

**Kearsarge Regional School District
School Board Meeting & Second Bond Hearing
February 17, 2022
Open to Public – MASK required**

I. Call to Order	The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.
II. Pledge of Allegiance	Mr. Bartholomew lead the Pledge of Allegiance.
III. Roll Call	Present: Ken Bartholomew, Alison Mastin, Emma Bates, Art Bobruff, Emilio Cancio-Bello, Bebe Hammond Casey, Ben Cushing, Eric Gregoire, Kristen Schultz; Beth Perkins (KREA Representative); Maggie Ellison, Katrina Nowicki (Student Reps). Superintendent Feneberg and Mr. LeBoeuf absent.
IV. Second Bond Hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Bartholomew introduced and read Question 1 on the March 8, 2022, ballot. Following the reading, Mr. Bartholomew opened the Public Hearing. ● Mr. Steve St. Pierre - Sutton - Mr. St. Pierre asked why the District would only pay interest in year one? Mr. St. Pierre gave his contact information to be referred to Mr. LeBoeuf who was absent. He went on to ask about school enrollment projections referencing the December 15th meeting where Supt. Feneberg stated that enrollment has been flat. He noted that he had seen numbers from the New Hampshire Department of Education (DOE) that stated there was a decrease in recent enrollment. Mr. Bartholomew noted that enrollment was down last year; however, has returned to normal levels this year. Mr. Bartholomew referred Mr. St. Pierre to the NESDEC projections on the District’s website. Mr. Bartholomew noted that the STEAM Addition would be additional space for programs already in existence, with the exception of an additional Art teacher and possible custodian. If this project were not approved, certain repairs would still have to be made. Mr. Cancio-Bello estimated \$6 million to \$7 million of repairs would still have to be completed and would cost more to complete individually than all at once. Mr. St. Pierre asked why the Concord Regional Technical Center (CRTC) was not a viable option for these STEAM courses. Mr. Bessette noted that District students do attend CRTC and that the STEAM Addition would not replace the use of CRTC, but would complement it. ● Mr. Bartholomew closed the Bond Hearing.
V. New Business	<p>House Bill 1371 and House Bill 1679-FN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Bartholomew welcomed Senator Ruth Ward, Senator Rebecca Whitley (via Zoom), Representative Karen Ebel (via Zoom), Representative Thomas Schamberg, and Representative Linda Tanner. ● Senator Ward referenced House Bill 1679-FN and noted that an amendment to the bill is coming. In reference to House Bill 1371, Senator Ward stated that she believes parents should be able to decide how they want their children to go to school. She noted that these bills can be found on the New Hampshire General Court’s website. Mr. Bessette stated that House Bill 1371 contrasted with the RSA setting

standards for health and safety in schools. Further, Mr. Bartholomew stated that the bill contrasts with New Hampshire Department of Health and Humans Services (DHHS) guidelines. He noted that the District looks to the public health experts for what the best thing to do is and that doing so reduces the chance for liability. Senator Ward noted that people are listening to other epidemiologists as well as DHHS. Mr. Bartholomew noted that these debates should be taking place before the local School Boards. Senator Ward encouraged Mr. Bartholomew to write a letter to the Chair of the Education Committee.

