

SANBORN REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

March 2, 2016

A regular meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board was held on Wednesday March 2, 2016. The meeting was called to order at 7:39 PM by Jon LeBlanc, School Board Chair, in the Library at Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston, NH. The following were recorded as present:

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS: Janice Bennett
 Jon LeBlanc, Chair
 Corey Masson
 Wendy Miller
 Dustin Ramey
 Nancy Ross

ADMINISTRATORS: Dr. Brian J. Blake, Superintendent
 Carol Coppola, Business Manager
 Jodi Gutterman, Student Services Director

EXCUSED: Roberto Miller
 Monique Ricard, Student Council Rep

The meeting began with a salute to the flag.

REVIEW AGENDA

MINUTES

Ms. Ross made a motion to accept the February 17, 2016, public meeting minutes. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion. All in favor. Ms. Ross made a motion to accept the February 17, 2016, non-public meeting minutes. Ms. Bennett seconded the motion. Five in favor; one abstained – Mr. Masson.

MANIFEST

The following manifest was signed by the School Board: Accounts Payable #22-\$1,095,855.13; Payroll #18 - \$797,609.23

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT Dr. Blake reported that the entire 11th grade participated in the SAT exam. Mr. Brian Stack, SRHS Principal, reported that the day was close to “flawless”. Students and grades 9 and 10 had classes as usual. Activities for the seniors included: resume writing, enrichment activities, omelet making, yoga, kickboxing and a job fair. Mr. Stack reported that it was a “very cool” day for the seniors. He said over 100 staff members were involved in organizing the day’s events. Ms. Michelle Catena, Director of Guidance, said the students did a phenomenal job – they took the test very seriously. Mr. Stack said the icing on the cake for him

was when he received a picture of an “enormous gym” in another district set up with tables and chairs. He said it was not personalized and that it’s not the way they do things here. Mr. Stack said it was administered like a regular SAT; students completed the essay part so that their scores could be used.

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT none

SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS none

SCHOOL BOARD CHAIRPERSON’S COMMENT Mr. LeBlanc apologized to the members in the audience for the late start to the meeting. The SB had met in a non-public meeting prior to the SB meeting. Mr. LeBlanc thanked the voters of Kingston for electing him to the SB and read from a prepared speech. Tonight is Mr. LeBlanc’s last SB meeting.

“I would like to start this evening’s comment first by saying thank you. I would like to thank the voters of Kingston for allowing me to represent them for the past 3 years. This position has been rewarding and enlightening most of the time and at other times, it has been stressful. Being on this board has made me appreciate just how much dedication, energy, compassion and knowledge that it takes to run a school district. This district is loaded with people who exhibit those traits - from the School board members, though the administration, through the teachers and para-professionals, the technology, custodial, maintenance and other support groups. We have a great team at Sanborn. I would like to thank the members of the school board for all the work that they do. This is a thankless position and until you have sat in these seats, you do not appreciate what it takes to do so successfully.

Could this district be better? Absolutely. Anyone who thinks they are perfect hasn’t looked hard enough in the mirror to see the rough edges that exist. The more important question is, **ARE** we getting better? Same answer - Absolutely. Sanborn has been on a steady up-swing and continuing to change and improve how our schools impart knowledge to our students. Many of these changes do not show immediate gains and some lack quantifiable measurements to show they are working. In some cases, the only metrics we have do not show the significant improvements that an impatient public wants to see. But from these seats here, over the past 3 years, witnessing the changes that have been undertaken, and having 4 children in this school district who are first hand witnesses, Sanborn is improving.

Since I’ve been board chair for about 1 year now, I’d like to review some of the larger items that have occurred in the past year which the school board had to deal with, made a decision on or just a nice item to discuss, a “year in review” if you will:

- We had the middle school roof collapse due to unprecedented snow and subsequently the district needed to find a home for the 8th grade students – High School anyone? In relation to this we had to work with FEMA and our insurance company, work with engineers to prepare a statement of work, select the lowest cost most reasonable bidder. Though it took longer than initially hoped for, everyone is back in the proper space now.

