

Amended Board Meeting Agenda- March 12, 2024- 6:30pm

School Board Members Present: Barbara Chow, Tim Kelly, Joy Bradbury, Kathleen Szostek,
Larry Whittington, Don Whittemore, Brad Dyer, Elizabeth Kelly,
Natalie Sneller, Tina Courtway, Diana Cayer (Student Rep)

Staff Attending: Pam Doyen, Cathy Arsenault, Brian Keene, Mary Dailey, Gena Cloutier, Charlie Swan, Jason Long, Olaf Johnson, Sarah Johnson, Sara Thurston, Andrea Palmer, Brandy Bordeau, Heidi Connelly, Kristi Holmquist, Lisa Sanborn, Heidi Broomhall, Cindy Petherbridge, C/M Araujo, Beth Edwards

CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

Motion: B. Dyer
T. Courtway - No
Motion Carried

1. Minutes of the February 27, 2024 Board Meeting
Motion: L. Whittington Seconded: D. Whittemore
Not Voting: B. Dyer
Motion Carried

B. Bordeau- The board and everyone here has decided we have a problem in our bathrooms. We have spent \$15k at the high school, I assume we are spending that at the middle school. So \$30k to put in vape sensors. My “single use” bathrooms would help that. A person goes into the bathroom, the sensor goes off, they exit, the camera sees them, you know who did it. There are many that feel this way, they don’t

come to speak. A survey may help, we've done this before. This last incident there was a no contact order put in place. I don't want to see this happen to any more kids. Can we please talk about this?

B. Chow- stated that the board does not give information on what happens as a result of something that is confidential. What you're asking for is budgeting money to do and we are working on the budget right now.

Ryan Bordeaux- My wife has been here several times to bring up issues, no one has really responded. Jason Long is doing a great job at the middle school. I'd also like to what's going to happen next year at the high school. My daughter's going to be there. Is she going to be playing on sports teams with boys, apparently that's allowed? Are the boys going to be in the locker room with my daughter, changing, getting ready for practices? I'd like an answer to that too.

B. Chow- the answer is #1 our administrators do what we direct them, #2 we follow federal and state laws.

R. Bordeaux- Even at the detriment of the students? I don't feel I have to stand up here and explain to grown adults why it's not right to have boys and girls in the same bathrooms.

COMMUNICATIONS

No new communications. The board did receive a couple of letters concerning the policy IJJ that was forwarded to the board, that is the only communication that we have.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Region 9 Updates (Bruce Ross/ Brian Keene/ Wayne Thurston)

Bruce Ross: Region 9 had a meeting on the 1st Wed of the month- March 6, 2024. Dave Murphy - Adult Ed Director went through what's been going on with the program.

Went through what some of the programs are doing and how they look. The Outdoor Skills went and attended the "Hall of Flags".

Projects that are coming up- The welding building project, went out to bid. The bids were looked at. A company called BenchMark came in with the lowest bid and will be building the welding building. Will be a big plus for the welding program at Region 9.

Another project is the Culinary Arts project. This was funded by a grant. There were a few issues with it due to starting to move forward without the architect signing off on it. Moving forward, just making sure everything is done correctly. This program has been booming. It could happen that this program is broken up into two programs due to a large number of students signing up for this.

Finance committee has been working on the budget to present to the districts. There are a lot of things that are uncontrollable costs. They have presented a draft, it is not the final numbers. The basic increase is around \$56k. That is with keeping all programs going. Right now all programs have some significant numbers in them. Currently we have as many applicants as we do students right now. That doesn't mean all applicants are going to enroll. Dirigo 10th & 11th graders are going to visit Region 9 tomorrow. A lot of students are interested in Region 9.

The finance board looks at everything and does formulas to calculate the budget. When all was done it came down to about a \$14k increase for Dirigo.

