

**Pelham School Board Meeting  
January 6, 2021  
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

**1. Call to Order:**

Chair Megan Larson called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm, followed by The Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Larson asked Mr. Wilkerson if he was alone, and he responded, 'yes.'

**a. Public Input:**

None

**b. Student Opening Remarks:**

Mr. Wholey stated that on January 7, PHS would have a Virtual Honor Society Induction Ceremony at 6:30 pm. The ceremony will be broadcast on PTV. He commented that the PHS clubs are underway and are meeting virtually. Mr. Wholey noted that most of the clubs had started up, and the Drama Club is planning a virtual play for this year. He added that Coach Kress is looking for students to tape the PHS basketball games. Interested students should reach out to Coach Kress.

**c. Superintendent Opening Remarks:**

Superintendent McGee mentioned that he wanted to celebrate the great joy of visiting Kindergarten. Dr. McGee thanked the teachers and staff of the PES, who made sure the rooms were ready.

Dr. McGee commented that he received two great announcements. He stated that the John Hargreaves Memorial VFW Post 10722 & Auxiliary sent the District two great letters. The first announcement was that Kathy Cartier received the first-place in the District and will represent District 6 at the Department level. The winner from the seven New Hampshire Districts goes to Nationals.

The second announcement was that Erin Henderson, who was selected as Pelham Teacher of the Year. Ms. Henderson was selected to represent District 6 at the Department level. Again, the winner from the seven New Hampshire Districts goes to Nationals.

Ms. Greenwood commented that Ava Sidlowski received the second-place at the District level. Her essay was titled. 'What is Patriotism to Me.'

**2. Presentations:**

No Presentations

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

54

55 Ms. Ryan motioned to move the Pelham High School State Standards Diploma to first. Mr. Bressette seconded the  
56 motion. The motion passed (5-0-0)

57

58 a. **Pelham High School State Standards Diploma:**

59

60 PHS Principal Dawn Mead and Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessments Sarah Marandos presented the  
61 New Hampshire State Core Diploma proposal. Ms. Mead thanked the school nurses for following the protocols of  
62 the District.

63

64 Ms. Mead mentioned that she and Dr. Marandos are requesting the implementation of a 20 credit New Hampshire  
65 State Core Diploma, starting with the Class of 2021. Ms. Mead stated the request was being made because of the  
66 result COVID-19 and added the pandemic had exacerbated the challenges that some of the students are facing.  
67 The pandemic is only one of the difficulties that some students face in earning the credits required for a High  
68 School Diploma. Ms. Mead stated that students are currently required to earn 26 credits to receive a Pelham High  
69 School Diploma.

70

71 Ms. Mead mentioned that the District currently have Seniors who are struggling with remote learning. She  
72 stressed that students already have to deal with earning credits in a remote learning environment, but they also  
73 have found that COVID-19 further complicates their education.

74

75 Ms. Mead commented that during the 2019-2020 school year, the PHS students were enrolled in 8 courses and  
76 used an A/B schedule, and the majority of A/B classes were yearlong. She noted that many students were not  
77 successful with receiving credits once the District pivoted to remote learning. Ms. Mead mentioned that one of the  
78 stopgaps used before the pandemic was the adult education programs. In the past, students have enrolled in and  
79 paid for these courses to earn credit to graduate with a Pelham High School diploma or a Salem Adult Education  
80 Diploma. Ms. Mead pointed out that the adult education diploma is equivalent to a New Hampshire State Core  
81 Standards Diploma.

82

83 Ms. Mead added that local districts have already adopted and implemented a 20 credit New Hampshire State Core  
84 Diploma. The local Districts include Bedford, Bow, Exeter, Goffstown, Hollis-Brookline, Hudson, Londonderry,  
85 Manchester, Nashua, Salem, Sanborn, and Windham. Ms. Mead and Dr. Marandos requested that the School  
86 Board support an amendment for a study program that will allow the School District to help the students.

