

**Merrill Area Public Schools
Regular Board of Education Meeting
January 27, 2021 – Minutes**

The meeting was called to order by President Kevin Blake at 5:30 PM in the Merrill High School Auditorium and also by Google Hangout virtual meeting.

Board members present: Nubs Ashbeck, Ron Liberty, Kendra Osness, Jon Smith, Brett Woller, Linda Yingling, Maria Volpe and Kevin Blake (a quorum was present). Board members absent: Jeremy Ratliff. Others Present: Dr. John Sample, Superintendent; Brian Dasher, Director of Finance; Eddie Then, Director of Human Resources; Glenda Oginski, Director of Curriculum & Instruction; Karen Baker, Director of Special Education & Pupil Services; Keshia Mashak, Director of Technology Integration; Dale Bergman, Director of Buildings & Grounds; Jill Seaman, Director of Head Start/4K/Early Childhood; Shannon Murray, High School Principal; Ryan Martinovici, Middle School Principal; Mark Seaman, Middle School Associate Principal; Amy Stutzriem, Elementary Principal; Heather Skutak, Elementary Principal; Student Representatives Levi Black and Amelia Skoviera, approximately 8 people from the staff and public; and, Tammy Woller, Recorder. Others present remotely: Laura Krause-Zastrow, Director of Food Service; Megan Kautzer, High School Associate; Dr. Dawn Nonn, Teaching Principal; and, approximately 11 people from the staff and public.

President Blake led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ratliff joined the meeting virtually at 5:32 p.m.

During the Public Comment, the following individuals spoke: Greg Mattlin, Director of Business Organic Life, regarding K-12 Food Service; and, Christine Vorpapel regarding the general perception in MAPS to the Merrill Community.

During recognition, the following were recognized: The Reading Buddies Program for their dedication to supporting literacy at PRSYL. On December 10, Kent and Sue Johnson delivered the final batch of mittens from our wonderful Reading Buddies' Knitting crew made for the students at Pine River School for Young Learners. After 24 years of providing both the mittens; as well as books, it would be appropriate for this community organization to be recognized. For 23 years, the Reading Buddies team has been coming to read books and do an activity with students at PRSYL and Parkside Preschool. During the Spring of 2019, COVID brought these visits to a stop a little earlier than planned. This school year, the students are still being read the books by their classroom teachers and sent home with them. However, after this year, this wonderful team of Reading Buddies will no longer be able to continue. The MAPS district has the greatest appreciation for all of the volunteers and especially the chairpersons, Sue Johnson and Joni Hahn for sustaining it for so many years. The impact each of these volunteers has had for the love of reading for our students is immeasurable. We also would like to give special appreciation to the mitten knitters. Every year, a pair of carefully knitted mittens is gifted to each child from this gracious and good-hearted group (Shirley Pfister, Sharon White, and Judy Grefe). Mike and Jean Ravn were recognized. During this pandemic, many families had very limited funds for the purchase of Christmas gifts. The Sawmill spearheaded a community project that would raise funds to gift children with pajamas, a book, a blanket and a toothbrushing kit. Other generous organizations helped as well. These two have helped to organize, wrap and distribute the donations for the "Oh Cozy Night" project. Their basement became Santa's workshop for about a month. Both Mike and Jean have been involved in many local

organizations that address the challenges in our community. They are very deserving of this recognition. The final tally of the packages was about 200. This means 200 children in the MAPS district have the opportunity to have a wonderful bedtime routine. Also recognized was Meilin Chen for her incredible mask donations. She has made over 160 masks for staff and students at Maple Grove. These high quality masks are tailored to fit the youngest of faces to our adults with a snug fit that prevents gaps. Having remained open since September 1st, Maple Grove says they are grateful to have a regular supply of high quality masks available to keep their building safe.

Ratliff left the meeting at 5:39 p.m.

