

# ***Mt. Blue Regional School District Board of Directors***

## **Minutes**

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**DATE:** July 27, 2021

**Place:** The Forum

**Time:** 6:30pm

**Meeting Video:** <https://vimeo.com/580435023> - Please be advised that there were technical difficulties that prevented video recording after the second executive session.

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**In attendance:** Carol Coles, Gwen Doak, Kirk Doyle, Doug Dunlap, Irv Faunce, Cherieann Harrison, Judith Kaut, J. Wayne Kinney, Lisa Laffin, Gloria McGraw, Josh Robbins, Jesse Sillanpaa, Debbie Smith

**Absent:** Scott Erb, Betsey Hyde, Craig Stickney

**Also present:** Keith Acedo, Jeff Brazee, Beth Christopher, Laura Columbia, Chris Elkington, Nichole Goodspeed, Jennifer Pooler, Lisa Sinclair, Tracy Williams

- I. Call to Order and Declaration of a Quorum at 6:34pm
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Public Comment
  - A. None
- IV. Report of the Chairperson - Carol Coles
  - A. Report of the Chair - Support staff contract negotiations are progressing well. There are still a few more meetings scheduled, anticipate finishing soon.
    1. Irv Faunce, Director from Wilton asked why the board meetings aren't being live streamed. Superintendent Elkington explained that this was the first night that we are using new AV equipment and that we hope to be live streaming by the second meeting in August.- why aren't we live streaming?
  - B. Good news stories from Board / Administration
    1. Superintendent Elkington gave a shout out to the RSU 9 Maintenance Staff for their efforts. The work he has seen going on across the district is well done; thank you to all!!
    2. Laura Columbia, Director of Curriculum reported that summer programming is in its final stages and that it's been a great summer. Students have made progress - a full report will be coming to the board soon. She thanked everyone who has been involved: teachers, support staff, bus drivers, school nutrition staff, administrators, nurses, secretaries. TEAM!
  - C. [Standing Committee Assignments](#)

1. An explanation of the method used to make committee assignments - Directors were asked to send their first, second, and third choice of committees to the chair and vice chair. Assignments were made in the order they were received - almost everyone was assigned their first choice.

V. [Superintendent's Report](#) - Christian Elkington

- A. New Hires, Transfers, Resignations, and Retirements
- B. Information Requests from Board Members
  1. Drug Testing - Information requested was shared with all
  2. Opioid Litigation - Information requested was shared with all
- C. Updates
  1. Fit Girls Program - Will be restarting
  2. Pathways to Teaching for Adult Learners - shout out to Nancy Allen

VI. Presentations

A. [Updated Planning for the 21/22 School Year](#) - Laura Columbia

A revised Plan was shared with the board (changes highlighted in yellow from document shared with Board on 7/23/21) -

1. Questions
  - a) Clarification was provided regarding Masks on page one referring to RSU 9's current guidelines. Whereas Masks on page three is the current proposal for fall.
  - b) Clarification was provided regarding HIPPA and how the district will differentiate between vaccinated and unvaccinated staff and students. The district will use the honor system at the high school with the understanding that everyone (staff and students) has the opportunity to be vaccinated, while not everyone at the middle and elementary levels has the opportunity due to the age limitations with the vaccine. That is why there is a distinction between our schools serving PreK-8 students and students in grades 9-12.
  - c) It was explained that the Pooled Testing pilot did not take place over the summer as hoped, as there were not enough resources (human or other) to pull it all together. Our hope is to do it in the fall.
  - d) It was thought that HIPPA was only for healthcare providers, which is not necessarily accurate as it is still privileged information. Parents would have to consent to release of medical information for those under 18.
  - e) Clarification was provided regarding Pooled Testing - with the first test, all swabs are placed in the same tube for processing. If anyone in the 'pool' tests positive, the whole group will test with a rapid test to determine who tested positive from the 'pool'. The group will test again with another rapid test to see if there were

any more positives. Only those who test positive are required to quarantine.

