

Kearsarge Regional School District
School Board Retreat
 June 11, 2022 - 9:00 a.m.
 Kearsarge Professional Development Center
 165 Main Street, New London
Open to Public

<p>I. Call to Order</p>	<p>The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.</p>
<p>II. Pledge of Allegiance</p>	<p>Mr. Bartholomew led the Pledge of Allegiance.</p>
<p>III. Roll Call</p>	<p>Present: Ken Bartholomew, Emma Bates, Bebe Hammond Casey (Arrived at 9:19 a.m.). Ben Cushing, Eric Gregoire (via Zoom), Kyle Lombard, Alison Mastin; Superintendent Feneberg, Assistant Superintendent Besette. Absent: Arthur Bobruff, Kristin Schultz.</p> <p><i>Mr. Cushing made a motion to allow Mr. Gregoire to vote via Zoom. Ms. Mastin seconded. The Motion carried 4-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>
<p>IV. School Board Goals 2022-2023/Other</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Superintendent explained the purpose of the School Board Retreat, stating that it allows for the Board to discuss different goals for the District without having a set agenda. He presented the Board with Copies of the Strategic Plan Update as well as a draft of the Capital Improvement Plan. In reflecting on the goals the District has set over the last two years, he noted that even as COVID has derailed some things, it is remarkable what the District’s staff has accomplished. ● Mr. Bartholomew added that the retreat allows the Board to talk about big picture items. <p><i>Ms. Casey arrived at 9:19 a.m.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Bartholomew began discussing the Strategic Plan Update. He noted that Dr. Bobruff had discussed putting something in the update regarding student safety, Mr. Bartholomew observed that is already in the Plan. He stated that there was nothing specific that he wanted to change in the Strategic Plan Update, but noted that he would like to hear from the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent about any points they would like to make. He began discussing Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and noted that the need for SEL has become greater and greater. He noted that over the years the District has added more to the budget for student counseling and therapy. ● Mr. Cushing brought up the question of what is the school’s responsibility and how far we have to go as a District in regards to providing different services to the community. The Superintendent stated that it is many people’s perception that the District is responsible for

several services that have in the past been the responsibility of the community. Supt. Feneberg noted that the District has worked to provide more services. For example, the hiring of a new school Social Worker for the elementary level. That person has since resigned and returned to the private sector. He noted that the need at the level was so great. He also conveyed to the Board that a number of principals have expressed to him how much the students have unlearned socially over the last two years through the pandemic.

- Mr. Bartholomew noted that the District needs to provide the students with a place where they are able to learn. If students are coming to school and can't focus for a specific reason, the District works to provide support for students in those areas.
- Mr. Bessette expressed that educators are fighting a culture war surrounding education, specifically surrounding SEL. There are people out there that see SEL as indoctrination. Mr. Bartholomew presented that one of the complaints he's received regarding SEL is that it includes mindfulness, which included meditation. Mr. Bessette stated that it teaches kids to be more aware of what they're saying and what they're bringing up in the classroom. The Superintendent also noted the many new rules that have been passing the legislature.
- Ms. Casey asked if the need for SEL has increased. Mr. Bartholomew noted the number of disruptive things students have gone through, specifically the Great Recession, the Opioid Epidemic, and COVID-19. He also expressed that it may be well-meaning to continue to add the curriculum however, there is a limited amount of time. Supt. Feneberg noted that teacher orientation takes two days specifically because one day can't even fit all the legal mandates the District has to comply with.
- Mr. Bessette stated that the politics seem to be more impactful than ever before. He noted that there seems to be a lot more misunderstanding surrounding different subjects within the District. He apprised the Board that there is also a push by the CDC to expand on SEL in schools. He noted that schools are becoming the hubs of communities and they are beginning to invade parts of the community that they shouldn't be in.
- Mr. Cushing asked how the District can continue funding itself when things are constantly being added. Mr. Bartholomew noted that the money is only part of it, there also isn't sufficient time or staff. The Superintendent added that the District has a turnover rate of 7% to 10%. About 20 people come and go yearly. Mr. Bartholomew noted that a strong core staff has been with the District for a long time and asked how the District can leverage that.
- Mr. Bessette discussed with the Board the teacher mentoring program explaining how the program had previously been revamped. He

explained that the District is now looking to incorporate the mentoring program with the supervision and evaluation model. The Superintendent expanded on that, explaining how curriculum development is closely tied with the mentorship program.

