

Our Mission is to prepare and support all students within a culture of excellence to do their best and to be their best, so that each can be a successful contributing citizen, able to adapt to change and to successfully respond to the future.

**RSU 16
Mechanic Falls * Minot * Poland
The 6th Regular School Board Meeting
for 2021 - 2022 was held
Monday, January 10th @ 6:30 p.m.
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MINUTES

- 1.0 CALL TO ORDER:** Mary Martin, Chair
Mary Martin called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.
Pledge of Allegiance & Mission Statement

Pursuant to subsection 403-A of 1 MRSA (Maine Revised Statutes Annotated), we will now confirm that each member of the Regional School Unit 16 School board can both hear and be heard. We will do this by calling the roll, members present are asked to say Yeah. We ask all other members to listen and report any audio difficulties when the roll call is complete.

Mechanic Falls	Minot	Poland	Student Reps
Alyssa Morrison	Jen Tiner	Christine Downs	Anna Brettler
Amber Lyman	Laura Hemond	Ed Rabasco	Joseph Elliott
Jessica Smith	Mike Downing	Emily Rinchich	
Mary Martin	Scott Tiner	Joe Parent	
Patrick Irish	Steve Holbrook	Melaine Harvey	

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85709801798?pwd=VmhEMDQxNlRUVkhOU1rU3Npa1o3QT09>

Meeting ID: 857 0980 1798

Passcode: 062621

FOR ALL VOTES

Pursuant to subsection 403-A of 1 MRSA, item D. –“All votes taken during the public proceeding are taken by roll call vote”. To the question before the board, I will call the roll, those in favor of passage are asked to say yea, those opposed say nay; members wishing to abstain may do so by stating abstain.

Mechanic Falls	Minot	Poland	Student Reps
Alyssa Morrison: Present	Jen Tiner: Present	Christine Downs: Present	Anna Brettler: Present
Amber Lyman: Absent	Laura Hemond: Present	Ed Rabasco: Present	Joseph Elliott: Present
Jessica Smith: Present	Mike Downing: Present	Emily Rinchich: Present	
Mary Martin: Present	Scott Tiner: Present	Joe Parent: Present	
Patrick Irish: Present	Steve Holbrook: Present	Melaine Harvey: Present	

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT: (15 minutes)

No Comments

3.0 RECOGNITIONS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: (5 minutes)

Mary Martin recognized Adult Education. She looks forward to receiving their Adult Education brochure and the news and photos that are shared.

4.0 AGENDA ADJUSTMENT:

5.0 PRESENTATION: (20 minutes)

Jessica Madsen, Principal, Elm Street School

Mrs. Madsen provided a handout for members of the board. She introduced a slide of Elm Street School staff and students, with highlights of school activities throughout the school year. Mrs. Madsen expressed that really great things are happening at ESS and it is a privilege to be the Principal. She thanked her school staff for their support of students during this challenging year and giving their best. Mrs. Madsen spoke about the Key Information such as demographics of staff and students including student population, educator makeup, teacher education levels, the free and reduced lunch percentage, IEP and 504 students, chronic absenteeism, and health visits.

Next, Mrs. Madsen shared the highlights of the 2021-2022 school year starting with the ESS school theme of Every Student, Every Educator, goals, and leadership team with roles. An area of focus for this year was meeting the social emotional well-being of students through the continuation of the Second Step program, Literacy, Attendance and Behavior. Mrs. Madsen talked about behavior increases, particularly, in the younger grades with the transition to full in person learning. Students have not had a regular school experience, and supports have been put into place.

She also spoke about Teacher of the Year Jessica Harvey, the Let's Go Silver Award, Competitive Winter Kids Winter Games and the upcoming opening ceremony. Other support for students at ESS are the Manna food program and the Whole School PBIS program. Mrs. Madsen shared the process of adopting a whole-school Title model that services students K-6 and the use of ESSER III funds to request additional interventionists. iReady-a universal screener and learning pathway, Really Great Reading, Hand to Mind, and Littera programs were purchased with funding as resources for math and literacy. Teacher teams meet regularly to discuss student needs and review data. The ESS staff is meeting kids and are seeing incredible gains as a result of creating a community of learners.

