

Wakefield School Board Public Minutes



September 5, 2023
Held in Paul School Library
Approved

BOARD MEMBERS		ADMINISTRATORS	
Mary Collins, Chair	✓	Anne Kebler, Superintendent	✓
Bob Ouellette, Vice Chair	✓	Shari Colby, Business Administrator	
Robert DeColfmacker	✓	Sarah Howard, Director Student Services	
Sandrea Taliaferro	✓	Norma DiRocco, Principal	
Brennan Peaslee	✓	Ivy Levitt-Carlson, Assistant Principal	

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Collins at 6:00. She led the salute to the flag.

Mr. DeColfmacker read the following:

Thank you for attending our meeting this evening. We would like to provide a Public Service Announcement. We have become aware that during the last meeting on August 29th a member of the public secretly video recorded the meeting through Facebook Live. This Facebook Live feed included the meeting, but it also contained side conversations and video of minors. Although we cannot stop this from happening, we would like to inform everyone that they should assume that they are being recorded by personal devices and that the video will be distributed through social media without their consent.

The Paul School utilize ClearView Community TV to provide public access to our meetings. By utilizing this source, we can focus the feed to the meeting itself. If a member of the public is recording the meeting, there is a greater chance of private conversations being picked up as part of the recording as well as video recording of any minors that could be attending.

Our intention is not to create fear but to protect those that attend our meetings.

Agenda Review

New hires were added to the agenda. They interviewed a third grade teacher and still need a fifth grade teacher. Staff Binders were printed for the Board. Mrs. Kebler is requesting that the Board approve a Local Critical Shortage. There is a draft financial report from Mr. Markiewicz. A quarter of the staff still needs to sign up for committees so that will be discussed at the next meeting. She will send everyone a copy and post it out front. Mrs. Peaslee asked to add QR codes for the packet under Follow Up. Mrs. Collins asked to add Spaulding under old business.

Presentations/Public Hearings

None

Reports

Lead Remediation Update

Mr. DeColfmacker said he met with Mr. Davis about the lead remediation. He said they follow RSA 485:17-a. The second round of testing was conducted on July 31st. The first round of testing showed 22 outlets with high ppb levels. The aerators were changed and when retested there were 14 still affected. The affected classroom faucets are outlined in the Board packet and have all been turned off. They are working with Amy Clark, the engineer for the Bureau of School Facilities. We will have the plumber for the school work with them or find a plumber. Grants are available to help cover the costs and we don't know the percentages yet. Mr. DeColfmacker said there is information available for every school in the state at [Airtable - R1 All School Data](#). Mrs. Kebler said they would load the link onto the website. Mrs. Collins asked that updates be made available to the community when available.

Mrs. Taliaferro, as a member of the Facilities Committee asked if she should have been included in the meeting. Mr. DeColfmacker said, as facilities chair, he felt they needed to get this information out as soon as possible. It was just a quick session so they could share the update. Mrs. Kebler said that Amy Clark is trying to find us a consultant/plumber who has worked with other schools. Ms. Clark said that the district has done everything correctly. Mr. Davis will be at the next meeting.

Transportation

Mrs. Powers told the Board that Summer has been a busy time for our her and the fleet of drivers. The following are some of the many things that were done this summer. Summer Maintenance: replace exhaust clamps, changed out old batteries, rust repair on mirrors, battery boxes on a few buses have been repaired they now open and rust has been repaired or slowed down. Stair treads were fixed on buses. Cleaning of buses: a few buses have had a deep clean. Seats were flipped up washed and vacuumed. They found heater filters clogged. They were vacuumed for now but will be ordering replacement ones. Mobile installation was done for the new bus.

The handbook was written and approved this summer, and drivers have reviewed it. We spent time building routes. We continue to review the cluster routes. We have requested for the 5th time that surveys be filled out. They have been posted on the website and Facebook and we have paper copies available for those who do not have access to computers. Our drivers will be meeting with me on Wednesday afternoon and adding cluster stops where they seem necessary in

order to accommodate students to the best of our ability. We hope that we receive more surveys by Tuesday to assist us with this.