- Mr. Bessette read a comment from Ms. Jackie Nowick on Zoom regarding the difficulties students with certain disabilities have with masking and noted that their rights should be considered.
- Senator Whitney noted that she does not believe it is the role of the legislature to get into the policies of local School Districts and stated that she does not believe that House Bill 1371 or 1679-FN allows local Districts to do what they think is best for their District.
- Representative Ebel stated that she does believe in local control for these issues and stated that she is looking forward to seeing the amendment to House Bill 1679-FN.
- Representative Tanner stated that there are currently 4 bills before the Education Committee regarding cooperative school districts. She stated that she uses Kearsarge as an example of what a School District should look like. Rep. Tanner made reference to House Bill 1399 which would require all cooperative School Districts to disband by 2023. In regards to House Bill 1371, she noted that there is a mutual feeling among the Education Committee that a lot of things need to be left up to the local School Districts. Rep. Tanner noted that there are other bills before the house regarding masking and vaccination requirements. She also encouraged the board to keep an eye on Bill 1671 from the Department of Education. She stated that in her personal opinion, public education is under attack. Mr. Cushing thanked Rep. Tanner for her 35 years of teaching in this School District.
- Representative Schamberg stated Districts should be listening to DHHS. He noted that he was a public school teacher and that public education is the economic engine of our country. Rep Schamberg asked Mr. Bartholomew if state Representatives and Senators were being invited to School Board meetings across the state? Mr. Bartholomew noted that this is not necessarily happening elsewhere. Regarding House Bill 1679-FN, Mr. Bartholomew noted that being on a School Board for a cooperative District gives them an inside view about how cooperative Districts work and how they could work better. Rep. Schamberg stated that this is not a good bill.
- Ms. Casey thanked the legislators for their remarks and noted that there is a small group of representatives that keep filing these bills. She stated that it is insulting to School Districts.
- Mr. Bartholomew references House Bill 1671 stating that he felt this was an expansion of the divisive concepts bill. He noted that soon after the divisive concepts bill passed, he got a call from a constituent who was

	<p>angry because he believed Critical Race Theory was being taught in the District. Mr. Bartholomew challenged the constituent to name a teacher or a course that taught Critical Race Theory and Mr. Bertholomew noted that he could not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms. Schultz noted that these divisive bills are contributing to the teacher shortage and noted that the shortage of teachers is what is going to hurt students. ● Senator Whitney referenced two Bills currently in the Senate: Senate Bill 298 and Senate Bill 304, both containing banned concepts language. Both Bills are going to the Senate floor next week. She stated that these bills are prohibiting our students from practicing democracy. She said that we talk a lot about freedom in New Hampshire; however, policing speech is antithetical to freedom. ● Rep. Tanner stated that when she started teaching, teachers were treated as professional educators and parents would give teachers the benefit of the doubt. Now, however, it is the other way around. She stated that there is a solid group of Representatives who are fighting for the School District. ● Senator Ward stated that there is a Senate Bill that is looking into the teacher shortage. ● Mr. Bartholomew noted that there is a distinct lack of trust in public education. <p><i>Ms. Casey made a motion to note the Board’s disapproval of House Bill 1371 and House Bill 1679-FN. Mr. Cancio-Bello seconded. The Motion carried 9-0-0.</i></p>
<p>VI. Approval of Minutes</p>	<p><i>Ms. Schultz made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2022, Deliberative Session as written. Ms. Mastin seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p> <p><i>Ms. Mastin made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 20, 2022, School Board meeting as written. Ms. Casey seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>
<p>VII. Reports of Administration</p>	<p><i>Student Representative Report: Maggie Ellison and Katrina Nowicki</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Swim Team had a meet in Salem. ● The National Honor Society had a meeting yesterday to plan their Spring Fling Dance. ● Charlie Brown is coming up on March 17th, 18th, and 19th. <p><i>Chair Report - Mr. Bartholomew - No Report</i></p> <p><i>Superintendent Report - Supt. Feneberg - No Report (Absent)</i></p> <p><i>Assistant Superintendent Report - Mr. Bessette</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Bessette presented the board with local COVID-19 data (presentation attached). ● Mr. Cancio-Bello asked how this data was obtained. Mr. Bessette stated

that all the data was acquired from DHHS' website. He stated that the District needs to start talking about an exit plan from certain COVID restrictions as the CDC and DHHS are considering new benchmarks for when masks are needed.

