

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

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**MINUTES**

Pittsfield School Board Meeting  
November 21, 2019  
Pittsfield Middle High School

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Members Present: Michael Wolfe, Chairperson  
Heidi Asdot, Vice Chairperson  
Bea Douglas  
Adam Gauthier  
Ted Mitchell

Others Present: John J. Freeman, Superintendent of Schools  
Jessica Bickford, Director of Student Services  
Melissa Brown, Director of College and Career Readiness  
Derek Hamilton, Dean of Operations  
Danielle Harvey, Dean of Instruction  
Tobi Chassie, Recording Secretary  
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:

- Title I Open House (Ms. Lemay)
- I Applied Event (Ms. Brown)
- Community College System of New Hampshire (Ms. Brown)
- District Meeting (Dr. Freeman)
- Warrant Articles (Dr. Freeman)

**III. ACTION ON AGENDA**

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Asdot, 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 7, 2019. The following changes were made: on page four, paragraph three, omit the letter “s”; on page four, section F, change to “Browne Center”; on page five, change the Roman numerals to be sequential; and on page five, paragraph three, add the word “unanimously”. 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 7, 2019. The change from the public session reconvening from 6:33 to 6:32 was made. The motion was approved unanimously to accept the minutes as amended.

#### V. PUBLIC INPUT

Stacey Wittenberg asked how often there was an evacuation drill and when was the last drill. Mr. Hamilton said the last drill was on October 24, 2019. He explained that the fall and spring seasons are used to do the evacuation drills and the winter months are left to do other drills.

Ms. Wittenberg read a statement regarding her concern about problem behavior and perceived lack of consequences. She stated that her major concern is the lack of consequences and the number of students who are offending repeatedly. She opined that the consequences such as Pitt Stop or being taken out of class are not appropriate consequences; students like to be taken from class. She continued to provide the School Board with examples of behavior that she suggested are inappropriate and not adequately consequence. Ms. Wittenberg concluded by suggesting there is a lack of communication about serious behavioral events.

Mr. Hamilton stated he will be discussing behavior challenges at PES in his report. Ms. Bickford provided Ms. Wittenberg with a written explanation of the Flex Program.

Robert Schiferle stated his agreement with Ms. Wittenberg’s comments related to behavior going un-consequenced.

Mr. Schiferle noted an increase in the proposed budget and raised the issue that this is in addition to the completion of the payment of a bond, which in his opinion, increases the impact to taxpayers to an unreasonable level. He questioned how the money that is reportedly coming from the New Hampshire Department of Education will be used to offset taxes. Mr. Schiferle explained that last year, due to budget constraints, no money was put toward capital improvement projects. This year, capital improvements will be a priority from the Town of Pittsfield side.

Mr. Wolfe stated that he is standing strongly behind the proposed budget because the students of the district have suffered from the previous budget cuts that have been made.

Mr. Mitchell stated that some of the behavior issues that are present are due to the many budget cuts that have been made, eroding the support available for students in need.

## VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Harrison Hill was unable to attend the meeting. On his behalf, Mr. Hamilton explained that the first draft of the school norms is being vetted with students during their advisory period.

Mr. Gauthier asked if a report could be provided from the student representative. Mr. Hamilton agreed to provide the Board with a copy of the draft norms.

## VII. DEAN OF INSTRUCTION - No report.

## VIII. DEAN OF OPERATIONS

### A. Capital Improvement Estimates

Mr. Hamilton distributed a copy of a document, *Potential Projects for Capital Improvements*. He reviewed the list of suggested projects for PES (secure main entrance, replacement of boilers, replacement of HVAC controls) and PMHS (roof areas, heat loss in roof around cupola, and replacement of windows in the original part of the building). Also under consideration for Drake Field is the installation of a softball field, attention to the cracked sidewalks, and broken fencing along the perimeter of the field. Finally, in another five to ten years, the Board will need to consider installing condensing boilers and a boiler stack economizer at PMHS.

Mr. Mitchell asked if EverSource might provide financial support for some energy-saving projects. Mr. Wolfe agreed that it would be worth pursuing when the time comes to do the projects. Although, as pointed out by Dr. Freeman, the district does not buy their power from EverSource, Mr. Wolfe suggested there is evidence to suggest they may still assist.

### B. School District Newsletter

Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with a copy of the recent newsletter sent out to families.

### C. PES Student Behavior Report

Mr. Hamilton compared the number of behavioral referrals at PES between this year's first quarter (13.7%) and the three-year average of behavior referrals for the first quarter of the 2016 through 2018 school year (6.7%).

Mr. Hamilton continued by explaining data that was related to specific behaviors. For example, twenty-two percent of the referrals have been for out of assigned area, in comparison to 6.7% in the 2018-2019 school year.

On a positive note, Mr. Hamilton stated that seventy-eight percent of students have not received a behavior referral to date.

Mr. Hamilton described the ways in which the administration is addressing the issue of behavior at PES, including revamping protocols relative to Pitt Stop; the use of a social mapping exercise with students who experience difficulties; the use of Zones of Regulation, a curriculum to help students regulate their actions; the integration of Choose Love, a social-emotional learning program; facilitating teams that meet monthly to support school-wide behavior management practices; and a Flex Advisory Board, supporting best practices being used across the Flex Program.

Ms. Douglas explained that there are specific laws that need to be followed in dealing with inappropriate behavior. She reassured Ms. Wittenberg that the administration is appropriately dealing with the issue of behavior.

