

APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

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

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
December 5, 2019
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Michael Wolfe, Chairperson
Heidi Asdot, Vice Chairperson
Bea Douglas (exit meeting at 6:50 p.m.)
Adam Gauthier (exit meeting at 6:52 p.m.)
Ted Mitchell

Others Present: John J. Freeman, Superintendent of Schools
Melissa Brown, Director of Career Readiness
Derek Hamilton, Dean of Operations
Kathy LeMay, Director of Interventions and Title I
Tobi Chassie, Recording Secretary
Harrison Hill, Student Representative
Members of the Faculty
Members of the Public

Mr. Wolfe called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

II. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Basketball Practice
- Warrant Articles
- Resignation
- January 2, 2020, School Board Meeting

The following item was removed from the agenda:

- Pace Academy

III. ACTION ON AGENDA

On a motion made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as amended.

IV. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Douglas to approve the minutes of the public meeting on November 21, 2019. The following change was made: on page one, add Kathy LeMay to the “others present” list. The motion was approved unanimously to accept the minutes as amended.

A motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Asdot to approve the non-public minutes of November 21, 2019. The motion was approved unanimously to accept the minutes as written.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

Melissa Babcock stated that she has been observing some behavior issues at PES. She stated her concern that inappropriate behavior has been observed on many occasions. Ms. Babcock wanted to ensure that the Board was fully aware of the incidents being observed. She stated her concern that Dr. Freeman had observed four incidents within an hour and didn't consider that a problem. Further, she stated her knowledge of an email that went to staff allegedly asking that students not be sent to the student support center.

Dr. Freeman stated that he does think student misbehavior is an issue to be considered seriously. He reviewed his previous observation by underscoring the point that the behavior he observed were handled effectively by the staff involved. He reassured Ms. Babcock that the administration does not “sweep anything under the rug” or falsify data as she has alleged.

Tracy Huyck stated that she is concerned with the qualifications of the administration and whether that may be a reason for the outcome of the behavior situations. She said that four people in one week have contacted her; she directs them to the appropriate administrative processes. She feels that something is missing if students are not feeling safe coming to school. She specifically mentioned “Choose Love” and that it wasn't working.

Dr. Freeman stated that when initiating a new program such as “Choose Love”, it takes time to see it's effect. He stated that all people are not always satisfied with the outcomes of behavioral events that occur at school. He believes that steps are taken when there are complaints of bullying. Dr. Freeman thanked Ms. Huyck for the part she played in bringing “Choose Love” to the Pittsfield's schools. Ms. Huyck stated that the work she has done with Dr. Freeman is appreciated and wondered if there should be a follow up since people do not feel that appropriate steps are being taken.

Mike Cabrel stated that there have been threats to his family, including the youngest member of the family.

Tara Ash asked if Dr. Freeman is aware of all behavioral incidents that happen at the schools. Dr. Freeman stated that he is aware of all reported bullying incidents, but not necessarily all behavioral incidents. Ms. Ash asked Mr. Hamilton what the protocols were when students are told by other students to kill themselves or to commit suicide. Mr. Hamilton stated that there is a protocol for self-injurious behavior and a protocol for a threat assessment.

VI. SUPERINTENDENT

A. Safety Inspection Report

Pittsfield Fire Department Inspector Nicholas Abell, accompanied by Chief Peter Pszonowsky, presented the Department's report of the annual inspection of the school buildings.

Mr. Abell called attention to two codes that failed the inspection. First, the school could not provide documentation that the school conducts all-hazard drills in compliance with the latest edition of the New Hampshire State Fire Code. Second, the school could not provide documentation that the school has developed an emergency response plan as required by RSA 189:64; Emergency Response Plans.

Mr. Abell stated that the Pittsfield Fire Department is willing to assist the district in working on the deficits identified in the report.

VII. DEAN OF OPERATIONS

A. District Technology Plan

Mr. Hamilton, accompanied by members of the district's Technology Team (Kathy Mahanes, Jen Massey, Bruce Ballou, and Emily Foote), presented the 2020-2023 Technology Plan. Mr. Hamilton paid compliments to others who were instrumental in the development of the plan who were unable to be at the meeting (Kiza Armour, Debbie Darrah, Sherry Evans, Amber Zachos, and Ross Morse).

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the timeline that was followed by the team in developing the Technology Plan proposal. He explained that the plan is in a logic model format. Ms. Massey reviewed the section of the plan titled *Ensuring Student Ownership for Learning*. She reviewed initial conditions, action plan, and long term outcomes. Ms. Mahanes reviewed the next section, *Raising Student Achievement*, including initial conditions, action plan, and long term outcomes. The section, *Developing Work Study Skills*, was reviewed by Ms. Foote. Mr. Ballou reviewed the section *Systems and Infrastructure*, including initial conditions, action plan, and long term outcomes.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the next steps, which include receiving feedback from the Board, seeking the Board's final approval, and creating a work plan related to the logic model.

VIII. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Harrison Hill distributed a copy of the PMHS Norms for the Board's review. The document explained the difference between a norm and a rule. The norms that have been proposed and continue to be vetted by advisories include: responsibility, courage, respect, and diversity.

