

**Pelham School Board Meeting**  
**January 17, 2024**  
**Pelham Elementary School**  
**6:30 pm**

**In Attendance:**

**School Board Members:** Troy Bressette, Chair; Thomas Gellar; Darlene Greenwood; John Russell; and David Wilkerson

**Superintendent:** Chip McGee

**Assistant Superintendent:** Sarah Marandos

**Business Administrator:** Deb Mahoney

**Student Representative:** Mya Belanger

**Absent:** None

**Also in Attendance:** Dawn Mead, Deb Jarvis, Darrin Coleman, Toni Barkdoll, Sarah Goldsack, and Keith Lewis

**I. Public Session:**

**A. Call to Order:**

Chair Troy Bressette called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm and requested that everyone stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**II. Public Input @ 6:35 pm**

**A. None**

Public Input closed at 6:36 pm.

**III. Opening Remarks:**

**A. Superintendent**

Dr. McGee commented that he was turning over the opening remarks to Assistant Superintendent Marandos. Dr. Marandos said that PES has their band concert at 5:30 pm next Tuesday. She mentioned that their rescheduled chorus concert occurred last night at PES. Dr. Marandos commented that PMS had their boys' and girls' basketball teams win last week. Dr. Marandos noted that both teams are doing great this season, and she added that this past Saturday, she was able to attend the Dan Gionet Wrestling Tournament with Principal Dawn Mead. Pelham came in second out of 14 teams.

**B. Student Representative**

Student Representative Mya Belanger stated that the PHS Choir had their first performance on January 11, which was great. The wrestling team came in second at the Dan Gionet Wrestling Tournament. She noted that the cross-country team worked at the Bay-State Marathon and donated all the proceeds, which was approximately \$300, to the food pantry.

Ms. Belanger mentioned the Fine Arts. She noted that Pelham is still the leading school for the most recognized student work for the sixth year in a row. During high school, the National Council of Teachers of English recognized the ethereal pattern of Fine Art magazine and received the rank of superior.

Ms. Belanger commented that the PHS has the following upcoming events. The first is Spirit Week, with the theme of "When I Grow Up," at the end of February. The high school is also changing semesters, and a hypnotist show is scheduled for March 22. The show will be at PHS and will be open to the public.

55 **IV. Presentations:**

56 **A. None**

57  
58 **V. Main Issues / Policy Updates:**

59 **A. PHS Field Trip 1**

60 **Details of the Proposed Field Trip:**

- 61 a. Teacher/Primary Contact Name: Darrin Coleman/Deborah Jarvis  
62 b. Date Submitted: January 4, 2024  
63 c. Grade(s)/Classes Participating: Open to all grades (including Freshmen)  
64 d. Proposed Duties: Scheduled for February vacation 2025.  
65 e. Location of Trip: Greece and Rome  
66 f. Estimated Distance from School: Approximately 4088 miles.  
67 g. Estimated Departure Time: To be determined (TBD)  
68 h. Estimated Return Time: To be determined (TBD)  
69 i. Estimated Number of Students: 20 – 30 students.  
70 j. Estimated Number of Chaperones: 3 – 5 chaperones.  
71 k. Will a bus be needed? Yes, for transportation to the airport and back.  
72 l. Other Comments: Dates are currently not set and will not be until closer to the trip.

73  
74 Dr. McGee requested that Deb Jarvis and Darrin Coleman come up and present their proposal for an overnight field  
75 trip from Rome to Athens.

76  
77 Mr. Coleman mentioned that the overnight field trip that they are planning is a nine-day trip scheduled for the  
78 February-March break in 2025. Mr. Coleman mentioned that the field trip is being organized through Education First.  
79 He noted that the itinerary is simple, and they expect approximately six students per chaperone. They will add more  
80 chaperones as more students sign up for the trip.

81  
82 Mr. Wilkerson stated that he thought the trip was a fantastic idea. He brought up the topic of tour companies making  
83 the funds non-transferable. He pointed out that if a student cannot go on the trip for any reason, the companies have  
84 historically not refunded the money or provide credit for another trip.

85  
86 Mr. Wilkerson stressed that the vendors need to take more responsibility for circumstances under which it could be  
87 transferred. He pointed out that he was told by staff at PMS that this is how these companies work. He acknowledged  
88 that this is how these companies run their business, but he believed it was time for School Districts to start pushing  
89 back and require an explanation as to why significant sums of money cannot be transferred. Mr. Wilkerson said he  
90 was not expecting an answer tonight but would like to know if the school will push back on a blanket no-transfer  
91 policy.

92  
93 Dr. McGee said he would work with Mr. Coleman and Ms. Jarvis regarding Mr. Wilkerson's concern.