87

88 Dr. Marandos presented the difference between the 26 credit Pelham High School Diploma and the 20 credit New  
89 Hampshire State Core Standards Diploma. Dr. Marandos stated that New Hampshire State Core Standards Diploma  
90 would require Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior English, and Intro. to Writing would not be required.  
91 Social Studies would replace Western Civ. with a half-credit Elective. Math would require students to pass Algebra I  
92 and two other math courses. Science would require students to pass Physical Science and Biology, but would not  
93 have to pass Chemistry. Fine Arts, Health, Physical Education and Computer Applications would remain the same.  
94 Personal Finance would not be required, Personal Choice Electives would decrease to 5.5 credits, and Community  
95 Service Learning would not be required.

96

97 Ms. Greenwood commented that people need a Personal Finance Plan/Managing Your Money course, and Mr.  
98 Bressette agreed. Dr. Marandos said that students could still take the course, and they typically take the course  
99 during their Sophomore year.

100

101 Mr. Bressette questioned if the Community Service Learning could be temporarily waived, and once the pandemic  
102 is over, revisit making the Community Service Learning a requirement. Dr. McGee commented that this was the  
103 intention. Ms. Larson mentioned that the Board might be better off deciding for the 2020-21 school year and come  
104 back with more feedback regarding future school years. Dr. McGee agreed with Ms. Larson's statement and said  
105 the Board has enough time to decide on the Class of 2022. Ms. Ryan noted that the proposal should be approved

106 based on the way the plan is started and know that the requirements would be revisited. Dr. Marandos confirmed  
107 that Windham is the most recent School District to adopt the 20 credit New Hampshire State Core Diploma. The  
108 other School Districts have offered the New Hampshire State Core Diploma for several years.

109  
110 Mr. Bressette questioned Dr. Marandos about the number of students she might expect to apply for the 20 credit  
111 New Hampshire State Core Diploma. Ms. Mead and Dr. Marandos agreed that they expect less than 20 students to  
112 apply for the program.

113  
114 Ms. Mead mentioned that Pelham High School would implement an application process. Students will need to  
115 submit an application to their school counselor. The application process is open to Juniors and Seniors who cannot  
116 meet the Pelham High School graduation requirements by the end of their Senior year. Applications will need to be  
117 submitted for approval no later than January 31 of the student's Senior year.

118  
119 Ms. Ryan motioned to approve the New Hampshire State Core Diploma for the Class of 2020-21. Mr. Bressette  
120 seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0-0).

121  
122 b. **Pandemic Response Update:**

123  
124 Superintendent Chip McGee walked the School Board through the pandemic update. He mentioned that it had  
125 been a busy week with the staff and Kindergarteners returning to the school. Dr. McGee commented that he is still  
126 recommending the plan that the Board approved. The plan is to pivot back to in-school learning for the families  
127 that chose in-school learning, beginning on January 11.

128  
129 Dr. McGee highlighted three of the changes that the Board approved at the last meeting:

- 130 1. The District is revising the protocol for when masks may be removed during lunch and mask breaks. The  
131 District has ordered plastic shields that can be set up on desks. When six feet of physical distancing is not  
132 an option, the shields will be used.
- 133  
134 2. The placement of desks was one of the most important pieces of work, other than teaching and learning  
135 that the staff has done this week.
- 136  
137 3. Dr. McGee was hoping to have the reopening guidelines to the families by today. The guidelines will be  
138 shared in the Friday update.

139  
140 Dr. McGee reviewed the metrics for the level of community transmission. He provided the School Board with the  
141 statistics from December 28 and January 6. The Covid-19 PCR test positivity as a 7-day average was 8.3%  
142 (Moderate) on December 28 and is 11.1% (Substantial) on January 6. The number of new infections per 100,000  
143 population prior to 14 days was 613.4.4 (Substantial) on December 28 and is 736.7 (Substantial) on January 6. And  
144 the number of new hospitalizations per 100,000 people over the prior 14 days was 0.9 (Minimal) on December 28  
145 and is 0.9 (Minimal) on January 6. Dr. McGee mentioned that the numbers likely increased because of the holidays  
146 and travel.