There will be public hearings on the budget. They will be March 20th at 7:30 at Region 9. There will also be a meeting at 6pm at Bethel. The regional budget meeting will be May 1st at 6pm at Region 9.

T.Courtway- Asked in relation to electricity costs, if they have looked at any other suppliers to reduce the overall cost. B. Ross- he would speak to the director regarding that.

2. Strategic Planning Update (Pam Doyen) - Next meeting is March 18 at 5:30, DHS Library

NEW BUSINESS

1. Budget Overview for Technology (Brian Keene)

Goals of the Technology Department:

The RSU 56 Technology Department has four specific goals:

1. Improve parent and community involvement in our students' education through the use of our digital platforms.
2. Continue to improve students' access to online educational programming, assessments, and other online content through the district's secured high-speed data network.
3. Increase the effectiveness, quality, and reliability of the technology equipment that teaching staff are using in their classrooms every day and provide high quality professional development opportunities to the staff members.
4. Continue to provide quality 1:1 devices to all staff and students in grades PK-12.

Pre-K to Grade 12

The proposed budget reflects both materials and support staff to provide the digital tools and 21st-century skills necessary for students to be lifelong learners while supporting all departments. The budget for the upcoming school year continues to include monies for equipment, software maintenance, software license agreements, repairs and maintenance, internet service, and salaries/benefits of Technology Department staff.

- A. **PowerSchool:** Over the last 16 years, the 3 schools in RSU 56 have used the PowerSchool SIS to house our student data. In the current data-influenced world of education and as state reporting requirements increase we need to utilize the programs we have to their fullest potential and continue to fund the professional development so our staff knows how to get everything we can out of the system. PowerSchool will be partially funded by the Maine DOE again this year.
- B. **Cyber Security / Student Data Privacy:** The 24-25 Technology budget includes continuing the funding for our Cyber Insurance, Sophos Internet Security, Backup and Restore Software to protect our network and data from cyber attacks, and membership to TEC, our Student Data Privacy consortium. The budget also includes money to work with a security consultant to monitor and increase our cyber security structure.
- C. **Staffing:** The Technology departments budget covers a Technology Director, and two IT Support Specialists. The third IT support specialist is covered by ESSER 3 through September 2024.
- D. **Devices:** This year we will be replacing the Grade 8 MacBooks and swapping them over to iPads with keyboards. We will cover most of the cost by utilizing the MLTI 2.0 program to replace their devices, and then use a small amount out of our regular budget to cover the balance of the replacement.
- E. **Training:** There are funds in the 24-25 Budget to cover staff professional development, and PowerSchool University.

FY 24-25 Budget- New Proposal

School/Dept: Technology

Proposal Name: **DES IT Support Position from ESSER to Regular Budget**

Statement of Proposal (Description):

I would like to transfer the DES IT Support Position from the ESSER Funding that is ending in September of 2024 and add it into the regular budget so that we can continue to have a Tech Support person in each building. In March 2020, the Technology in our schools grew exponentially, and many services that weren't supported before, were now part of our everyday maintenance tasks. The new normal of being able to teach remotely to our students due to health concerns, environmental reasons, or weather events has created a new support role for our staff. We have changed from supporting devices only when students are in school, to when they are at home on remote days. We also have increased the number of devices in the district, and have taken on additional systems that used to be cared for by other departments or outside vendors.

Justification (Supporting Data):

Before COVID we had 1:1 devices in grades K-12 and staff members had their own Macbooks. When COVID hit, we purchased devices so that all students PK-12 had their own devices and teaching staff were all given an iPad in addition to their Macbooks to support teaching remotely. The Technology Department also took over the keycard management system, a new Phone System that is managed internally, cameras, and many other technology related items and software packages. The district has also added 27 Interactive Panels over the last 18 months to replace the older SmartTV's, while these are great additions to our district, they bring regular maintenance tasks with them.

Another change that is affecting our department is many of the curriculum resources are being moved online and that is making our response time more important than ever. If there is a network outage, or issue with a device, it will usually affect the ability for the student/teacher to provide their lesson.

