

# Merrill Area Public Schools

*MAPS Mission Statement: Merrill Area Public Schools, in partnership with the Merrill Community and our families, will empower students to be lifelong learners, responsible citizens, and productive community members.*

## Finance/Human Resources Committee Meeting

Wednesday - December 1, 2021

4:30 PM

BOARD ROOM

**MAPS Central Administration Building**

(1111 N. Sales Street, Merrill, Wisconsin)

## Minutes

- I. Call to Order and Roll Call – Kevin Blake, Ron Liberty, Kendra Osness, Dr. John Sample, Eddie Then and Brett Woller

Ron Liberty was absent; Linda Yingling filled in for Ron. It was clarified for future reference that people who do not regularly attend the meeting, but present material or comment would be noted appropriately in the section they speak.

- II. Approval of [November 3, 2021 Finance/Human Resources Committee Minutes](#)

Kevin Blake asked if there were any questions or clarifications needed. None.

1st: Brett Woller

2nd: Kendra Osness

Motion: Motion to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2021 Finance/Human Resources Committee meeting.

Vote: Unanimous

- III. Human Resources

- A. Placement on Compensation Plan for Those not Historically Placed

**Please see the attached [topic summary sheet](#) from Edward Then.**

**Administration recommends a motion to approve the placement of three current employees onto Grade 8 level of the Support Staff Compensation Plan with retroactive payment starting July 1, 2021 and to have them placed on the personnel report for the December 15, 2021 regular board meeting.**

The committee inquired how many people in the district were not currently on some form of compensation plan. Mr. Then informed them that the number was minimal and that future changes to the support staff compensation plan would allow for the creation of and placement onto newly created lanes, hopefully by the end of the current fiscal year. The Aquatics Director position was one example that was not placed on a compensation plan, but could be if we did some research and placed the position in a range of wages supported by data (similar to the current plan). The committee wanted to confirm that there would still be a compensation review coming soon; the timeline is likely to be February or March.

1st: Kendra Osness

2nd: Brett Woller

Motion: Administration recommends a motion to approve the placement of three current employees onto Grade 8 level of the Support Staff Compensation Plan with retroactive payment starting July 1, 2021 and to have them placed on the personnel report for the December 15, 2021 regular board meeting.

Vote: Unanimous

B. Review of Hiring Policies for FY22 (First Read)

**Please see the attached [topic summary sheet](#) from Edward Then.**

The committee discussed some of the items presented in the topic summary sheet. One question in the discussion was about the potential to pay for liquidated damages of prospective hires. There was discussion about what it could potentially cost. Mr. Then shared that we could confirm through contracts what amounts would/could be offered and that a clear budget could be set for that specific purpose so as to not get carried away. It was also made clear that would not be a hiring bonus; it would be a liquidated damages reimbursement that has to be paid to the new hire; paying it directly to the district is not compliant with IRS taxation laws. This will be shared through the monthly board report, reviewed with the building administrators, and brought back for a formal recommendation. There was also discussion completing stay interviews with staff. No motion; it will be included in the monthly business services update to the Board for December.

C. First Read of FY23 Teacher Contract (First Read)

**Please review the notes on the [draft contract](#) and be prepared to discuss.**

The committee suggested including this in the monthly update and getting final revisions to bring to the HR/Finance committee in January. Issues around the hiring of teachers who are working through the “license with stipulations” process was discussed. The current contract makes it difficult to hold those individuals accountable. There was also data being collected regarding what other districts have for liquidated damages and whether or not decreases may be appropriate in the current employment market. This will be brought back to the committee for a recommendation in January but there is no immediate timeline requirement.

D. Review Administrator Contract Deadlines for Layoff Protocol

**Discussion Only.**

Mr. then reminded the Board that it is not a contract year but the Board has the option to reduce administrative positions if it so chooses based on contract changes from the prior year. The timeline would require 60 days notice prior to any action. It is unlikely that this would be an administrative reduction given that there was a reduction of four (4) administrative positions last year; two at central office and two at the building level. Several board members clarified that they would like a recommendation brought forth based on reasonable options and wanted to make sure that all options are explored. Mr. Then stated that this would be done.

E. Personnel Report - Standing Agenda Item

**This will be added/updated the day of the Finance/HR Committee to be most current. Please see the [attached personnel report](#).**

IV. Finance

A. 2022-2027 Bridges Virtual Academy Contract (FY23, FY24, FY25, FY26, FY27)

**A [topic summary sheet](#) from Edward Then will be shared as soon as it becomes available. Attorney review in progress.**

**Administration recommends a motion to approve the revised BVA contract as presented for a five year cycle commencing July 1, 2022.**

The committee was updated on the current status of the BVA contract; since it is not finalized, it is still up for potential negotiation so it could not be presented in open session. The recommended contract will be shared with all board members by the end of the week and input from board members can be sent to HR/Finance Committee members, Dr. Sample, or myself prior to the next committee meeting. Overall, assuming that the Board was happy with the contract, administration would be recommending the renewal of the contract as it is financially beneficial to MAPS and resident students who participate. The committee acknowledged that if there was a requirement of a 1st and 2nd read that it would be placed on the December board agenda, otherwise it will be approved after a 1st read in January.

B. Review of Board Budget Priorities for FY22

**Please see the attached [topic summary sheet](#) from Edward Then. This topic summary sheet could change if survey participation increases.**

**Administration recommends a motion to approve the Board budget priorities for planning related to the 2022-23 fiscal year as presented.**

The committee reviewed the data from 6 of 8 board members and realized they valued input from others. Dr. Sample stated that the community's priorities are thoroughly captured from the referendum survey. The committee wanted additional input and decided that they wanted administration's input on the prioritization. Mr. Then stated that the survey would be shared with them, discussed at next week's principal meeting, and then shared out at the January HR/Finance Committee meeting. Staff input was also included in the referendum survey. Mr. Then also emphasized the critical importance of having a set of priorities that guided the budget process; without it, prior work regarding the GFOA and Odden would not be useful and it is important that we maintain that process of budgeting based on priorities. It is also a "best practice" in budgeting. The topic summary would be shared with the Board through the monthly business services update and further discussion will happen in January. The committee inquired whether or not approval was necessary. Mr. Then confirmed that it is not legally required, but it is an essential part of the budget process.

V. Technology (Operations)

A. Technology Update

Mr. Then informed the committee about upcoming i-Pad renewals, the current insurance program for i-Pads and some of the potential issues that would be associated with a failed referendum. He also informed the committee that the portion of the E-rate project that was related to UPS' (uninterruptible power supplies) was completed the day before Thanksgiving; kudos to Andrew Caylor for getting the project done with the vendor all in one day and for having us up and running without interruption. There is still switch work to be completed as part of that E-Rate project but some of the product still has not been received and it is likely to occur closer to the spring and/or over spring break.

VI. Standing Agenda Item For Policy Review by Finance/HR Committee

**Please see the attached main index for Committee review of policies. At this time, the Finance/HR Committee is up to date with their review.**

VII. Items for Next Meeting

None.

VIII. Adjournment

1st: Brett

2nd: Kendra  
Motion to adjourn carried (6:02 p.m.).