

APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

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

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
December 1, 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
Michael Wiley, PES Principal
Members of the Public

Chairperson Gauthier opened the meeting at 5:32 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:

- Tuitioning Out (Mr. Cote)
- School Calendar (Mr. Gauthier)
- Safety Grant Funding (Ms. Goggin)
- Staff Resignations / Nomination (Mr. Lane)
- Non-Public (Mr. Lane)
- This Weekend's Events at PMHS (Mr. Gauthier)

IV. ACTION ON AMENDED AGENDA

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

V. SITE COUNCIL

Annalissa Marcotte informed the Board that the Site Council is still working on a voting policy to include sixth grade student. Ms. Marcotte stated they will be looking to vote on this on the following Wednesday if there are enough participants that show up to the meeting.

VI. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The minutes of the November 17, 2022 meeting were considered.

Changes include: page 2, VII, correct spelling of Koladish; page 3, paragraph 1, change “Ms. Peterson explained that the only” and add a period, paragraph 7, add *neither* between family and adults, paragraph 8, change to “Ms. Snow went on to”, VII, change have to gave, IX, paragraph 3, “the Board and the details of the”; page 4, F, “change to “Mr. Lane provided the data of the state testing”; page 5, G, update sentence “Mr. Gauthier stated that he sees points on both sides, and would like to continue to work towards policy revisions.”; page 6, paragraph 7, change to “Ms. Marcotte brought an example of a teacher who refuses to address students by their legal names as they are documented.”.

On a motion made by Ms. Goggin and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board approved the amended minutes. 5-0.

VII. PUBLIC INPUT

Katie Nikas spoke to the Board to share some positive experiences that she’s had while employed at PMHS.

Clayton Wood spoke regarding the outcome of the state testing that was discussed at the previous meeting.

Annalissa Marcotte spoke regarding the minutes from the last meeting. Ms. Marcotte would like the record to reflect that she was speaking about a student not being referred to by a legal name, not a dead name.

Olivia Cote spoke regarding the comment that Ms. Marcotte made at the previous meeting about students that are not referred to by their legal names. Ms. Cote stated that she made a decision to change her name for personal reasons and that there are times that her legal name is not used.

Hailey Bernard shared her thoughts and feelings on Policy JBAB, and how it effects the students at PMHS. Ms. Bernard shared the data on the LGBTQ+ community in relation to mental health issues. Ms. Bernard stated that she believes that if schools start revising or rescinding the JBAB Policy, more schools will follow suit.

Sarah Cote spoke as the mother of Olivia Cote, the student who is not referred to by their legal name. Ms. Cote stated the difference between her daughter not being referred to by her legal name is that there isn’t a policy in place that would penalize other students if they chose not to use her chosen name.

Chris Smith paid accolades to the students that come to represent PMHS, and show their support for the things that matter to them.

Joseph Defruscio stated that he had attended school in Manchester, and found the transfer to the Pittsfield School District to be difficult. Mr. Defruscio shares his experiences on the bullying that he has endured as an openly gay man during his time as a student at PMHS.

Ms. Marcotte informed the Board that the student body has started a petition in regard to Policy JBAB and the Superintendent will share the documents with the Board once all responses have been received.

Harmony Defruscio spoke in support of her son Joseph, who is a student at PMHS, and in support of keeping all students safe.

Mr. Lane stated that he was given a letter by a student at PMHS that he will not read into the record due to the student's wellbeing.

Mr. Lane read a letter from a student at PMHS, Max Hadwell, that included documents with data on mental health issues within the LGBTQ+ community.

VIII. PES PRINCIPAL

- A. The PES Food Drive was successful. The school as a whole brought in 230 items.
- B. PES held a Whole School Morning Meeting on Wednesday, November 22, which was enjoyed across the entire student body.
- C. Mr. Wiley shared his SMART math goals for the NHSAS Improvement Plan.
- D. Mr. Wiley provided details of the Collaborative Teacher-Student Problem Solving workshop that was held on November 30th as well as today.