Superintendents Report

Touch The Future, TEACH! Apprenticeship program.

I am excited to share with you an initiative sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor, with the goal to increase the workforce in education. Enrollments in educational departments at many of our in-state colleges have dramatically decreased, and we are as a result seeing a significant drop in the Workforce for teachers. This program is designed to grow our own educators and will be of particular benefit to any of our support staff who might want to pursue certification in education. This will be available to any paraprofessional interested in participating, and any teacher who holds a Statement of Eligibility for certification. We will be one of three districts in the southeast region participating in this opportunity, and we are excited to become a member of the cohort. This program will have no cost to the school other than the salaries and benefits we already provide to our staff, and we will move towards becoming a professional development school.

We will be primarily working with the Community College System of New Hampshire, We will also be working with Spaulding and Kingswood to help our Wakefield students who are enrolled in the teacher education program in their CTE programs, in order to assist these students in moving towards a career in education. We will be holding 2 informational meetings within the next month, and dates will be made available to the board should board members want to learn more about this. This is a great opportunity for our school and staff and will serve as a great recruiting tool to attract both paraprofessionals and ABA Tutors. I have included in your folders a more detailed document explaining the program.

Lead in school update: A report of the process which the Paul School Facilities staff followed in accordance with NH Bill 1421 is on this agenda and will be discussed by Robert DeColfmacker, Chair of the facilities committee. We have contacted New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) and requested a consultant from the department to work with us to recommend further remediation plans. I am also working with Amy Clark, Director of Facilities for the Department of Education, to ensure we are meeting all the requirements necessary to comply with the law. We have followed the recommended remediation plan recommended by the NHDES and will continue to move forward with recommended plans. We are aware that the Department of Education will provide grant funding up to 50% of the cost of any remediation plan needs. We will keep the community updated through the SAU 101 website as well as Facebook and email. The information shared at the board meeting will be uploaded to the website on Wednesday, September 6, 2023.

In the meantime, all water to classroom sinks that have been identified as high in lead per NH Bill 1421 will be turned off upon the return of the students. Teacher Professional Development Days: Our staff had a very productive workshop week, with our school leadership team Mrs. DeRocco, Mrs. ivy Leavitt-Carlson and Sarah Howard worked with the staff on developing their personal goals to relate directly to the Schoolwide Goals. Teachers met again after working together as staff to develop action plans around the goals they have set. These goals will be analyzed this coming week, and our professional development plans for the year will be planned

based on the themes of the goals. Much of the professional development will be embedded in the school days through lunch and learn, snippets of instructional practice and staff meetings along with our scheduled professional development day. Our staff also participated in some team building activities, participated in extensive training on MTSS-B, Special Education and 504 rules and practices, and curriculum and data update. An escape room activity occurred on the first day of the workshop days which was framed around our staff handbook, assuring that our staff is familiar with the staff handbook. The last day of the workshop was devoted to allowing teachers to prepare their classrooms. The feel of the week was very positive, and our staff is excited to have our students return.

I will hold two Superintendent Chats a month beginning this month. The first chat is scheduled for September 12th at 9:30. Please RSVP to the SAU if you plan on attending. The chats will be held in the conference room, and therefore it would be very helpful to know if you intend to attend so that we know we have the correct amount of seating. The Chats will be held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 9:30 and 4th Tuesday of the month at 4:30. We will focus on a few topics each month, with the first chat focusing on the teacher certification process, as well as systems we have put in place to provide an intensive mentoring and instructional coaching for any teacher that feels the need for this, but required for our new teachers from last year as well as this year. This opportunity is meant to be a place where we can work collaboratively and in a positive manner to move Paul School forward. At the first chat will also be looking for feedback on what parents would like to have for topics in the future.