94  
95 Mr. Bressette thanked Mr. Coleman and Ms. Jarvis for presenting the field trip proposal. Mr. Bressette asked how this  
96 field trip ties into the curriculum and what type of learning deliverables are expected from the students who  
97 participate in the trip.

98  
99 Ms. Jarvis stated that from a high school English Teacher's perspective, the teachers and students do a lot of work with  
100 Roman mythology. She noted that at PMS, the students had already seen some of the Roman mythology and added  
101 that she thought the students at PES had seen some of it. They will ask the students to do a project at the end that will  
102 tie into what they learned.

103  
104 Mr. Coleman commented that he is a Social Studies teacher, he also created a new elective course in archaeology. The  
105 course gives students the option not only to learn about the myths of literature but also to look at the actual material  
106 culture. He noted that students can look at history and see what it looks like.

Mr. Gellar said that he always favors travel, especially in different parts of the world. Mr. Gellar was concerned about the cost of the trip and the District's policies on student behavior. He asked if a student who is over the age of 18 would be considered an adult. Ms. Jarvis and Mr. Coleman explained the cost for adults versus students. They then discussed how parents could go on the trip with their children.

Mr. Gellar then asked if there was a minimum number of students required for the travel company to proceed with the field trip. Ms. Jarvis said the minimum is 12 students. If there are fewer than 12 students, the District could combine with another school.

Mr. Coleman reviewed the travel itinerary.

Ms. Greenwood mentioned that she is excited about the teachers doing this. Ms. Greenwood commented on how she had gone on an EF field trip before and enjoyed it.

Mr. Bressette asked if EF would allow families to purchase their travel own insurance. Mr. Coleman and Ms. Jarvis did not have an answer to the question. Ms. Jarvis commented that the travel insurance was to prevent an issue similar to what occurred during the pandemic. She added that the company would move students and adults to another area if something happened during the trip.

Mr. Gellar asked about medical insurance, but Ms. Jarvis said she was unsure about it. Dr. McGee noted that EF is the gold standard for ensuring safe trips.

Mr. Wilkerson motioned to approve the proposal to travel to Rome and Athens as presented. Ms. Greenwood seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0-0).

Mr. Bressette thanked Mr. Coleman and Ms. Jarvis for their presentation.

Ms. Jarvis asked for permission to start fundraising for the trip. The Board discussed what the policy was regarding fundraising. Dr. McGee said he would follow up with the teachers after more clarity regarding a possible policy.

## **B. PHS Field Trip 2**

### **Field Trip Proposal - FBLA Spring Conference:**

#### **Details of the Proposed Field Trip:**

- a. Teacher/Primary Contact Name: W. Dorval
- b. Date Submitted: November 28, 2023
- c. Date of Field Trip: April 2 – 3, 2024
- d. Number of Students: 20
- e. Number of Chaperones: 2
- f. CPR Certified Staff Member: W. Dorval
- g. Time of Departure: April 2, 2024, at 7:30 am
- h. Destination: DoubleTree by Hilton, 700 Elm Street, Manchester, NH
- i. Class or Group: FBLA – Spring Conference
- j. Sub Needed: Yes
- k. Special/Necessary Arrangements: They will stop for lunch at Panera from 12:00 – 1:30 pm
- l. Objectives of the Field Trip: Compete in Business skill events, attend workshops, listen to motivational speakers
- m. Pre-Field Trip Activities Planned: Create presentations, register, field trip forms, and a lesson on professional attire.
- n. Activities at Destination: Workshops, speakers, competitions, meals, and dance.

Dr. McGee commented that the next field trip proposal was submitted by Ms. Dorval, the primary contact for the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) Spring Conference. Dr. McGee noted that the request was cutting it close

in terms of timing, but he thought they were within a week of the time frame by policy. He added that this would have to be an exception but noted it is something the Board approved previously.

Mr. Bressette stated that he supported the request.

Mr. Russell asked how many students are part of the FBLA, and Ms. Mead said there are about 20 students this year.

Mr. Wilkerson noted that the application has 20 students listed. He asked if the Board would have to reapprove the request if the FBLA increased by a member.

Mr. Bressette asked Ms. Mead if she could commit to adding a third chaperone if that situation did occur. Ms. Mead said that they could make that commitment. She added that a student would already have to be a member to go on the field trip, and she noted that 20 students were being generous.

Dr. McGee added that for overnight trips, there is a requirement for male and female chaperones.

Mr. Wilkerson motioned to accept the proposal for the FBLA to attend their conference in Manchester. as presented. Mr. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0-0).