Goals and Expected Benefits:

1. We would be able to keep a dedicated technology support person in each building for coverage.
2. By keeping the position, we would be able to leverage new technologies and implement more efficient systems and workflows to help with everyday tasks for students and staff.
3. Cybersecurity threats continue to evolve and become more sophisticated. Adding this position to the budget will also help focus on cybersecurity and ensure that our sensitive data remains protected, and our Student Data Privacy initiative will be continued.
4. Continuing to fund the technology position can be justified based on the need to address workload issues, leverage specialized skills, provide more professional development, support growth, improve service levels, enhance security, and drive innovation.

Consequences of Non-Approval:

The Technology Department would go back to sharing a technician between two buildings and would no longer have immediate access to a support person during classroom teaching times, and the ticket response time would be longer as requests would have to be prioritized.

Resources required (List and cost of staff/materials/space):

IT Support Specialist Salary and Benefits: \$71,210

Technology Capital Reserve

School/Dept: Technology

Proposal Name: **Network Redesign/Upgrade**

Statement of Proposal (Description):

The network upgrade project will replace all network hardware in RSU 56 including switches, access points, wireless, and battery backups. This project will be partially funded by E-Rate federal funding, but due to the process, we will need to budget the entire cost up front.

Justification (Supporting Data):

The current core hardware will be in its 6th year in June, and has a normal life expectancy in the 5-6 year range so we are beyond the end of life on a majority of the equipment. Over the past year we have had 50% (5) of our core network switches fail and have to be replaced under their warranties, mostly due to environmental reasons (Power). Our current wireless network cannot provide the faster speeds that our new laptops/iPads can work on as the access points were made before the new technology was developed.

Goals and Expected Benefits:

Increased network speeds as well as better quality internet connections for our buildings.

Consequences of Non-Approval:

The network hardware has been held together with bandaids over the past year. When the licensing expires in July of 24, the hardware will not function and our network will expire unless we renew the licensing. Also if we do not use the available E-rate federal funding it will go away as it is the end of the 5-year funding cycle.

Resources Required (List and cost of staff/materials/space):

Network Hardware- \$300,000 (80% is eligible for e-Rate reimbursement). By funding this through e-rate and the Technology Reserve Account it would not increase the FY24-25 Budget.

The board had a few questions regarding items on the Technology budget report.

2. Budget Overview for Nutrition (Gena Cloutier)**REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT 56 SCHOOL NUTRITION****Mission:**

The mission of the RSU 56 School Nutrition Department is to contribute to student academic success by providing well balanced nutritious meals, promoting life-long healthy eating habits, served by caring professionals in a pleasant environment.

Staffing:

Dirigo Elementary School- 3 staff consisting of one Person in Charge with 7 hours, two helper positions at 6.25 and 5 ½ hours daily.

TWK Dirigo Middle School- 3 staff consisting of one Production Manager at 8 hours and two helper positions at 6.25 and 4 hours daily.

Dirigo High School- 2 staff consisting of one Person in Charge with 6 ¾ hours and one helper at 4 hours daily

One Director

No staffing changes requested at this time

Budget:

The school nutrition budget is a zero-based budget. All funds needed to cover the expenses by the nutrition department are expected to be raised by reimbursement of meals served in the National School Breakfast program, the National School Lunch program and CACFP afterschool snack program, a la carte

sales and catering. The SY 2023/2024 Nutrition budget will be subsidized by the district budget. I am asking to hold my budget request steady at \$173,000 to help defray payroll and benefits. This amount also includes \$6,000 in software maintenance fees.

Vision:

The vision of the RSU 56 school nutrition department is to offer nutritional, visually appealing meals to students and staff leading to increased participation by offering more scratch-cooked meals.

Continue improvements in regards to equipment needs and to utilize new ideas to gain student access to meals.