Discussion:

Joe Parent - Asked if the winter diagnostics could be shared with the board.

Jessica Madsen - Will share data with Kaitlynn Brown to bring to the board. Mrs. Madsen gave additional information about the program and its benefits.

Steve Holbrook - Asked why more students are going to the nurse.

Jessica Madsen - Due to individual medical needs and the pandemic.

Mary Martin - Commented that, it is exciting to see the variety of interventions. How are they delivered?

Jessica Madsen - Discussed the structure as small groups and combinations in class and some pull-outs with interventionists.

Jessica Madsen - Informed the group that she will be off for 10 days to spend time with her family.

Amy Jenkins and Val Young will fill in. Mrs. Madsen would love to have the board come to Winter Kids.

6.0 CONSENT AGENDA INTRODUCTION: (5 minutes)

Approve 12-13-21 5th Regular Meeting Minutes

Notification of Support Staff New Hire:

- Carly King, Ed Tech III - PRHS

Notification of Retirement:

- Karen Hill Brown, Data Specialist - District

Notification of Resignation:

- Joan Dyer, Ed Tech III - PCS

Sub Committees Minutes - No December Meeting held

Motion: by Steve Holdbrook to approve Consent Agenda

Seconded: by Patrick Irish

Vote: Unanimous

7.0 ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL SUMMARIES: (10 minutes)

Stacie Field updated the group on the food service summary. Ellen's report is due by the 10th of the month. Stacie reported to the board the current period, with updates. She gave information on the outstanding subsidy amount. The balance with the update is \$48,564. The program is in the black. As the budget process starts, we will need to look for an amount that should be recommended for the local contribution.

Mary Matin - Commented that this is good news.

Stacie Field - Agreed with Mary.

Adult Ed grand total for revenue is \$121,000 for 7/1-6/30. Local amount shows the amount from the town. Each month we get a check from the town for 1/12 of the budget. The expenses are at 50%, which is in line with expected revenue. Subsidy from the state for adult education is at 100%. Balance is at \$105,405 for the remainder of the year. Pages 3-5 are individual grants and do not affect the general fund budget.

General Fund Revenues are looked at during budget time. Local revenues from the towns and state are showing at 50%. The state agency client is billed from the state and reimbursed. Three teachers get an extra stipend. We have not received that for 2022. The tuition is billed in December, and we are waiting for it to be set from the state.

Prior Year Revenue is money for the bus sign. We receive money for online payments from parents through Androgov. Examples are computers, hockey, bus seat damage and parts. The fund balance is money on hand. When we had our audit last month, the report found that the fund balance was healthy. It was at 7.1%. We are looking at allocating money to reduce tax burden for taxpayers. The state allows for different amounts between 3-5% to support the budget moving forward.

Joe Parent - Asked what is the bus sign? Is it the sign we put up on route 11 in Poland?

Stacie Field - Answered yes.

Motion: by Steve Holdbrook to approve the Acceptance of the Financial Summaries

Seconded: by Mike Downing

Vote: Unanimous

8.0 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: (10 minutes)

The current enrollment of Regional School Unit 16 as of January 10, 2022 is:

Elm Street School (254 – up 1)

Minot Consolidated School (234 – down 1)

Poland Community School (438 – up 1)

Bruce M. Whittier Middle School (289 – up 1)

Poland Regional High School (490 – no change)

Total Enrollment 1705 – up 2 from 12/13/21

I'm pleased to report that Santa Claus did visit the PreK classrooms at all three elementary schools before Christmas. Santa, Mrs. Claus, and Sparkle, the Elf, listened to what students wanted for Christmas and told North Pole Stories. Santa then read a holiday story and presented the class with a new book for their teacher to read aloud.

