

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 7th Regular School Board Meeting
for 2021 - 2022 was held

Monday, February 14th @ 6:30 p.m.

>>>>> PRHS LIBRARY <<<<<

***** REVISIONS - 6.0 & 10.0 *****

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 (R)	Jen Tiner (R)	Christine Downs (Y)	Anna Brettler
Amber Lyman (R)	Laura Hemond (R)	Ed Rabasco (R)	Joseph Elliott
Jessica Smith (Y)	Mike Downing (R)	Emily Rinchich (Y)	
Mary Martin (Y)	Scott Tiner (R)	Joe Parent (Y)	
Patrick Irish (Y)	Steve Holbrook (Y)	Melaine Harvey (R)	

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85709801798?pwd=VmhEMDQxNIRUVkhnOU1rU3Npa1o3QT09>

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	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	

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENT: (15 minutes)

- Mary Martin provided rules and expectations of public comment.
- Whitney King Buker (Minot): Shared that various states are making masks optional and asked what we can do to get to that step. Said that pooled testing is interfering with students being in school, and that the board should reconsider pooled testing. Suggested surveying families for input.
- Mary Beth Taylor (Poland): Thanked the school board for their hard work and noted the implications that February vacation may have on our positive cases at school.
- Kate Fluette (Mechanic Falls): Talked about being in favor of ending masking requirements in school.
- Sarah Robinson: Said she is interested in off-ramps to end masking requirements in school. She also expressed mental health concerns tied to masking.
- Sarah Rand (Poland): Talked about being in favor of ending masking requirements in school.

3.0 RECOGNITIONS/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: (5 minutes)

Congratulations January Optimist Student of the Month- Hailey Caron, 6th grader at ESS.

Congratulations Emma Moreau who participated in the Maine Music Educators Association Jazz All State SSAA Choir this past weekend at Bangor High School. She represented PRHS & RSU 16 with Class!

Congratulations: Alex Emery, Lucas Frechette, Audrey Fryda, Nolan Garey, Emma Moreau,

Alex (Payson) Picard, Rylee Smith and Sophia Dollof who were selected to the District II Music Festivals

Congratulations to all who participated in the **ESS WinterKids Winter Games**

4.0 AGENDA ADJUSTMENT:

5.0 PRESENTATIONS: (20 minutes)

- JMG (Jobs for Maine's Graduates) - Elizabeth Degrandpre
The program has been in place for three years at PRHS. Students Latrelle Mongo, David Darling and Lexi Magofna talked about their experiences in the program. Students in grades 9 and 10 find who they are and learn about how their experiences and perspectives shape them. They apply for worker's permits and learn how to interview. Students in 11 and 12 learn leadership skills, do career exploration, and learn how to complete quality job applications. Elizabeth talked about the program's success at last year's competitions. She also talked about badges that the students can work to earn and then can appear in their LinkedIn accounts.

- Kaitlynn Brown, Principal - Minot Consolidated School

Talking Points:

At the start of the year:

- Students in grades K-6th completed the i-Ready Diagnostic in Reading and Math as a screener. The results provided by i-Ready provide an overall baseline level for each subject area and a breakdown level for each strand within the content area.
- We used the initial Fall data to identify students in need of interventions.
- The Interventionists formed groups based on common needs and levels of students.

During the Fall Semester:

- Interventionists used the materials to instruct their students based on the specific needs of students.
- All students used i-Ready on a weekly basis. They worked on their individualized learning path in Math and Reading in class.
- We also used i-Ready to supplement work for students who were in isolation or quarantine due to Covid.
- Teachers monitored student progress on i-Ready and provided additional support to students as needed.
- This was all in addition to their core curriculum.

After the Winter Benchmark:

- Data: Review the School-wide data on the handout from the Winter Benchmark.
- Interventionists used this data to monitor the progress of students in their fall groups. They used the data to make decisions about student groupings.
- Do students in groups continue to need additional support?
- Are students in an intervention making adequate progress?
- Are there additional students who are in need of an intervention group?

- We conducted Grade Level Meetings to look at data to identify needs of students and form groups to address needs of students who are not picked up for an intervention.
- Of our students who received Reading Interventions:
 - The average progress towards their individual annual typical growth goal is 70.4%.
 - About 1/3 of the students who receive interventions have already met (or are within just a few points of meeting) their annual typical growth goal for the full year.
- Of our students who received Math Interventions:
 - The average progress towards their individual annual typical growth goal is 65%. 1/3 of the students who receive interventions have already met (or are within just a few points of meeting) their annual typical growth goal for the full year.
- Interventionists will continue using the materials to instruct their students based on the specific needs of students.
- All students will continue to use i-Ready within their classroom in addition to their core instruction.