The board had a few questions regarding the Nutrition budget and some things the dept is doing. One board member commented that it was appreciated the dept was supporting local farms and sourcing foods locally.

New dishwasher will be installed at DES over the April break.

3. Budget Overview for All Other Areas (Pam Doyen/ Mary Dailey)

RSU No. 56 Budget

2024-2025

Cost Center	2023-24 Budget	2024-25 Proposed Budget	Difference	Percent Change	Rationale
Board of Directors	\$88,659	\$93,314	\$4,655	5%	Increased budgeted amount due to increased cost of annual audit and projected 15% increase in liability insurance.
Board – Election Services	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$0		
Office of Superintendent *	\$20,193	\$23,393	\$3,200	15%	Increased budgeted amount to cover additional conference for the Superintendent and increase in copier and printer maintenance line.
Business Office **	\$20,834	\$22,215	\$1,381	6%	Increased budgeted amount for software maintenance annual fee. This line will now cover PowerSchool's Applicant Tracker and Human Resources Module along with AptaFund accounting software.
Teacher Certification	\$200	\$200	\$0		
Food Service	\$173,000	\$173,000	\$0		
Major Capital Debt Service	\$767,947	\$711,345	(\$56,602)	(7%)	Decreased as less interest on DES will have to be paid in 2024-2025.
Out-of-District Transportation	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$0		
English Language Learners (ELL)	\$5,500	\$5,500	\$0		
Health Services	\$7,533	\$8,590	\$1,057	14%	Increased as a new audiometer has been requested.
Gifted and Talented	\$11,616	\$7,487	(\$4,129)	(35%)	Decreased to be in line with actual expenditures.
Total "All Other"	\$1,109,182	\$1,058,744	(\$50,438)	(4%)	

Amounts shown in budget columns above do not include payroll and benefit lines, except for Food Service.

/mmd

3/11/2024

4. Request for overnight trips (and fundraising for such) for the Speech and Debate Team (Olaf Johnson and other team members)

This school did it again. This small school went up against some really big schools and every team member either qualified or qualified as an alternate.

Olaf spoke to the board regarding the request for the Speech & Debate team to go to Chicago.

Team Members: Lili Salvati- **NSDA Qualifier**, Daisy Sweatt- **NCFL Qualifier**, Sunny Pealatore- **NCFL Alternate**

NCFL Tournament Chicago Trip: May 24th-May 27th

Chaperones: Olaf Johnson, Erin Pealatore

Students Attending: Lili Salvati, Daisy Sweatt, Sunny Pealatore

DHS transportation from Dirigo High School to Portland Jetport and return trip. Flying Southwest Airlines from Portland, Maine to Chicago and return trip. Staying at the Hilton Chicago in Chicago, also NCFL National Tournament location. Sightseeing within walking distance of hotel.

Millennium Park: Free

Art Institute of Chicago: \$116

Chicago SkyDeck: \$180

Navy Pier

Field Museum

Shedd Aquarium

Lincoln Zoo

Trip Expenses:

Southwest Airlines \$2043.88/ \$510.97 per passenger

Hotel \$1550 (NCFL special rate)

Car/Taxi Fees \$500

Sightseeing \$600

Incidentals (food) \$1000

Grand Total: \$5,693.88

Current Funds Available:

Speech & Debate \$3,300

General Fund \$761

Grand Total: \$4061

Total Needed to Raise: \$1,632

Request:

The team is requesting three items from the school board.

Item One: To take students, Lili Salvati, Daisy Sweatt, and Sunny Pealatore to the NCFL National tournament in Chicago, IL from May 24-May 27th

Item Two: To use appropriate funds from both the general fund for Speech and Debate and the School Speech and Debate fund to pay for the trip and expenses.

Item Three: To begin fundraising efforts for the Speech and Debate general fund.