The MSSA Winter Convocation on January 13th and 14th, has been postponed to April 7th and 8th. The conference is still planned to be held in person at the Marriott Sable Oaks in South Portland for the first time in two years. I have been asked to be part of the DOE's Threat Assessment Advisory Committee. We will meet remotely at 11:00 AM on Thursday. I will be the only Superintendent on the advisory committee. We will begin administrative budget meetings next week with all building principals and district directors. Stacie, Amy and I will meet with each cost center supervisor to hear the rationale of each budget submission. Will meet with Town Managers for breakfast on January 19, 2022.

9.0 ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: (10 minutes)

We may be done with COVID, but COVID is not done with us.

Reaffirming that our top priority is keeping our students in our buildings for in-person learning, and that we use the tools that we have in front of us in order to make that happen. School boards have the authority to make policy around masking and pooled testing participation. Quarantine and isolation procedures or how we respond to a positive case in our schools is set by the DOE. A new SOP was released to schools on Thursday, December 30th.

Aligning with CDC recommendation for quarantine and isolation to be 5 days rather than 10 days. Because RSU 16 has a universal, enforced masking policy, any student or staff who is deemed a close contact will not have to quarantine from school and school activities. RSU 16 schools will now be considered in "Outbreak" status when at least 15% of staff and students of the school are absent due to illness. This approach is consistent with Maine CDC's approach to other communicable diseases.

Pooled testing continues to be an important tool in monitoring the health of staff and students, and the school community as a whole. It also provides access to COVID testing, which is currently in short supply in the community. Identify cases early and mitigate the spread of the virus in our community.

RSU 16 will now accept home tests because of shortage of laboratory testing availability and the increasing availability of at-home COVID-19 tests. Symptoms must be improved/resolved, fever free for at least 24 hours without fever reducing medicine. If symptoms continue or worsen after 24 hours, then you would need to remain out of school.

The caregiver must present to health service staff:

- A. A picture of the home test with the student's name, date and time of collection on the test card.
- B. Caregiver signature on the test card. This signature certifies the caregiver followed instructions and it is the test for the person's name written on the test card.

The US CDC and Maine CDC have reaffirmed their commitment to masks, but also recognize that not all masks are created equal. Dr. Shah said it's time to rethink our use of cloth masks. I want to make sure that people understand that rethinking the use of cloth masks does not mean he's endorsing removing masks. Further details from the US and Maine CDC talk about the use of a mask that fits you and has a wire nose bridge. If you have access to a better mask, go with that.

Joe Parent - Commented that getting at-home tests is really hard. Can we provide tests?

Amy Hediger - Pooled testing would be an alternative to that. We would have to develop it with our own policy and provide tests and funding. I recommend pool testing.

10.0 NEW BUSINESS: (5 minutes)

11.0 OLD BUSINESS: (15 minutes)

Review Covid-19 Return to School Plan

Amy Hediger reviewed graphs of Monitoring the Conditions and Androscoggin County, with student and staff data. 73% of our students are in pool testing and we have eyes on our students. The rest of the data is broken up by schools. At the bottom of the page is the Grand Total.

Discussion:

Ed Rabasco - Stated that the vaccination percentage for younger kids is pretty dismal. Are they waiting on a second shot for 14 days?

Amy Hediger - Answered yes, and our spreadsheet needs to be updated.

Mary Martin - Shared that she is pleased to see the numbers in terms of pooled testing. How sustainable is it to keep up with?

Amy Hediger - Replied that we shuffled and made an aggressive plan to get all of our kids pooled tested. We are committed to it and have a plan for next week. It gives us reassurance that we can stay healthy.

Alyssa Morrison - Asked if pool testing is PCR testing? Children who have tested positive within a couple of months are being excluded from the pool testing.

Amy Hediger - Answered yes, after you have a positive you are pulled from the pool testing.

Emily Rinchich - Wanted to know are the kids who are being excluded part of the percentage of pool testing?

