



HUDSON SCHOOL DISTRICT ♦ Hudson, New Hampshire  
Hills Memorial Library, 18 Library Street

6:30 pm

Regular Meeting  
Non-Public Session

## Hudson School Board Meeting Minutes October 25, 2021

### In attendance:

#### Board Members

Gary Gasdia, Chairman  
Diana LaMothe, Vice-chair  
Ethan Beals  
Mike Campbell  
Gretchen Whiting - absent

#### SAU Staff

Larry Russell, Superintendent of Schools  
Rachel Borge, Director Special Services  
Jen Burk, Business Administrator  
Kim Organek, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction

### A. Call to Order [0:00:25]

#### 1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Gasdia called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Ms. Organek led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### B. Public Input [0:00:45]

There was no public input.

### C. FY2023 Budget: Alvirne, CTE Center, Hudson Memorial [ 0:01:15 ]

There were a few updates since the last meeting: two new Board members would be added to the FY23 budget (\$2,000) and health insurance had been inadvertently included in the separation pay line. That amount in Special Services was \$35,705 and this would be removed. There was discussion regarding the decision made at the last meeting regarding the cutting of the management software to monitor student computer screens. Kim Bourassa and Sue Vivian from the middle school addressed the Board on the matter. The middle school has had

1:1 technology the longest out of the District's schools but there was now no management software for student computers other than internet blocks. Students were aware of this and took advantage by going on Websites, gaming, etc. Managing the usage of laptops was important and safeguarded privacy; they could be controlled at a distance to work with students. Data showed how school-issued laptops were being used online. Students should learn how to use technology appropriately. Mr. Beals reiterated that he felt the software was not beneficial and he preferred teachers to walk around and interact with students rather than monitoring them from afar. Mr. Campbell favored the ability of parents being able to get a report of what students were doing on school computers. There was a question if the cost would be the same if monitoring was only done at the middle school.

***Mr. Campbell made a motion to reinstate the \$10,000 for classroom management software. Ms. LaMothe seconded the motion. Motion failed 2:2 with Mr. Beals and Mr. Gasdia voting nay.***

### **1. Alvirne - Principal Steven Beals [0:15:48]**

The FY23 high school budget increased by 4.4%. Factors included:

- Salary and benefit increases
- Focus on supporting instruction and student learning
- New staff requests: English teacher (for Capstone implementation that was consistent with the Strategic Plan); Strategies teacher for unidentified and struggling students; Alternative Education program for high school with a Coordinator and Alt. Education teacher
- Increases in: dues/subscription; transportation; equipment increases in music; supply increases; new programming; new equipment line in Physical Education (treadmill replacement); co-curricular transportation contractual increases; and increase in having outdoor graduation. It was noted that the Trustees were focused on other areas.
- Proposed increases of \$5,000 or greater included:
- Alvirne Trustees: placeholder at \$50,000 (unknown proposals)
- Reduction (most were Trustee-related): musical instruments, stage curtain, Challenge Day program, farm cart
- Welding/deisel supplies and Perkins Grant
- Co-curricular transportation - increases due to contract and this was an annual Trustee-proposed item but they requested it be embedded within the school budget.
- Graduation increase
- Hay cutter (formerly Trustee-supported)

There was discussion regarding the difference in graduation cost. The new arena cost was \$8,500 (SNHU Arena) vs. the cost associated with outdoor graduation (\$24,000). Part of the high cost was for sound and staging, chair rental costs, police and fire details, and fireworks. It was uncertain if the SNHU Arena would be open again in June 2023. Weather and property damage were other logistics. Getting feedback was discussed; having bad weather was a serious detriment.

***Mr. Beals made a motion to decrease the graduation budget by \$12,000. Ms. LaMothe seconded the motion. Motion passed 3:1 with Mr. Campbell voting nay.***

There was review of the new proposed Coordinator and teacher positions relative to the Alternative Education Program (traditional day school did not meet every student's needs) targeted towards ninth graders. Money in ESSER funds was allocated this year for these positions. The ESSER III grant was in review currently so a Coordinator was not able to be hired to begin in January 2022. The position was posted for the second semester; there would be discussion if it was possible to begin in January. Originally, it was thought this would be the pilot year. There was a possibility of shifting funding out of the budget and into the grant for next year. (ESSER funding was set up for educational discrepancies related to COVID-19). Ms. LaMothe favored keeping a placeholder in the budget for the positions in case grant funding ran out. Ms. Burk suggested instead to transfer grant expenditure into the grant vs. reducing it to \$1 in the operating budget. This would provide accountability for the expenditure and revenue sides. Allocating building space for the program was discussed. Mr. Beals noted when the ESSER funding ran out (2025), the budget would take on the cost of salaries, etc.; he favored paying for the pilot through ESSER and seeing if there was benefit.