- Mr. Bartholomew asked if Mr. Bessette's presentation was made off of COVID data from the 7-towns or from the school population? Mr. Bessette stated that a lot of the information comes from School Nurses and noted that DHHS' information is not completely accurate. Mr. Bartholomew noted that in the last 3 days, there has been a substantial drop in active COVID cases among the 7-towns.
- Mr. Bessette stated that the Critical Decision Unit (CDU) has not reached a consensus on this topic. He noted that the best data is the school data. Further, he apprised the board of a number of constituents who have contacted the District asking when the masking requirement will be lifted.
- Ms. Mastin stated that if the mask requirement is going to be removed, the District needs to have their numbers exactly right.
- Dr. Bobruff thanked Mr. Bessette for bringing this before the Board.
- Ms. Casey stated that she would like to see an exit strategy in place. She noted that she wants to see the children protected. Mr. Bessette noted that the District has received 11,500 KN-95 masks that are available to parents and children. He noted that most students seem to prefer the KN-95 because of its rigidity which seems to help prevent students' glasses from fogging up. Mr. Bessette noted that there hasn't been any bullying seen over mask-wearing. Mr. Bartholomew noted that some students will be anxious about removing their masks.
- Ms. Mastin stated that if the District is going to be moving away from following DHHS guidelines in any way, there needs to be a structured decision-making process around these issues. Mr. Bessette noted that DHHS has not presented an exit strategy for masking.
- Dr. Bobruff stated that he supports waiting until after the March break to assess changing any masking guidelines. After the break, the Board can assess where COVID is at in the schools and make any necessary determinations.

Business Administrator Report - Barbara Turner (On behalf of Mr. LeBoeuf)

- Ms. Turner presented two budget transfers for the Board's approval.

Mr. Cancio-Bello made a motion to approve a transfer of \$5,000 from the Maintenance Electrical Bradford line item to the Maintenance Electrical New London line item for the purpose of installing new "Exit" signs. Seconded by Mr. Cushing. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).

Ms. Casey made a motion to approve a transfer of \$7,000 from the Maintenance Property Insurance line item to the Maintenance KRHS New Equipment line item for a negative balance adjustment. Seconded by Mr. Cancio-Bello. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).

	<p><i>KREA Representative Report - Beth Perkins reporting</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third graders in Bradford participated in a halfway day on the 90th day of school. They did activities involving 1/2 and lines of symmetry to celebrate. Students in K-2 participated in the 100th day of school celebration that started off with doing 100 exercises with Mr. Andrews, Bradford’s 100-year-old Google Meet guest (played by Mr. Chouinard). After that, they completed three different 100-day activities led by different classroom teachers. • At the Middle School, Ms. Belanger’s winter activities group, ”Abenaki Activities” had their final meeting last week. The students learned about "Bundle and Pin” and the game “Snow Snakes,” which they will play February 26th and 27th at the Mt Kearsarge Indian Museum - the public is encouraged to join them. This is the first time in centuries that this game will be played in this part of Nd’akinna ("Our Land") Territory! • The robotics team is small, young, and working super hard. They have a Google Classroom site where their captain, Amber Houle, posts updates and videos of their projects. • Chef Ross’ baking class created chocolate molds with Mr. Spooner. They designed what they wanted to create, then Mr. Spooner came in and helped students create models that they could print, using the 3-D printer. They made silicone molds from their printed models. They used the silicone molds to create chocolate bars. Students will get to take home their 3D model, as well as their silicone mold and the chocolate bar they created. This is a great example of STEAM at its finest. • Several teachers asked me to share how much we appreciated the Independent Learning Day. Teacher burnout is a real concern we've been facing these past couple of years. Something as simple as a day to catch up on work revitalized us and allowed us to collaborate with colleagues.
<p>VIII. Public Comment</p>	<p><i>Ms. Kathleen Payne submitted a letter to the Board for public comment. The letter is attached.</i></p>
<p>IX. Further New Business</p>	<p>Technology Purchase Recommendation and Budget Transfer - Purchase of sensors for wireless networking issues - Wyebot, Barbara, Turner Director of Technology.</p> <p><i>Mr. Cushing made a motion to approve the purchase of Wireless Troubleshooting Sensors from Wyebot for \$14,300.00. Dr. Bobruff seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p> <p><i>Ms. Schultz made a motion to approved the transfer of \$24,000 from the MS Instructional Retirement line item to the Contract Services line item to cover unanticipated charges. Dr. Bobruff seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>

Mr. Cancio-Bello made a motion to approve the transfer of \$9,000 from the Instructional Retirement Line to the Staff Training Staff Development line item. Dr. Bobruff seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).