Public Comment

Mr. Fogg expressed his feelings about not being on the agenda. He listed subjects he wished to address. He gave his opinion on three members of the Board. He felt some hiring practices were discriminatory. He asked what makes a person unemployable. Randi Fox wondered how long it would take for the testing and or remediation to take place, Is there a timeline, when is the next testing, She said she knew her questions couldn't be answered but wanted this part of the record. She asked about funding for the partnership. Mrs. Kebler said it is entirely funded by the NH Department of Labor. She asked if there was a limit on applicants and is the goal retention and is any data being taken for retention purposes.

She asked to have information on the three school wide goals that were mentioned that the teachers were working on during in service days. Have we done a culture survey to get opinions from the teachers on how they feel the school culture is.

Mrs. Collins said there will be answers to her questions at the next meeting. Mr. DeColfmacker said there will be a Facilities meeting prior to the next Board meeting. Mrs. Fox said, maybe her questions can be answered then. Chris McKay said he was glad to hear about the Superintendent Chats and is glad there is a plan in place for the staffing crisis. He'd like to see Paul School above the lower 5% level. He said a 20% raise would be required to be at the median compensation level for teachers.

Katie Roy asked if there was a list of certified teachers and the ones that need SOE's? She read that we can only have long term subs for twenty one days and asked what the Board is going to do about that. She said last year a long term sub was in the classroom all year. She said there are at least two or three this year. Mrs. Kebler said those questions will be answered when we get to

that agenda item. Cheryl David said we all have more similarities than differences. She feels we have done little in the forty years she has lived here to support teachers. We need to start to support each other. We need to make progress and we haven't. Candace Dewey asked, what teachers are in the classrooms with the sinks that have high levels of lead? Mrs. Collins said we will get the list out of what teachers are in which room and the number of the room. Mrs. Roy asked if the school does exit interviews. Patricia Tusaint asked about getting the number of teachers who left last year and their reasons.

Consent Agenda

Mr. DeColfmacker made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ouellette, to approve the Consent Agenda. (Vote 4-1)

Mrs. Fox reiterated her concerns about the culture of the school and asked if anyone had addressed the situation. Mrs. David said this is global. There is a national shortage. She said she still works a couple days a week in a neighboring school and they had a huge turnover. This is not unique to Paul School. What's unique is its lack of progress and support from the community and the Board over a long period of time. You're not going to be able to retain young people in this competitive market unless you start paying them better. Mrs. Dolaher said when she was in school Paul School offered foreign language and asked why we don't offer a foreign language. She said the Paul School students enter high school far behind. Mrs. Kebler will have a letter to the community to answer these questions.

Meeting Minutes

Mr. DeColfmacker made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ouellette, to approve the public minutes of 8-22-23. (Vote 5-0)

Mr. DeColfmacker made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ouellette, to approve the public minutes of 8-29-23. (Vote 5-0)

Old Business

Mrs. Collins asked if the Paul School students being allowed to play sports in Rochester with the Rochester kids was ever resolved. She said lawyers from both districts were supposed to discuss this. Mrs. Kebler said that the Rochester Superintendent said this is a conversation the two Board chairs have to have. Mrs. Peaslee asked for an update. She said it was cheering and wrestling that were the sports. Mrs. Collins believes it had something to do with insurance. Mr. DeColfmacker asked for an update for the first meeting in October. Mr. Ouellette remembers that there was supposed to be a conversation between the attorneys. Mrs. Kebler will contact our attorney. Mrs. Taliaferro asked that when the attorney have the conversation if the enrollment numbers could also be discussed. It would have to be an addendum to the agreement. Mrs. Peaslee asked that this be on the Follow Up.

New Business

Mrs. Kebler said did not lose twenty staff members. We lost seven. We advertised for positions that would be funded by ESSER. Mrs. Kebler said we lost a first, fourth, fifth, sixth grade teacher a counselor and a reading specialist. We lost a social worker that we have been advertising for two years.