147  
148 The next metric that Dr. McGee reviewed was the level of school impact. Dr. McGee pointed out that the figures  
149 are almost impossible to measure in a meaningful way because they are currently remote learning. He mentioned  
150 that since the pivot 27 students, from the entire District had reported positive cases of Covid-19. During the same  
151 period, 17 staff members reported having a positive case of Covid-19.

152  
153 The final metric reviewed was staff capacity. Dr. McGee stated that the District has reached out to the staff to see  
154 if a staff member requires an exception to come to work. The District has requested the information because the  
155 District needs to know that the staff will be available and ready to work. The staff capacity on December 28 was  
156 considered 'Strained Medium.' And the staff capacity on January 6 was considered 'Strained Medium.' Dr. McGee  
157 stated that resignations, quarantines, and requests for leave of absence have all affected the School Impact Level.

158

159 Dr. McGee discussed the hiring of second and third-grade teachers. He mentioned that the District is calling  
160 references, and the new teachers should start before the School Board meets again. Dr. McGee added that the  
161 District would have to move students to new classrooms and would make the move as easy as possible. The goal is  
162 to have 17 students per classroom.

163  
164 The School Board discussed how Pelham teachers want to return to in-school learning and do not intentionally  
165 choose to teach remotely. Mr. Wilkerson added that he lives with two teachers and said that the teachers are  
166 concerned about the successful outcome for the students. Chair Megan Larson said that she is concerned that  
167 COVID-19 PCR test positivity as a seven-day average was at 11.1%. The members of the Board agreed that the  
168 decision to return on January 11 was with the idea that the numbers would decline after ten additional days of  
169 remote learning.

170  
171 Ms. Larson mentioned that between December 28 and January 6, the numbers have increased by 3%. She  
172 questioned whether the District would be better off having additional four-and-a-half days of remote learning and  
173 return to in-school on January 18. The Board discussed the effects of remote education at the end of a semester  
174 and how students who are excluded from school will not receive the same benefit as the students who can return  
175 to in-school learning.

176  
177 Mr. Bressette commented that his impression was that Dr. McGee's initial decisions were based on staffing issues.  
178 Mr. Bressette added that the staffing issues have improved, the COVID-19 numbers are worse, but the District has  
179 made modifications to the safety and health protocols to mitigate the risk. He asked what input Ms. McGlynn has  
180 offered as the Pelham Health Officer. Dr. McGee stated that he informed Ms. McGlynn of his recommendation to  
181 return to in-school learning on January 11. He informed the Board that Ms. McGlynn told him that she supported  
182 his recommendation.

183  
184 Ms. Ryan said that if the COVID-19 PCR test positivity as a seven-day average were at 11.1% in the fall, the School  
185 District would not have been talking about in-school learning. She noted that the District has learned more about  
186 the Coronavirus and how to protect oneself. Ms. Ryan spoke about adding more barriers, masks, and handwashing  
187 helps decrease the chance of catching COVID-19. She acknowledged that the best place for children is in the  
188 schools, but Ms. Ryan was concerned that bringing children back to school would only make the matter worse.

189  
190 Dr. McGee stated that if the Board did not vote to move back in-school learning, he intends to reopen the schools  
191 on January 11.

192  
193 Ms. Greenwood motioned to continue remote learning until January 18, and return to school on January 19. Mr.  
194 Wilkerson seconded the motion. The motion passed (4-1-0). (Mr. Bressette voted 'No')

195  
196 c. **Bond Hearing Preparation:**

197  
198 Superintendent Chip McGee clarified why the School Board meeting would have a Public Hearing next Wednesday.  
199 Dr. McGee mentioned that it is a required Public Meeting when the School Board will present a bond. The meeting  
200 will be on Wednesday, January 13, at 6:30 pm.

201  
202 Ms. Greenwood asked if she and Mr. Wilkerson might be allowed to attend the meeting remotely. Dr. McGee did  
203 not see any reason why that would not be permitted.