- f) Clarification that schools are covered by FERPA, meaning that we can ask for information regarding vaccination status expected under the law or in regards to an outbreak, but there has to be a valid reason for the ask. An example was given that we can ask as part of the contact tracing process if the student is considered a close contact and proof of vaccination would release them from quarantine. A parent would need to give permission/authorization for us to ask anyone under 18.
- g) Discussion was heard in regards to why are we trying to hit a moving target. Especially given that the guidance from the CDC was likely going to be updated and recommend masking indoors for certain populations.
  - (1) The superintendent had not received any further guidance or recommendations from the Maine DOE as of Tuesday, 7/27, but there was a meeting scheduled for school district leaders with Dr. Shah from the Maine CDC on Thursday, 7/29 to provide an update.
  - (2) Some board members thought any mask mandate from the district level should be for all staff and students, not just those who are not vaccinated.
- h) It was announced that the superintendent, director of curriculum, and the district physician are the district team who receives the information and acts on it. During the school year the school nurses have played a role in this work, but they have had time to regroup over the summer and will be involved again in late August.

## B. Staffing Update - Christian Elkington

### 1. [Open Positions](#)

- a) As of today's hiring, there are now fewer than 70 positions open districtwide. We are looking at and talking about creative ways to attract and retain staff. An example - We have hired many new staff with little to no experience - what kind of extra support can we give them during induction and continue throughout the school year to help them become successful and stay with us. Maine DOE offered pathways to emergency certification during the past year, and we are checking if, or how long that will continue. We may need to increase class sizes or offer multi-age classrooms due to our staffing shortage, along with adjusting programs - building and district administrators are looking ahead and reviewing options.

### 2. Special Education & Differing Service Models

- a) Special Services administrators will be presenting on differing service models in early August the **board**. We are reviewing our current service model to see if we can better support our students by making modifications to the services we're offering. Researching what other possibilities are out there that might work better.
3. Staff Transfer Concerns  
Moving forward, the superintendent expects to be more selective and systemic with transfer requests; meaning likely only those with a qualified replacement lined up will be approved. There is a possibility of involuntary transfers if we cannot fill several key positions. Discussion and concern was heard related to current support staff openings in transportation, facilities, and operations. Some of the scheduled 'big project' work may need to be delayed due to staffing.
4. 21/22 Superintendent Agreement Concerns  
The superintendent requested board approval to limit superintendent's agreements to renewals and students who have a sibling attending the same school. The concerns are not only number/class size related, but the availability of services and supports. We need to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of our resident students before accepting those from outside our geographic boundaries.
5. Questions  
A question was heard regarding the status of the board negotiations team membership. Carol Coles and Wayne Kinney have been the continuity on the team - Doug Dunlap and Scott Erb have replaced outgoing board members Angie LeClair and Jeff Harris.
6. Discussion  
Ideas/recommendations/possibilities/concerns from board members included: Inviting community members into our schools to step into some of the vacant support roles; Inviting UMF faculty to step into our classrooms; Offering student teachers a more long-term option or job share opportunity; The staffing situation has been building for years and is not getting better. Education has suffered over the last 18 months state- and nation-wide.

## VII. Consent Agenda

- A. Minutes from [July 13, 2021](#)
- B. Committee Report Outs and Minutes
  1. Operations Committee - None
  2. Personnel & Finance - None
  3. Educational Policy - None

4. Drop-Out Prevention - None

<p><i>Motion to approve the consent agenda</i></p>	<p>Yeas: Carol Coles, Gwen Doak, Kirk Doyle, Doug Dunlap, Irv Faunce, Cherieann Harrison, Judith Kaut, J. Wayne Kinney, Lisa Laflin, Gloria McGraw, Josh Robbins, Jesse Sillanpaa, Debbie Smith                  Nays: 0                  Abstained: 0                  Vote: 13:0:0 (814:0:0)</p>	<p>Motion: Cherieann Harrison                  Seconded: Gwen Doak                  Motion: Passed</p>
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VIII. Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(D) - Labor Contract update for the Support Staff's Bargaining Unit

<p><i>Motion to enter into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A §405(6)(D) - Labor Contract update for the Support Staff's Bargaining Unit</i></p>	<p>Yeas: Carol Coles, Gwen Doak, Kirk Doyle, Doug Dunlap, Irv Faunce, Cherieann Harrison, Judith Kaut, J. Wayne Kinney, Lisa Laflin, Gloria McGraw, Josh Robbins, Jesse Sillanpaa, Debbie Smith                  Nays: 0                  Abstained: 0                  Vote: 13:0:0 (814:0:0)</p>	<p>Motion: Cherieann Harrison                  Seconded: Debbie Smith                  Motion: Passed</p>
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Time Entered: 7:40pm