Local Critical Shortage/Emergency Authorization

Mrs. Kebler said we have regular ed teaching positions that we haven't been able to fill so we have to declare a Local Critical Shortage. I'd like to get permission from the Board and the Chair will sign the letter declaring a Local Critical Shortage. When we hire someone with a bachelor's degree that meets the criteria they have to go through a process to get their Statement of Eligibility. They have to schedule their Praxis Test which could take thirty days. They have to pass the test, upload all their transcripts and now pass a criminal background test from the DOE plus a background check from this district before they can be issued a SOE. Sue Blake from the DOE has verified that all of the six teachers that we have that are pursuing an SOE meet the criteria. Three of the six teachers have master's degrees. They won't have to do too much before they get their certification, maybe take a course or maybe not.

Two of the teachers are from out of state so they have to transfer their certification from Connecticut. Most states are reciprocal but NHDOE has become difficult with their process of credentialing. Once we declare the critical shortage I send in an authorization that authorizes the district to bring these people on board as they meet criteria, they just haven't gotten everything completed because it hasn't all come in yet.

Mr. Ouellette made a motion, seconded by Mr. DeColfmacker to have Mrs. Collins sign the letter for Local Critical Shortage.

Mr. Ouellette asked if there will be background checks. Mr. Kebler said that's what's taking longer because the DOE background checks are a much different process than ours. It could take up to thirty days to get the DOE background checks done. This is why the DOE is recommending to many districts across the state that they apply for the emergency authorization. She said we had to do this for one person last year. Mrs. Taliaferro asked if the emergency says while you're getting everything done it's ok to be employed? Mrs. Kebler answered yes. Mrs. Kebler said the emergency authorization is for a year but it will not take that long. We have two long term subs that will likely meet criteria. Ms. Blake is looking at everyone we've hired to make sure they meet criteria.

Mr. DeColfmacker asked what happens if they don't pass the background check or the praxis. Mrs. Kebler said the contract would be null and void. Mrs. Peaslee asked if we have teachers that haven't passed their background checks but are in with students. Mrs. Kebler said they have taken the districts background checks. Mrs. Peaslee asked if they passed them. Mrs. Kebler said the contract says that they are aware if they don't pass the background check they are not employed. She said they have received some of the background checks back. Mr. Ouellette said he thought there was a policy that said you have to have a background check to work in the school. Mrs. Collins said that there is a policy that says if you are with children you need to have a background check. Mrs. Peaslee said field trip chaperones need a background check. How do we have teachers in the classroom without background checks.

Mr. DeColfmacker asked if we have teachers that haven't even passed our local background check. Mrs. Kebler said some. Mr. DeColfmacker said he was for the emergency authorization but he is not ok with cutting corners in order to get the school staffed. Mrs. Peaslee thought this rule was federal or a DOE regulation. Mrs. Peaslee said if you have a DOE background check you get a certificate and can use that from school to school. Mrs. Collins said now we have

someone spending all day with kids in the school without a background check, this should not be happening.

Mrs. Kebler read the following from policy GBCD: Conditional Employment: Persons who have been selected for employment may be hired on a conditional basis, pending a successful completion of the State and FBI criminal records check. No selected applicant for employment shall be extended a conditional offer of employment until the Superintendent, or his/her designee, has initiated the formal State and FBI criminal records check process and has completed a background investigation.

Mrs. Kebler explained that the policy says upon completing the process. Mrs. Peaslee said that a conditional offer is saying I'm offering you a job if you pass the requirements it's not actually putting them in the classroom. Mrs. Kebler said that is not what your policy says and as long as she's been here that they are conditionally employed. Mrs. Kebler said that Ms. Blake is very aware of the background checks. Mr. Ouellette asked how old the policy is. Mrs. Kebler said 2014. The Board thinks this policy was updated last year. Mrs. Peaslee said there was a law change and the law supersedes policy. **(Vote 0-5)**

Mrs. Peaslee said we need to find the law before we continue on with school. Mrs. Kebler asked the Board what they wanted her to do with the empty classrooms. She said she had the law up on her phone. It was discussed whether the conversation should take place in non public. Mrs. Taliaferro said if we have certified people should they fill the holes, can that be a recommendation? She said it's not under our duties or roles. Mrs. Taliaferro said all the emergency items sound good except for the background checks.

Mrs. Collins called for a recess at 7:27.

