

Kearsarge Regional School District
School Board Meeting
 May 18, 2023 - 6:30 pm
 Kearsarge Professional Development Center
 165 Main Street, New London
Open to Public

I. Call to Order	The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.
II. Pledge of Allegiance	Mr. Paterson led the Pledge of Allegiance.
III. Roll Call	<p>Present: Ken Bartholomew, Emma Bates, Arthur Bobruff, Ben Cushing, Eric Gregoire, David Keith, Kyle Lombard, Alison Mastin, Kristen Schultz.</p> <p>Michael Bessette, Assistant Superintendent; Beth Perkins, KREA Representative; Maggie Ellison, Student Representative</p> <p>Absent: Winfried Feneberg, Superintendent; Larry LeBoeuf, Business Administrator; Adara Boucher, Student Representative.</p>
IV. Reports of Administration	<p><i>Assistant Superintendent's Report - Michael Bessette, Assistant Superintendent</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Bessette apprised the Board that Superintendent Feneberg passed along to him a number of tasks to be presented in his absence. ● There were a number of professional development opportunities for teachers in the last week. He noted that there was a lot of time where teachers were working collaboratively. ● Mr. Bessette presented the Board with the resignation of Christine Downing, Principal at Sutton Elementary. He noted that the District did receive correspondence from the teachers and staff of Sutton Elementary and recognized the number of people present at the meeting in support of Ms. Downing. Mr. Bartholomew thanked Ms. Downing, present via Zoom, and stated that she has been a great benefit to the District. Ms. Downing thanked Mr. Bartholomew and expressed that Sutton should have a full-time principal. He explained the challenges of juggling her role as principal and her role as Curriculum Director. Mr. Lombard thanked Christine for all her work with the students in Sutton. <p><i>Mr. Cushing made a motion to accept the resignation of Christine Downing with regret. Ms. Schultz seconded. The Motion carried 9-0-0.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mr. Bessette presented the Board with the nominations of Kristine Turcotte, School Counselor and Sarah Warner, Elementary Teacher. <p><i>Ms. Schultz made a motion to accept the nomination of Kristine Turcotte. Ms. Mastin seconded. The motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Gregoire made a motion to accept the nomination of Sarah Warner. Ms. Bates seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>

- Mr. Bessette also apprised the Board that the District has received notification from Scott Fitzgerald, Athletic Director, of his intent to retire at the end of the 2023-24 school year.

Business Administrator's Report – Michael Bessette, Assistant Superintendent on behalf of Larry LeBoeuf, Business Administrator

- Mr. Bessette noted that there is information about scholarship withdrawals to be presented later on in the agenda.

KREA Representative - Beth Perkins, KREA Representative

- New London third graders sang at the VNA's Women Who Make A Difference Luncheon last week. They did a wonderful job representing the district at this touching and inspiring community event.
- New London 4th Graders gave their Spring Concert this week. Thanks to a grant from the Center for the Arts, the East Bay Jazz ensemble teamed up with the chorus to perform 20th century American music.
- The New London PTO's Cougar Carnival included an extensive art show all throughout the school lobby and hallways, as well as food catered by High School Culinary classes, a raffle for experiences with teachers, and a very popular dunk tank. Special thanks to Lieutenant David Keith for signing up to get drenched, along with quite a few intrepid teachers and principals.
- Elementary Schools have been deep into state testing for the last 2 weeks. In New London the third-grade tests at the beginning of the day, fourth grade in the middle of the day and fifth grade at the end of the day. All the tests are given online, so each child uses their Chromebook and headphones, as well as scrap paper and pencil.
- Simonds Library classes all take a walking field trip in the spring to Pillsbury Free Library to learn about that great town resource and hear about their upcoming summer reading program. They listen to a story from Miss Sue and get a tour of their public library.
- Over 300 family members turned out for Sutton's Annual Spring Concert under the tent and Art Show in the school on Monday May 8th. Students did a phenomenal job with their performances; including 4th Grader Kole Crowe who did a guitar solo with his Father to the hit Johnny B Goode by Chuck Berry. This was a special event for everyone involved. Congratulations to Nicole Densmore and Caitlin Mauser-Rowe for providing a great night to celebrate the arts. This event was supported by the Center for Arts in New London and Friends of Sutton PTO.
- About 30 Sutton students are busy preparing for their 1st annual production of "Snow White" (Sutton Style), which will occur at 6pm on May 26th at the middle school. This play is being produced and directed by a group of 5th grade students who came up with the idea to produce the show.
- The Sutton Central School had a Fire Safety Day on May 17. Educators from the State Fire Marshal's Office, as well as Lieutenant Biron from our local Sutton FD taught students important fire safety messages. Students became more familiar with the sights and sounds of a firefighter