Amy Hediger - Replied yes, because they are coming back in after their 90 days are up.

Emily Rinchich - Shared that as a volunteer, testing has become a hardship because she has to be tested within 24 hours of coming into school. She had to cancel coming in. She emailed Amy and Ken and wanted to know was there any way to adjust the volunteer policy with the new SOP?

Amy Hediger - Suggested that we hear Ken's recommendation and the board voted on that. It may play into what you are going to suggest.

Ken Healey - Superintendent's recommendation regarding masking:

Maintain status quo with monthly review at the February School Board meeting. Mr. Healey supported all of the reasons that Assistant Superintendent Hediger mentioned, and restated those points. He said that we would look for a matrix that would provide an offramp to masking, but will continue to recommend it for now.

Discussion:

Amy Hediger - Stated that our goal is to keep kids in school.

Ed Rabasco - Made a motion to approve the Superintendent's recommendation.

Steve Holbrook - Wanted to know if that included the five days.

Amy Hediger - Explained yes.

Mary Martin - Asked if there were any questions.

Scott Tiner - Said he had two questions. Reminded the Board that Emily was going to make a motion and Amy asked her to stop. I'm not sure how that played into what Ken was going to say? Are we accepting negative at home test results? If a student tests positive at school and then goes home and tests negative, are we accepting the test?

Amy Hediger - Answered a positive test is a positive test.

Scott Tiner - Asked what does an at home testing do for us that it didn't do before?

Amy - Explained that before, the test might be delayed to find a place to test which delayed the start of isolation. Now the positive test starts the isolation and it is only five days from that positive home test. At that point in time we would need to have a further discussion if we were not universal masking. Ed and Joe made the motion and I will let that vote go through and make a comment if I need to.

Mary Martin - Asked if what Emily was suggesting would fall under if we continued to mask?

Amy Hediger - Agreed - yes it is separate.

Mary Martin - Stated to be clear about what Emily was suggesting?

Amy Hediger - Replied that it had to do with masking.

Emily Rinchich - Agreed that it was totally fine.

Christine Downs - Asked Amy if we are still contact tracing and are we notifying those contacts?

Amy Hediger - Answered that we are doing a broad view of tracing and explained what that means in the context of the SOP.

Alyssa Morrison - Stated the SOP has made it so that in order for children to stay in school, the school has to enforce a mask policy.

Amy Hediger - Explained the time frame of being infectious and masking in congregate settings.

Alyssa Morrison - Stated that this came at the same time that we are questioning the efficacy of masks. Yet the SOP is stating that we have to universally mask in schools in order to reduce close quarantine. Is that what I'm gathering?

Amy Hediger - The CDC is saying that if you have a better mask go with it, but it is not necessary at this time.

Alyssa Morrison - Will we have to quarantine if we do not mask?

Amy Hediger - Yes

Jennifer Tiner - Asked if the district has appropriately sized either KN95 or N95 masks for children?

Amy Hediger - We do not. In our last conversation with the state, we asked if they were going to be given out and they are having us keep the current mask with multilayers. Families can give them out if they have them at home.

Joseph Elliott - Asked previously if you had COVID you were out for 10 days. Is that correct?

Amy Hediger - Yes, that is correct.

Joseph Elliott - Would those be excused absences? Five days now would be excused absences? COVID symptoms last for longer than five days. Are those going to be excused absences?

Amy Hediger - Responded yes, you would want to have your family call and talk to the nurse. It is all about your symptoms improving or resolving.

Joseph Elliott - Question: Are parents and students being made aware?

Amy Hediger - Replied that we certainly hope so.

Cari Medd - Told the board that I can attest that that conversation has been had with students.

Kenneth Healey - Reminded the group that a community letter was sent out.

Amy Hediger - Shared that it is posted on Facebook and online, as well.

Joseph Elliott - Asked if that applies to staff as well. Were they made aware that they could be out past the five days?

Amy Hediger - Replied yes, I have been talking with staff, as well.