End of Year & Into Next Year:

- We will complete a diagnostic again at the end of the year. This will allow us to see if students have made at least a year's growth in reading and math, allow us to determine if we are closing gaps for students, and help us to identify students who will likely be in need of additional support right at the start of the school year.
- Students will continue to have access to their individual learning paths during the summer. There is the option for students to continue to use i-Ready throughout the summer if parents would like to have their child use it in order to maintain their academic levels throughout the summer.
- When we purchased i-Ready this year, we were able to purchase it for two years at a reduced rate, so we know that we will be able to continue to have access to these resources for at least next year.
- We are hopeful that in the fall we will continue to have at least one academic interventionist so that we can continue to offer academic interventions which have been so helpful in making progress for students this school year. The interventionists we have currently in the building are paid through ESSER funds and previously were paid through Title I funds, so that is a current need at MCS for next year that you will likely hear more about when it comes time to discuss the budget.

What do our teachers say about i-Ready:

- “It is an important tool that we use to facilitate conversations between the classroom teachers and the interventionists so that the team can target instruction for students in intervention groups. Common goals are worked on in both settings.”
- “Because we have i-Ready, we are seeing students in grade levels who might be missing skills as a result of the inconsistency of instruction (Hybrid, quarantines, waiting on tests) that we wouldn't otherwise notice because it is skills taught at previous grade levels.”
- “We have been able to identify gaps that wouldn't otherwise be apparent without the diagnostic. We are able to work on filling a gap that otherwise would create a broader gap later on.”
- “I find the program useful because if we are finding something while conferring with students, then we can go back to the learning path and identify next steps for goal setting based on their current level in a skill area.”
- “The Instructional Group setting is a useful tool in creating strategy groups in reading, and flex groups in math.”
- “We have been meeting with students and doing data chats. We are explaining their data and progress in child friendly terms and creating some individual student goals, so that students are able to take ownership of their learning.”
- “There are letters available for families to reflect the learning that is taking place in the classroom. They give examples of how to work on specific skills and provide support to parents who want to help their children at home.”
- “The Family Report is a great tool to share progress with families. It is helpful in demonstrating the areas of strength and growth for individual students.”

- “It is a quick way to screen each child on a very broad number of skills, allowing teachers to spend more time teaching students what they need vs spending the time on more time consuming assessments within the classroom.”

6.0 CONSENT AGENDA INTRODUCTION: (5 minutes)

Approve 1-10-22 6th Regular Meeting Minutes

Notification of Support Staff New Hire:

Notification of Retirement:

Notification of Resignations:

- Joanne Thomes-Bicknell, Teacher - PCS
- Ted Tibetts, Teacher - PRHS
- Philip Kimball, Custodian - PCS
- Rene Tufts, Custodian - PCS

Motion by Steve Holbrook to approve Consent Agenda

Seconded by Patrick Irish

Vote: Unanimous

Sub Committee January Minutes - attached

7.0 ACCEPTANCE OF THE FINANCIAL SUMMARIES: (10 minutes)

Motion by Steve Holbrook to accept the Financial Summaries

Seconded by Patrick Irish

Vote: Unanimous

8.0 SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT: (10 minutes)

The current enrollment of Regional School Unit 16 as of February 14, 2022 is:

Elm Street School (250 – down 4)

Minot Consolidated School (234 – no change)

Poland Community School (435 – down 3)

Bruce M. Whittier Middle School (291 – up 2)

Poland Regional High School (485 – down 5)

Total Enrollment 1695 – down 10 from 1/10/22

The entire A-Team has been working to refine the FY 23 RSU 16 School Budget. Amy, Stacie, and I have met with each Administrator and Director individually to discuss the financial needs of each cost center. Last week we met as an A-Team to discuss RSU 16’s Wants and Needs and prioritize them in order to present to the School District Budget Committee. We appear to be on track, and look forward to the discussions and rich conversations that come out of the Budget Committee Meetings.

RC Management is a Maine owned business that operates the McDonalds here in Poland. They have generously donated coupons for all Transportation employees - approximately \$175.

Met with Town Managers for breakfast on February 9th.

