

**Pelham School Board Meeting
November 18, 2020
Pelham Elementary School
6:30 pm**

In Attendance:

School Board Members: Megan Larson, Chair, Debbie Ryan, Vice-Chair, Troy Bressette, Darlene Greenwood, and David Wilkerson (virtual due to Covid-19)

Superintendent: Chip McGee

Business Administrator: Deb Mahoney

Director of Curriculum,

Instruction & Assessments: Sarah Marandos

Student Representative: Joe Wholey

Also in Attendance: Dawn Mead, PHS Principal
Todd Kress, Athletic Director

1. Call to Order:

Chair Megan Larson called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm, followed by The Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Larson asked Mr. Wilkerson if he was alone, and he responded, 'yes.'

Public Input:

Chair Megan Larson requested the public to follow Policy BEDH.

- a. Paul Maslanek, 54 Longview Circle – Mr. Maslanek commented that he understood that not all winter sports topics would be covered during the meeting. Mr. Maslanek also mentioned that it was unlikely that he would get another chance to speak with the Board before Monday, November 30. Mr. Maslanek made a couple of key points. The first point was that the wrestling team could use the PHS cafeteria to practice, and students do not currently use the cafeteria. His second point was that the wrestling team is a very small group. Mr. Maslanek noted that the athletes are willing to do whatever they have to to have a season.

Student Opening Remarks:

Mr. Wholey congratulated the PHS Varsity Football Team. Mr. Wholey stated that the team was the Division III State Champions. He noted that the group was undefeated this season, 8-0. Mr. Wholey commented that the football team outscored their opponents 256-23 this year.

Mr. Wholey said that the Fall Sports Awards Night for PHS was held on Tuesday, November 17. He advised anyone who wanted to watch the ceremony to go to @phsphythons using Twitter. He added that the students are happy to be back in school.

Superintendent Opening Remarks:

Superintendent Chip McGee mentioned that he wanted to thank everyone in the community. Dr. McGee appreciated that members of the community reached out and asked how he was doing.

Dr. McGee commented that Principal Stacy Maghakian decided to cancel the PMS trip to Washington D.C. The trip was canceled because of the unknown factor of the pandemic and the fact that the District would not be able to return the deposit money for the trip. Dr. McGee made it clear that the decision was tough.

Dr. McGee brought in a PSD Snack Attack prop to the meeting. Girl Scout Troop #10645 snack attacked the School District today. The Superintendent thanked the leadership of Camryn Celata, Khloe Letourneau, and Abby Chandonnett.

53 **2. Presentations:**

- 54 a. No Presentations

55

56 **3. Main Issues / Policy Updates:**

57

58 **Reopening Safely Update:**

59 Superintendent Chip McGee mentioned that as of Monday, the District is back to a Family Choice program. The
60 District is back to in-school and remote learning. Dr. McGee said that PMS had one student with a positive case of
61 Covid-19. He informed the Board that the District had switched to assigned seating to assist with contact tracing.
62 The Superintendent added that the District has protocols to help identify 'close contacts' within the schools.

63

64 Per the advice of Public Health Officer Karen McGlynn, the District has tightened the approach to face mask
65 breaks. The District still has lunch in the school rooms, but the alternating row mask breaks have stopped. Dr.
66 McGee commented about the School District's response to what is occurring in other communities. He said that
67 the plan is to keep the schools open as long as the District can safely operate the schools. Dr. McGee mentioned
68 that he uses public health data and the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services reporting to
69 receive updated Covid-19 information. He also reviews the school impact information. This information will show if
70 Covid-19 is spreading within the school.

71

72 Dr. McGee stated that the District is most at risk with their staffing. He said that the substitutes, long-term
73 substitutes, and custodians are areas of need. The Superintendent noted that anyone interested in applying for a
74 position would need to go to:

75 <https://www.applitrack.com/sau28/onlineapp/default.aspx>

76

77 The District has started the second round of the Family Choice Survey for Kindergarten through Eighth Grade. Dr.
78 McGee said that the transfer requests are in, and the District is doing its best to honor the requests. Most of the
79 students have asked to stay with their original selection. The current term ends on December 2, and the new term
80 begins on December 3.