Dr. McGee thanked Ms. Jarvis, Mr. Coleman, and Ms. Mead for attending the meeting.

#### **C. PHS Graduation Date**

Dr. McGee said that he and Ms. Mead worked together and devised a date for the PHS graduation. He noted that graduation will be held on Saturday, June 8, 2024, at noon on Harris Field with a rain date of Sunday, June 9, 2024, on Harris Field at 2:00 pm to allow for church services.

Dr. McGee commented that this allows the planning to begin with the District and families.

Mr. Bressette mentioned that the District has moved in the right direction on this during his time on the School Board. Mr. Bressette commented that he appreciated the commitment to returning the graduation date.

Mr. Gellar asked if this change was being made because there has been limited snow this year. Dr. McGee said that his commitment is to decide at this time every year.

#### **D. Culture and Belonging Task Force**

Toni Barkdoll, Sarah Goldsack, and Keith Lewis presented the Culture and Belonging Task Force, findings, and recommendations.

##### **Background**

The task force was charged with identifying the key factors holding the District back from a better culture of belonging, recommending an improved process for collecting, analyzing, and acting on information, and recommending an improved method for reporting progress.

The task force comprised a cross-section of team members, including a Custodian, Educators representing each school, PEA and PESPA representatives, school level Support Staff, School/District Administrators, and Technology Team members.

##### **Members of the Culture and Belonging Task Force**

- a. Toni Barkdoll, Human Resources Director (Chair/Facilitator)
- b. Zach Belanger, Facilities Team
- c. Sue Bianchi, School Support Team
- d. Cindy Brunelle, Information Technology Team
- e. Brian Driscoll, District Mental Health Counselor

- f. Sarah Goldsack, District ELL Teacher
- g. Brandon Hannon, PHS Teacher
- h. Kim Kelly, SAU Team Member
- i. Keith Lewis, PMS Teacher
- j. Tara MacDonald, Leadership Team Representative
- k. Brian Sands, Leadership Team Representative
- l. William Scanzani, Instructional Assistant
- m. Erin Weigler, PES Teacher

### Definitions and Key Factors

Initially, the task force collected words that defined a culture of belonging to them. Words included diverse, innovative, motivating, community-focused, collaborative, and empowered. When asked to define Pelham's culture and to identify what was currently holding the District back, the following challenges were identified:

- a. Lack of Trust Confusing
- b. Lack of Change - Little/No action when feedback is given.
- c. Lack of Communication between individual schools vs a District culture and rules.
- d. The us vs them mentality is not supported/heard.
- e. Micromanaged Administration- doesn't remember being in the classroom.
- f. Hierarchical Administration- lack of understanding.
- g. Treat as Professionals - Treat everyone as equals no matter their position.
- h. Lead by example - Power/Control.

### Quick Wins

The task force expressed the need to demonstrate the District's willingness, desire, and commitment to bring about improvements in the areas of culture of belonging. Acting as a voice of the educators and support staff within the District, members of the task force identified four quick and easy updates/changes that would relay the District's commitment to improving culture and belonging.

### These four were identified as

- a. Dress code expectations have been updated with jeans that can be worn during the work week beginning January 2, 2024.
- b. Chromebook chargers for students were placed within classrooms at PMS to reduce time away from class.
- c. Supervisors have been encouraged to share innovative, fun, and interesting activities seen during formative class visits that increase collaboration and success of team members.
- d. Team members have been able to provide feedback on District leadership during the evaluation process.

### Key Factors that are holding the District back

- a. **Trust:**
  - i. Support: When support is sought, listen and formulate a plan.
  - ii. Team: Build trust in one another, work as a team, and trust until there is a reason not to.
  - iii. Visibility: As situations require an administrator, it is often perceived as negative compared to administrator visibility, which focuses on the positive outcomes that happen every day.
  - iv. Policies: When new policies (and procedures) are implemented, communicate them and trust they will be followed to the best of the team member's ability.
  - v. Expertise: Team members wanted to be valued for their professional expertise rather than micromanaged.
- b. **Communication:**
  - i. Emails: Include everyone so all team members know and act in unison. This includes teachers, support team members, and all members of a school or department.
  - ii. Professional Standards: Private conversations need to be held privately, not in hallways or walkies, etc. Otherwise, colleagues and students can think the team member is in trouble. Negative