	<p>in gear and got to explore the firetruck. It turned out that it was K9 Anthem and Deputy Fanjoy who stole the show. Anthem is one of two Ignitable Liquid Detection K9s in the state of NH. Students learned why Anthem is such an important partner during fire investigations and got to see her demonstrate some of her very impressive skills. She's pretty cute, too!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 150 eighth graders are in Washington DC this week. They have visited the Capitol Building, The Library of Congress, National Museum of African American History, National Monuments on the Mall, Arlington National Cemetery, the Holocaust Museum and much more. <p><i>Student Representative's Report – Maggie Ellison</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Project presentations were on Tuesday. Seniors had the chance to share what they've been working on throughout the year. With those wrapped up, everyone is ready for graduation and summer. • The active shooter drill that was scheduled for this week was postponed. There were mixed emotions throughout the student body about the drill. • Senior nights have been taking place for Spring sports. • Elections for next year's Student Government positions will take place next week. • Dinner Theater is happening now at the High School. Drama Club is providing food and entertainment for students and the community. • Prom is this weekend at the Andover Barn. <p><i>KRHS Student Constitution, Second Reading – Charles Langille, Principal and Maggie Ellison, Student Representative</i></p> <p><i>Ms. Mastin made a motion to waive second reading and adopt the KRHS Student Constitution. Ms. Schultz seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>
<p>V. Old Business</p>	<p><i>Class Size Discussion – Michael Bessette, Assistant Superintendent</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Bessette opened the discussion by explaining that the District has received a number of correspondence regarding the incoming 4th grade class at New London Elementary. The current 3rd grade class, currently four classes, would be going down to three classes, increasing the class size of each to 24 students. He discussed class caps with the Board and posed the question of what number is the right number for a class cap. The current class cap in the District is 25 students for 4th grade. Mr. Bessette presented the Board with research conducted by Harvard on class sizes. The question of whether an additional 4th grade teacher should be added was discussed. • Mr. Bartholomew asked if the only solution is to add another teacher. He asked what has been done in the past when a class size has exceeded or gotten close to the class cap. Mr. Bessette explained that in the past classes have exceeded the class cap; however, classrooms supports would be added to help the teacher manage the larger class. He noted that with the difficulty hiring para educators currently, that would be a difficult