- The seacoast charter school lease expired and was not renewed at the old seminary campus. Many parents of students at SCS were not happy with the board for this decision but the building they were in had too many life-safety issues and too many concerns. Subsequent to the campus being vacated, the school board has approved changes that will begin to break the utilities at the campus apart and save on heating costs.
- The school board and administration had to deal with a default budget for FY16. Several layoffs were approved in order to meet the fiscal constraints of the default budget. These layoffs were an unfortunate reality of a default budget that could not accommodate the priorities of the district.
- The public voted on and approved a 2 year support staff contract in March of 2015 which had minor increases and switched the support staff to a new, lower cost medical plan.
- Over the course of the year, and as part of a school board goal, the administration designed, developed and delivered the "District Report Card" providing vital statistics and insight into SRSD for the public to consume.
- The district successfully implemented the first PACE assessment as part of 4 schools in New Hampshire chosen to participate in this pilot program aimed at reducing the amount of standardized testing our students go through without removing accountability measures. Our student's normal school day was not interrupted to participate in this pilot, it was just part of the normal assessments we do.
- I would be remiss if I didn't mention that the district was nominated and received the Lawrence W. O'Toole grant award for their approaches to student centered learning.
- The school board gave its budget guidance to the administration to focus on four areas: 1) Invest in student enrichment; 2) Invest in Capital Improvements; 3) Slow the salaries and benefits and 4) Drug Awareness and Curriculum Program. Unfortunately, with the impending cuts to the budget, several of these board focus areas are in jeopardy.
- Most recently the school board voted to extend Dr. Blake's contract by 2 years so that he will have 3 years left on his contract. Some in social media sites have questioned the timing of this in relation to the superintendent's survey which hadn't completed when this vote occurred. I would like the public to understand that the survey is used to provide Dr. Blake feedback on areas he can improve and the school board feedback on both perception as well as reality of his performance. The survey is not intended to be used to determine the status of Dr. Blake's contract. The School Board, this elected body, determines whether to renew, extend or terminate the superintendent's contract. This School Board has worked with Dr. Blake throughout the entire year and understands the talent he brings to this district. The decision to extend his contract was made based on his performance leading the district the past few years as well as his working relationship with the school board.

While our decisions have not always been perfect and our approach has not always been smooth, I stand behind all of what this board has accomplished while I have been a member of it. I also support the direction this district is heading in and truly hope that lack of funding doesn't limit the district's potential to achieve success. In closing, I wish the members of the

next seating of this board success in navigating the turbulent local political waters we now have. No matter how rough the water gets, I hope that you will never forget that you are here because it is all about the children which in reality means it is all about the future.

PUBLIC COMMENT Ms. Jenna Alvaredo of Newton thanked Ms. Miller for her time on the SB. She said that Ms. Miller has done amazing things for the Town of Newton and organized the End 68 Hours of Hunger program in the District. Mr. Evan Czyzowski, HS English, thanked the SB for supporting the teacher contract. He said he was sad about the budget cuts that were made. He said there's been a lot of discussion about class size. He said that there have been studies on class size which indicate that increased class size has a negative effect on student learning. He said that as a person who is in the classroom everyday he urged the SB not to cut positions – he said this is the wrong way to go. Ms. Cheryl Giordano said she has two children in the District. She said her daughter finds it hard enough in a class of 15, and that 30 students to a class could definitely have a negative effect on her.

Ms. Pam Brown of Newton said there is no evidence showing that increased class size has a negative effect. She said that going from 15 to 20 students was not a negative. She also said the teachers' union encourages more teachers because it is more money that the union receives. Ms. Cindy Quintal of Hampstead (Sanborn employee) said that increasing class size from 15 to 25 would have a great impact on the kids. She said she's seen kids in enrichment classes covering their ears because the classroom is so loud. Ms. Quintal mentioned the accomplishments of the District in the past year – Superintendent of the Year; receipt of the \$100,000.00 Nellie Mae award and the PACE exams. Ms. Tammy Gluck of Newton said she wanted to echo Mr. Czyzowski's comments on class size. She said anybody could take data and manipulate the data to say anything you wanted. She said she does not support larger class sizes. She does support the teachers. She urged the SB to consider other cuts before cutting teachers. She said she moved to Newton because she wanted smaller class sizes, and asked the SB to do what's best for the kids. 25-30 kids to a class is not best for children.

