling around the building is calm and he is not seeing a lot of tension.

Mr. Cote asked Mr. Hamilton what he is hearing and seeing with bullying and such this early in the school year.

Mr. Hamilton responded that he has not seen these things.

Mr. Gauthier thanked Mr. Hamilton for his report.

X. SUPERINTENDENT

- A. QUARTLEY FINANCIAL REPORTS – Mr. Lane provided the Board with the first quarterly financial statement. Mr. Lane explained the unencumbered line item as the health insurance as we have been wrapping up enrollments at the SAU. Mr. Lane explained the variances due to enrollment fluctuation within special education, fuel/heating and transportation costs.
- B. ADEQUACY FUNDING – Mr. Lane explained to the Board that the Adequacy Funds amount have changed and decreased due to enrollment, special education and asked the Board to ensure that he has answered all of their questions.
- C. CHARTER SCHOOL – Mr. Lane informed the Board that he confirmed that the Benjamin Franklin Charter School is for grades 6-12, but is currently only servicing

grades 6-8. This allows them the legal ability to accept the student, which would also cause the District to lose the funding for that student.

- D. MS-25 – Mr. Lane provided the Board with a copy of the MS-25 that was submitted timely to the NHDOE.
- E. 2024-2025 BUDGET – Mr. Lane stated that he has provided the Board with the second version of the budget at this evening's meeting. Mr. Lane stated that the budget was an overall 6% increase. Mr. Lane explained the budget increase by line item to the Board.

Mrs. Schiff inquired to Mr. Lane as to how many students use bus transportation.

Mr. Lane stated he does not have a number, but he will get this for the Board. Mr. Lane estimates that it is about 50/60% of the student body.

Mrs. Goggin inquired to Mr. Lane as to a line item 27 that showed both an increase and a decrease and asked for clarification.

Mr. Lane budgeted for an 18% in the health insurance, and put this as a generic placeholder, and that it does appear misleading and stated he would be sure to clear this up on the next version and apologized for this.

Mr. Gauthier directed Mr. Lane to the discrepancy in the variance number from the summary page.

Mr. Lane stated he would investigate this.

Mr. Cote stated his shock at the nearly \$622,000 increase and asked if the tax impact would be nearly \$2 per thousand.

Mr. Lane advised the Board that there was also an unforeseen increase in special education funds that were nearly \$150,000 more than the previous year. Mr. Lane stated that this increase could potentially offset the increase to the budget and without the final numbers, he cannot provide the final number yet as he does not have the final funding numbers to do so.

Mr. Cote thanked Mr. Lane for his work on this as he understands the magnitude of importance on getting the budget right.

Mrs. Adams inquired as to a few positions that are listed under the SAU salaries for people who do not appear to belong there.

Mr. Lane stated these are District wide positions such as the Director of Student Services and Out of District Coordinator and their administrative assistants. Mr. Lane asked the Board if they would like this information presented differently if they have suggestions on how to present it to the Budget Committee.

Mrs. Goggin wanted to ensure that she stated that she continues to support the need for a Reading and Writing Specialist, and recognizes the cost regarding this position, but believes it is of the utmost importance to the success of the mission of the District. Mrs. Goggin spoke on this as an educator in this area herself, the 6-8th grade students are at the most need of intervention.

Mr. Lane stated he supports Mrs. Goggin's opinion on this matter, and inquired as to if they would like to see changes in positions in order to make this happen, he invites the Board to make suggestions.

Mrs. Goggin states that while she appreciates the cost associated with the position, and doesn't want to take one position away from another, the forward progression of our students with these struggles are our biggest concerns as they are the highest dropout rates or completion of high school. Mrs. Goggin stated that she does not believe this position to be negotiable for the success of these students.

Mr. Cote asked what the cost figure associated with this position would be.

Mr. Lane stated it would be approximately \$125,000, budgeted with a family plan for health insurance and other related costs. Mr. Lane stated he will create a version three of the budget and provide it to the Board.

Mr. Cote inquired to the Board as to their opinion on removing the Technology Assistant from the budget.

Mr. Lane stated that for transparency's sake, he would advise that the Board review all versions of the budget, have the school board vote for their desired positions to provide to the Budget Committee.

XI. SCHOOL BOARD

- A. TRUNK OR TREAT EVENT – Mr. Gauthier presented the PTO's annual Trunk of Treat Event that has been held for the past few years by the District. This year's event is scheduled for October 28, 2023. Mr. Gauthier advised that there is a special time period of 5-6p.m. for a Sensory Trunk or Treat for the special education students.
- B. Policies – to be held for review per recent legislative changes.
 - i. GBCD
 - ii. JCA
 - iii. JKAA
 - iv. KCD
 - v. BEDG
 - vi. IHBAA
 - vii. BIDDING POLICY, Mr. Gauthier inquired to Mr. Lane as to why the bidding process was not followed for recent work completed.
- C. Policies – Action
 - i. KE, Public Complaints, was considered, changes include 2.: removal of (dean or director), on a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Cote, the changes were accepted, 5-0.