Mary Martin - Asked if anyone else had a question?

Motion: by Ed Rabasco to approve the Superintendent's recommendation regarding masking to maintain the status quo.

Seconded: by Joe Parent

Vote: 12-2 (Alyssa Morrison, Emily Rinchich)

Motion: by Emily Rinchich to amend the Return to School Plan with regard to volunteers.

Seconded: by Patrick Irish

Discussion:

Emily Rinchich - Amend the return to school plan with regard to volunteers- Emily read aloud a proposal of new wording.

Volunteers, who are an integral and regular part of school operation (café/recess monitors, office helpers, classroom volunteers with a regular, defined academic role), can be allowed. Volunteers are required to comply with the masking, social distancing, and hand sanitizing requirements. They will sign in and out of buildings and rooms as they may be identified as a close contact. Volunteers who are not an integral and not a regular part of the school's operation (drop-ins, one-time visits) are not allowed at this time, during school hours.

Mary Martin - Asked Amy to clarify what the difference was in language to what we had previously for volunteers?

Amy Hediger - We were asking volunteers to provide proof of vaccination, take part in pool testing or provide a negative test. We now have universal masking.

Motion: by Emily Rinchich to amend the Return to School Plan with regard to volunteers.

Seconded: by Patrick Irish

Vote: 9-5 (Scott Tiner, Christine Downs, Ed Rabasco, Joe Parent, Melanie Harvey)

Kenneth Healey - Motion fails 426-342.

Mary Martin - Stated that the motion fails goes back to the original policy.

Ken Healey - Shared that an error was made and the motion passes 522 to 426.

Mary Martin - Explained that the motion does carry.

12.0 **POLICIES: (10 minutes)**

13.0 **REPORTS TO THE SCHOOL BOARD:**

Student Representatives: **(5 minutes)**

Anna Brettler - Shared the colleges she has applied to. NHS meets every other week. They have decided on a community service project. They will renovate the outdoor lunch space or student area. They will be fundraising. Anna's Senior Capstone Project that has just been approved. She will be bringing seven cocurricular music groups to elementary schools. Her goal is to encourage students to pick up an instrument or start singing for the first time.

Mary Martin - Commented that that was an ambitious application process and Senior celebration. She asked Joseph if he had anything to add.

Joseph Elliott - Reported that the last time it was shown that people are not so aware of what the SRB does and it had never been really talked about before. It is individual class counselors who are picked to plan and fundraise for

their class. Fundraisers for prom, senior year, and class trip. Organizing those funds and homecoming and spirit weeks. Occasionally advising administration.

Mary Martin - Asked what is the process for being elected to represent a class group?

Joseph Elliott - They are considering a change this year due to COVID. They are considering changing it to a system where each classroom is electing eight representatives. They would choose amongst themselves and they are changing the names. In previous years, each one would individually run. It was an overall election by all of the students.

Anna Brettler - Added that in past years, people ran for core positions. Anna reviewed positions and processes.

Mary Martin - Thanked Joseph and Anna for that explanation.

Report of the School Board Chair: **(5 minutes)**

- Attendance
- Board Goals

In the last meeting, we approved the goals for the year. We will check in on it every month. There are a couple to highlight for the month because they are time sensitive. They are the designated board members to work with administrators for submitting articles to the Country Connection. That is under our communication goal. Finding a board member to support the school board section on our website. Under effective board structure and function, we do find time to do a local workshop on parliamentary procedures. Around our strategic planning goal it says approve a process for updating the strategic plan. Within our packet we did receive an Adult Education Report.

Steve Holdbrook - Asked if the board would have committees?

Mary Martin - Replied yes.

14.0 ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

A Team Reports - Adult Education

15.0 COMMUNICATIONS:

16.0 HANDOUTS:

17.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION:

18.0 REMINDERS: Sign Policies from December meeting

19.0 ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to adjourn at 7:43 p.m.

Seconded: by Mike Downing

Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth J. Healey