Mrs. Collins called the meeting back to order at 7:40.

Mrs. Collins said we have to research the laws and call the DOE. Mrs. Kebler said she already talked to the DOE and can call Ms. Blake tomorrow. Mr. DeColfmacker said we need to get a decision and information where the DOE stands on all this out immediately.

Committee Updates

CIP Updates

Mrs. Collins said the school CIP Committee met with the town CIP Sub Committee. Floor covering replacements has been added to the CIP. Mrs. Collins explained the CIP process. Bathroom renovations were completed over the summer. An outdoor classroom pavilion has also been added funded with the ESSER grant. The well that was supposed to be done this summer requires more funds. Boiler and HVAC have to be done together. This will come back to the Board for approval. The three bay garage will be changed to a smaller more affordable metal building. A new roof is being added to the list. The CIP Committee meets with the Planning Board at 7:30 this Thursday.

Nominations/Hires/ Resignations

Casey Avery, Para is being taken off the list.

The staff were approved by PandaDocs on 8-18-23 and the rest are FYI:

Brianna Valdenpena, Family Support Liaison
Lauren Borque, Special Ed Case Manager
Kayla Lancot, Special Ed para
Kelly Pitard, bus driver
Brianna Metivier, para

Follow Up

Mr. DeColfmacker said that the QR code was put on the agenda but not everything made the packet. Mrs. Collins said there was a lot of paper and time wasted putting them together and not being used so ended up being thrown away. The packet will be online and there are items that should not be in the public packet. You can request a public packet by emailing or calling the SAU.

Mrs. Kebler read the first paragraph of the background check law:

189:13-a School Employee and Designated School Volunteer Criminal History Records Check. –

I. (a) The employing school administrative unit, school district, or chartered public school shall complete a criminal history records check on every selected applicant for employment in any position in the school administrative unit, school district, or chartered public school prior to a final offer of employment. A public academy approved by the New Hampshire state board of education shall submit a criminal history records check on applicants for employment pursuant to this section to the division of state police. The superintendent of the school administrative unit or the chief executive officer of the chartered public school or public academy may extend a conditional offer of employment to a selected applicant, with a final offer of employment subject to a successfully completed criminal history records check. No selected applicant may be extended a final offer of employment unless the school administrative unit, school district, chartered public school, or public academy has completed a criminal history records check.

Mrs. Peaslee read the second paragraph of this law:

People who fall within this category must submit a criminal history record check. Mrs. Kebler said but they can be hired conditionally. She said they must submit it. Mrs. Peaslee said conditionally says you are offering them a job and saving that spot. Mr. DeColfmacker said if you look at the meaning of conditional employment it means you can work conditionally. Mrs. Peaslee said we are putting our kids in a gray area and Mr. DeColfmacker said it's the law. Mrs. Kebler said the conditional terms of employment are they have to pass the background check or they are no longer employed. Mrs. Peaslee asked if we had people with those teachers with a clear background check in the room with them? Mrs. Kebler said each has a para in the room.

Mrs. Peaslee asked about the email they were supposed to receive saying what the Transportation Department worked on over the summer. The Board gave Mrs. Collins permission to reach out to Miss Joell to see if she heard anything about the sports situation.

Non Public Session

Mr. Ouellette made a motion, seconded by Mr. DeColfmacker, to enter non public session under RSA 91-A 3:ll (c) at 8:00. Roll call: Ouellette aye, Collins aye, Taliaferro aye, Peaslee aye, DeColfmacker aye Vote: (5-0)

The Board returned to Public Session at 9:00

The Board decided that meeting minutes, committee updates, reports, old business items should be in the packet.

Mrs. Taliaferro made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Peaslee, to approve the non public minutes of 8-29-23. (Vote 5-0)

Adjournment

Mr. Ouellette made a motion, seconded by Mr. DeColfmacker, to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 (Vote 5-0) Ouellette aye, Collins aye, Taliaferro aye, {Peaslee aye, DeColfmacker aye.

Respectfully submitted for approval at the next School Board meeting,

Priscilla Colbath
School Board Secretary