KRMS Vestibule Flooring RFP - *Todd Fleury, Director of Facilities (via Zoom)*

- Mr. Fleury stated that this would replace two aluminum grates that have deteriorated. The District received 1 bid from New London Floor Craft and would recommend the bid. This is a budgeted item.
- Mr. Cancio-Bello asked if this would replace the items at the doors that are so difficult to remove and clean? Mr. Fleury stated that is correct. This would eliminate the need for a forklift to remove and clean the current ones.

Mr. Cancio-Bello made a motion to approve the purchase of the KRMS Vestibule Flooring for \$13,715.00 from New London Floor Craft. Ms. Schultz seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).

Policies for Board Review & Consideration: DJE - Bidding Requirements-Revision, IJL - Library & Instructional Materials-First Reading, IJL-R (Procedure), KEC Reconsideration of Instructional Materials (Rescind upon approval of IJL), IGE Parental Objection To Course Materials (included for Board reference) - *Michael Bessette, Assistant Superintendent*

- Mr. Bessette presented the above policies for Board review, stating that these are the best-updated policies available.
- Ms. Casey stated that the Policy Committee spent two meetings reviewing these policies. There was a policy in place; however, no record could be found of the Board ever approving it. Families can challenge anything they disagree with; however, they cannot do so anonymously.
- Dr. Bobruff noted that any parent, legal guardian, or student can object to course material; however, members of the public are not listed. He asked if they should be added? Mr. Bessette stated that the individual needs to have a right to complain under the policy. Mr. Bartholomew stated that he believed that if the books are being paid for with taxpayer money, the taxpayer should be allowed to petition the School Board to have them removed.

Ms. Mastin made a motion to approve IJL-Library & instructional Materials for first reading. Seconded by Mr. Cancio-Bello. The Motion carried 7-0-2 (Mr. Bartholomew and Dr. Bobruff abstained).

Mr. Cancio-Bello made a motion to approve the revision to DJE-Bidding Requirements. Dr. Bobruff seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).

X. Old Business

Strategic Plan Update - *Michael Bessette, Assistant Superintendent*

- Mr. Bessette presented the Strategic Plan Update to the Board. The

	<p>District has accomplished a lot for the mid-year review.</p>
<p>XI. School Board Sub Committees</p>	<p>Communications Committee 1/27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms. Mastin stated the Communications Committee has continued working on encouraging people to get out and vote as well as spreading information about the STEAM Project. Dr. Bobruff stated that he has started going to local businesses to gain their support. <p><i>Ms. Schultz left the meeting at 9:24 p.m. during the Communications Committee update.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Bessette stated that the STEAM presentation has now been given 27 times in the communities. The Superintendent also recently did a radio interview about the project. ● Ms. Mastin stated that the committee is going to be drafting an athletic communications plan. Mr. Barthlomoew stated that he would agree that is needed. <p>Human Resources 1/27</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms. Mastin discussed the Tech Integrator Specialist Position and stated the committee discussed the job description to begin recruiting. Mr. Bessette stated that this position would help teachers integrate technology into their teaching. The HR Committee voted unanimously to approve the job description. ● Ms. Mastin also discussed the restructuring of the facilities department. Mr. Bessette stated that having a Facilities Director and an Assistant Facilities Director will help to give the Facilities Department a better structure. <p>Facilities Committee 2/3, 2/10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Cancio-Bello gave an update on transportation stating that more bus routes will need to be consolidated due to the lack of bus drivers. At the Commissioner's meeting in Concord, there were discussions about electric buses. Mr. Cancio-Bello stated that the typical range for an electric bus is 90 miles in good weather; however, the majority of the buses in the District run over 150 miles a day. ● Mr. Cancio-Bello stated that the AC project at the Middle School has been placed on hold mainly because of expense. To continue, the AC units would need to be completely changed. ● Mr. Cancio-Bello discussed the Preschool South Project, stating that there is some space in the back of the Bradford School. The estimated cost would be \$800,000, some of which could be obtained through ESER funding. ● The fire escapes in Warner need to be completely redone. The estimated cost is \$250,000. He also stated that the front windows of the school need to be replaced as they provide a second emergency exit. An estimate will be obtained next Summer. Mr. Bartholomew stated that those windows are South facing and bring in a lot of heat. A coating should be considered to help keep the building cool. Mr. Cancio-Bello stated that