81

82 Dr. McGee said that the District strongly suggests that students, who were in close contact with someone who has
83 Covid-19, get tested. If the student does not get tested, they cannot come back until 14 days after the close
84 contact. He added that if a student shows symptoms of having Covid-19, the student is not required to get a test
85 but must then quarantine for ten days from when the symptoms began and are symptom-free.

86

87 **Winter Sports Information:**

88 Superintendent Chip McGee introduced PHS Principal Dawn Mead and Athletic Director Todd Kress. Mr. Kress
89 presented the winter sports plan for the Pelham School District. He started by describing how the 2020 Pelham
90 High School Athletics opened the fall season with nine teams. The teams spent seven to eight weeks practicing and
91 competing. The teams followed the guidelines and protocols put into place by the Pelham High School Athletic
92 Department and approved by the Pelham School Board. At the end of the season, the teams were placed in NHIAA
93 tournaments.

94

95 PHS allowed two family members per athlete at the home events and screened each guest as they entered the
96 field or gym. At away events, PHS athletes and coaches followed the guidelines put in place at each school. Based
97 on the PHS fall sports season's success, the Pelham High Athletic Department has recommended that the District
98 move forward with a winter sports program.

99

100 **NHIAA and PHS Guidelines for all Winter Sports Teams:**

101 The NHIAA has set the following dates for the start of winter athletics:

- 102 a. Monday, November 30 – Skills and Drills only (not mandatory, casual workouts)
- 103 b. Monday, December 14 – Tryouts/First Practices (mandatory)
- 104 c. Monday, January 11 – First day to compete against other schools.

105 Similar to the fall sports season, the NHIAA will run open tournaments. The tournaments will start regional but
106 would eventually end up statewide in each Division.

107
108 Pelham High will again develop regional schedules for all of its teams. The idea is to keep the travel distance down
109 and to play the same teams each week for Covid-19 tracing, if necessary. The Southern NH Pod will consist of
110 Sanborn, Timberlane, Hollis/Brookline, Souhegan, Milford, West, and Campbell. Each sport may differ slightly, but
111 our schedules will be made as consistent and regional as possible.

112
113 The NHIAA has categorized all winter sports into three categories. Below are the sports that PHS offers and how
114 they are organized. Mr. Kress reviewed the guidelines for the eight winter sports.

115
116 a. Lower Risk:
117 i. Indoor Track
118 ii. Swimming
119 iii. Sideline Cheer

120
121 b. Moderate Risk:
122 i. Basketball
123 ii. Gymnastics

124
125 c. Highest Risk:
126 i. Wrestling
127 ii. Competition Cheer
128 iii. Ice Hockey

129
130 Mr. Kress stated that the NHIAA had ice hockey as a moderate risk sport. Because Pelham is a co-op ice hockey
131 team, the Pelham athletes would be sharing the ice with another school. He pointed out that if Nashua says 'no' to
132 playing ice hockey, Pelham will not have enough ice hockey players to field a team. Mr. Kress stressed that unless
133 an athlete is actively competing, the athletes will be required to wear a face mask.

134
135 Mr. Kress added Division I and III have already decided to require wearing masks all the time, and no visiting
136 spectators will be allowed. Mr. Kress mentioned that he believes that indoor track will be suspended because the
137 three facilities used in the past have stopped holding high school meets. He noted that the NHIAA has not come
138 out with any guidelines regarding wrestling.

139
140 Mr. Kress stated that the communication protocol created in the fall requires that the coach have a list of the
141 student's email address, student's cellphone number, parent's email address, home phone number, and parent's
142 cellphone number. The coaches will provide the Athletic Director with a copy of the list. Upon a student or family
143 member confirming a positive covid-19 test, the coach will contact the Athletic Director. If the Athletic Director is
144 not available, then contact the Principal. The Athletic Director will coordinate with the Superintendent, who will
145 work with the Public Health Officer to determine a course of action. The Athletic Director will contact the athletes
146 that were possibly exposed. The parents will also be contacted.