IX. PMHS PRINCIPAL

- A. Mr. Hamilton paid his respect to various staff, students and coaches that strive to bring their best work to the Pittsfield School District in the various things that they do for the District.
- B. Mr. Hamilton summarized the behavioral data report of incidents that have been recorded in the 2022-23 school year. Mr. Hamilton provided details for the types of incident categories, as well as the locations that they occurred.
- C. Mr. Hamilton spoke on the "Every Student Succeeds Act" and how it impacts the District. As of the last meeting, the District was notified that it has achieved the required progress in order to meet the criteria to be removed from the status of "ATSI", which is a school in need of Additional Targeted Support and Improvement. PMHS has however been identified as a school in need of Comprehensive Support and Improvement. Mr. Hamilton stated that in order to be removed from the list, we would need to reach a graduation rate of 70% in the coming school year.

- D. The NEASC Decennial Visit is set to occur March 26-29, 2023. Mr. Hamilton explained the reason for the visit as well as what will happen with the visit..
- E. In the past month there have been two senior class events that were held in collaboration with New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation. During these events students were guided through the college application process.
- F. Mr. Hamilton provided an update on the science offerings for the middle school since the on-boarding of Ms. Tyrell, our Middle School Online Learning Coordinator. Mr. Hamilton included a letter that was sent to the households of students in these classes.
- G. Mr. Hamilton showed a presentation that included aggregate state testing data for sixth, seventh and eighth grade for the 2021-22 school year, as well as the goals to support improved testing outcomes.

X. SUPERINTENDENT

- A. Mr. Lane stated that the district has had a 60% staff turnover in the past two years. Mr. Lane paid his appreciation for all of the District staff in their dedication during this time of transition.
- B. Mr. Lane provided an update on the work being done with the Budget Committee. Mr. Lane provided account balances for the various District Funds. Mr. Lane advised that any warrant articles need to be finalized as we approach the next meeting in December.
- C. Mr. Lane provided a summary of the state testing data to follow up Mr. Hamilton's presentation.
- D. Mr. Lane shared that he was able to obtain an additional \$124,000 of Title I grant money. Mr. Lane would like to see some of these funds go to an after school remedial program that includes transportation so that all students could have access to the program.
- E. Mr. Lane informed the Board that he has created the first draft of the school calendar for the 2023-24 school year, but is awaiting further information from the Concord School District in order to confirm specific dates.
- F. The State of New Hampshire did not choose The Pittsfield School District for the Technology Grant.

Ms. Goggin asked Mr. Lane to gather more details as to why they came to this determination. Mr. Lane confirmed that he would look into this.

XI. SCHOOL BOARD

- A. Mr. Lane presented the Board with a resignation from Sonia Brooks. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Adams, the Board moved to accept the resignation of Sonia Brooks, 5-0.
- B. Mr. Lane nominated Sarah Harkness for the position of Special Education Teacher at a prorated salary of \$41,112, MA Step 2. On a motion made by Ms. Goggin, and seconded

by Ms. Adams, the Board moved to accept the nomination of Sarah Harkness, 5-0.

C. Policies – First Reading

- i. EBC, Emergency Management
- ii. EBCA, Emergency Plans
- iii. JICDAA, Employee-Student Relations

D. Policies – Second Reading

- i. DN, Disposal of Material and Equipment, accept as written, with the addition of formatting and grammatical corrections, on a motion made by Ms. Goggin and seconded by Mr. Cote, the Board accepted the changes, 5-0.
- ii. IK, Earning of Credit, change Dean of Operations to administration, on a motion made by Ms. Adams and seconded by Ms. Goggin, the Board accepted the changes, 5-0.
- iii. IGDJ, Eligibility Requirements, no changes
- iv. JLCE, Emergency Care and First Aid, no changes

E. Policies – Seventh Reading

- i. Policy JBAB, Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students, tabled for eighth reading on December 15, to allow the public time to view the working GoogleDoc that is posted on the website with the revisions and commentary made by the Board.

F. Tuitioning Out

- i. Mr. Cote said the Superintendent presented the Board with the three options available to the District for the warrant article, passed in 2020, to investigate the feasibility of tuitioning out students. Mr. Cote would like to see this finalized.

Mr. Gauthier stated that he is working on finalizing the language with Ms. Adams to present the Board's position to the public.

Mr. Lane asked the Board if they would like to express the direction of the Board that was determined at the meeting that was held on October 27, 2022 to discuss the tuitioning out.