- 266 feedback needs to be shared privately and without negative emotions. Otherwise, the  
267 team members can feel they are not liked. Students can overhear and think their  
268 teachers are in trouble.
- 269 iii. Communication: Communication is, at times, in a disciplinary tone/manner instead of in a mutually  
270 respectful manner.
- 271 iv. Hierarchy: Many team members feel a top-down culture within the District does not encourage  
272 team members to grow, take on responsibilities, or rise to new challenges.
- 273
- 274 c. **Belonging:**
- 275 i. History: A feeling that in the past, "things" have not been addressed fairly and in a timely way.
- 276 ii. Professional Trust: Some team members feel overlooked.
- 277
- 278 iii. Listening: When appropriate, it can be enormously helpful to acknowledge two (or more) ways to  
279 approach a situation or problem. Team members will feel they belong when both parties  
280 are heard and asked to help find a solution instead of being told the solution.
- 281
- 282 d. **Recommended Ways of Improving Collecting, Analyzing and Reporting Data:**
- 283 i. **Collecting:**
- 284 a. Survey twice yearly using an anonymous survey tool such as Survey Monkey.
- 285 b. Focus on simple and direct questions.
- 286
- 287 ii. **Analyzing:**
- 288 a. Create focus groups charged with creating action plans based on survey results. Groups meet  
289 quarterly to report on progress.
- 290 b. Continue using retention as a measurable outcome.
- 291
- 292 iii. **Reporting:**
- 293 a. Share survey results with all District team members and the School Board.
- 294 b. Share action item progress within the District and to the School Board.
- 295
- 296 e. **Next Steps:**
- 297 i. Leadership surveys will be delivered in the fall/winter of 2023. They will re-survey in the Spring of 2024.
- 298 ii. Create a member survey and send it in the Spring of 2024.
- 299 iii. Create focus groups that will meet once a quarter to measure and report progress on action items.
- 300

301 Mr. Russell said this was a hot item for him and noted that he enjoys culture and belonging. Mr. Russell said that the  
302 definitions and critical factors are hard to read. He stressed that they are painful. He asked if this was staff-wide, and  
303 Ms. Barkdoll stated that it only came from the task force. Ms. Barkdoll added that she had asked them what culture to  
304 them from a definition standpoint, and then she would define it. She then would ask what the culture is in Pelham, and  
305 these were the words that came back when they defined culture in Pelham.

306

307 Mr. Russell offered to become a task force member if they wanted a School Board member.

308

309 Ms. Greenwood pointed out that the next step needs to take place. One step is to get this out to the teachers and get  
310 them involved.

311

312 Mr. Bressette commented that he appreciated the comparison of the Math Task Force to the Culture and Belonging  
313 Task Force. He acknowledged that they are very different subjects, but the process is the same, and it reflects the trust  
314 this Board has in everybody to execute the Board's vision and strategic direction for the District.

315

316 Mr. Gellar mentioned that he appreciated what they were doing and was glad they came back with a forthright  
317 answer. Mr. Gellar acknowledged wanting to know the truth and what was happening.

318

Mr. Wilkerson asked if the task force members were the ones who went to Ms. Barkdoll with the information. Ms. Barkdoll confirmed that was correct. He pointed out that as the task force expands its scope of the source, they will have created a living document.

Mr. Wilkerson agreed with Mr. Gellar. They both want to see how the task force moves from analysis to making recommendations.

The Board continued to discuss the results of the task force.

**E. Deliberative Discussion/Default Budget/Warrant Budget**

Dr. McGee commented that the Budget Committee's line-item reductions were included in the Board's packet. They also adjusted from a decrease of **\$802,760** to **\$450,000**. He suggested that they walk through what the Budget Committee's reductions were and have the Board ask questions. He added that Ms. Mahoney had worked to align it to the operating budget. The Board could then make its decision on the warrant articles.

Dr. McGee said that the Board could then discuss draft Deliberative Session slides. He included information about the reductions made by the Budget Committee.

Dr. McGee said that the Default Budget was not changing. He added that there was a link to the Budget book, where they could look up any of the information regarding the budget. Mr. Bressette noted that the link brings one to a 210-page comprehensive document provided by the Budget Committee.

Mr. Bressette, for clarity, stated that the Budget Committee initially voted on and approved a budget reduction of **\$802,760**. The reduction was then reduced at reconsideration. So, the Board is now looking at a decrease of **\$450,000**.

Dr. McGee reviewed the summary of the FY2025 Level 5 Budget Committee cuts. He noted that Ms. Mahoney did all this work to ensure the numbers aligned.

**Reductions:**

- a. **\$250,000** in Special Education Tuition. He acknowledged that this is an expense the District will have next year. They cannot reduce \$250,000 from the budget.
- b. **\$51,000** in Two (2) IA positions. The Instructional Assistant positions cannot be removed from the budget because, at this point, the District is anticipating getting them.

Ms. Greenwood asked why the District was being asked to cut personnel. Dr. McGee replied by saying that the positions being reduced are unfilled.