Time Exited: 8:10pm

IX. Executive Session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(A) to discuss compensation of officials

<p><i>Motion to enter into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A §405(6)(A) - to discuss compensation of officials</i></p>	<p>Yeas: Carol Coles, Gwen Doak, Kirk Doyle, Doug Dunlap, Irv Faunce, Cherieann Harrison, Judith Kaut, J. Wayne Kinney, Lisa Laflin, Gloria McGraw, Josh Robbins, Jesse Sillanpaa, Debbie Smith                  Nays: 0                  Abstained: 0                  Vote: 13:0:0 (814:0:0)</p>	<p>Motion: Cherieann Harrison                  Seconded: Jesse Sillanpaa                  Motion: Passed</p>
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Time Entered: 8:11pm

Time Exited: 8:25pm

<i>Motion to extend the meeting to 9:00</i>	Yeas: Carol Coles, Gwen Doak, Kirk Doyle, Doug Dunlap, Irv Faunce, Cherieann Harrison, Judith Kaut, J. Wayne Kinney, Lisa Laflin, Gloria McGraw, Josh Robbins, Jesse Sillanpaa, Debbie Smith Nays: 0 Abstained: 0 Vote: 13:0:0 (814:0:0)	Motion: Cherieann Harrison Seconded: Kirk Doyle Motion: Passed
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X. New Business

A. Board Member Assignments - [Committee Assignments](#)

1. Special Committees

a) Information will be sent in regards to the commitment of the Special and Additional Assignments

2. Additional Board Assignments

a) Board members are to email Carol Coles and Debbie Smith if they are interested in consideration for any of the additional board assignments by the end of next week.

B. [Approve New Hires](#)

<i>Motion to approve the new hires as presented in the Superintendent's Report.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Lauren Beale</i></li><li>• <i>Matthew Brann</i></li><li>• <i>Angie Casavant</i></li><li>• <i>Sandra Mitchell</i></li><li>• <i>Nichole Pilote</i></li><li>• <i>Kellie Sanborn</i></li><li>• <i>Chris Searle</i></li></ul>	Yeas: Carol Coles, Gwen Doak, Kirk Doyle, Doug Dunlap, Irv Faunce, Cherieann Harrison, Judith Kaut, J. Wayne Kinney, Lisa Laflin, Gloria McGraw, Josh Robbins, Jesse Sillanpaa, Debbie Smith Nays: 0 Abstained: 0 Vote: 13:0:0 (814:0:0)	Motion: Doug Dunlap Seconded: Irv Faunce Motion: Passed
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C. Remote Academy Program

Discussion was heard about the cost of this to the district. Purchased 60 seats for grades K-8 and 20 seats for grades 9-12 totaling \$567,380 funded by ESSER 2.

<i>Motion that the Board of Directors authorize the Superintendent to purchase</i>	Yeas: Carol Coles, Gwen Doak, Kirk Doyle, Doug Dunlap, Irv Faunce,	Motion: Gwen Doak Seconded: Irv Faunce Motion: Passed
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<p><i>Remote Academy Program services from the Western Maine Regional Service Center for Fiscal Year 2021/22 on such terms as the Superintendent deems appropriate.</i></p>	<p>Cherieann Harrison, Judith Kaut, J. Wayne Kinney, Lisa Laflin, Gloria McGraw, Josh Robbins, Jesse Sillanpaa, Debbie Smith  Nays: 0  Abstained: 0  Vote: 13:0:0 (814:0:0)</p>	
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D. Approval of the July 27, 2021 [Updated Plan for the 21/22 School Year](#)

<p><i>Motion to approve the July 27, 2021 Updated Plan for the 21/22 School Year as presented by the Director of Curriculum.</i></p>	<p>Yeas: Carol Coles, Gwen Doak, Kirk Doyle, Doug Dunlap, Irv Faunce, Cherieann Harrison, Judith Kaut, J. Wayne Kinney, Lisa Laflin, Gloria McGraw, Josh Robbins, Debbie Smith  Nays: Jesse Sillanpaa  Abstained: 0  Vote: 12:1:0 (764:50:0)</p>	<p>Motion: Cherieann Harrison  Seconded: Lisa Laflin  Motion: Passed</p>
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E. Approval of the 2021-2022 Superintendent's Agreement Proposal

Discussion on the purpose of voting on this topic since the superintendent has discretion to do what is in the best interest of students anyway.