- Ms. Mastin asked how the teachers are adapting to the use of SEL and how it is being integrated at the High School level. Mr. Bessette noted that SEL is incorporated most commonly in the Health and Wellness curriculum. SEL is also a part of the Career Counseling at the high school as well as the Freshman Seminar class.
- Ms. Casey noted that the role of Guidance Counselors nationally has changed. The Board discussed those changes. Ms. Casey presented the idea of a preschool through 12 Grade counseling curriculum. Supt. Feneberg noted that Mr. Langille has been charged with that task.
- Supt. Feneberg explained ongoing efforts to help the creation of curriculum and different aspects of teaching more efficiently.
- The Board discussed different methods of retaining teachers and how to recruit new teachers, discussing concerns such as the challenges facing new teachers who would be trying to move to the District. They also discussed the challenges of recruiting new teachers, noting that there are very few teachers applying to teaching positions across the state. Further, the Board discussed how few graduating High School students are looking to enter the field of education.
- Mr. Cushing asked if the teachers in the District work to recruit themselves. The Superintendent stated that they do. Ms. Casey asked about different ways the District can incentivize teachers to continue recruiting.
- Mr. Cushing presented to the Board the discussion point of creating a School Resource Officer (SRO) position. Mr. Bartholomew explained the history of the efforts to create an SRO position for the District.
- Supt. Feneberg presented the Board with the question of what is a real effective model of increasing security? He presented the possibility to the Board that an SRO may not necessarily be the more efficient way of helping and protecting our kids. Ms. Bates asked if the District would be better served hiring another social worker.
- The Board expressed that they don't want to see resources taken away from the Sutton Police Department due to an increased need at the schools.
- Mr. Bessette presented the idea that effective after-school programs can make a dramatic difference when it comes to school safety. He noted that it gives students a place to go and helps to keep them busy.
- Mr. Bessette noted that the District lost the afterschool program in New London, explaining that there has been pressure to solve that problem.

The Superintendent mentioned discussions the District has been having with a New York-based company that is interested in expanding to New Hampshire to provide afterschool programs and possibly all-day daycare.

- Mr. Bessette stated that it is no surprise that the cost of school is ever increasing. He noted that the District looks to innovative solutions to increase efficiency. He also explained that the District is hemorrhaging money out of some of the older schools. Mr. Bartholomew noted that 10 or so years ago, the District did a study regarding how much could be saved by closing Sutton Central Elementary. The study found the District would save about \$400,000 to \$500,000. He noted the need to discuss something that would really save money for the District. Mr. Lombard stated that there were previous discussions of moving the 5th Grade classes to the Middle School. Mr. Bessette explained how much money needs to be put into Simonds Elementary.
- Mr. Cushing expressed that he is very impressed with the Capital Improvement Plan and thanked Administration. The Board went on to discuss certain things that need to be addressed such as the Air Conditioning system over the auditorium and the locker rooms at the High School.
- The Superintendent brought before the Board the need to discuss plowing for the upcoming winter. He noted that the RFP brought in no bids. He presented to the Board the idea of the District purchasing two new plow trucks and additional grounds staff to operate them. He stated that two fully-equipped 1-ton trucks would be \$140,000.00 from Springfield GMC, noting that those two trucks are currently available.
- Mr. Bessette noted that one of the advantages of the District having the trucks is that they would be available immediately when they are needed. He stated that a number of plowing contracts require an inch of snow to be on the ground before they will come out and plow.
- Mr. Cushing presented the Board with the discussion topic of bussing, expressing concerns over the lack of bus drivers. He apprised the Board that the Transportation Committee has discussed adjusting school start times to accommodate the lack of bus drivers.
- Mr. Cushing asked how many bus drivers short the District currently is. The Superintendent stated the District is about 13 bus drivers short currently. He noted that some bus routes will likely need to be combined.
- The Superintendent brought before the Board the possibility of purchasing 13-passenger vans for the Athletic Department, noting that there were recently two athletic events scheduled for the same time and not enough bus drivers to accommodate. He noted that there's a possibility those vans could also be used for daily bus routes and they can be driven by someone with a regular driver's license, rather than a CDL.

	<p>Mr. Bessette did note that the additional vans would bring in the question of inspection and maintenance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms. Casey asked the Superintendent why objectives relating to opportunities for parent and student voice were removed from the Strategic Plan Update. The Superintendent noted that the District has made great strides in those areas and is still paying close attention to that. Mr. Bessette stated that it can be added back into the Strategic Plan Update. ● Ms. Casey asked if the District is still working with Dr. Preble regarding school culture and climate. The Superintendent stated that the District is continuing the work that was started with Dr. Preble. Mr. Bessette noted that the District now has a lot of information, but stated that these culture and climate issues are not quick fixes. ● Mr. Bessette noted that at times student voice was coerced to become adult perspectives. He stated that he feels that the District is moving really well with some of the staff, but noted that there are still pockets of resistance.
<p>V. Non-Public</p>	<p><i>Mr. Lombard made a motion for the Board to enter Non-Public. Mr. Cushing Seconded. The Motion carried 6-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>
	<p><i>The Board returned to Public session.</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Cushing made a motion to approve various bonuses discussed in Non-Public. Ms. Bates seconded. The Motion carried 6-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>
<p>VI. Adjourn</p>	<p><i>Mr. Lombard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bartholomew seconded. The Motion carried 7-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.</i></p>

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Hilton
 School Board Note Taker