9.0 ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT: (10 minutes)

Attended the Kindergarten SuperReaders Celebration in Mrs Beaudoin’s classroom. Students read books to the adults and showed off their reading strategies. Thank you to Dotty Bagley, district nurse, who provided an opportunity for all nursing staff and pooled testing staff to be fit tested for masks on our January 18 Workshop Day. School Counselors week was formally celebrated last week! Carrie Rhoades, Corey McFadden, Hillary Bush, Bonnie Robbins,

Julie Martin, Danielle Higginbotham, Abby Rines, Andrew O'Connell Shevenell are critical in helping students examine their abilities, strengths, interests and talents; for working in a partnership with parents as they encounter the challenges of raising children in today's world; and for focusing on positive ways to enhance students' academic, career and social/emotional development

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. Our schools are using a new tracker designed by Karen Brown, our data specialist, so we can complete the DOE notification if we do have 15% out due to illness.

Used 4 of 4 traditional snow days. RSU 16 will now move to remote learning for inclement weather. The last student day is Friday, June 17. RSU 16 will have available shelf and freezer stable meals that can be preordered in case of a remote day, available on March 1, 2022.

Puberty education has started. Jessica Taylor is teaching our 5th and 6th grade students three lessons in their classroom over the course of the next few months. Our curriculum is on the website. Notification has been sent to families to opt out.

Joe Parent - Has the Maine DOE given permission for schools to use remote days to replace lost school days?

Amy Hediger - Yes

10.0 NEW BUSINESS: (5 minutes)

- **Approve \$33K to secure Sieman's plans and specs for ESS heating upgrade**

Ken Healey: Will pay for this through the ESSER3 grant. This money is to pay for the work they have already done.

Motion by Steve Holbrook to approve \$33K to secure Sieman's plans and specs for ESS heating upgrade

Seconded by Mike Downing

Scott Tiner: Are we approving buying the design?

Ken Healey: We are approving the scope of work and buying the design.

Vote: 13 Yes; 1 No (Jen Tiner) 1 Abstained (Emily Rinchich)

- Approve Timeline for Strategic Plan Update as presented by the Educational Policy Subcommittee at their January 24, 2022 meeting.

Amy Hediger is planning a survey to involve all stakeholders in building a strategic plan.

Motion by Joe Parent to approve the timeline as suggested.

Seconded by Amber Lyman

Vote: 14 - 1 (Steve Holbrook)

- Report of School Board representation at the public municipal town meetings. (Jess Smith)
Request board members participate in public municipal town meetings when possible.
Just take it as a general encouragement. Not many conflicts with school board meetings.

11.0 OLD BUSINESS: (15 minutes)

Review Covid-19 Return to School Plan

Amy provides background around recommendation to the board and data from the district. Pool testing continues to be an important tool; it requires consent. We may be done with COVID, but COVID is not done with us. And sometimes it feels a little like whiplash. Last month the talk was about the need to ensure everyone has the tightest fitting mask possible such as a KN95 and here we are watching around the world as Boards grapple with when to take off the masks. We are only a couple weeks out from a major spike in cases that very nearly overwhelmed us. January 16 - January 22, we had 111 cases in RSU 16. 16% of our cases this year happened that week. Reaffirms 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. Because RSU 16 has a universal, enforced masking policy, any student or staff who is deemed a close contact will not have to be quarantined from school and school activities. Several states have lifted their State mask mandate, Maine does not have a mask mandate. That ended last summer when the state of emergency was lifted by Governor Mills. Now those states find themselves in the position of deciding locally that you have faced since August.

Pooled testing continues to be an important tool in monitoring the health of staff and students and the school community as a whole. Many people with COVID-19, especially children and teens, are less likely to have symptoms, though they can still spread the virus. Regular testing helps find people who have the virus before it can spread to others, whether in the school or community. This benefit is important for children who are not yet eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination, those at risk for experiencing severe COVID-19 illness and those not fully vaccinated. We are preventing outbreaks by testing and catching asymptomatic carriers. It also provides access to a PCR COVID testing which is currently in short supply in the community.

It's important to say that disruptions still exist in school, however we have lessened the disruptions significantly because of the universal masking policy. Wherever we go in the next few weeks or months - masks or masks optional, or talking about next year's budget, please hear this.

Our kids are still experiencing hardships as a result of this pandemic. If we don't keep our eyes and ears open to what is really happening, to what kids and teachers in schools are actually experiencing, we create a disconnect and we make things worse. Academically, the kids are alright because they are in our buildings with teachers 5 days a week. You just heard from Kaitlynn about students closing gaps - wonderful news to celebrate. Emotionally and behaviorally, kids are struggling due to the limited social experiences of the past few years. You commented on ODRs last month or have heard about reactive and proactive steps PRHS is taking to reduce vaping. The urgency is we need to help our kids feel safe and good at school, so they know how to be with others. This has to remain at the forefront, no matter your position on masking, vaccination, or pooled testing.