	<p>approach. Mr. Bartholomew asked if these class cap numbers should be looked at based on the fact that the District has had difficulty recruiting para educators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Mastin stated that she felt these were two issues combined into one: the issue of the class cap and the issue of the size of this specific class. She noted that the class sizes are not going to be hitting 25. • Dr. Bobruff stated that the Board should be looking at this in terms of this specific 3rd grade class rather than at the class size, expressing that he felt class size was a completely separate topic. He gave the example of having a class of 15 that can be harder than a different class of 19. He stated that adding kids to that class of 15 is just going to make it that much harder. He said that that teachers and students need to be put first. He stated his support for an additional teacher noting that he felt it was worth the money. • Ms. Schultz stated that class size is an issue. She expressed that there are a number of initiatives that have been put on teachers’ plates, initiatives of which she stated she supports, but adding 24 students to a classroom really chews up time. She expressed that the amount of time currently allotted to teachers to prepare is inadequate. • Mr. Cushing commended teachers for all that they do on a daily basis, saying that he doesn’t know how they do it all. He stated that it doesn’t matter what the price tag is, adding another teacher is a no brainer to him. • Mr. Bartholomew reminded the Board that when the initial census is presented to the Board in October, if a class could be combined and not meet the maximum number, he has asked why the class hasn’t been combined. He noted that there has always been a good explanation. • Mr. Bessette apprised the Board of the recent results from the DESSA survey conducted on this 3rd grade class. He noted that this class did have numbers that were more elevated. • Mr. Bartholomew asked the question of whether class sizes do need to be reassessed based on the staffing shortages. • Mr. Bessette pointed out the issue of space in the different schools. If too many classes are split, different schools may run into the issue of not having enough classrooms for all the classes.
<p>VI. Public Comment</p>	<p><i>Mr. Bartholomew opened the meeting for public comment.</i></p> <p><i>Christine Downing – Principal, Sutton Elementary</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Downing stated that the class sizes are in the ED306 policy that is being looked at by the Department of Education. She noted that the cap set by the state does not mean it has to be the cap for the District, there is still local control. There is a true commitment to the students in Kearsarge and a class of 24 makes it challenging for students. We live in a different world now. She stated that if the District continues to have conversations about how to help students based on class size, it would be doing the District a disservice. She noted that equity does not mean that all four schools get the same thing, stating that leveling a number across the schools is not meeting the needs of students. She expressed that

Sutton Elementary deserves a full-time administrator. Though Sutton may be half the size of a school like Bradford or Simonds, it doesn't mean it's half the work.

- Mr. Bartholomew noted that the Board does not make the decision on the number of teachers. That is up to the administration to determine. He noted that the maximum numbers for classes have typically been a guide to help administration plan their budgets in the past. Mr. Bessette noted that these numbers came in for budget prep a long time ago. Principals work incredibly hard to ensure their students get what they need.
- Ms. Bates stated that she was confused as to why the School Board is involved in this if the Board does not make the final decision. Mr. Bessette stated that it is in part because there are no funds for an additional teacher. It would need to be at the direction of the School Board for administration to reappropriate funds for an additional teacher. He noted that he has had conversations with the Superintendent that has led to the belief that the job can be done with 24 students and still be up to the Kearsarge standard.
- Dr. Bobruff expressed that he would like to hear from the teachers on this and asked if the Board were to tell administration that they favored a change, whether it would be legitimate. Mr. Bartholomew stated that it would, but that he wanted to give administration the chance to take all the comments into account and then come back to the Board.

Bonnie Gill – 4th Grade Teacher, Sutton Elementary

- Ms. Gill informed the Board that she is a former teacher at New London Elementary and was the kindergarten teacher to the 3rd grade class at the heart of this discussion. Ms. Gill thanked Dr. Bobruff, Mr. Cushing, and Ms. Schultz for acknowledging the workload that is going on right now. She stated that it's easy to say that the data shows that a larger class size doesn't make a difference; however, she has had 22 students in a class teaching 4th grade and stated that it does make a difference. You can't compare the class size of elementary students to middle and high school. She noted that there have been fewer and fewer paras and noted that New London has the Gateway Program. She stated that she has a student in this class and is also advocating for her colleagues in New London. She stated that teaching fourth grade is not the same as it was even 6 years ago. She apprised the Board that she had taken a break from teaching 4th grade and when she returned all the curriculum had changed. She stated that burnout is a real thing and expressed that if the teachers in New London need a 4th teacher, then the District should find a way to do it.