***Ms. LaMothe made a motion to reduce two line items in the operating budget for Alternative Learning salaries and benefits to \$1 each (a reduction of \$217,039), and transfer to a grant fund line, Mr. Beals seconded. Motion passes 4:0.***

There was discussion about transferring to the ESSER grant/keeping a placeholder in the operating budget for the Strategies for Success program (for unidentified students who did not qualify for Special Services). The Teacher supported between 60 and 72 students. Initially, 75 students were not able to be serviced; because a full-time position was unfilled in the budget, work was done to provide support for that cohort. A second teacher in the program was requested to help handle the high number of students struggling at Alvirne. There was a question if the position could be earmarked for ESSER funds; however, it was an existing program proposed to expand due to the pandemic. Discussion included taxpayers and end-of-year unassigned fund balance. The goal was to get students caught up and feel better about themselves. It was helpful to request this now and hopefully not need it in the future.

***Ms. LaMothe made a motion to transfer the Strategies for Success teacher position to the ESSER grant and keep \$1 in the operating budget as a placeholder. Mr. Beals seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:0.***

The English Teacher position request was new. Alvirne used to have an American Sign Language (ASL) program. It was successful because an English teacher (Melanie O'Toole) had experience doing this. She now taught ASL full-time but no sections teaching English. The Capstone pilot this year would require a new teacher (for about 36 students). A Capstone delivery would include a student demonstrating their learning through chosen interests such as a building project, etc. Having this in the budget would require a project to be done through the English program.

Highlighted increases/decreases of \$5,000 or more were: Trustee's expense of \$50,000; decrease in Foreign Language supplies due to 1:1 technology; \$14,200 decrease and \$16,000 decrease in Trustee items; \$15,000 Challenge Day program (Trustees); \$7,500 Farm Cart (Trustees); co-curricular transportation; and graduation. With requesting 4 positions, priorities were made. Since the Trustees were transitioning away from things, it was anticipated that a proposal would come from the Theatre Arts Department (screen, projection/A/V package). Alvirne was 12 staff positions short of being fully staffed; staffing was the greatest resource. If able, having the Mental Health Counselor be full time at the middle and high schools would be favored.

There was review of budget items such as instruments (that were lent out during the pandemic), speaker system replacement, score board, reconditioning of equipment (certified for safety use next year), athletic repair budget, and swimming/diving team (inclusive).

The current budget cost for the Student and Family Interventionist was \$80,913. Mr. Beals requested information on how students were being helped with mental health resources outside the District.

***Ms. LaMothe made a motion to add a Student and Family Interventionist position (\$80,913) so the high school and middle school would have a full-time staff member. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Mr. Russell suggested postponing the vote in order to gather more information.*** Ms. LaMothe agreed to table the motion.

## 2. CTE Center [01:24:10]

CTE Director – Eric Frauwirth  
The numbers were under Alvirne's budget.

All of the newly renovated CTE spaces were being used. There were about 700 students in the Palmer Center (which was an increase of about 100 students since pre-Covid). Tuition from students outside the District was about \$6,000/student. There was room for about 125 more students. There was review of CTE programs, including forestry and natural resources. All programs would be 90-minutes; this would open up opportunities for the 9 sending schools. New positions included: culinary arts instructor (there was a 60-student wait list this year); Health Science (can help teach programming aside from LNA); Computer Science (need a second teacher to accommodate the 90-minute block; and welding, heavy equipment and construction aid (one teacher could not oversee 24 students in these areas safely). Another culinary arts teacher could teach a feeder class. Home Economics classes were not career-based like the culinary arts courses were. There was concern that there might only be a few students taking culinary arts classes after school. If there was no need to fill the after-school program, a part-time position could be hired, but the full position should be budgeted for. Of note:

- Computer class supplies - increase due to doubling of class size
- Office supplies for CTE events (this was split out of the Alvirne high school budget)
- Medical terminology textbooks - migration to Perkins budget

- Professional memberships - increased students in clubs and dues
- The District was obligated to maintain sending school students (percentage-based): under the regional agreement; seat allocation was based on student population in the Town (Hudson represented 14% seats of the student population for the region for CTE Center); however, Alvirne students represented up 75% of the seats. The Forestry Team were going to Nationals.

Priorities for staffing were Health Science, Computer Science, Culinary Arts, and Shop Aide. If necessary for budgeting, the Shop Aide could be cut. Something helpful would be expansion of programming after dark (after 2:30 pm).