XII. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Budget Committee Representative – Initial meeting is scheduled for October 16 at 6pm.
- B. Drake Field and Facilities – Mr. Gauthier nothing
- C. Negotiating Team – nothing
- D. Foss Family Scholarship – Mrs. Adams stated the initial meeting was September 28th. Mrs. Adams stated that Ms. Pike was there to explain what the Foss Family Scholarship is, and that there were even a few seniors in attendance. Mrs. Brown additionally commented on how great it was to see the event.

- E. Public Relations – Mrs. Goggin spoke on her delight on the turnout for the NH Fair Funding presentation that was well attended. Mrs. Goggin would like to see more of these organizations and the lawsuits that formed them brought to light for more informational context on the presentation.

XIII. BOARD COMMENT

Mrs. Adams spoke on a presentation that she recently attended at the local library by Mr. Stephen Taylor, a former agricultural leader, who stated that funding was an issue then in the one-room school house days, and it's an issue now, and that schools have always experienced funding issues.

XIV. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for October 19, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School Media Center.

Mr. Lane stated that he will ensure that the policies are included in the next meeting, including the Bid Policy as requested by Mr. Gauthier.

Mr. Gauthier stated that he would also like to see the Hi-SET statistics for the past five years, which he will e-mail to Principal Hamilton for clarification.

Mrs. Adams requests a non-public session for the Superintendent's evaluation.

XV. PUBLIC INPUT

Jerrica Smith would like to see the Board look into the PragerU and how this will work for our special needs students. Ms. Smith would also like to know what the Board's thoughts and decisions were on the salaries for teachers. As both a staff person and a tax payer, hearing the gasps of 15% increases of salary, when we already an underpaid district is difficult.

Mr. Lane responded to Ms. Smith and provided her with the information that her voice would be one of power as an educator, should she choose to attend one of those meetings when those types of bills come up.

Mrs. Goggin continued to support her desire to educate the public on school funding through presentations such as the one we held, the public will be better informed to vote and make these changes.

Weston Martin inquired to the health care portion of the budget. Mr. Weston is a health practice owner in town, spoke as a biller to health insurance companies and the revenue made by them. Mr. Martin would like to know if there are any areas of which he would be able to assist the Board in helping them with this. He would love to use his knowledge and expertise to help the District.

Mr. Lane stated that he would be the contact person for this.

Sabrina Smith wanted to thank the Board for looking into the Reading and Writing Specialist position for the District. Ms. Smith stated her concern for the implementation of the PragerU curriculum in our District, due to their lack of accreditation.

Mrs. Smith inquired to the Board as to what the outcome was with the Open Enrollment at Prospect Mountain High School and the impact on our District.

Mr. Lane stated that we are not required to pay tuition to pay the open enrollment District, unless there is another agreement in which the two Districts would have to come to, for another legally liable reason.

Mrs. Smith asked the Superintendent to confirm that we would pay no costs for students choosing to attend the open enrollment for special education or anything else.

Mr. Lane confirmed the District would incur no costs.

Mrs. Smith spoke on her participation in the various afterschool programs and the need for some of the students to have 1:1 paraeducators.

Mr. Lane inquired of Mrs. Vary as to if the District needs to provide the students with this service for afterschool programs.

Mrs. Vary confirmed that this is a service the school is required to provide for special education students.

Mrs. Smith inquired as to the possibility of having a paraeducator present for afterschool activities, if the budget would allow, because it is needed for the support of the students, regardless if they have an IEP or not.

Mr. Lane stated that if a parent and student has a need for afterschool supports, to please reach out so that we can get them the help that they need.

Mrs. Smith thanked Mr. Lane.

Mrs. Schiff stated the District did lose four students to the open enrollment, which will affect next year's adequacy funds.

Mrs. Smith additionally thanked Mrs. White for all of her hard work at PES.

Mr. Schroth paid his appreciation to the District Team as a whole. Mr. Schroth read an article regarding climate and testing.

NON-PUBLIC RSA 193:A

On a request made by Mr. Lane to enter into a non-public session under RSA 193:A, Mr. Gauthier motions to enter a non-public, seconded by Mrs. Goggin, 5-0, at 7:40 p.m..

A motion was made by Mr. Cote and seconded by Mrs. Goggin to exit the meeting. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mrs. n to adjourn the meeting. The

Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Zinn

Recording Secretary