IX. DEAN OF INSTRUCTION

A. Conference Data

By report, Ms. Harvey provided the Board with conference participation data from 2016 to 2019. She noted that PMHS had the highest percentage of students completing their conferences this fall within that period. PES has maintained its participation rate at the time of this report, with some rescheduled conferences taking place this week.

B. Midterm Assessments

Ms. Harvey provided the Board with a copy of the letter that was sent to families regarding midterm assessments, which are scheduled for December 4 to 11, 2019.

C. ATS Team

Ms. Harvey's report reminded the Board that the middle school was identified as an Additional Targeted Support school. Teachers in grades five through eight will be meeting with administration monthly to review data and participate in plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycles to improve outcomes. External assistance is anticipated by WestEd, resourced by federal grants.

X. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

A. FAPE (Free and Appropriate Public Education)

By report, Ms. Bickford provided information to the Board relative to laws that ensure all students, including students with identified disabilities, have the right to a free and appropriate public education. She also reviewed laws relative to "LRE", or least restrictive environment.

B. NH Special Education Costs Survey 2019

Ms. Bickford provided the Board with a report that is created by a voluntary survey of special education directors completed throughout the state relative to special education costs. Ms. LeMay, on behalf of Ms. Bickford, provided the Board with the Pittsfield statistics.

C. Flex Program

Ms. Bickford provided the Board with the first newsletter of the Flex Advisory Board (FAB) sent to all staff.

XI. DEAN OF OPERATIONS (Continued)

A. Capital Improvement Projects

Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with an updated list of capital improvement projects and estimates. He pointed out an updated estimate to replace the HVAC controls from Energy Controls of New Hampshire. Mr. Wolfe opined that the Board should take a year to investigate these items further. Mr. Bob Schiferle stated the items on the capital improvement list should be forwarded to the Town of Pittsfield Capital Improvement Committee.

B. School Facilities

Mr. Hamilton provided accolades to Sue Barrett and Jim Dawson for their help with the fire inspection.

XII. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOL (Continued)

A. NH Safe Grant

On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board unanimously voted to accept the New Hampshire Safe grant in the amount of \$17,500.

B. Policy Updates

Dr. Freeman presented Policy GBEB, Staff Conduct, Policy JFA, Residency, Policy JFA-R, Residency - Legal Requirements, and Policy JLF, Reporting Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted unanimously to approve the policies presented.

C. Middle School Designation by State

Dr. Freeman informed the Board that the middle school was previously designated as an “Additional Targeted Support” school. This fall, the district has also been advised that the middle school has been identified as a “Targeted Support and Improvement”

school, due to the state's conclusion that the school has one racial subgroup that is underperforming the general population. He explained that he has reached out to a potential source of technical assistance with whom we have worked in the past - a large consulting organization known as WestEd - for support. A potential multi-year collaboration is being planned by Ms. Harvey, which will be funded by federal grants.

D. Annual Audit Report

Dr. Freeman presented the Board with a copy of the annual audit report from The Mercier Group.

E. Basketball Practice

Dr. Freeman stated that a parent has made a complaint about basketball practices on Sunday during poor weather. Dr. Freeman informed the Board that a previous Board had discouraged practices on Sunday and wanted to know this Board's opinion. Mr. Wolfe stated that it should be optional for students to participate. Ms. Douglas stated she was on the fence and asked members of the public for their opinion. Discussion ensued highlighting the pros and cons of having Sunday practices. The process for poor weather cancellations during weekend activities was reviewed.

F. Warrant Articles

Dr. Freeman distributed a packet of information that was presented to the Budget Committee at a meeting earlier this week. He also provided the Board with a draft copy of the Pittsfield School District Warrants for 2020. Mr. Wolfe stated he would like to see money requested for the special education reserve account. Ms. Asdot asked that technology be considered. The Board agreed facilities should be considered. Ms. Asdot asked that the position of resource officer be reconsidered. Dr. Freeman agreed to provide the Board with draft warrant articles relative to these topics.

G. Resignation

Dr. Freeman informed the Board of the resignation of Paul Strickhart. On a motion made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to accept the resignation.

H. January 2, 2020 School Board Meeting

Dr. Freeman suggested the Board cancel their meeting on January 2, 2020. If the Board feels a second meeting is necessary, they can add one on January 30, 2020. The Board was in agreement with this suggestion.

I. Coming Events

Dr. Freeman provided the Board with a list of coming events for the month of December.

XIII. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Budget Committee - Ms. Asdot
- B. Drake Field & Facilities - Mr. Wolfe and Mr. Gauthier
- C. Negotiations – Ms. Asdot and Ms. Douglas
- D. Foss Family Scholarship Foundation – Mr. Mitchell

XIV. PUBLIC INPUT (Second Session)

Mr. Cabral stated he would be willing to be the resource officer voluntarily for the remainder of the year.

Ms. Ash asked about a behavioral incident that occurred before the Thanksgiving break. Dr. Freeman stated specifics could not be discussed due to confidentiality laws.

Ms. Huyck asked if students can provide a service to the community by offering a service to a small business in town, such as developing a web page. She expressed her support of having a resource officer in the district.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the meeting was adjourned at 7:13 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Chassie
Recording Secretary