### 3. Hudson Memorial [01:59:34] Mr. Bowen - Hudson Memorial School Budget

Overall budget increase was 2.45%

- Salaries and benefits increase was 3.31% and made up 94.6% of the budget
- Other proposed expenditure decreased by .86%
- General supply accounts were generally low (reduction of student count for supplies due to decline in enrollment) - however, enrollment fluctuated.
- Increased costs were in Tech. Ed.; art supplies; library/media center (laminating machine repair and maintenance and supplies); Spanish e-book; project lead the way computers/coding and kits; software accounts; athletic officials (from \$68 to \$70 per game); tournaments/meets officiation; SNAP software; American Library Association; Music equipment replacement (keyboards and guitars).

There were decreases in: Noteflight Learn online subscription; Spanish Professional Membership; Project Lead the Way Annual Participation Fee; Library/Media Center furniture budget (due to upgrading through ESSER funding); and Library/Media Center software account.

New to the budget were: ELA literature teachers exploring update of contemporary novel offerings to be more compatible with units of study; NH Library's Association membership; 8th grade social studies textbook licensing ending - placeholder; math - IXL Math Intervention licenses (add-on to Alex program already in place); CPALMS Pilot Program; Music program - majestic vibraphone (band request for percussionists); American Choral membership; Natural History Day to replace Geography Bee; Fitness equipment to add treadmills and exercise bikes; and Health e-book for wellness to support the 1:1 piece in classroom.

Removed from budget were Math in Focus books (purchased through ESSER funds as part of a three-year contract; ropes course was gone due to pandemic and cost; NH OP membership was removed; library furniture replacement used through ESSER funds; Star Assessment removed from budget, iReady paid for by ESSER; ALEKS licenses (last year this was approved for five years); nurse office chairs; cafeteria replacement plans; science tables/stools replacement; technology: and shifting from whiteboards to interactive TVs.

Programs/course changes included: Wellness program: 45 days of PE and 15 days of health and wellness - this was not a good product for a 60-day program. New was a personal fitness program on a trimester basis.

Capital projects included: space refreshers; girls locker room renovation; gym curtain replacement (21 years old); and stairwell refresher.

FY23 Budget Crosswalk: changes over \$5,000

\$21,300:	3-year Math in Focus program moved to ESSER funds
\$31,955	Online platform of Math in Focus program moved to ESSER funds
\$9,328	Removal of Star Assessment program and iReady moved to ESSER funds
\$7,500	Accounting for money spent on a la carte items

There was discussion about the budget, including treadmills and bikes (\$2,000 for three years for 6 treadmills and 12 stationary bikes); getting an estimate for security cameras e.g. at the main stairwell and outside; to be considered for the budget: projector and screen for the gym - would be difficult to do this based on the basketball hoop location and gym framing - so, looking at a newer bigger screen with projector based on the gym's design; personal fitness portion of the P.E. program (focusing on personal best); gym curtain importance especially for the end of the year. If necessary, a budget cut would be the Read 180 and System 44 (reading intervention program) that were not usable since the data privacy agreement was not signed. There was a new reading program that provided intervention within the program itself. A want would be to make the two mental health/support positions full-time (to cover family and substance issues). This would be reviewed again.

Mr. Campbell made a motion to change the Read 180 consumables including real books and system 44 books (under 12423110640 and 12423110650) from \$2,950 to \$1.00. Mr. Beals seconded the motion. Motion passed 3:1.

### **Follow Up [2:32:50]**

There was a question about specifying funds going to ESSER when making motions for budget cuts.

***Per Ms. Burk's suggestion, Mr. Beals made a motion to reduce the health insurance line for the Special Education staff (acct. number 10002330-211) by \$66,514 (due to errors). Ms. LaMothe seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:0.***

***Per Ms. Burk's suggestion, Mr. Beals made a motion to add the funds for the two School Board members' stipends in the related social security account - to increase funds in account number 10012311-110 by \$2,200 and also related increase account #10012311-220 by \$170. Ms. LaMothe seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:0.***

### **D. Non-Public Session [2:41:29]**

***At 9:12 pm, Mr. Beals made a motion to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c). Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:0 by rollcall vote.***

All SAU staff except Superintendent Larry Russell left the meeting. At 9:16 pm, the School Board members discussed a personnel matter.

An attorney-approved letter that documents the mutual agreement to end the contract with Superintendent Larry Russell effective June 30, 2022 was signed by Superintendent Russell and Chairman Gasdia.

Mr. Russell plans to make announcements on October 28, 2021, after which this will be deemed public knowledge. The process to search for a superintendent is to be determined by the Board. Mr. Gasdia will reach out to search firms and arrange for them to present to the Board. Mr. Beals volunteered to take ownership of administrative duties related to the search process thereafter.

***A motion to exit non-public and adjourn at 9:44 pm was made by Mr. Beals, second by Ms. LaMothe. The motion passed 4-0.***

Respectfully submitted,

Susan DeFelice (public)

Diana LaMothe (non-public)