	has been discussed. Mr. Cushing stated that he was not pleased to hear that discussions of replacing the same fire escape had come up 15 years ago and no action was taken. He emphasized that the replacement of the fire escape and the windows are a life safety issue and should be prioritized.
XII. Non-Public	<i>Ms. Mastin made a motion for the Board to go into Non-Public Session. Seconded by Ms. Casey. The Motion carried 7-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i>
XII. Adjourn	<i>Ms. Mastin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Gregoire seconded. The Motion carried 7-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained). The meeting was adjourned at 9:53 p.m.</i>

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Hilton
School Board Note Taker

Hello,

I have included what I would like to be my public comment for the school board meeting on 2/3, as well as the link to the opinion piece I referenced in my statement.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/01/25/schools-safely-make-masks-optional-new-cdc-guidelines/>

I am writing this to speak it at the school board meeting, where I do see that house bill 1371 is due to be discussed, which brings notice to district policies on masking in schools.

I want to first say that I have been very vocal since day one as to how I personally feel about masks on our children all day at school. I am not anti mask, I am just anti no choice. have been talked down to, had eyes rolled at me, and been made to feel that what I have to say doesn't matter.

I'm not here to argue, but I am here to beg. Our children have had to bear this burden for far too long. My first grader doesn't know what school looks like without masks. The amount of social anxiety she has developed over the last two years is terrifying as a parent. I can't get her into any type of counseling because the mental health sector is so overburdened with kids like her who are having the same type of problems. We have had several instances that she didn't even want to go to school, not only because she doesn't want to wear the mask, but because her social emotional development has been put on the back burner by our schools. She does not know what any of her teachers smiling faces look like. She is not the happy child she was before she went to public school full of masks.

My third grader has handled it as well as she can, but it has gotten to the point where now she is being punished when her mask slips. Just last week she was given a time out for it. This week she was told if it keeps happening she would have to be separated from her peers. I am certain she is not the only child this is happening to. My children have both voiced in the last week that because of this, they do not want to go to school anymore until the masks are not required.

I encourage this school board to read the opinion post in the Washington Post, that I sent ahead of time, written by Shira Doron, Westyn Branch-Elliman, and Elissa Perkins, who are epidemiologists, infectious disease specialists, and professors. I won't quote the whole article, but I'll point out a few important pieces.

“Respirators and other high-quality masks are highly effective at protecting their wearers, regardless of what people around them are doing. That makes the old mantra “my mask protects you and your mask protects me” obsolete. As a result, schools can finally safely make masks optional for students and staff.”

“The news about covid-19 and schools has been [relentlessly negative](#), only compounding these issues and encouraging increasingly harsh restrictions in schools. This tells students that they are disease vectors while failing to recognize that they are also growing children in need of social interactions for proper development. There is a [youth mental health crisis in this country](#), yet punitive actions that limit social interaction and normal life continue. School should be a place where children feel safe and supported, [even if their mask-wearing isn't perfect](#).”

The school boards responsibility is not to dictate personal health choices for our children. That is the responsibility and the choice of parents. Parents now have all of the tools needed to protect themselves and their children in the way they choose. Vaccinations are available, and N95s are available.

“The omicron wave will [soon be behind us](#), and, barring the imminent arrival of the next variant, we can all hope for quieter times this spring. We urge public health and school officials to educate communities on [one-way masking](#), emphasizing personal choice regarding self-protection and supporting those who choose to remain masked. Time and energy that staff spend policing mask use is far better spent on teaching and supporting children. It's time we stopped worrying about what others are doing and started focusing on protecting ourselves. We have many more tools in 2022 than we did in 2020, and our policies should shift to reflect these advances.

Our children have sacrificed a lot to protect us. Now it's time for us to give them their childhood back.”

APPROVED

Thank you,
Kathleen Payne
Warner- Simonds Parent