204  
205 d. **Annual Meeting on COVID-19:**

206  
207 Superintendent Chip McGee mentioned that legal counsel had sent the School District an Advisory Memo.  
208 According to the law, legal counsel informed the District that the School Board could decide to have the Annual  
209 Meeting remotely. Dr. McGee said that his recommendation was to have the Annual Meeting in person. Ms.  
210 Greenwood asked if she and Mr. Wilkerson might be allowed to attend the meeting remotely. Dr. McGee will look  
211 into the possibilities of Board members attending the meeting remotely.

212 e. **2021 Warrant Article Approval:**  
 213  
 214 Business Administrator Deb Mahoney mentioned that the School Board and the Budget Committee have already  
 215 voted and recommended the two Warrant Articles. She stated that the Board members only had to sign the form.  
 216 She commented that the posting requirement is January 25.  
 217  
 218 Mr. Bressette asked Ms. Mahoney when it would be considered appropriate to move to restrict reconsideration.  
 219 He wanted to know if that was during the Deliberative Session. Ms. Mahoney said that the Deliberative Session is  
 220 when that motion should be made. She added that the Moderator would manage the process during the  
 221 Deliberative Session.  
 222  
 223 All five members of the School Board have signed the form for posting.  
 224  
 225 f. **Deliberative Session Preparation:**  
 226  
 227 Superintendent Chip McGee stated that this was his first year running a Deliberative Session with the Pelham  
 228 School Board. He commented that he was informed that the School Board likes to take ownership of the  
 229 presentation. Dr. McGee added that he was working on the presentation and would be there to provide any  
 230 support the Board needs to have the presentation the way they want it.  
 231  
 232 The School Board agreed that they would be happy to have more involvement from the SAU.  
 233  
 234 Ms. Ryan asked Ms. Mahoney if she knew if the bond numbers have been lower in the past ten years. Ms.  
 235 Mahoney said she could get some trend information, and New Hampshire Bond Bank can help with the  
 236 information.  
 237  
 238 Ms. Ryan mentioned that she would not be running for School Board Member. The starting date to file to be a  
 239 candidate is January 20. Ms. Mahoney noted that the information would be provided on Friday.  
 240  
 241 g. **Policy Revision:**  
 242 **Policy Revision – First Reading:**  
 243  
 244 Dr. McGee mentioned that the Policy Committee had started the B Section, which is primarily Administrative  
 245 Adjustments. The Board reviewed the eight revised policies.  
 246  
 247 a. **Policy BDC – School Board Member Ethics (Revised Policy)**  
 248 Dr. McGee will check with legal counsel about the difference between the Clerk and Treasurer.  
 249  
 250 b. **Policy BDE – Committees and Delegates (Revised Policy)**  
 251  
 252 c. **Policy BDF – Advisory Committees to the Board (Revised Policy)**  
 253  
 254 d. **Policy BEA – Regular Board Meetings (Revised Policy)**  
 255  
 256 e. **Policy BEB – Emergency Board Meetings (Revised Policy)**  
 257  
 258 f. **Policy BEC – Non-Public Sessions (Revised Policy)**  
 259  
 260 g. **Policy BEDA – Public Notification of School Board Meetings (Revised Policy)**  
 261  
 262 h. **Policy BEDB – Agenda Preparation and Dissemination (Revised Policy)**  
 263  
 264

265 **Policy Revision – Second Reading:**

266

267 The School Board revisited the policy listed below.

268

269 a. **Policy BCA – School Board Member Ethics (Revised Policy)**

270

271 Mr. Bressette motioned to approve Policy BCA - Ethics Policy Statement. Ms. Greenwood seconded the motion.

272 The motion passed (5-0-0)

273

274 **4. Old Business**

275 a. **Board Member Reports:**

276

277 i. **Ms. Ryan** – Ms. Ryan mentioned that ACES (Awareness for Community and Educational Support) would  
278 have a virtual meeting on Thursday at 6 pm to discuss the Middle School Project's promotion. She stated  
279 that a link to the meeting would be provided 15 minutes before the start of the session. She added that  
280 the Memorial Renovation Project Facebook page, the Pelham Proud Facebook page, and the  
281 PelhamSD.org would have a link to the forum.

