

**Meeting of Board of Directors  
September 5, 2024, 7:00 p.m.  
Skowhegan Area Middle School**

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Maine School Administrative District No. 54 was held on September 5, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at Skowhegan Area Middle School Library.

**ATTENDANCE BOARD MEMBERS (887 present, 112 absent):**

|                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Sarah Bunker (Mercer-16) PRESENT   | Janet Burrill* (Canaan-43) ABSENT |
| Mark Bedard (Skow-53) PRESENT      | Lauren Fox* (Mercer-16) ABSENT    |
| Samantha Delorie (Norr-46) PRESENT | Michael Lambke* (Skow-53) ABSENT  |
| Jeannie Conley (Skow-53) PRESENT   |                                   |
| Valerie Coulombe (Norr-46) PRESENT |                                   |
| Karyn Curran (Skow-53) PRESENT     |                                   |
| Jean Franklin (Canaan-43) PRESENT  |                                   |
| Daniel Frey (Smith-27) PRESENT     |                                   |
| Tanya Groce (Skow-53) PRESENT      | *excused                          |
| Theresa Howard (Corn-30) PRESENT   |                                   |
| Michelle Kelso (Skow-53) PRESENT   |                                   |
| Desiree Libby (Norr-46) PRESENT    |                                   |
| Peggy Lovejoy (Skow-53) PRESENT    |                                   |
| Janice Malek (Norr-46) PRESENT     |                                   |
| Julian Payne (Corn-30) PRESENT     |                                   |
| Lynda Quinn (Skow-53) PRESENT      |                                   |
| Amy Rouse (Skow-53) PRESENT        |                                   |
| Sara Smith (Skow-53) PRESENT       |                                   |
| Michelle Taylor (Smith-27) PRESENT |                                   |
| Timothy Williams (Skow-53) PRESENT |                                   |

1. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

a. Flag Salute followed.

Chair Quinn asked for a moment of silence for Larry Tuttle.

2. Good News and Recognitions

There were no scheduled presentations.

3. Approval of the Minutes - 8/22/24

**ON A MOTION BY Theresa Howard, seconded by Karyn Curran, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting of 8/22/24 into the record. (887 yes)**

4. Communications

a. Letters

Superintendent Moody acknowledged and accepted letters of resignation from the following:

- Kyle Colby, Ed Tech at MCSS
- Jessica Turgeon, Ed Tech at BES
- Kimberly Judkins, Librarian Ed Tech III

b. School Personnel

There were no school personnel who wished to speak.

c. Visitors

There were no visitors who wished to speak.

5. Committee Reports

There were no committee reports.

6. Superintendent's Report

a. Vacancies, nominations, recommendations

Superintendent Moody reviewed vacancies and recommended the Board's approval of nominations.

**ON A MOTION BY Sarah Bunker, seconded by Michelle Kelso, the Board voted to approve nomination pages one, two and three. (887 yes)**

b. Report on Assessments Payments to Date

Superintendent Moody shared that as of September 5, 2024, Canaan, Cornville, Mercer, Norridgewock and Smithfield were current on their monthly assessments. Skowhegan was outstanding for July, August and September. Assessments are due on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

c. Update on New School Construction Building Project

The Building Committee will meet on October 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6pm at SAMS Library. There will be an update on the progress of the new school as well as furniture purchasing. Principal Myla Kreider and Support Services Asst. Director Jessica Brown have included elementary staff in the furniture selection process and will be visiting a potential vendor next week.

Small group tours of the building site can be arranged for any interested board members; those interested should reach out to the Superintendent.

The Percent for Art Committee will meet on December 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am at the Superintendent's Office. The Maine Arts Commission will review the project advertisement for artists to apply, which will be advertised in various media, website and Maine Arts Commission Newsletter.

d. Review/Update of Federal Projects

Finance Director Melannie Keister is closing in on the final ARP and Federal Funds reimbursement. The Superintendent will share an update on federal spending once the state has finalized the final reimbursement process.

The Finance Committee met to review the FY23 Audit Report.

Superintendent Moody shared that he anticipates a stretch of tough budgets over the next few years as rising costs (both inflation and legislation) impact the district budget. This will require a lot of work and some tough choices. He will be meeting with staff about this year's budget and once again will work with administrators to bring forward a "status quo" budget to the board.

e. Approval to Purchase Current Bus Garage Site from DOT

Superintendent Moody requested the Board's approval to purchase the current bus garage site from the DOT. The purchase will be done

through the building project and state funds; there is no local cost. Superintendent Moody noted that this move will not only not cost anything locally, but will likely result in cost savings for the state as part of the project.