Amelia Skoviera and Levi Black, Student Board of Education Representatives, updated the Board on activities at the Merrill High School, including: winter sports drawing to a close; spring sports pushed back to late April and May; musical practice began this week for the *Little Shop of Horrors*; scholarship season for seniors; start of the new semester; specifics of Prom, Senior Awards Night and Graduation still up in the air; and, all Merrill Schools are open - many students are very happy about that.

Administrative reports were shared with the Board including: Wisconsin School Report Cards; PRSYL monthly data; SPED/Pupil Services update; Second Friday in January enrollment data; monthly budget update; food participation update; Human Resources report; Technology Update; and, the Superintendent's Report.

Committee reports were shared with the Board from the Finance/HR Committee; Facilities Committee; and, the Curriculum/ Technology/Pupil Services Committee.

MOTION by Volpe, second by Liberty to approve the 2021-2022 MAPS Head Start Five-Year Strategic Goals. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Liberty, second by Woller to approve the Head Start Cost Allocation Plan. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Smith, second by Ashbeck to approve the 2021 MAPS Head Start Self Assessment. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Woller, second by Liberty to approve the Head Start Transportation Waiver for 2021-2022. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Volpe, second by Osness to approve the limited continuance of leave provisions under the FFCRA and EFMLA through June 30, 2021 for all employees who have unused time as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Volpe, second by Woller to approve Marshfield Clinic as the Athletic Training Service provider for Merrill Area Public Schools, starting January 1, 2021. Motion carried unanimously.

The preliminary 2021-2022 School Calendar was presented to the Board.

Ratliff joined the meeting virtually at 6:14 p.m.

MOTION by Liberty, second by Ashbeck to approve the purchase of Option 2 from Minnesota/Wisconsin Playgrounds. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Ashbeck, second by Woller to adopt the Safe Routes to Schools resolution as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Volpe, second by Osness to approve adding three teacher work days for planning (February 8, February 22, and March 8) to the existing 2020-2021 School Calendar. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Volpe, second by Liberty to approve the classroom capacity for open enrollment purposes and to not deny students with disabilities based on space, for the 2021-2022 open enrollment period. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Woller, second by Ashbeck to approve the Merrill High School Course Descriptions for the 2021-2022 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Smith, second by Ratliff to approve the extension of the MAPS requirement that all students and staff wear a face covering per the guidelines established by the Governor's orders through June 30, 2021 (regardless if the Governor's order is upheld or not). Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Smith, second by Liberty to have a review of this requirement (statewide face covering mandate) at the May Regular Board Meeting. Motion carried with Ratliff abstaining.

Per Bylaw 0131.1, the Board was informed of technical changes made to Policies 5113, 6450, 8141 and 8442.

MOTION by Ashbeck, second by Ratliff to approve the donation of funds from ARC Lincoln County (Walter Ristau Fund) valued at \$3,000.00 for providing PRSYL children/early childhood with a diagnosis of DD/ID and/or to be used to provide parent education/training for parents of children with DD/ID. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board discussed the building configuration timeline.

President Blake asked if anyone wanted anything pulled from the consent agenda, hearing none, he called for a motion. MOTION by Volpe, second by Osness to approve the consent agenda items a through e, which includes the second readings and approval of Policies 3430.01/4430.01 Family & Medical Leave of Absence ("FMLA"); Policy 5112 Entrance Age and Policy 6325 Procurement - Federal Grants/Funds; minutes of the December 16, 2020 meeting; claims, vouchers and receipts totaling \$3,602,128.60; the personnel report [as presented](#); and, donations totaling \$10,258.12. Motion carried unanimously.

"Items for Future Meetings and Possible Action to Approve the Future Discussions Thereof" was shared with the Board.

Radio Schedule: Thursday, January 28, 2021 at 8:15 AM @ Bluejay 730 Radio Station.