Mr. Wilkerson pointed out that these positions were discussed during one of the Budget Committee meetings. The issue was that the Committee had difficulty understanding that they were necessary positions while the positions were vacant. The Committee believed that the District worked through not having the positions with the current budget so it could do it again with the next budget.

Mr. Gellar commented that this was a Budget Committee cut, and he wanted to know if Dr. McGee was still planning to be able to keep it in the budget and to fill it. Dr. McGee responded by saying if they operate under this **\$450,000** reduction, they will have to maintain those two positions from their point of view and make reductions elsewhere.

Mr. Gellar pointed out that because they intend to fill those positions that is why the Default Budget number did not change.

- c. The burnisher and the truck. Dr. McGee recommended that the Board not pursue purchasing the truck or the burnisher.

- d. Salaries and Benefits related to the Mentor pay, Deans, Team Leaders, and Department Heads. Dr. McGee said they wanted to increase those stipends to get them to \$2000 for those three and \$700.00 for the Mentors.

Mr. Bressette said the proposed increases were not going away entirely; they were being reduced. Ms. Mahoney agreed and added that the Budget Committee reduced the stipends to \$1,600.

Ms. Greenwood stated that because the Budget Committee said this is what they want, next year's School Board will decide where the money goes.

- e. Furniture Replacement is on the schedule at PES and PHS. Dr. McGee said he would wait for the next Board and listen to its recommendations regarding furniture reductions.

Mr. Bressette commented that this was a sign of the Budget Committee doing its job instead of giving an arbitrary number.

Mr. Gellar commended the Chair of the Budget Committee for getting the members to work on the right track; he noted it was a difficult situation, but there had to be a reason behind the cuts.

Ms. Greenwood thanked Mr. Wilkerson for doing a good job putting their word out there.

Dr McGee said that he shared the adjustments with the Board, and that was where the **\$41,318,286** came from in the Article 1 operating budget. Ms. Greenwood pointed out that the Budget Committee's Budget is less than the Default Budget.

Mr. Wilkerson commented that the Default Budget should be the last resort. He noted that what the School District needs is the proposed Operating Budget. He pointed out that the conversation with the Budget Committee started with the Default Budget, and the Committee began by reducing that amount. Mr. Wilkerson added that he was reluctant to say that the District needs the Default Budget.

Ms. Mahoney said the difference between the Default and Operating Budget is \$185,156. She clarified that if Article 1 does not pass, the School District will have \$185,156 more.

### **Operating Budget**

Mr. Wilkerson asked if the Board was not obliged to vote in favor of the proposed operating budget. Mr. Bressette said that was the Board's prerogative. He expected that the Voter's Guide and Deliberative Session would do an excellent job of explaining why the situation that Mr. Wilkerson described does not support the Budget Committee's proposed budget.

Mr. Gellar mentioned that he wanted to discuss how they were going to phrase the motion and how they were going to put it on the warrant article. He explained how a warrant reads, and at the bottom, it reads, "Recommended by the Budget Committee" with a tally. The warrant article then reads, "Recommended by the School Board."

Mr. Gellar described his concern regarding how the School Board would vote to recommend the budget. He pointed out that they cannot have the warrant article read that they do not recommend the article (5-0-0). He mentioned that people may not see the word "not" but see the (5-0-0).

The Board discussed how the warrant article should be read at the bottom. They also discussed not including the tally or recommending the proposed Operating Budget.

Mr. Mahoney said that she wanted to read the warrant article and then have the Board take a vote. She stressed that the Board did not need to make a motion.



**Article 1**

Shall the Pelham School District raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session of the annual school district meeting, for the purposes set forth herein, totaling Forty-One Million, Three Hundred Eighteen Thousand, Two Hundred Eighty-Six Dollars (\$41,318,286)? Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be Forty-One Million, Five Hundred Three Thousand, Four Hundred Forty-Two Dollars (\$41,503,442), which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Pelham School District or by law; or the Pelham School Board may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13 X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only. (Majority vote required)

**Roll Call**

Mr. Bressette - No  
Mr. Gellar - No  
Ms. Greenwood - No  
Mr. Russell - No  
Mr. Wilkerson - No

The Board discussed what would happen if the voters approved or did not approve Article 1. Ms. Mahoney confirmed that there is a 10% rule. She added that it will be posted with MS 27. Ms. Mahoney said she would share it with the Board when received.

Mr. Bressette asked that they do a follow-up on the 10% rule later.

Ms. Mahoney added that Article 1 will reflect, not recommended by the School Board (0-5-0).

Dr. McGee said the Budget Committee supported Article 2 – PEA CBA (9-0-0).