147
148 Mr. Kress said that if an athlete had a positive case of covid-19, and was involved in a sport that had contact made
149 continuously, then the entire team would be quarantined. He noted that he wants to get information on
150 restricting interscholastic athletes from participating in club sports. Mr. Kress commented that one of the
151 difficulties with running a contact sport is the risk of having an athlete be asymptomatic and spread Covid-19 to
152 the team. He added that he did not know of any District that did not plan to play winter sports, and Mr. Kress
153 mentioned Pinkerton Academy as an example. Pinkerton Academy shut down their fall sports program but intends
154 on playing winter sports.

155
156 David Wilkerson exited the meeting at 7:17 pm.

157 Mr. Kress commented that he expects Division II schools to require that face masks be worn at sporting events. If
158 Division II does not make the requirement to wear face masks, then he believes the Districts will enforce wearing
159 face masks. Mr. Kress mentioned that he thought the PHS gymnasium was large enough to fit the basketball team,
160 cheerleaders, and parents. He did not want to limit how the cheerleaders would show their support for PHS.
161

162 Ms. Mead mentioned, under the current guidelines, the gymnasium could hold 80 pods of two people or 160
163 people. Dr. McGee said that the Board voted to approve the return to sports and established new safety guidelines
164 in the fall. PHS is looking to continue with the current safety guidelines and does not require a vote.
165

166 **PHS Band**

167 Mr. Wholey commented that PHS still has band class. The band has transitioned from football to concert season.
168 He noted that he was not sure how the band would have performances. Mr. Wholey discussed the band's size and
169 how it decreased from 50 students down to 24 students. He mentioned that the band expects two competitions:
170 the New Hampshire All-State Band, and the other is a competition at Six-Flags. At this time, he has not received an
171 update about the competitions.
172

173 **Program of Studies Review:**

174 Superintendent Chip McGee introduced PHS Principal Dawn Mead, and Director of Curriculum, Instruction &
175 Assessments Sarah Marandos. Ms. Mead thanked Girl Scout Troop 10645 for the snacks, and she wanted to
176 recognize that today is National Education Support Personnel Day.
177

178 Ms. Mead mentioned that PHS decided to move from an A/B (classes meet every other day) schedule to a 4 x 4
179 (same courses meet every day) block schedule in August. The decision was made to limit the number of contacts
180 for students and staff. She asked for the opportunity to come back in March 2021 with a proposal to either
181 continue the 4x4 block schedule or return to A/B classes for the 2021-2022 school year.
182

183 Ms. Mead mentioned that the District would better understand where they are in March, with regards to the
184 pandemic. PHS will also have time to gather qualitative data from the teacher, student, and parent stakeholder
185 groups. PHS will provide quantitative data using the SAT scores and semester one scores.
186

187 Ms. Ryan suggested that Ms. Mead listens to people who are for and people who are against the 4 x 4 schedule.
188 Dr. McGee agreed that meeting again in February 2021 would be better for the students and parents selecting
189 classes for the next school year.
190

191 **Course Description Changes**

192 Dr. Marandos commented on the description changes to the following courses. She thanked the Deans at PHS,
193 who have worked very closely with the Administration and Ms. Mead. Dr. Marandos confirmed that College
194 Composition credits would be transferred to the accredited colleges.
195

196 Course Description Changes	# of Credits	Level
197 American Literature Classics	1.0	CC
198 American Lit Contemporaries	1.0	L1
199 Academic Skills	1.0	UL
200 Best Shorts	0.5	UL
201 Current Political & Social Issues	1.0	CC
202 Exploration in Physical Education	0.5	UL
203 Yearbook	1.0	UL/L1/H

204
205 Ms. Ryan made a motion to approve the changes to the program of studies, as outlined. Mr. Bressette seconded
206 the motion. The motion passed (4-0-0).
207
208
209

210 **Progress on District Goals and Superintendent’s Quarterly Evaluation:**

211

212 **Goal 1: Health and Safety**

213 Dr. McGee mentioned that the District has been working on following the guidelines, including reinforcing the
214 policies. Dr. McGee noted that he and Public Health Officer Karen McGlynn had performed unannounced school
215 visits. The visits were done to make sure the District followed the guidelines. Dr. McGee added that the most
216 significant issue the District has is with unfilled positions.