282

283 ii. **Ms. Larson** – Ms. Larson reminded the Board that the National Honor Society would have its virtual  
284 induction ceremony tomorrow at 6:30 pm.

285

286 **Housekeeping:**

287 a. **Adoption of Meeting Minutes:**

288

289 i. December 16, 2020 – School Board Meeting Minutes

290 ii. December 28, 2020 – School Board Special Meeting Minutes

291

292 Ms. Ryan made a motion to approve the School Board Meeting Minutes of December 16, as written. Mr. Bressette  
293 seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0-0)

294

295 Ms. Ryan made a motion to approve the School Board Special Meeting Minutes of December 28. Mr. Bressette  
296 seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0-0)

297

298 b. **Vendor and Payroll Manifests:**

299

300 i. 114 \$550,163.47

301 ii. PAY114P \$260,021.80

302 iii. 115 \$512,457.57

303 iv. PAY115P \$23,858.57

304 v. AP010621 \$933,046.57

305 vi. HT010621 \$23,680.78

306

307 Ms. Ryan made a motion to approve the Vendor and Payroll Manifests, as written. Mr. Wilkerson seconded the  
308 motion. The motion passed (5-0-0).

309

310 c. **Correspondence & Information:**

311

312 i. None

313

314

315

316

317

318 d. **Enrollment Report:**  
319  
320 i. Superintendent Chip McGee stated, since the start of the school year, PES had seen an increase of about  
321 eight students, PMS had seen a decrease of one student, and PHS had seen a reduction of three students.  
322 Dr. McGee commented that he did not see an exodus from the School District.  
323

324 e. **Staffing Updates:**

325  
326 i. **New Hires:**

327 i. Thomas Beer - District - Interim Assistant Director of Student Services  
328 ii. Kaleigh Gordon - PMS/PHS- Speech-Language Pathologist (Clinical Fellowship)  
329

330 ii. **Resignation:**

331 i. Alan Miller - SAU - Facilities Director  
332

333 iii. **Leave of Absence:**

334 i. Carrie Dutil - PES - Grade 3 Teacher  
335

336 Dr. McGee commented that he was excited about two of the hires. Dr. McGee was excited to have found an  
337 interim Assistant Director of Student Services. Thomas Beer worked for the Nashua School District in a similar role.  
338 Dr. McGee mentioned that Mr. Beer had moved back to the area after working as an Educational Leader in the  
339 New Orleans area.  
340

341 Dr. McGee stated that the District hired Kaleigh Gordon as the Speech-Language Pathologist. Ms. Gordon will be  
342 doing her Fellowship with the Pelham District.  
343

344 Ms. Ryan motioned to approve Thomas Beer as Interim Assistant Director of Student Services, and Kaleigh Gordon  
345 as Speech-Language Pathologist for the Middle School and High School. Mr. Bressette seconded the motion. The  
346 motion passed (5-0-0).  
347

348 Mr. Bressette made a motion to accept the resignation of Alan Miller. Mr. Wilkerson seconded the motion with  
349 regrets. The motion passed (5-0-0).  
350

351 Ms. Ryan made a motion to approve the leave of absence of Carrie Dutil. Mr. Wilkerson seconded the motion. The  
352 motion passed (5-0-0).  
353

354 **5. Future Meetings:**

355  
356 a. 01/13/2021 – 6:30 pm Bond Hearing & School Board Meeting @ PES Library  
357 b. 01/20/2021 – 6:30 pm School Board Meeting @ PES Library  
358 c. 02/03/2021 – 6:30 pm School Board Meeting @ PES Library  
359

360 **6. Non-Public:**

361 No Non-Public Session  
362  
363

364 **7. Adjourn Meeting:**

365  
366 Mr. Bressette made a motion to adjourn the public session at 8:22 pm. Mr. Wilkerson seconded the motion. The  
367 motion passed (5-0-0).  
368

369 Submitted by Matthew Sullivan  
370