

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 5th Regular School Board Meeting
for 2021 - 2022 was held**

Monday, December 13, 2021 @ 6:30 p.m.

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**REVISED
5.0 & 6.0**

MINUTES

1.0 CALL TO ORDER: Mary Martin, Chair

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=VmhEMDQxNIRUVkhnOU1rU3Npa1o3QT09>

Meeting ID: 857 0980 1798

Passcode: 062621

We now would like to confirm that members of the public who are remotely attending the public proceeding are able to hear all members. All participants can send a message via the Zoom chat feature on the right of the screen. Recognizing that this is the board's first time conducting a meeting in this manner to help combat the spread of COVID-19, we ask the community and all members to proceed with patience and an understanding that the district staff and board members are doing the best they can in an unprecedented time. As a reminder to conduct an orderly meeting, all board members and community members must remain muted and wait to be recognized by the chair before speaking.

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
<i>Amber Lyman: Absent</i>	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)

Daniel French (Minot): Question- Wants to understand why there appears to be two different sets of quarantine rules for close contacts. He shared a specific situation involving an employee. Mary stated that employee issues couldn't be addressed at the meeting and someone would be in contact to get more information. Suggestion- He requested an additional survey be sent out to families again about pooled testing, masking, and quarantining.

3.0 RECOGNITIONS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: (5 minutes)

- ★ Congratulations - *Optimist December Student of theMonth -Leksi Langevin, 6th Grader at Minot Consolidated School*
- ★ *Congratulations & THANK YOU recipients of the 2021 MSBA Distinguished Service Award.....*
..... Dotty Foster Bagley, Lisa Storer, Laurie Camire, Louise Robinson, Mary Wallace and Pam Tracy
- ★ *Welcome Joseph Elliott, new junior School Board Student Rep*

4.0 AGENDA ADJUSTMENT:

5.0 PRESENTATIONS: (20 minutes)

Auditor: Christian Smith

Christian summarized the audit. It was a successful audit with no audit adjustments, no audit findings, and no major issues or concerns. The audit firm is an independent auditor. They work with management to perform the audit. They express an opinion on the financial statement as to whether they are fairly stated and in accordance with accounting principles. We are in full compliance with Maine State financial guidelines.

- The Governance Letter that outlines if there were any issues with the audit. There were no changes in accounting policies or practices, no disagreements with management, and no difficulties performing the audit.
- Federal Grant Audit- The district does receive quite a bit of federal funds. There has also been an increase in federal money coming into the district especially with the Corona Relief Funds. They completed the audit on all federal grants and issued the report on those findings.
- They also submit a report to the State of Maine on compliance with state laws and regulations, stating that all the information the district submitted to the state is accurate. There were no issues or findings, and the district is in full compliance.
- The independent auditor's opinion is that the financial practices are in accordance with expected financial practices.
- He reviewed the Expenditures and the balance of the funds for the end of the year. Revenues were more than expenditures last year. The remaining balance was added to the fund balance. Most of the savings came from the transportation department. These results are common and consistent with what the auditors are seeing with many other schools, considering the year that we had last year.
- He reviewed assigned and unassigned carry over. Generally in the past, the State of Maine hasn't wanted to see unassigned carry over exceed about 3%. The unassigned is about 7%, which is over what is typically accepted for carry over. This is also consistent with other districts and the state has recently approved that and will work with schools to use their carry over.
- He reviewed the nutrition program. There was a loss of about \$74,000 which is consistent with other years, as well. This was consistent with the other districts in the state.

- They did look at how grant funds were spent with particular attention on the Covid relief funds and everything looked good in that area.
- There were no significant issues with procedural pieces. There was a recommendation that there is an annual cyber protection training program for employees.

Motion: *by Steve Holbrook to approve the audit as presented*

Seconded: *by Mike Downing*

Vote: *Unanimous*

Winter Sports/Rules Update - Don King

Don King shared that MPA has recommended masking for all students at all times. There are some schools that have made masking optional. Our league has required masking for both athletes and spectators. We have control of what happens in our school. Hockey teams in the league have agreed to follow masking. They have asked spectators to follow the arena's masking, which is masking for those who are not vaccinated and optional for others. Indoor track has requirements that only allow for athletes to compete without any spectators. Speech and debate will allow students to unmask when presenting, but all spectators must mask. Some schools they visit do not allow spectators, but many allow for streaming options. The goal is to provide programming for students to perform.

Out of District Placements - Holly Day

Holly Day and Jo St. Peter-Scott presented about Special Education out-of-district placements.

- Out of District Placement: A placement outside of the school they would typically attend
- Why does a student need an out-of-district placement? When it is necessary for a student to receive a free and appropriate public education
- Holly showed how our district's numbers have decreased over time. Part of the reason is because of social emotional programming that has been made available at the middle and high school.
- Holly reviewed the costs associated with sending a student out of the district for school. She reviewed the cost of tuition and explained that any related service increases the cost for each student as well. (Some costs can be covered through MaineCare. (\$1,591,552 which is about 30% of the budget to service about 7% of the special education students).
- Holly explained some of the benefits and drawbacks for sending a student to an out of school program for the student and the district.