Future Meetings

- Finance/HR Committee Meeting: Wednesday, February 3, 2021 @ 4:30 p.m. in the

Board Room

- Maple Grove Governance Board Meeting: Monday, February 8, 2021 @ 6 p.m. at Maple Grove Charter School
- Head Start Policy Council: Tuesday, February 9, 2021 @5:30 p.m. by virtual meeting
- Curriculum/Technology/Pupil Services Committee Meeting: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 @ 4:30 p.m. in the Board Room
- Regular Board Meeting: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 @ 5:30 p.m. in the MHS Auditorium

President Blake called for a MOTION to adjourn into executive (closed) session pursuant to Wisconsin Statutes under Sections 19.85(1) (c) considering employment, promotion, compensation, or performance evaluation data of any public employee over which the governmental body has jurisdiction or exercises responsibility (e) deliberating or negotiation of the purchase of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session; (f) considering financial, medical, social or personal histories or disciplinary data of specific persons, preliminary consideration of specific personnel problems or the investigation of charges against specific persons except where par. (b) applies which, if discussed in public, would be likely to have a substantial adverse effect upon the reputation of any person referred to in such histories or data, or involved in such problems or investigations; (g) conferring with legal counsel for the governmental body who is rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to litigation in which it is likely to become involved; and, 118.125 for the purpose of considering student Early College Credit and Start Now applications that may involve discussions of confidential student records, and to discuss other matters involving student records and personal histories that, if discussed in public, would likely have a substantial adverse effect on the reputations of the persons discussed. The purpose of the closed session is to consider the negotiation strategies/options available to the Board as it considers the owner petitions for detachment related to property in the Town of Hamburg (and Maple Grove School) from Merrill Area Public School District to Athens School District and to confer with legal counsel who is rendering legal advice regarding the potential/likelihood of litigation associated with doing so, and take possible action related to the same; to discuss a support staff member's request for a temporary leave of absence; ~~and~~, consideration of (and possible action regarding) applications for participation in the Early College Credit and Start College Now programs; discuss the approval of the employment contracts of administrators who have accepted the material changes to the contract; potential discussion of preliminary consideration of nonrenewal of employment contracts of administrators who have not accepted the material changes to the contract for the purpose of formally issuing the contracts with the material changes to the administrators; review a prior approval of vacation allowance related to an individual administrator contract; and, discuss revisions to the superintendent's contract for the upcoming contract cycle. MOTION by Volpe, second by Woller to adjourn into executive session. Motion carried on a roll call vote.

6:58 p.m. - 12 minute break to get organized.

Ratliff did not join the closed session.

MOTION by Yingling, second by Smith to adjourn closed session and reconvene into open session. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Liberty, second by Woller to accept the leave of absence for Heather Klimek without a guarantee of a right to return to her aide position due to unknowns surrounding the District's consolidation activities for the upcoming school year. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Osness, second by Woller to approve the alternative Early College Credit courses as presented. This approval of alternative Early College Credit and Start College Now courses is a non-precedent setting action and is due to the impacts of the Covid pandemic during the 2020-2021 school year. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Volpe, second by Osness to accept the signed contracts for select administrators as shown in the attached Exhibit (A) with the understanding that any applicable liquidated damages are hereby waived for (1) administrators with contracts of less than 260 work days if they give written notice to Dr. Sample before June 15, 2021, of their termination of employment with the District effective June 30, 2021, and (2) administrators with contracts of 260 work days if they give written notice to Dr. Sample before June 1, 2021, of their termination of employment with the District effective June 30, 2021. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Volpe, second by Osness to approve one (1) week of vacation for each year of the biennium for administrator John Miller due to additional contract days. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Volpe, second by Osness to approve the process adjustments specific to the Superintendent's contract as presented in Exhibit (B) for the 2021-23 administrative contract cycle. Motion carried unanimously.

MOTION by Osness, second by Smith to adjourn at 9:24 p.m.

Nubs Ashbeck
Clerk

Tammy Woller
Recorder