**Deliberative Session**

Dr. McGee asked if there was any feedback regarding the slides. He reminded the Board that he was working with Mr. Bressette as the point person. The slides were included in the School Board's packet.

Mr. Wilkerson said that he liked the slides. He noted that he liked the breakdown of cost per pupil and that he was focused on the budget portion. Mr. Wilkerson said that the Budget Committee was looking at the student-teacher ratio, which is a number that the State Board of Education provided. He pointed out the ratio gives the impression that they have more teachers than they need.

Mr. Wilkerson stressed that the number provided by the State Board of Education is an unreliable indicator of the number of teachers needed in a District. He noted that it gives the impression that the Pelham School District has classrooms with approximately seven students per classroom, which is by no means the way things operate. He did not believe that they communicated effectively regarding the actual numbers behind what the State Board of Education provided.

Mr. Wilkerson mentioned the other number that the Budget Committee discussed, and a comment was made that budgets go up every year, and at some point, no more money will be left. He pointed out that the State Board of Education suggested that they have had an 88% increase after inflation regarding the cost of operating the schools. He pointed out that they have had difficulty clarifying the proposed numbers. Mr. Wilkerson suggested they find answers to these budget questions because they are not going away.

Mr. Bressette commented that Dr. McGee and Ms. Mahoney had provided those numbers at every opportunity. Mr. Bressette mentioned that he did not know how much more they could do to make some sense of nonsensical arguments.

Mr. Gellar stated that he liked the slides. He noted that they must be patient and non-opinionated during the deliberative sessions. They must try to give straight information. Mr. Gellar said that he would like to make a few recommendations:

- a. Page 4 - Mr. Gellar said they do not necessarily have to include FY2024 because that looks backward instead of forward.
- b. Page 5 - Mr. Gellar proposed that they take it out entirely. He noted that it is up to the Budget Committee to discuss their cuts.
- c. Page 6 - Mr. Gellar agreed with bullets 1 and 2 but needed clarification about 3.

Mr. Gellar proposed that a page 6 bullet point read, "The School Board is committed to maintaining the level of service approved by the voters." Then add bullet points underneath for maintaining programming data and seeking available opportunities to offset costs.

Mr. Gellar said that Technology is discretionary and added that Special Education is non-discretionary because it is mandated by law.

- d. Page 9 - Dr. McGee pointed out that Special Education alone, as a dollar amount, is more than the overall budget increase. He noted that the slide is powerful to say a single non-discretionary item is more significant than their overall increase.
- e. Page 12 - Mr. Gellar suggested that instead of saying 150 of those 163, they say 14th from the bottom.

Mr. Russell said that on page 18, he wondered if there was a way that this could be presented in a graph. He noted that the meaning of the slide gets lost because of how busy the slide is. The Board agreed that slides 11 and 19 were also busy.

The Deliberative Session is on February 7 at 7 pm.

#### **Slide Presentations**

- a. PEA Contract – Mr. Gellar and Ms. Greenwood
- b. Budget – Mr. Wilkerson

#### **F. PMS Principal Search Update**

Dr. McGee said he wants to ensure the District is out in front of the principal search. He noted that Mr. Medlock stepped in immediately and has been the interim principal for the remainder of the year. Dr. McGee stated that Mr. Medlock knew from the beginning that they would search for a principal.

Dr. McGee mentioned that he wanted to clarify that the search must have public input possibilities. The search team will be put together with staff and parents as members. Dr. McGee commented that he hoped to have a Board member join the search team. He expects to have a recommendation to the Board by March 6.

Mr. Bressette asked Dr. McGee to explain to the rest of the Board why having an aggressive timeline is essential. Dr. McGee stated that there were two reasons for the aggressive timeline. The first reason is that the District wants to be first in the marketplace when hiring a principal. He added that having a principal start on July 1 is essential, and he commented that this was about as early as they could start looking. He said that people would not be ready to apply for the position and signal that they would leave where they currently worked.

Dr. McGee pointed out that hiring season was about to start soon. He commented that Districts tend to start looking for staff after March because of natural attrition or turnover. He added that hiring a principal would be a recommendation to the School Board. He noted that the Board would meet the applicants face-to-face during non-public sessions.

Dr. McGee mentioned that the staff and parent meetings would not require a School Board member to attend. The dates for a School Board member to attend would be:

- a. January 29
- b. February 12
- c. February 16
- d. February 19

Mr. Bressette asked if there were any questions or comments from the Board. The Board discussed the meeting dates and times.

Mr. Wilkerson volunteered but added that he might need an alternate. He provided the Board with his reason for needing an alternate. Mr. Bressette stated that he would be the alternate.