Discussion:

- Mary asked what are some of the challenges of starting additional programs within the district. Holly shared that staffing is difficult. It takes time for a new program to settle in and be successful. There are spacing issues. They would like to bring it to the elementary level, but it would require the right staffing. Jo suggested that it would be best to split with a K-3 and 4-6 program.
- Joe asked if there are additional teachers coming out of school that might be available. Holly discussed that there are always openings for special education and our pay is not as high as in other areas.
- Joe would like to know what our pay would need to be to be able to compete for staffing in special education.

6.0 **CONSENT AGENDA INTRODUCTION: (5 minutes)**

Approve 11-8-21 4th Regular Meeting Minutes

Notification of Support Staff New Hires:

Notification of Retirements:

- Mike Carter, Teacher - PRHS
- Jo-Ellen Carter, Secretary - PRHS
- Carolyn Ames, Custodian - ESS

Notification of Resignations:

- Rikki Lukeski, Ed Tech - PRHS
- Peg Robinson, Food Service - PRHS
- Amber Henderson, Library Ed Tech- ESS

Sub Committees Minutes - November 2021

Motion: *by Steve Hollbrook to approve Consent Agenda*

Seconded: *by Mike Downing*

Vote: *Unanimous*

7.0 ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL SUMMARIES: (10 minutes)

No report - Auditor presentation

8.0 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: (10 minutes)

The current enrollment of Regional School Unit 16 as of December 13, 2021 is:

Elm Street School (253 – down 1)

Minot Consolidated School (235 – up 3)

Poland Community School (437 – up 6)

Bruce M. Whittier Middle School (288 – down 1)

Poland Regional High School (490 – down 6)

Total Enrollment 1703 – up 1 from 11/8/21

Ken shared:

- Participated in a vaccine clinic for 5-11 year olds on November 20th, at Elm Street School. Ken was assigned the very important task of passing out snacks for those who had just received their shot.
- Ken will be attending the MSSA Winter Convocation on January 13th and 14, 2022. The conference will be held in person at the Marriott Sable Oaks in South Portland for the first time in two years.
- Ken met with Town Managers for breakfast on November 17th. Our next meeting is December 15th .
- Ken is very pleased with the audit results, again this year. Thanks to the Business Department and Stacie Field for a job well done.
- Ken thanked the school nurses for all their efforts. He shared his appreciation for all of their hard work.

9.0 ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: (10 minutes)

Amy Hediger shared that she has been excited to see all the spirit days leading up to the holidays. She highlighted all of the fun stuff that is happening in all of the different schools. Amy talked about pooled testing and the big job that all of the nursing team is doing weekly. She explained that with parent permission, students swab their noses. The testing takes place throughout the week in different schools. Amy explained that spreadsheets need to be kept up with so that staff can ensure everyone is appropriately being tested based on permission, as well as keeping positive cases out of pools for 90 days. Once pools are sent out and results come in, any students in a positive pool need to be tested using Binex Now tests. Each box of Binex has a control test to ensure that the tests are reacting accordingly. Students are tested one at a time and each have their own timers. Any positive tests are reviewed by multiple nurses to verify that it is positive. Once a positive is identified, the contact tracing begins. Contact tracing takes a considerable amount of time to contact trace. Each case can take up to 2-3 hours to contact trace, contact families, and report cases and close contacts to the state. Mary clarified that the process is time intensive for staff, but not for students. Amy clarified that it is a very efficient process for students. Amy took time to thank and acknowledge the administrators for all their work on managing Covid 19 within our schools this year.

Amy shared that Ken and she had met with the Commissioner and she offered that there will be some overhaul to the SOP due to the impact it is having on staff and students. It will be released possibly over the Winter Break. The administrative team will review and make changes based on the changes to the State SOP. Mary thanked Ken and Amy for their work towards being committed to staff and students this year, as well.

10.0 NEW BUSINESS: (5 minutes)

Discuss Board Goals

Educational Policy suggested that the board stay with the three goals that were identified last year. They added some activities to the goal, as well as deleted some activities that had been completed.

- Communication and Engagement: Improve Communication and engagement with students, staff, and community. There was an update on the public participation policy, submitting articles to local community newspapers, to react proactively with community feedback, fostering relationships with municipal leadership, and recognizing staff. The board didn't want to add or delete any pieces.
- Effective Board Structure and Function: Scott Tiner suggested that there be an addition in helping members understand board functions and how to make motions.
- Strategic Plan: Joe clarified that some things were removed because it was standard practice instead of a goal. No additional suggestions were made.