There were just a couple questions from the board regarding the trip

Motion: B. Dyer to approve all items requested by the team. Seconded: J. Bradbury

Motion Carried

5. Request for overnight trip to Bryant Pond (Charlie Swan)

Charlie Swan wrote to the board to seek approval for our grade 5 students to again attend a four day, three night trip to the UMaine Extension at Bryant Pond. He was NOT requesting any financial assistance for this opportunity other than transportation to and from the site which has been budgeted for. Below are the details for the trip.

WHO? 60 Grade 5 students & 10 staff & parent Volunteers

WHEN? Depart DES on Tuesday, May 28 at 8:30am

Return from Bryant Pond on Friday, May 31 at 1pm

We may need a daily van run to support students with special needs

WHERE? UMaine Extension at Bryant Pond: 17 Conservation School Road, Bryant Pond, ME

WHAT? Hunter Safety Training (Bow or Rifle); Team Building Activities; Survival Training; Challenge Courses (High ropes & Zip Line); Canoeing; Fishing; Lots of other outdoor activities

WHY? The purpose and goal of this trip is to:

Allow our grade 5 students to bond and continue to build important connections with peers as they begin to transition to middle school

Provide opportunities for students to be stretched out of their comfort zone with various activities

Provide students with outdoor skills that are important to many of our families living in Western Maine

Allow our students to have FUN!

COST? Because we participate in the Hunter Safety Program we have a significant reduced cost for our school

Total cost we will: \$2700

Some of this cost will come from a donation from the Friends of the River Valley, some from what was budgeted.

Motion: B. Dyer

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

6. First Reading of Policy IJJ-R Instructional and Library Media Materials Selection Procedure

Much discussion ensued regarding this new policy and in regards to the current one.

Some felt it should go back to the policy committee for more review. It was decided this was another layer for parents in regards to books in the library

Motion: N. Sneller

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Abstain: J. Bradbury

Vote: Yes: 500 No: 230

Motion Carried

7. Approval of ELO Coordinator Job Description

Motion: N. Sneller

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

8. Approval of SRO Job Description

Motion: L. Whittington

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

9. **Approval of Payroll/ Bookkeeper/ Accounts Payable/ Human Resources Job Description**

Motion: L. Whittington

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

10. **Approval of Athletic Director Assistant Job Description**

Motion: L. Whittington

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

11. **Motion to Vote on Social Studies Textbook for Curriculum**

The curriculum committee met about a month ago and had decided on a core text for Social Studies. It was recommended to use a McGraw Hill textbook. There has not been a core text book in about 20 years. A social studies book is controversial. Thanks to Jason Long, who spent a great deal of time researching and some teachers involved in the process. A few board members didn't feel enough time was spent looking at the text. The book was handed out and after a meeting tonight a decision was made by the committee to move forward with the McGraw Hill book. Jason put together a substantial amount of information for the board. He deserves a lot of credit. There was some further discussion regarding the textbooks that were being recommended for curriculum in grades 6-12

There is also a book series called "Land of Hope" that is a US history and a "Patriots history" that may be used as well.

Motion: B. Dyer made a motion to approve the following instructional materials: McGraw Hill's United States Voices and Perspectives and McGraw Hill's United States History for learning materials.

Seconded: N. Sneller

No: K. Szostek

Motion Carried

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

J. Bradbury- Brought up a situation in another district regarding expulsion/policies.

B. Chow- Could not reply on another district's policy or procedure. In a situation in our district there is a policy for Title IX or they would go through a process of a superintendent's agreement possibly.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND CORRESPONDENCE

Superintendent's Report: Pam Doyen

Wondering if we should push out the board vote on the FY25 budget to April 23 so we can have the Anthem numbers? It will not impact the remainder of the budget timeline. The general consensus from the board was to do that.