Ms. Duval asked if there was a necessity to hold another meeting regarding this matter.

Ms. Goggin stated that she feels after all of the data that was presented, that tuitioning the student out is not a viable option. The warrant article directed the Board to determine if it was a viable option, and the warrant article has been satisfied by the feasibility study that was conducted.

Mr. Gauthier stated that he is still in support of tuitioning the students out, but does not feel that the town cannot afford the cost of the warrant article or budget increase.

Mr. Cote spoke to not tuitioning out the students. Mr. Cote spoke on continuing to build our District, create goals and reinvest into our own school.

Ms. Duval stated that she is in agreement with Mr. Cote.

Ms. Adams stated that she feels the Board wasn't as involved with the process as they should have been. Ms. Adams stated the process had already begun when multiple Board member positions changed.

Ms. Goggin stated that she also believes that we need to continue to invest in our school.

Ms. Duval spoke to the climate that this has created for staff within the District. Ms. Duval spoke on how this negatively impacted the teachers as they have long awaited the outcome of the decision of this warrant article.

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Goggin, the Board determined that the warrant article has been satisfied and no further action will be taken on this, 4-0-1, with Ms. Adams abstaining.

ii. School Calendar

Mr. Gauthier would like to see the staff and students be given a half day of vacation on December 23, 2022 for people to spend time with their families.

Ms. Goggin brought up the impact that this could bring to families that may not have childcare for the afternoon.

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Duval, the motion to grant a half day to the students of staff of the Pittsfield School District, the motion passed 4-1.

iii. Weekend Events

Breakfast with Santa and PTO Fundraiser are scheduled to be held at PMHS this Saturday.

XII. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

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

XIII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, December 15, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School Media Center.

XIV. PUBLIC INPUT

- Ms. Nikas asked that the Title I Grant money in regard to transportation be communicated to the community. Ms. Nikas said it could cause misunderstanding about providing transportation for afterschool programs, but not transportation available on Wednesdays.
- Ms. Nikas further asked if there was a possibility of obtaining additional vape detectors for PMHS.
- Mr. Smith inquired as to the state safety funds and where the funds come from.

Mr. Lane stated that this is a federal grant that is managed by the Dept. of Education.

- Sabrina Smith stated that she has not been able to locate the Pickup Patrol link or the ALMA link on the District websites.

Mr. Lane stated he would have these checked and updated.

- Ms. Smith brought up the issue of vaping, smoking, weed and alcohol in the schools. Ms. Smith stated that when her children were of school age, there was an SRO as well as a program that was in place for students who were caught with these items. Ms. Smith asked what the school does to mitigate these issues.

Mr. Hamilton provided information on substance use programs and counselors.

- Victoria Marcotte inquired as to where the working GoogleDoc for JBAB is located on the website.

Ms. Goggin stated that it was with the policies on the website.

Mr. Gauthier stated it was also listed on the agenda.

- Mr. Wood thanked the Board for answering his questions regarding the state testing scores. Ms. Wood further paid his appreciation for the report on incidents for the current school year.
- Mr. Wood circled back to the issue of bathroom safety that was discussed during the last meeting.

Mr. Hamilton stated that he has been monitoring this issue.

- Ms. Nikas paid her appreciation to everyone who has been part of the policy review process. Ms. Nikas shared the pride she feels in watching the Board work diligently for the community, and the safety of the students.

XV. NON-PUBLIC RSA 8:30

At 8:30 p.m. a motion was made by Ms. Duval and seconded by Mr. Cote to enter into a non-public session under the authority of RSA 91-A:3 to discuss personnel. The Board polled and voted unanimously to enter into a non-public session. (Ms. Adams, yes; Ms. Duval, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Cote, yes).

Board Chairperson motioned to allow the Superintendent to approach the Educational Association of Pittsfield for a sidebar agreement, seconded by Ms. Adams, the motion passed 5-0.

At 8:40 p.m. a motion was made by Ms. Duval and seconded by Mr. Cote to exit the non-public session under the authority of RSA 91-A:3 to discuss personnel. The Board polled and voted unanimously to exit into a non-public session. (Ms. Adams, yes; Ms. Duval, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Cote, yes).

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Duval to adjourn the meeting. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sara Zinn

Recording Secretary