SCHOOL BOARD COMMENT Ms. Nancy Ross said that as she has reflected over the last few months she feels a bit disillusioned and disgusted. She spoke of the \$1 million budget cut made at the Deliberative Session. She also spoke about the presenter of the slide show including personal information concerning the Superintendent that was not appropriate. She said the presenter's comments were deliberate, calculated and mean spirited and that these comments had no relevance to the topic. Ms. Ross said she wasn't sure why the presenter wanted to portray the Superintendent in a negative light – he was chosen NH Superintendent of the Year for 2016. Ms. Ross stated it is true that the SB members spend two nights per month for ten months attending SB meetings and that you can count the members of the public who attend on one hand. She said that it is true that every week from November through January the budget committee meets and develops a budget based on administration's recommendations.

She said it is also true that once a year, the public attends the Deliberative Session, and that some of the attendees think they know what's better for the District and try to reduce the recommended budget. It's also true that at this year's Deliberative Session, the budget was cut by more than \$1 million. She said it was also true that the recommended cuts, as presented, were discussed at multiple BC meetings. She said that the Administration was asked to justify retaining line items and that Administration sufficiently justified the items. Ms. Ross said that over 60% of Sanborn teachers have their Masters Degree, yet the average salary is \$50,000.00 which she said is well below the state average. Ms. Ross said it is true that the SB has been accused of hiding things and not being transparent and wonders what the basis is when there is a lack of attendance at the SB meetings. Ms. Ross said it is true that there is a lot of misinformation out there, but said that a lie does not become truth by reason of propagation, nor does the truth become lies because nobody sees it.

Mr. Ramey thanked Mr. LeBlanc for his service to the School Board. He said that Mr. LeBlanc has been a wonderful leader to the Board and that he enjoyed working with him. Dr. Blake said he echoed Mr. Ramey's comments, and said it was a pleasure working with Mr. LeBlanc the past three years. Dr. Blake thanked Ms. Miller for her service to the Board and her questioning and looking for answers. He thanked Ms. Miller for her involvement with the End 68 Hours of Hunger and for bringing the program to the District.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS none

NEW BUSINESS

c. Budget Reductions Dr. Blake reviewed a prepared hand-out "Potential Budget Reductions" and a short narration with each cut. The first set of reductions reflect the cuts needed to meet the Default Budget. Cuts include: three teaching positions (HS Business; 1 Memorial; 1 District Technology Integrator); cuts in Administrative and Non-union Health Insurance; cuts in the CIP which include: flooring at the MS; New Athletics at the MS and HS; windows at the MS; resurfacing the tennis courts at the HS; a new District Truck; the demolition of the old headmaster house and barn; and a metal maintenance building. Cuts in furniture include: file cabinets; student desks at Bakie, Memorial and the MS; district wide furniture replacements; PE and athletic equipment; drama supplies; science stools; district wide library book replacements; technology equipment and one SAU clerical position cut from full time to part time.

Additional reductions to meet the proposed voted budget: Two teachers **each** at Memorial and Bakie: Enrichment teacher and Technology Coordinator – Add one Memorial and Bakie teacher (STEAM); Reduce one HS French teacher. Add 1 HS support Staff (online coursework); reduce/eliminate B team sports. Dr. Blake said it is not a matter of taking the total amount of students and dividing by 25 (to increase class size). He said it does not work like that. He also took exception to the comment that there is no negative effect to class size according to a

Chinese study. He said in China they don't educate all children— there is no Special Ed in China. He said we're educating every kid, every day. Dr. Blake said the flooring at the MS has been put off and that the cost of abatement will continue to go up. He said the loss of the B teams is a loss of opportunity for students and that there is not a lot for kids to do after school. He said that there have been no sports introduced in Sanborn in 16 years. He said that the addition of the football program was approved in a warrant article and that ice hockey is a club sport – funded by the team, not the District. Mr. Masson asked for clarification – the proposed cuts include approximately \$500,000.00 in salary cuts. Yes. Mr. LeBlanc asked about a 5th grade teacher being cut at Bakie. No, that position will remain. Ms. Miller said she refuses to cut teachers, suggested cutting office staff. “We need to keep our teachers.” Ms. Bennett asked if cutting class options jeopardizes meeting our contract with Fremont. Dr. Blake said not this year, but it will in the future if the trend continues. Ms. Bennett asked if budget cuts = tuition reduction. Yes. Mr. LeBlanc asked about the \$80,000.00 reduction in technology. Ms. Coppola responded that 50 ChromeBooks have been cut and technology equipment was cut by \$30,000.00. Mr. Ramey asked about reductions in the CIP and deferring maintenance costs. Ms. Coppola responded that projects relating to life safety will remain in the budget: cameras, radios, repeater system and the redesign of the HS front office. Two swing sets, one at Bakie and one at Memorial are deemed to be unsafe and are on the list of replacements. Mr. Masson said this was the type of information he's been asking for. He said the SB should have been made aware of the cuts. (It should be noted, the items listed are a preliminary list.) Dr. Blake responded that once the budget number is known, the District will prioritize where to spend money. He said it does not make sense to make five different budgets based on different scenarios. Dr. Blake said that the budget is prepared based on the needs of the district. Mr. Ramey noted that approximately \$217,000.00 was cut from CIP projects.