We had a bus driver who, unfortunately, witnessed a fatal accident while driving. The driver did everything correctly. Our driver had the red lights on when students were exiting the bus. Cars from the opposite direction were stopped as well as the motorcyclist. A vehicle behind the motorcyclist failed to stop and the motorcyclist was killed. Our condolences go out to the family of the motorcyclist. My heart is also heavy for our bus driver who is, rightfully, struggling with the after effects of witnessing such an event. We are working with the bus driver in any way possible to help them.

Some districts are releasing early and/or having a remote day on April 8 for the upcoming Solar Eclipse. Is an early release anything the board would like to entertain? Dismissing at 11:30 might allow families time to travel to see the Solar Eclipse if they are so inclined. The board's general consensus was to allow the early dismissal day. Pam also pointed out that it could get very dark around the time of the eclipse when buses could also be on the road with students if we did a full day.

Administrator Report: Principal Charlie Swan, Dirigo Elementary School

CKLA: Amplify

DES Reading Program

Questions that I am going to focus on:

1. Why did we adopt a new reading program?
2. Why did we adopt this reading program?
3. What is taught in this reading program?
4. What have been the pros and cons of our new reading program?

Why did we adopt a new reading program?

1. We did not previously have a comprehensive Pre-K to grade 5 Reading Program- or really any reading program.
2. Our Data year to year reflected that students were struggling to be proficient readers.
3. A comprehensive reading program helps to eliminate learning gaps from classroom to classroom and from grade to grade.
4. A reading program provides structure and support especially for new or inexperienced teachers.
5. We had a window of opportunity in terms of funding that helped make this a reality.

Why did we adopt this reading program?

As a school and a search committee we were looking for the following in a reading program:

- A. We wanted a program that was Pre-K to Grade 5.
- B. We wanted a program that put real books in the hands of our students.
- C. We wanted a program that integrated Science and Social Studies into the reading instruction.
- D. We wanted a program that was grounded in the Science of Reading.

Science of Reading?

"The science of reading is a vast interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing.

This research has been conducted over the last five decades across the world, and it is derived from thousands of studies conducted in multiple languages. The science of reading has culminated in a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some have difficulty; and how we can most effectively assess and teach and, therefore, improve student outcomes through prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties."