- The Superintendent shared that it is a change from previous practice by the district whereby most incoming and outgoing requests were approved.
- What about students living in the 'local' unorganized territories? Residents of unorganized territories can be assigned to a specific school district by the Maine DOE. If a request is made by a resident not assigned to our district and we do not approve it, the Commissioner could mandate we take them if she were to deem it in the best interest of the student.
- What does 'returning' mean in this situation? 'Returning' is a student who is requesting a renewal/continuation of an agreement for the following year - by law, superintendent's agreements are for one school year only and families must reapply each year.
- This request does not include students requesting Foster Tech programs.
- This does not impact Principal's Agreements which are for students currently attending school in our district but request to attend a school other than what they are assigned based on their physical address.
- Concerns that if this is approved, it would not leave any wiggle room for discretion.

- The Superintendent requested that the motion be pulled.

<p><i>Motion to approve the superintendent, as directed by the board, to use his discretion in approving Superintendent's Agreements during the 21/22 School Year only for non-resident students who are either returning students or if they have a sibling who wants to join a brother or sister already enrolled in the same RSU No. 9 School.</i></p>	<p>Yeas: Nays: Abstained: Vote:</p>	<p>Motion: Gwen Doak Seconded: Lisa Laflin Motion:</p>
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*Gwen Doak withdrew her motion and revised the motion as stated. Lisa Laflin seconded the new motion.*

*Gwen Doak withdrew the motion from the floor, Lisa Laflin withdrew her second, and no vote was taken.*

<p><i>Motion to extend the meeting until 9:30.</i></p>	<p>Yeas: Carol Coles, Gwen Doak, Kirk Doyle, Doug Dunlap, Cherieann Harrison, Judith Kaut, J. Wayne Kinney, Lisa Laflin, Gloria McGraw, Josh Robbins, Jesse Sillanpa, Debbie Smith Nays: Irv Faunce Abstained: 0 Vote: 12:1:0 (740:74:0)</p>	<p>Motion: Kirk Doyle Seconded: Cherieann Harrison Motion:</p>
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F. Second and final reading of Board Policy [GBEC](#): Drug-Free Workplace

<p><i>Motion to approve board policy GBEC: Drug-Free Workplace as the second and final reading.</i></p>	<p>Yeas: Carol Coles, Gwen Doak, Kirk Doyle, Doug Dunlap, Irv Faunce, Cherieann Harrison, Judith Kaut, J. Wayne Kinney, Lisa Laflin, Gloria McGraw, Josh Robbins, Debbie Smith Nays: Jesse Sillanpaa Abstained: 0 Vote: 12:1:0 (764:50:0)</p>	<p>Motion: Cherieann Harrison Seconded: Debbie Smith Motion: Passed</p>
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G. [Blue Crew Field Trip Request](#) - WPI BattleCry Robotics Competition



<i>Motion to approve the Blue Crew Field Trip as requested</i>	Yeas: Carol Coles, Gwen Doak, Kirk Doyle, Doug Dunlap, Irv Faunce, Cherieann Harrison, Judith Kaut, J. Wayne Kinney, Lisa Laflin, Gloria McGraw, Josh Robbins, Jesse Sillanpaa, Debbie Smith Nays: 0 Abstained: 0 Vote: 13:0:0 (814:0:0)	Motion: Josh Robbins Seconded: Cherieann Harrison Motion: Passed
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XI. Adjourn

<i>Motion to Adjourn</i>	Yeas: Nays: Abstained: Vote:	Motion: Cherieann Harrison Seconded: Gwen Doak Motion: Passed
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Adjourned at 9:18 pm

**NEXT SCHEDULED MEETINGS**

August 10, 2021 - 6:30pm - The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus

August 24, 2021 - 6:30pm - The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Operations - August 3, 2021 - 5:00pm - The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus

Personnel & Finance - August 3, 2021 - 6:00pm - The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus

Educational Policy - August 3, 2021 - 7:00pm - The Forum, Mt. Blue Campus