Dr. Blake said the Student Assistance Counselor position was not cut. He said that based on a youth risk survey and the current opioid and alcohol problem, the position would not be cut. Dr. Blake reported that he met with the SREA President, as per SB policy, to discuss how the staff will be affected by these cuts. He said the teachers have the opportunity to go before the SB with suggestions for cuts. He said no action was required on tonight's discussion about the cuts. More will be known after next week's vote. Mr. Masson thanked Dr. Blake for going through this process. He asked how many HS students will be affected by the cuts at the HS? Approximately 375 students. Mr. Masson asked what the impact would be at the elementary schools? First grade classrooms will have 19-20 students each. Still below the SB policy.

a. Newton Cable Broadcast Dr. Blake said that the Newton Cable station is interested in broadcasting SB meetings. According to the tech folks, the meeting will be placed on a thumb drive and given to Newton cable for broadcasting. Mr. LeBlanc said he thought that was a great idea. Ms. Bennett made a motion to agree/supply the Newton Cable with the recorded SB

meetings for broadcast on the Newton Cable station. Ms. Ross seconded the motion. All in favor.

b. Headmaster House/Barn Ms. Coppola said the Mr. Riley, Director of Facilities, was approached by Custom Barns, LLC, of Hookset to remove the structures from the old Seminary campus. Custom Barns will harvest the wood and granite from the building. The total cost to the district to remove the structures would be approximately \$3,500.00 vs. \$20,000.00 that was proposed to remove the structures. Mr. Ramey made a motion to accept the February 11, 2016, proposal for removal of the headmaster house and barn. Ms. Ross seconded the motion. All in favor. Mr. LeBlanc stated it seemed like a cost effective way to remove the buildings.

d. School Board Goals Mr. LeBlanc read each of the 2015-2016 School Board Goals. Goal #1, Seminary Campus Plan: The district did not renew the Seacoast Charter School lease due to the life safety issues with the building. The utilities at the campus have been separated. Mr. Ramey reported that the seminary was approved for a charrette by Plan NH. He has met with several people in the program. Ms. Bennett said the seminary is a very dense issue and she thanked Mr. Ramey for shepherding the plan. She said figuring out the best way to handle the property is not simple. She said she thinks the district is on the right track and thanked Mr. Ramey for his patience.

Goal #2, Community Partnership: Mr. LeBlanc stated that Dr. Blake has been writing articles for the Carriage Towne, as well as himself. He said that the SB participates in social media and that SB members attend the school events. He stated he does not know that the board has engaged with the PTA/PTOs. He said there have been 2-3 round table discussions. Dr. Blake reminded the SB that the goals are for the 2015-2016 school year and the SB will continue working towards the goals.

Goal #3, Measurement of Academic Progress: Mr. LeBlanc reported that the District report card was developed and is online. Ms. Bennett said that this SB knows more about competency based education than any other district in NH. Ms. Bennett said she thinks it should be mandatory for SB members to attend the summer design studio that the district hosts. Dr. Blake said that Patrick Rooney from the U.S. Department of Education visited Memorial today and visited with students and staff.