217

218 Dr. McGee commented that the schools have gone through a change in both physical space and cleaning
219 protocols. He noted that the Pelham School was able to purchase High-Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters
220 before the start of the school year. Dr. McGee added that the District has been able to stay within the Operating
221 Budget.

222

223 Dr. McGee thanked the community for not using bus transportation if they did not need to use the bus. The
224 District has been able to provide bus transportation at half capacity. He added that the District is treating remote
225 learning the same as in-school learning. Dr. McGee said that the biggest challenge in teaching is with the
226 Chromebooks. The District ordered 300 Chromebooks, and they were supposed to arrive in July. And as of this
227 meeting, they still have not arrived.

228

229 Dr. McGee noted that the District had completed a majority of the Compensatory Education IEP meetings. Dr.
230 McGee said that he is trying to give a quantitative approach by using survey data. One of the questions asked in
231 the survey was, "How do you feel about the efforts that the Pelham School District has undertaken to promote
232 health and safety during the pandemic?" The survey showed that 59 percent of the people who took the survey
233 thought the District was doing excellent.

234

235 **Goal 2: Renovation of the Pelham Memorial School**

236 Dr. McGee said that the Special Warrant Article is ready, and the Budget Committee will finalize all Warrant
237 Articles at the Budget Committee meeting. Dr. McGee commented that the District was able to provide a
238 guaranteed maximum price to renovate the Memorial School. The price to renovate PMS is \$31,980,000.
239 He noted that the price is an increase of 3.6 percent from last years’ proposal.

240

241 Dr. McGee will sit down with Awareness for Community and Education Support (ACES) and other community
242 groups to promote and educate the community about the project. Superintendent Chip McGee’s second survey
243 question was "How important do you feel it is for the district to renovate and upgrade the Pelham Memorial
244 School building?" The survey showed two things:

- 245 a. Eighty-five percent of the PES survey takers thought that a renovated Memorial School was very important.
- 246 b. Seventy-five percent of all the survey takers thought that a renovated Memorial School was very important.

247

248 **Goal 3: Culture and Climate**

249 Dr. McGee said that his goal is to build on some cultural elements, and people come because they know the
250 Pelham School District is a great place to have a career as a student or educator. Superintendent Chip McGee’s
251 third survey question was "How likely are you to recommend the Pelham School District to others (as a staff
252 member, a parent or a student)?" The survey showed the following results:

- 253 a. Eighty-seven percent of parents would 'likely' or 'very likely' recommend the Pelham School District to others.
- 254 b. Eighty-three percent of staff would 'likely' or 'very likely' recommend the Pelham School District to others.

255

256 The Superintendent and the Board agreed that the surveys need more staff input. The Board also suggested that
257 future survey results should provide a comparison. For example, the next survey would show the results from
258 January 2021 and the results from November 2020. Dr. McGee noted that the subsequent quarterly evaluation
259 would be in late January or early February.

260

261

262

315 Superintendent Chip McGee stated that PMS Band Teacher Elisa Saunders had requested a Leave of Absence.
316
317 Ms. Ryan made a motion to accept the Leave of Absence of Band Teacher Elisa Saunders. Mr. Bressette seconded
318 the motion. The motion passed (4-0-0).
319
320 b. **Future Meetings:**
321 a. 12/02/2020 – 6:30 pm School Board Meeting @ PES Library
322 b. 12/16/2020 – 6:30 pm School Board Meeting @ PES Library
323
324 c. **Non-Public:**
325 a. No Non-Public Session
326
327 **8. Adjourn Meeting:**
328 Mr. Bressette made a motion to adjourn the public session at 8:46 pm. Ms. Ryan seconded the motion. The motion
329 passed (4-0-0).
330
331
332 Submitted by Matthew Sullivan