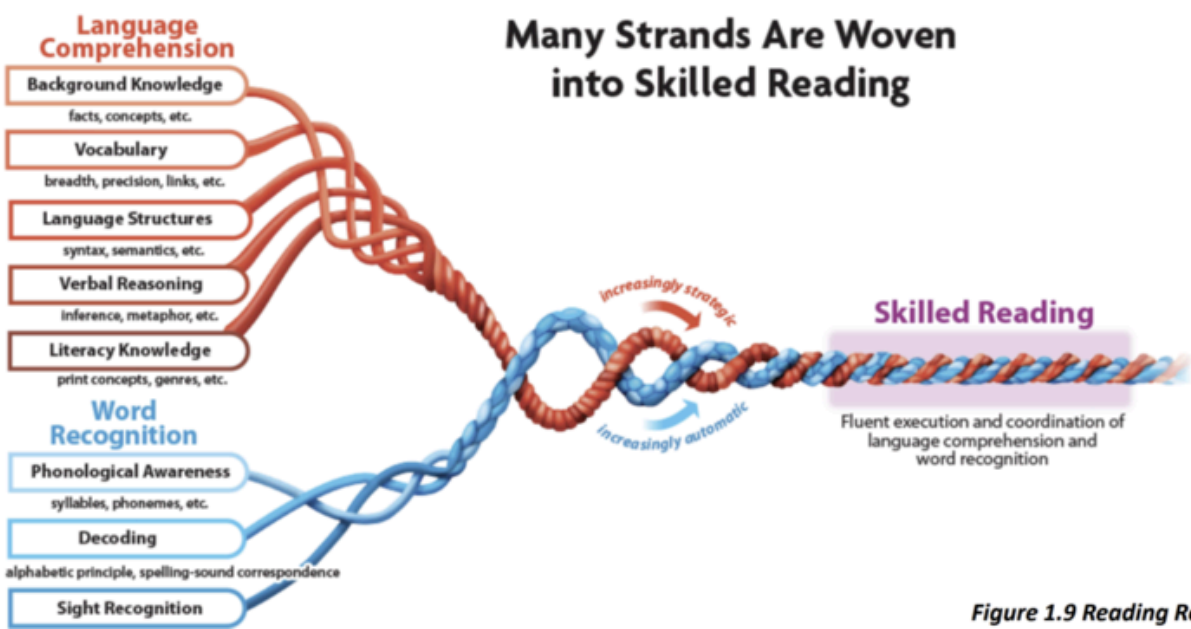
- www.thereadingleague.org

There are 5 critical pillars that are part of the Science of Reading:

1. Phonemic Awareness- the ability to identify and work with individual sounds called Phonemes.
2. Phonics- the connection between letters and the sounds they make.
3. Vocabulary- words students need to both communicate and understand what they are reading.
4. Fluency- the ability to read passages accurately, quickly and with the right expression.
5. Comprehension- Understanding what you have read.

-www.lexialearning.com

Science of Reading: Scarborough's Rope



What is taught in this reading program?



What are the Science and Social Studies Topics?



Pros & Cons:



Pros	Cons	Remedies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both horizontal and vertical alignment - Increased student vocabulary. - Engaging Science & Social Studies Topics - Focus on both background knowledge and reading skills - Incorporates writing into reading. - Less preparation time for staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More whole class instruction vs. small groups. - Very time intensive. - Trying to find the best opportunity to pull kids for intervention. - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking at a new assessment System to reduce assessment time and make analysis more efficient. - Looking at an aligned and individualized intervention/enrichment tool called Boost. - As teachers become more familiar and efficient with the pace of teaching more small group opportunities will arise.

Two teachers: Andrea Palmer- 1st grade teacher and Sarah Johnson- 3rd grade teacher both spoke on how the Reading program works in their classrooms.

There were a few questions for Charlie as well as the two teachers on how the program was working and also in conjunction with other programs

Resignations/ Retirements:

Carole Rickards, Special Education Ed Tech III at TWKDMS, retiring at end of the contract year
Heather Merchant, Special Education Ed Tech at TWKDMS at the end of year.
Kaitlynn Woollam, Special Education Ed Tech at TWKDMS as of April 1, 2024

Transfers:

Kristi Holmquist from TWKDMS teacher to DES teacher starting in school year 2024-25

COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Student Representative Report- Diana Cayer- Sports sign ups are happening and will get started within the next couple of weeks. Prom committee is meeting and the prom is going to be May 4th at 49 Franklin so save the date. More details will come out soon. Teacher workshop day Friday. Spring fling games Thursday followed by the dance on Saturday.
2. Policy Committee- No date set
3. Finance Committee- Not met
4. Curriculum Committee- Met 3/12
5. Buildings & Grounds Committee-Will meet 3/21 at 1pm at DHS
6. Negotiations Committee- Meeting March 13, 2024 at 5:30
7. Personnel Committee- Brought forward 4 job descriptions tonight. Will set a date for the next meeting.
8. Ad-hoc Committee- Will meet 3/21 at 5pm

EXECUTIVE SESSION (To occur at 7:15pm)

1. Enter into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. subsection B for discussion or consideration by a school board of suspension or expulsion of a public school student

Motion: B. Dyer

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Motion Carried

Entered into executive session at 7:14pm

Exited executive session at 7:39pm

1. Motion pertaining to executive session, if applicable

Motion: B. Dyer made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation

Seconded: D. Whittemore

Not Voting: T. Courtway

Motion Carried

ADJOURNMENT

1. Motion to adjourn
Motion: N. Sneller
Motion Carried
Meeting adjourned at 9:22pm
Seconded: B. Dyer