Date	
Wednesday, January 17	Position Posted
Monday, January 29, 2:30 - 3:30 pm	Organizational Meeting
January 30, 2:30 - 3:30 pm	Staff Meeting to provide input (Learning Commons and Voluntary and Optional)
February 1, 3 - 4 pm and 6 - 7 pm	Parent Meeting to provide input (PMS Room 223)
February 12, 2:30 pm - 5:00 pm	Candidate "Paper" Review Meeting
February 16	All-Day Candidate Interviews and Committee Input
Week of February 19 (TBD)	Finalists Visits to PMS
March 6	Superintendent recommendation to the School Board

#### **G. Preschool Tuition**

Dr. McGee mentioned returning the proposed preschool tuition to the Board with his recommended increase. He noted that some additional information was provided by everyone at this point. Dr. McGee commented that the Board could see the comparison between Pelham and some local Districts.

#### **Pre-Kindergarten Rates for 2024 - 2025**

Town	2-Days	3-Days	4- Days	5-Days
Bedford	\$145	\$180	\$215	\$250
Hudson	\$120		\$260	
Goffstown		\$195	\$240	
Litchfield	\$125	\$165		
Londonderry	\$150	\$180	\$200	
Salem		\$200		
Windham	\$150		\$300	
Average	\$138	\$184	\$243	

#### **Proposed Pre-Kindergarten Rates for 2024 - 2025**

Pelham		\$150		\$180
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Dr. McGee stated that he would recommend a 50% discount for families that qualify for free or reduced lunch, a practice he has seen in other Districts. Mr. Bressette mentioned that he thought that was a good move.

Ms. Greenwood stated that because of the economics, she did not believe it was an excellent time to increase the rates. This time, she thought it would be better not to ask for more money. She stressed that people have much to pay for, especially families with young children.

Mr. Wilkerson motioned to approve the preschool rate increase as stated. Mr. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed (3-2-0). (Mr. Gellar and Ms. Greenwood voted 'No')

#### **Roll Call**

Mr. Bressette - Yes  
January 17, 2024

564 Mr. Gellar - No  
565 Ms. Greenwood - No  
566 Mr. Russell - Yes  
567 Mr. Wilkerson - Yes

568

569 Dr. McGee acknowledged that the vote was (3-2-0).

570

571 **H. School Calendar 2024 – 2025:**

572 Dr. McGee thanked Dr. Marandos for ensuring they got the semester and trimester breaks in. He noted that the school  
573 calendar is a second read.

574

575 Ms. Greenwood pointed out that the yellow days were gone. Dr. McGee said those were just days to think about, and  
576 they took them off because they were not resolved.

577

578 Mr. Bressette commented that what stood out to him was that they are not blocking the three days for Workshop Days  
579 for all staff on August 21 and 22. Mr. Bressette noted that he understood having the Friday free, but he did not find  
580 starting the school week on Tuesday when they can get in there on a Monday and move the third Workshop Day up to  
581 August 20.

582

583 Dr. McGee said he wanted to note that August 26 is a meet and greet for PES and PMS. He added that it is considered a  
584 Workshop Day for those two schools, but the teachers are with families during the morning. It was noted that  
585 Freshman Orientation is on August 26.

586

587 Mr. Wilkerson made a motion to approve the calendar as presented. Mr. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed  
588 (5-0-0).

589

590 Dr. McGee said there is a minor adjustment to the current calendar with yellow on it. He noted that the date was  
591 January 2. He acknowledged that January 2 had come and gone, but it was the day for the PMS move. Dr McGee asked  
592 Dr. Marandos to inform the Board what the change is.

593

594 Dr. Marandos said that they adjusted the end date of quarter three at PHS to ensure a balance of days between  
595 quarters three and four. She noted this was mainly for the quarter classes to ensure they were equal.

596

597 Dr. Marandos stressed that correcting the balance is essential to the quarter classes.

598

599 Dr. McGee commented that he chose to bring it to the Board because it comes down to some grading decisions, and he  
600 wanted to ensure they were clear about this. Dr. McGee stressed that he wanted to make the decision official. April 3  
601 would be the first day of the fourth quarter.

602

603 Mr. Wilkerson made a motion to approve the change to the current school year for 2023 – 2024, as presented. Mr. Russell  
604 seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0-0).

605

606 **I. Co-Curricular Stipend Reallocation:**

607 Dr. Marandos mentioned that per the current CBA, if they have an allocation change in a co-curricular activity, they  
608 must bring it to the School Board. She commented that Dr. McGee and the PEA support this reallocation. Dr. Marandos  
609 said they are looking to move the Guitar Club funds, which are no longer running and are not in CBA for next year, to  
610 permit the Coding Club to run. She added that the Coding Club has significant interest and an excellent teacher  
611 running it.