Consider Approval of Board Goals

Motion: *by Mike Downing to accept the updated board goals with the addition to the board functions that was suggested.*

Seconded: *by Joe Parent*

Vote: *Unanimous*

11.0 **OLD BUSINESS: (15 minutes)**

Review Covid-19 Return to School Plan

Amy reviewed the updated data. The data was previously emailed out to the board with the recommendation from the superintendent that we maintain the status quo with monthly review at the January School Board meeting.

Ken shared that we no longer have to report fully vaccinated staff, but we hold steady at about 90%. Student vaccinations are slowly climbing. Pool testing enrollment percentages continue to increase over time.

Motion: *by Emily Rinchich to change to recommended, but not mandatory at all schools starting January 4, 2022*

Seconded: *by Allissa Morrison*

Discussion: There were questions if Emily's motion would include transportation. It is not possible to change masking requirements on transportation at this time. There was a question if the state was giving any information on if there should be changes made around masking at the state level. There was a question around why there would be additional time provided for masking based on the blue chart, since vaccines are readily available. Ken doesn't feel that we have met "60 days readily available" within the district. There was a question: If Emily's motion doesn't pass, does the board have to vote again for masking to be required? Ken shared that next month he would make a recommendation again. If that recommendation changes anything, then it would require a motion at that time. Amy shared that she would like to see what metrix the state would suggest for when to "off ramp" for masking. Emily shared some of her personal experiences with the effects masks have had on her children. Scott wants clarification on what would happen at each level based on the vote. Amy shared that the current policy is that masking is required at all schools. So if Emily's motion doesn't carry, masking would continue to be required in all schools.

Vote: *3-11 (Jessica Smith, Mary Martin, Jen Tiner, Laura Hemond, Mike Downing, Scott Tiner, Steve Holbrook, Christine Downs, Ed Rabasco, Joe Parent and Melaine Harvey)*

Motion: *by Joe Parent to continue the status quo as recommended by the superintendent until our next meeting.*

Seconded: *by Steve Hollbrook*

Vote: *13-1 (Emily Rinchich)*

12.0 **POLICIES: (10 minutes)**

Approve 1st & Final Reading of below policies as presented by the Educational Policy Subcommittee at their November 22nd meeting:

- BB Legal Status
- BBA Powers and Responsibilities
- BBAA Member Authority & Responsibilities
- BBBAB Student Representative to the School Board
- BBBDA Board-Declared Vacancy Caused by Absenteeism
- BBBE Unexpired Term Fulfillment/Vacancies
- BCA Code of Ethics
- BHC Board Communications with Staff

Motion: *by Steve Hollbrook to approve 1st & Final Reading of above policies as presented by the Educational Policy Subcommittee*

Seconded: *by Mike Downing*

Vote: *13-1 (Jen Tiner)*

13.0 **REPORTS TO THE SCHOOL BOARD:**

Student Representatives: **(5 minutes)**

Anna introduced Joseph Elliott to the board as the new student representative. Senior class has been doing some fundraising and are selling raffle tickets currently. Band and chorus concert is coming up. Themed dress-up days leading up to the winter break.

Joseph shared that juniors had a vendor fair to raise money for their class. The Policy Committee is considering some changes to the SBO.

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

- Budget Committee: Committee is formed - Jessica, Amber, Mary, Christine, Ed and Mike They will be making contact with the towns who will provide representatives, as well.
- Attendance: Subcommittee meeting for December will be canceled
- Mary reminded members that if it is their year for reelection, then they will need to get their papers in.
- There will be no December 27th Subcommittee Meeting.

14.0 ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

ATeam Reports: Christine asked if Ken has had a chance to check into the phone system at MCS. Ken shared that 2 additional lines have been ordered to address the issues the school has had with the phone and fax lines. Emily has asked about the generator. Ken shared they are still looking at costs for the generators so each school would have one. Jessica asked about the higher number of ODRs and it being higher than the national average. Ken shared that he felt it had to do with the consistency of being in the schools due to the pandemic. Mary stated that she was pleased to see that there was a vaping program at the high school, strong attendance at MCS on the remote days, and was happy to see that band and chorus concerts were returning to the high school and middle school. Christine asked for clarification to the whole school Title I program at ESS. Amy explained briefly what a whole-school Title I looks like at ESS. Scott noticed chronically absent numbers at the elementary level and asked if that includes students out in isolation and quarantine. Amy explained that chronically absent means excused and unexcused absences and that when students are out for quarantine, that they are provided with educational resources while they are out of the building. Mary restated that we do not have control over the quarantine requirements.

15.0 COMMUNICATIONS:

16.0 HANDOUTS:

17.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION:

18.0 REMINDERS: Sign Policies - Done

19.0 ADJOURNMENT:

Motion: by Steve Hollbrook to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

Seconded: by Mike Downing

Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully Submitted,

Kenneth J. Healey