I think the omicron surge ending is a really good thing and it may mean we are moving to an endemic. An endemic does begin with the word end but it does not mean that. It means the disease has a constant presence that is not impacting our hospitals or fraction of the population infected. Metrics are used, not personal preference. It makes sense for us to begin thinking about pulling back on the requirement for children and staff to wear masks while not adversely impacting our nurses and education consistency for all students.

- The Educational Policy Subcommittee will review off ramp options on February 28 to evaluate, modify and create a recommendation for the March School Board meeting.
- The Educational Policy Subcommittee published their recommendation.
- The School Board holds a Special Board Workshop via Zoom Webinar to listen to feedback from stakeholders regarding off ramps to masking. It is recommended that the first hour is staff only, followed by an hour for families, students, and community members. With every big decision over the past 2 years, Ken and I have found tremendous value in listening before making a decision.
- The School Board will consider the “off ramp” recommendation at the March 14th regularly scheduled meeting.

Emily Rinchich: Why do we not have last week's data for the positive cases?

Amy Hediger: It takes time to receive all information.

Emily Rinchich: The newest information is important to include.

Jess Smith: Is there time to have input from the public prior to the board meeting?

Amy Hediger: Yes, potentially; likely remote Zoom sessions

Ken Healey: So it is a listening opportunity for the board

Mary Martin: Please describe what those would look like.

Amy Hediger: Similar to public comment at board meeting

Joe Parent: Can we rely on Amy and Ken to schedule and make meetings happen? What are the other impacts on students? Social? Emotional? Academic? How do we measure the less tangible stuff?

Amy Hediger: Attendance. Habits of Work. ODRs.

Ken Healey: I could check with colleagues to see how it is being measured elsewhere.

Emily Rinchich: We need to take the qualitative data along with the quantitative data.

Patrick Irish: Last month we saw the Omnicron surge. Nurses have done a great job; I don't want them to have to spend the same time they were spending on contact tracing. Numbers of students pool testing, have tested positive or are vaccinated.

Amy Hediger: We have previously talked about not doing different things with our schools because the kids are intermingling.

Emily Rinchich: (Patrick) I think you have a good point. 83.3% of our students are pool testing, have tested positive or are vaccinated. There may be an opportunity for a test to stay.

Amy Hediger: That is part of our test to stay off-ramp plan. We can't use the supplies we have for pooled testing for tests to stay.

Mary Martin: If parents choose to have their children continue to mask, they should be able to do that.

Motion by Ed Rabasco to keep masking in place until the next Bourd meeting, March 14, 2022.

Seconded by Mike Downing

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

Vote: 590-415 Motion Passes

12.0 POLICIES: (10 minutes)

Approve 1st & Final Reading of below policies as presented by the Educational Policy Subcommittee at their January 24th meeting.

- BCC - Nepotism
- BDE - School Board Standing Committees
- BEDF - Voting Method
- BEDFA - Abstentions
- BG - School Board Policy & Procedure

Motion by Joe Parent to Approve 1st & Final Reading of below policies as presented by the Educational Policy Subcommittee at their January 24th meeting.

Seconded by Mike Downing

Vote: 14-1 (Scott Tiner)

13.0 REPORTS TO THE SCHOOL BOARD:

Student Representatives: (5 minutes)

- Planning prom for late April, early May - details to be worked out
- Winter Carnival after break - working out the details; won't be completely normal.

Report of the School Board Chair: (5 minutes)

- Establish a Superintendent Evaluation Committee
Emily Rinchich, Scott Tiner, Joe Parent, Mike Downing, Mary Martin volunteered.

- Attendance
Attendance has been excellent; remote members need to sign policies.
- Board Goals
Attendance at municipal meetings, strategic plan
The Budget process is starting in March. Representatives are in place from towns and the school board. First full day is March 15th.

14.0 ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION:

A Team Reports
Mary highlighted unified basketball.

15.0 COMMUNICATIONS:

16.0 HANDOUTS:

17.0 EXECUTIVE SESSION:

18.0 REMINDERS:

19.0 ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Steve Holbrook to adjourn at 8:26 p.m.

Seconded by Patrick Irish

Vote: Unanimous

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth J. Healey