Dr. Freeman explained that there is an increase in inappropriate behavior across all schools in the nation. He reminded the audience that the corporal punishment strategies that were previously used have been determined ineffective. Further, many of the best practices used are not necessarily seen by other students. He reassured the Board that the administration is taking this challenge seriously and continually assessing the options available to address the issue. Dr. Freeman provided numerous examples of the remarkable positive behavior that he recently observed at PES, as well as four examples of negative behavior, which were handled effectively by adults. He highlighted the fact that school is an educational environment, in which appropriate behavior must be taught.

Mr. Hamilton reassured the Board that the administration is transparent with the Board about behavior data and the strategies being used to address that behavior. To answer Mr. Gauthier's question, he stated that approximately ten to twelve people are trained in crisis prevention intervention strategies.

#### D. PMHS Student Behavior Report

Mr. Hamilton stated that there were a total of 211 referrals during the months of September and October, which is an average of 5.1 referrals per day. These numbers have decreased in comparison to first quarter last year of 7.6 referrals/day. Seventy percent of our students at PMHS have not received a referral this year.

## IX. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

### A. Hiring Update

According to Ms. Bickford, two paraprofessional positions remain open, as does one part-time English for Students of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher.

### B. Out of District Students

Ms. Bickford updated the Board on students who have been placed out of district due to placements made by the New Hampshire Division of Children, Youth, and Families.

### C. Medicaid Update

Ms. Bickford reported that she has drafted a letter for all families in the district that have students in special education or have a Section 504 plan to collect permissions to communicate with their child's medical providers. Once the permission is received, referrals will be mailed to physicians for their approval of services that will be reimbursed by Medicaid.

### D. Special Education

Ms. Bickford reported on case management and student space changes to better address specific student needs.

### E. Students Involved in Court

The number of students that are court involved has increased. There is only one juvenile justice case; the remainder of the cases are relative to abuse and neglect issues in the home.

Ms. Bickford clarified the purpose of the Flex Program.

## X. DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

### A. I Applied Event

Ms. Brown presented a poster that depicted the result of the I Am College Bound / I Applied. Twenty-two students applied to college during the event at PMHS; 105 applications were completed.

### B. Community College System of New Hampshire

Ms. Brown reported that new alliances will be built between the Pittsfield School District and the Community College System of New Hampshire. Dr. Freeman stated

this work is in alignment with the new role description for a director of college and career readiness.

## XI. DIRECTOR OF INTERVENTIONS

### A. Title I Open House

Ms. LeMay reported a positive response to the Title I Open House. The feedback she received included bringing back the summer field trips that she provided in 2018.

### B. International Dyslexia Association Conference

Ms. LeMay reported on her recent participation in the International Dyslexia Association Conference. She is sharing what she learned with faculty and hopes others will attend future conferences.

### C. Eighth Graders

In the month of October, Ms. LeMay met with all 8th grade students individually to ensure that they understood the policies for promotion into 9th grade and attendance at the ceremony. She followed the meeting up with a letter to parents.

## XII. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOL

A. Dr. Freeman explained that Attorney John Tobin, one of the attorneys involved in the Claremont Lawsuits, contacted the district inviting Pittsfield to be included in the filing of a court brief in support of the ConVal school funding lawsuit. Inclusion in this effort will be done *pro bono*, so the district will not assume any financial burden.

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted unanimously to approve being included in the initiative.

### B. Request

A request was presented for a non-resident student to continue her senior year at PMHS. On a motion made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to approve the student's request.

### C. Role Description - Director of Career Readiness

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to approve the recently modified role description for the position of director of career readiness.

### D. Policy Updates

Dr. Freeman proposed a change to Policy JRA, Student Records and Access. On a motion made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board unanimously approved Policy JRA.

E. Proposed Budget, 2020-2021

Dr. Freeman provided the Board with a copy of the proposed budget, which reflects modifications to previous versions which the Board made at the last meeting. He distributed a copy of the estimated Revenue Summary, 2020-2021.

On a motion made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to approve the proposed budget.

F. PES Student Behavior Management

Topic discussed earlier in the meeting; see page four.

G. Coe-Brown Invitation

Dr. Freeman reported that Mr. Wolfe and he attended the informational meeting for new students at Coe-Brown Academy.

H. January 2 School Board Meeting

Dr. Freeman informed the Board that he will be absent from the Board's meeting on January 2, 2020.

I. Superintendent Performance Evaluation

Dr. Freeman provided members of the Board with the superintendent performance evaluation worksheets as requested.

J. School District Meeting

The Board determined the date of the Deliberative Session to be Wednesday, February 5, with a snow date of Thursday, February 6, 2020.

K. Warrant Articles

Dr. Freeman suggested the Board think about possible warrant articles for the next Board meeting.

#### L. 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. Schiferle stated that the projected adequacy grant increase is favorable.

Mike Cabral provided positive feedback on a new PMHS teacher.

Mr. Schiferle stated his appreciation for the candid conversation about the measures being taken relative to discipline.

Mr. Schiferle stated the district's appointment with the Budget Committee will be December 4, 2019.

### XV. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

At 6:56 p.m. a motion was made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Ms. Asdot to enter into non-public session to discuss personnel issues under the authority of RSA 91-A:3 II (a). The Board was polled and voted unanimously (Ms. Asdot, yes; Ms. Douglas, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes) to enter into non-public session.

The Board discussed two personnel issues; no action was taken in non-public session.

At 7:03 p.m. a motion was made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Mitchell to exit from non-public session and to re-enter into open session. The Board was polled and voted unanimously (Ms. Asdot, yes; Ms. Douglas, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes) to exit the non-public session and to re-enter into open session.

### XVI. SCHOOL BOARD



On a motion by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted unanimously to approve a contract extension for the superintendent of schools.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Chassie  
Recording Secretary