Sarah Beauchemin – Nurse, Sutton Elementary

- Ms. Beauchemin stated that she wanted to speak on behalf of her children in regard to class size. She stated that there are ramifications of COVID that she doesn't think anyone could have predicted on the social emotional learning of these children and the academic deficits they're seeing. She stated that logically, you can come to the conclusion that working with a smaller number of children has tremendous benefits. She

stated that she remembers that the District did reallocate funds for some much needed facilities projects from staffing budget lines, expressing that she believes the District can find the money to get this teacher. She also expressed her sadness, regret, and concern for her children's education for the loss of Christine Downing.

Beth Perkins – KREA Representative

- Ms. Perkins gave the Board an example of the time it takes for her to grade two specific assignments required by her class's learning targets. The first being that students need to be able to write technically using a sequence of events to tell a story. She needs to meet with every student on their writing to give feedback and every Thursday she collects the students' notebooks to review their writing. She stated that each notebook takes her about 7 minutes on average to read and make notes. She made note of the time restraint if even three students were to be added to her class. Another learning target is writing using evidence to convey ideas clearly. This is another assignment where students write, and she collects their notebooks. It again takes her on average 7 minutes to review each student's writing and respond. In total, the assignments take her about 3 hours. She stated that she works way past the hours of the day and on the weekends.

Katherine Hastings – Librarian, New London Elementary

- Ms. Hastings thanked the Board for their concern about this topic. She stated that she is concerned about this particular group of students, expressing that she would like to see an additional teacher. She commended the 4th grade teachers, but noted her concern that they may lose a teacher if an additional teacher is not added.

Cathy Robjent – New London Resident and Former Elementary Teacher

- Ms. Robjent stated that a lot is asked of teachers. She stated that if the teachers are telling the District something, they should be believed.

Amy Cook - School Counselor, Sutton Elementary and Jill Wilson, 1st Grade Teacher, Sutton Elementary

- Ms. Cook presented a letter to the Board. Ms. Wilson read the letter. The letter is attached to these minutes.

Sarah Katsonos – 2nd Grade Teacher, New London Elementary

- Ms. Katsonos stated that she had been a part of the class she was sent home during COVID. She stated that it was a joy coming back to school and seeing students and it was clear what students had missed. As a 2nd grade team, they did their best with the 4 classes, breaking up the reading groups by reading level. They used those reading groups to intervene and work with students to help them catch up. She stated that they had given up when they left kindergarten. She stated that she advocates for this class and that they need a 4th class. These students are amazing and have been through trauma. She expressed that she believes that if there are the