612

613 Mr. Bressette asked when the District last ran the guitar club. Dr. Marandos said 2018.

614

615 Mr. Bressette asked if they had done a reallocation previous reallocation, and Dr. Marandos confirmed that this was  
616 the first time.

Mr. Wilkerson made a motion to approve the reallocation of stipends, as presented. Mr. Russell seconded the motion. The motion passed (5-0-0).

**J. PMS Memorial School Project Update**

Dr. McGee mentioned that they are in Phase 9, which is the last phase. Dr. McGee noted they had a chance to tour the building today with Pelham's Chief of Police. The police do a monthly walk around, and the Chief informed Dr. McGee that she had seen the building since the summer.

Ms. Greenwood commented that the subcommittee talked about renaming the library and how they would do the lettering. She added that there was discussion about recognizing Eleanor Burton, but nothing was definitive because they didn't have costs.

Dr. McGee stated that Brian Sands, Director of Facilities, is serving on this subcommittee and is excellent at ensuring that the District is cost-effective.

Mr. Bressette said that they have a Building Committee meeting on January 31. This is when the subcommittee would propose its recommendation to the Building Committee.

Mr. Bressette asked where the tiles were going. Ms. Greenwood said the tiles will be in the town common area and on the back wall above the seating.

Ms. Greenwood noted that there will be bookcases with some sports trophies outside the gym. The long corridor is where the plaques and DC photos will be located.

Dr. McGee said that Ms. Lamontagne showed him a signed softball from 2004 that had fallen behind the wall and a spelling quiz from 1989.

Dr. McGee stated that old room 100 was the largest of the science labs. It is no longer a room because they have demolished the walls and are making progress downstairs. Dr. McGee noted that he did not have any other updates.

Mr. Bressette said that the tiered seating area in the town common was the most popular community space. He added that people gathered in that area every time he was there. Mr. Bressette mentioned that he loved that was where they would recommend putting up the tiles.

**K. Policy Review:**

The Board reviewed the policies listed below.

**a. First Reading:**

i. CAN - Nursing Mothers Accommodations (New Policy)  
Mr. Bressette noted that 42 U.S.C. 2000 had 'gg' following it. He wanted to know if they belonged there.

ii. BEDG - Minutes

iii. JLCF - Wellness  
Based on how the policy reads, the Board had questions about whether water would be provided with meals. The policy reads that water will be available to students at all times and places. The Board agreed to revisit the policy after it was cleaned up.

**b. Second Reading:**

i. None

670 **VI. Board Member Reports:**  
671 A. None  
672  
673 **VII. Housekeeping:**  
674 A. **Adoption of Minutes**  
675 a. December 20, 2023 – Draft Public Minutes  
676  
677 The Board chose to table the minutes until the next meeting.  
678  
679 B. **Vendor and Payroll Manifests**  
680 a. 465 \$609,823.93  
681 b. AP011724 \$282,356.22  
682 c. BFPMS57 \$ 12,345.14  
683 d. PAY465P \$304,261.54  
684  
685 Mr. Gellar made a motion to approve the Vendor and Payroll Manifest as presented. Mr. Wilkerson seconded the motion.  
686 The motion passed (5-0-0).  
687  
688 C. **Correspondence & Information**  
689 Mr. Bressette mentioned that he wanted to give a plug for the Pelham Awareness for Community and Education  
690 Support (ACES) in combination with the PMS PTSA and the National Junior Honor Society. He noted that they are  
691 going to run the Tiles and Tours event. He added that it is the second round to get an opportunity for people to come  
692 out and paint a tile and contribute.  
693  
694 D. **Enrollment Report**  
695 a. None  
696  
697 E. **Staffing Updates**  
698 a. **Leaves**  
699 i. None  
700  
701 b. **Resignations:**  
702 i. None  
703  
704 c. **Retirements:**  
705 i. None  
706  
707 d. **Nominations:**  
708 i. None  
709  
710 **VIII. Future Agenda Planning:**  
711 A. No Future Agenda Planning  
712  
713 **IX. Future Meetings:**  
714 A. 02/07/2024 – 7:00 pm Deliberative Session  
715 B. 02/21/2024 – 6:30 pm School Board Meeting @ PES Library  
716  
717 **X. Adjournment:**  
718 Mr. Wilkerson made a motion to adjourn the School Board Meeting at 9:12 pm. Mr. Russell seconded the motion. The  
719 motion passed (5-0-0).  
720  
721  
722

723 Respectfully Submitted,  
724 Matthew Sullivan  
725 School Board Recording Secretary