**ON A MOTION BY Mark Bedard, seconded by Timothy Williams, the Board voted to approve the change of the bus garage site from North Elementary to the DOT fleet maintenance lot at 264 Canaan Road in Skowhegan and to put the following referendum out to the voters on November 5, 2024.**

“Do you favor authorizing the School Board of Maine School Administrative District No. 54 (the “District”) to change the proposed location of the replacement bus garage from the current site of the North Elementary School (NEL) to the former DOT fleet maintenance lot at 264 Canaan Road in the Town of Skowhegan. The voters of the District previously approved funding and construction of the replacement bus garage as part of the new Early Childhood through Grade 5 elementary school project.”

Note: Approval of this location change will not change the previously approved budget for the project, nor will it incur additional local costs, and in fact anticipates cost savings for the project.

Following questions and comments, the motion passed. **(887 yes)**

There will be a Public Hearing on 9/19/24 at 5:00pm at the Middle School Cafeteria, prior to the Committee and Board meetings. (note: this date was incorrect and will be corrected at the Board meeting on 9/19/24).

f. Start of School

Superintendent Moody shared that students Olivia Huff and Sydalia Savage will be recommended for student board members at our next meeting on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

Jason Bellerose, Principal of Skowhegan Area High School, reported on the start of school. Students enjoyed walking in to see the *Education* = wall painted by Art Teacher, Robert Hernandez. Freshmen opening day went well and students met all of their teachers and classrooms. Faculty kicked off with several trainings, including Trauma Informed Approach and Classroom Practices, as well as prepping for NWEA Accreditation

Review.

Tristen Hinkle, Director of Marti Stevens Learning Center, reported on the start of school, which has been positive for both staff and students.

Zachary Longyear, Principal of Skowhegan Area Middle School, Reported on the start of school, with staff focusing on RTI and Intentional Prevention. Open House nights on August 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> were well attended.

g. PLD

Superintendent Moody discussed the concept of removing PLD as an option for non-traditional Maine State Retirement employees based on the cost.

This topic is directly tied to the state's move to dramatically increase ed tech pay by requiring districts across the state to pay educational technicians 125% of the state's annually adjusted minimum wage. This move undermined local control and will have a significant impact on the MSAD54 budget and future contract negotiations with the unions. The removal of PLD would have a significant up-front cost, but would further reduce costs as new employees would no longer have access to PLD retirement. Superintendent Moody indicated this item will be revisited as we move into and through this year's budget process.

h. Other

Current enrollment, as of 9/5/24, was 2,191.

Superintendent Moody shared that adjustments to the 2024-2025 calendar to remove up to eight half day professional days to move the last day of school to June 6<sup>th</sup> as a result of the need to start the demolition timeline of the Margaret Chase Smith School. The revised calendar will be presented for the Board's consideration at the meeting on 9/19/24.

Superintendent Moody shared and Assistant Superintendent Hatch reviewed adjustments to the Emergency Management Plan, which include additional references to the School Resource Officer, School Counselors and Social Workers regarding suicide and tragedy. The following recommendation was made:

**ON A MOTION BY Samantha Delorie, seconded by Valerie**

**Coulombe, the Board voted to approve the adjusted MSAD 54  
Emergency Management Plan as presented. (887 yes)**

Superintendent Moody indicated that the district will again be working with community partners to review the district Emergency Management Plan to get their feedback.

7. Assistant Superintendent and Support Services Manager

Assistant Superintendent Hatch reported that we had a great opening of school with a lot of hard work by all staff. Administrators have done a phenomenal job getting ready for school and also attended a three-day evaluation model training which focuses on consistent growth for all of our teachers. He shared with the board an article from USA Today that featured our R.E.A.C.H. After School Program.

The Support Services Manager reported that with a few minor issues, PreK transportation seems to be going well. The Canaan Elementary School has a new sign, stairs and paved parking lot. Paving at the high school was completed and the tennis courts will be completed soon.

8. Old and Unfinished Business

Julian Payne (Cornville) commented on the school lunch menus including a lot of processed foods, which the American Cancer Society says it increases the risk of cancer by 21%. Mr. Payne suggested that the district should review school lunch to see how it can reduce foods known to cause cancer.

Mr. Payne also mentioned the committee assignments for the Board and consider reviewing how committees are rotated each year.

9. Introduction of New Business

Daniel Frey (Smithfield) asked for an update on the SRO and how it is going. Superintendent Moody shared that it is going very well with the additional SRO and communication is also going very well. Timothy Williams (Skowhegan) shared that Deputy Pike has been assigned to a SRO position and is available for all schools in Somerset County.

10. Adjournment

The Board adjourned at 8:13 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Moody, Superintendent of Schools