	<p>means to do so, the students deserve it.</p> <p>Amy Cook – School Counselor, Sutton Elementary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Cook asked if Ms. Downing’s resignation letter was different from her not signing her contract. Mr. Bartholomew stated that it was a legal question. Mr. Bessette asked if what she was saying was whether or not the District could renegotiate the terms of her staying. Ms. Cook confirmed that was her question. Mr. Bartholomew stated that he would let the administration take the lead on that question. Ms. Cook presented and read a letter to the Board. The letter is attached to these minutes. <p>Abby Cross – 2nd Grade Teacher, Sutton Elementary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Cross presented and read a letter to the Board. The letter is attached to these minutes. <p>Ms. Schultz made a motion to close public comment. Ms. Mastin seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</p>
<p>VII. Approval of Minutes</p>	<p>Ms. Schultz made a motion to approve the minutes from the May 4, 2023 School Board Meeting as written. Ms. Mastin seconded. The Motion carried 7-0-2 (Mr. Bartholomew and Mr. Cushing abstained).</p>
<p>VIII. Presentation</p>	<p>KRMS Culture and Climate – Steve Paterson, Principal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Paterson discussed recent issues at the Middle School with bias and the targeting of certain individuals and groups based on their religion, race, gender identity, and sexual identity. He noted that so far this year the Middle School has had 25 bullying investigations that have been founded. He explained that he has reached out to the Anti-Defamation League to get an idea of what kinds of resources are available to address these issues. In addition to the Anti-Defamation League, he noted that he has reached out to New Hampshire Listens, the Carsey School at the University of New Hampshire, the Assistant Attorney General in the Office of Civil Rights, The New Hampshire Commission on Human Rights, ACLE, and Granite State Progress. He noted that the Anti-Defamation League offers anti-bias training for teachers and students and that the guidance on this issue explicitly states that anti-bias training is permissible. Mr. Paterson stated that he would like to have Board support in pursuing the training. Funds for the training can be found in the Middle School budget. Mr. Paterson presented the Board with three initiatives to address these issues at the Middle school. The first was the anti-bias training from the Anti-Defamation League, designed to help staff recognize their own biases and how to address them. He stated that he has discussed this with Mr. Langille about partnering with the High School in this initiative. The second initiative is a student driven program known as No Place for Hate which would allow students, with adult guidance, to plan 3 school wide events per year to address hate and promote kindness throughout their school community.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The third is a peer-to-peer training program that would look at training 25 to 30 students to be peer facilitators for conversations about bias. It would be 18 hours of training for students and 3 hours of professional development for staff. • Ms. Bates stated that she is fully in support of this effort and expressed that she is glad Mr. Paterson has taken on this initiative. • Ms. Schultz thanked Mr. Paterson for working to address this issue. She expressed concern that these initiatives would add more to the plates of teachers. Mr. Paterson stated that this would be included in Professional Development days rather than outside of teachers’ schedules. He said that this is an issue that teachers are facing daily, and the hope is that these trainings would help to reduce that for teachers and the school community. Ms. Schultz asked if the District did peer mediation at all. Mr. Bessette noted that the District does not. • Dr. Bobruff stated his belief that this is a no-brainer and stated his full support. • Mr. Cushing expressed his support for these initiatives. • Mr. Gregoire stated his support. He asked Mr. Paterson if he is seeing more of these issues coming up due to the vitriol of society or students using certain words because they get a reaction. Mr. Paterson stated that he feels that they’re seeing more targeted language being used. <p><i>Dr. Bobruff made a motion in support of anti-bias training at the Middle School and High School as presented. Ms. Bates seconded. The Motion carried 9-0-0.</i></p>
<p>IX. New Business</p>	<p><i>Maintenance Contract Renewal/Budget Transfer – Brett Paré, Director of Facilities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Paré presented the Board with a purchase recommendation for outsourced cleaning services for the next school year at the Middle School and New London elementary from Metrowest Cleaning Systems, Inc. in the amount of \$291,200.00. He also presented a budget transfer in the same amount. <p><i>Mr. Cushing made a motion to approve the purchase recommendation for outsourced cleaning services for the next school year at the Middle School and New London elementary from Metrowest Cleaning Systems, Inc. in the amount of \$291,200.00. Dr. Bobruff seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p> <p><i>Mr. Cushing made a motion to approve the budget transfer in the amount of \$291,200.00. Mr. Lombard seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p> <p><i>EMPG Grant – Emergency Generator for the SAU Building – Brett Paré,</i></p>

Director of Facilities

- Mr. Paré apprised the Board of a grant that would cover half of the overall cost to install and emergency generator at the SAU building. He requested the Board accept the terms of the grant.

Dr. Bobruff made a motion to accept the terms of the EMPG Grant. Ms. Bates seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).

The School Board, in a majority vote, accepted the terms of the Emergency Management Performance Grant as presented in the amount of \$72,500.00 for the Kearsarge Regional School District. Furthermore, the board acknowledges that the total cost of the project will be \$145,000.00, in which the School board will be responsible for a 50% match (\$72,500.00).

Technology Purchase Recommendations – Barbara Turner, Director of Technology

- Ms. Turner presented the Board with a purchase recommendation for 14 iMacs from Apple in the amount of \$31,225.00.

Mr. Cushing made a motion to approve the purchase recommendation for 14 iMacs from Apple in the amount of \$31,225.00. Ms. Mastin seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).

