



HUDSON SCHOOL BOARD

The Barnyard Cafe
200 Derry Road, Hudson, New Hampshire

School Board Retreat – Minutes

July 19, 2022

In Attendance

Board Members

Gary Gasdia, Chairman
Gretchen Whiting, Vice-chair
Ethan Beals
Mike Campbell
Maureen Dionne

SAU Staff

Dan Moulis, Superintendent of Schools
Rachel Borge, Director Special Services
Jen Burk, Business Administrator
Kim Organek, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction
Terry Wolf, Director of Strategic Engagement & Communication

A. Call to Order

Mr. Gasdia called the meeting to order at 9:02 am. Ms. Borge led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Welcome & Agenda Review

Mr. Gasdia and Superintendent Moulis welcomed everyone and briefly reviewed the agenda for the day.

C. 2021 - 2022 School Year in Review

Assistant Superintendent Kim Organek provided an overview of SAS scores in the district from 2018 to 2021. There are no results for the 2019-2020 school year.

Science needs to be a focus in K-8, especially K-5. There has been a lot more focus on reading and math to support the impact of the pandemic. Some students are struggling in science because of their lack of reading skills – improving reading will help some students. Mr. Gasdia asked if other districts are in a similar position with scores. Ms. Organek said other districts have a similar pattern of ups and downs. Overall, we've come out of COVID better than other districts.

Instructional rounds will resume this year, which are very effective. Looking at iReady data, we're not challenging our students at grade level. Increasing rigor happens through reviewing lesson plans, PLCs and teaching small group instruction.

Student engagement is a challenge, especially eighth grade and up. Choice is important for student engagement. Hills Garrison is looking at the “Leader in Me” program, which Ms. Organek used in a previous district. The board asked that programs be consistent between schools.

Graduation Rates

Ms. Organek shared graduation rates from 2016-2017 through 2020-2021. The rate for this past year is not available yet. In 2016-2017, the rate was 89.12%. In 2020-2021, the rate 83.27%. The reason for the decrease is not clear. It’s most likely several factors:

- Increase in the number of credits to graduate, from 20 to 24
- The impact of the pandemic
- Alternatives for students, such as the HiSet
- Students that graduate in five years or take the HiSet aren’t counted in the rate

Mr. Gasdia said an 83% graduation rate is unacceptable and the number of credits shouldn’t be lowered; it’s about 25 kids a year. We also need to challenge all our students so they don’t leave and go somewhere else.

Superintendent Moulis said the new schedule structure at the high school includes a built-in intervention time each day, which could help catch kids earlier. The Pathways program is designed to support students at a lower grade level. This is an area we can certainly improve.

D. Strategic Plan & School Year 2022-2023

Superintendent Moulis shared a document, “First 100 Days.” The top priority is meeting with people in the schools and the community through visibility in the schools and attending meetings and events. He will also review all assessment data, look at support for students and review the “Portrait of a Graduate.” He has already had conversations with Chief Buxton and Chief Dionne and will do a thorough review of emergency management plans.

Superintendent Moulis will take this year to listen to staff, students, families and community members about what is working well and areas for improvement. He hopes those discussions will include thoughts about the future of the district, including buildings and the structure of our schools.

The board discussed the number of transitions for the district’s youngest students and whether the “Early Learning Center” concept is supporting students. Library Street School and Dr. HO Smith school are at capacity.

Ms. Whiting would like the strategic plan to be three years and have a road map that’s more detailed and rolling, where a new year is added each year.

Mr. Beals suggested the district leverage HCTV and use it for public service announcements.

E. School Board/Board of Selectmen & State of the District

Mr. Gasdia proposed a joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen, with a potential date of September 1. They received a lot of feedback after the meeting last year.

The evening would start with an opportunity for the public to meet and talk with school district and town staff. It would be similar to a fair, with tables dedicated to topics. The fair would be followed by a formal meeting portion, with the superintendent and the town administrator each providing an update to the School Board and the Board of Selectmen. Town and school district moderator, Paul Inderbitzen, would again be moderator for the meeting. After the presentations, there would be an opportunity to ask questions of both boards. If this is structured properly, it will also fulfill the “state of the district” warrant article that passed in March.

The board agreed overall it was a good idea. This item will be on the next school board agenda if it will be held in August.

F. Capital Improvement Plan

Superintendent Moulis and Business Administrator Jen Burk reviewed the [report](#) by the Capital Improvement Committee. A study was done at Hills Garrison to review high traffic times with Hills and the high school. The traffic does not currently seem to be an issue and there isn't any recommendation to move forward with changes.

The Early Learning Center was discussed and its capacity for students and programming. The facilities study is an important piece in deciding what should be done. It is expected the report should be ready in December or January. The board asked administration to evaluate the early learning center model and to hold focus groups with teachers and parents.

The traffic at Hudson Memorial continues to be a concern. The loop at HMS is officially a road and the principal has said that drivers will use it as a short cut, creating a safety issue for students and staff.

The report by the Capital Improvement Committee includes major projects. There is also a facilities maintenance plan for improvements and maintenance. The committee will be meeting again soon for an update.

G. Budget Process for 2022-2023

Business Administrator Jen Burk shared some of the major drivers for the budget process. As the board has already seen, the costs of supplies for the district are going up. The HFT contract will be on the ballot as a separate warrant article. There has been a large fund balance due to hiring challenges and the impact of COVID (cancelled programs and events).

Superintendent Moulis is considering an enrollment study with projections for the next several years.

There was a follow up discussion on the use of ESSER III funds for a retention bonus for staff, a sign-on bonus for new hires and a referral program. There are several open positions in math and science with no applications. If ESSER funds are used, some grant funded positions will end at the end of this school year. The board prefers to use the funds for all three programs.

H. School Board Priorities

The board discussed priorities for 2022-2023. Ideas included:

- Passing a teachers' contract that retains and attracts teachers
- Creating a teacher internship program
- Improving operational efficiencies and reviewing processes
- Continuing with the alternative program and long-term planning for it
- Evaluating the Early Learning Center model and building options
- The role of the CTE center and allocation of spots for Alvirne students and sending schools
- Building cohesion between the schools and consistency in programs with the elementary schools
- Continuing to improve communication and collaboration
- Reviewing the strategic plan and a five-year roadmap
- Adding mental health counselors
- High academic standards for ALL learners
- Passing the Alvirne renovation
- Continue to support social emotional learning

The priorities will be discussed at a future meeting, along with goals for the superintendent.

Adjourn – 4:02pm

Respectfully submitted by Terry Wolf