Goal #4, Fiscal Responsibility: Mr. LeBlanc said the negotiations committee had reviewed salaries in other districts when negotiating with the SREA. He said that health insurance costs were also decreased. Mr. Masson stated that the SB goals may have been achieved, but they were not achieved as a team. Mr. LeBlanc stated that the point was taken. Ms. Bennett said she thought the negotiation committee made good progress of slowing the growth of salaries and benefits.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED none

WRITTEN INFORMATION Invitation to the Memorial School kindergarten winter performance March 3rd at 6:30 PM.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Cheryl Gannon said she would like to echo the sentiments of the board members on Mr. LeBlanc's leadership on the SB (one of the toughest years she's seen) and wished him the best. Ms. Gannon said she appreciated that the SB goals were reviewed and would like to see them reviewed more often. She thought it was good that the district was able to save \$16,000.00 to remove the buildings on the old seminary campus. She also thought it was good that the public will be able to see the SB meetings on Newton Cable and maybe the public would have a better understanding of what goes on. She suggested the district install security cameras at two schools this year and two schools next year for a potential savings of \$90,000.00 and retain one teaching position. She asked if the professional contract passed if the \$400,000.00 would have to be found in the budget? No, the contract is a separate warrant article.

Ms. Pam Brown said that the NKTA did not recommend the cuts in staffing discussed tonight. NTKA proposed cutting four teachers at the HS, one PE teacher and add one teacher at Bakie. She said it looked like there were more cuts in teachers than the NKTA recommended. She said there was \$530,000.00 in salary cuts tonight and that the NKTA recommended \$415,000.00 in cuts and was not sure that the NKTA would support this budget.

Ms. Tammy Gluck congratulated Mr. LeBlanc on a great job. She said he did a great job communicating with the community and appreciated his transparency. Ms. Gluck thanked Ms. Miller for her four years on the SB and wished her and her family luck in their move to Texas.

SCHOOL BOARD COMMENT Ms. Bennett thanked Mr. LeBlanc for his time on the SB and wished Ms. Miller good luck. Ms. Ross wished Ms. Miller good luck in Texas. Ms. Ross said that Mr. LeBlanc will be sorely missed and that he was a voice of reason and was a pleasure to work with. She told Mr. LeBlanc not to be a stranger and to stay involved. Mr. LeBlanc had one final comment. He said that the cuts tonight were made by people who understand what it takes to run a school and the NKTA are not experts and don't understand what the priorities are, what the needs are. He said the district has people with a combined experience of over 300 years of experience making the decisions. Mr. Masson said that we have two totally polarizing people leaving the SB tonight and that that is what life is about. He thanked Mr. LeBlanc and Ms. Miller for teaching him things over the years. Ms. Miller said that tonight was her last SB meeting after spending multiple years on the SB. She said that she's leaving a town in which she hoped to raise her children. She said that at times should could be crass and sharp tongued. She said it wasn't surprising when she received 666 votes in last year's election. She

said she's put so much time into these meetings, and her husband wanted to know why? Ms. Miller said she knows it takes a team to move a mountain make a difference. She said that she's made many friends because of her passion. She said she ran for the SB because she wanted to, not because someone had asked her to. She said over the last five years she's done many things for which she is proud of and some things that she wasn't. She said she is bothered by the fact that other SB members and leadership wanted to replace Corey Masson. She said she thinks Mr. Masson is an asset to the community. She said Mr. Masson asks questions and knows his stuff. She said that today was an emotional day. She and her children said good bye to teachers and staff. She said that her and her family joke at home about favorite teachers that they wanted to bring to Texas with them. She said she wanted to thank everyone at Sanborn.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Second Session of Annual School District Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 8, 2016. Voting to be conducted at the Swasey Gym in Kingston for Kingston residents from 8:00 AM until 8:00 PM. Voting to be conducted at the Newton Town Hall from 8:00 AM until 8:00 PM for Newton residents.

The next **regular meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board** will be held on **Wednesday, March 16, 2016, at 7:00 PM**, in Room 137 at the Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston.

The next **regular meeting of the Sanborn Regional School Board** will be held on **Wednesday, April 6, 2016, at 7:00 PM**, in Room 137 at the Sanborn Regional High School, Kingston.

Non-Public Session – RSA 91-A:3 Ila Superintendent Evaluation Review Ms. Ross made a motion to enter into non-public session at 9:41 PM. Ms. LeBlanc polled the board. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail M. LeBlanc
School Board Secretary

Minutes of the School Board meetings are unofficial until approved at a subsequent meeting of the School Board.