Equipment Grant – Food Service – NLES – Michael Bessette, Assistant Superintendent

- Mr. Bessette presented the Board with a Department of Education grant that the District has qualified for in the amount of \$2,245.00 to be used for the purchasing of a heated holding proofing cabinet.

Mr. Cushing made a motion to accept and expend the Department of Education grant in the amount of \$2,245.00 to be used for the purchasing of a heated holding proofing cabinet. Dr. Bobruff seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).

Scholarships – Michael Bessette, Assistant Superintendent

- Mr. Bessette presented the Board with a list of scholarship deposits and withdrawals and requested Board approval.

<i>Scholarship Name</i>	<i>Deposit Amount</i>	<i>Withdrawal Amount</i>
Chris Scarpino Scholarship	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
Project Climb Scholarship (Trust Account)	\$437.96	\$600.00
Carl Fitzgerald Scholarship	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
Art Scholarship	\$200.00	\$200.00
Elizabeth Feingold Scholarship	\$200.00	\$200.00
KADP Scholarship	\$600.00	\$600.00
TOTAL	\$4,437.96	\$4,500.00

Mr. Lombard made a motion to approve the scholarship deposits and withdrawals as presented. Mr. Cushing seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).

<p>X. Old Business</p>	<p><i>Board Goal Review – Michael Bessette, Assistant Superintendent</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Bessette discussed the Board Goal Review to be discussed at the School Board Retreat. <p><i>Supervision and Evaluation Update – Michael Bessette, Assistant Superintendent</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Bessette gave a presentation to the Board on the progress of the update to the District’s Supervision and Evaluation model. He stated that the committee of teachers and administration reviewing the model wants to help teachers determine how they can become better educators. He also noted that the review of this model came out of the last CBA negotiations. Mr. Bessette presented an example of the current model, noting that there are just too many criteria involved to the point that it makes the model inefficient. He gave the Board an example of how time-consuming the current model can be. This model is helping the District to define the portrait of an educator, going hand-in-hand with the development of a portrait of a learner. Additionally, he noted how the District’s mission and vision informs the updating of this model. Mr. Bessette commended and thanked each member of the committee for the great work being done.
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<p>XI. Public Comment</p>	<p><i>Mr. Bartholomew opened the meeting for public comment.</i></p> <p><i>Sarah Beauchemin – Warner, New Hampshire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Beauchemin apprised the Board that she is the parent to two Middle
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	<p>School students and applauded the efforts of the administration and School Board to engage in the anti-bias training discussed earlier in the meeting. She stated that what’s currently in place is not working and that she applauded the Board and District for taking a stand. She expressed that the fact that the Board has made a stand is saying that the safety of these students is a right. She stated that these situations are hateful and meant to demean the other students.</p> <p><i>Ms. Mastin made a motion to close public comment. Ms. Schultz seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained).</i></p>
<p>XII. School Board Sub-Committees</p>	<p><i>Facilities Committee – Mr. Cushing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Cushing stated that the Committee discussed the fire alarm panel at the Middle School. It was found that Simplex could come out and replace the Board for about \$25,000.00. Mr. Paré has looked into possible insurance money that may be available to cover the project; however, in order to receive any insurance money, the District would have to first complete the project. The Committee also discussed the possibility of replacing both fire alarm panels at the Middle School. • The Bradford PreK slab is in place. Three of the modular units have arrived and the last of them will arrive by June 5th. • Mr. Cushing stated that Mr. Paré apprised the Committee that some of the facilities employees have been taking rags home and washing them in their personal washers and dryers. He discussed the need for an alternative. Discussed the possibility of outsourcing the cleaning of the rags or the possibility of a facilities employee collecting the rags from around the District to be laundered at one of the District buildings with laundry units.
<p>XIII. Adjourn</p>	<p><i>Mr. Cushing made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Schultz seconded. The Motion carried 8-0-1 (Mr. Bartholomew abstained). The meeting was adjourned at 9:44 p.m.</i></p>

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Hilton
School Board Note Taker