

**LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT**

*Our mission is to provide rigorous and varied educational opportunities that challenge and engage all students to attain their highest level of intellectual, social, physical, and emotional growth. (2007)*

**LITCHFIELD SCHOOL BOARD  
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT NO. 27**

Litchfield, New Hampshire 03052

**Draft Minutes for October 4, 2017**

**In Attendance:** Brian Bourque, Chair  
Christina Harrison, Vice Chair (*excused*)  
Derek Barka, Board Member  
John York, Board Member  
Elizabeth MacDonald, Board Member  
James L. O'Neill, Superintendent  
Cory Izbicki, Business Administrator  
Devin Bandurski, Director of Special Services  
Jason Pelletier, Director of Technology  
William Lonergan, Principal, CHS  
Michele E. Flynn, Administrative Assistant

*(Agenda items may not be in the order in which they were addressed.)*

**I. PUBLIC SESSION**

**6:00 p.m.**

A. Call to Order

Mr. Bourque called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Review & Revision of Agenda

D. Summary of Non-Public Actions from September 27, 2017: *There were no non-public actions.*

E. Presentations and Recognitions

Mr. Bourque announced that Ryan Blow attained the level of Eagle Scout and congratulated him for his accomplishment.

F. Correspondence

Mr. Bourque reported that the following correspondence was received: a letter from Natalie Hirte regarding high school diplomas and graduation criteria; a letter from Jocelyn Raho regarding full day kindergarten.

Mr. York reported that correspondence was received from Tami Hoffman regarding the Chromebook program.

G. Superintendent's Comments

• Enrollment – Oct 1 Report

Mr. O'Neill provided the September enrollment report and October 1 enrollment data for the Board. He commented that the data shows enrollments are in line with projections. He noted over the last eight years the district has lost 279 students. He indicated the largest cohort in elementary school is grade 3 with 90 students and declining enrollment will impact the middle and high school over the next four years unless there is a change in demographics in the community. Mr. O'Neill commented it will create a challenge if numbers continue to drop, but may alleviate space options in the buildings. He indicated the district will have to keep an eye on enrollment numbers and how we allocate resources and use space. He noted there could be an exception from the number of new apartments, single family homes and older three bedroom homes on the market that are being purchased by younger families. He commented this trend was noted on last year's NESDEC projections.

Mr. Bourque requested an enrollment comparison with enrollment projections.

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- Business Administrator’s Update

Mr. Izbicki provided an update on the district’s financials and budget preparations. He reported that budget preparation for FY19 continues, all three school budgets have been reviewed, and he will be working with HR on the salaries and benefits budget.

- 2017-2018 Tuition Rates

Mr. Izbicki noted that the 2017-2018 tuition rates have been prepared and require approval from the Board.

***Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the 2017-2018 Tuition Rates as presented. Mr. Barka seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.***

Mr. O’Neill expressed his appreciation to administrators for the budget preparation and review. He believes the FY19 budget will be favorable and the primary goal is the implementation of full day kindergarten next year.

H. Community Forum

Laura Gandia, 3 Chamberlin Drive, provided feedback on Policy IMDA, School Ceremonies, Observances and Patriotic Exercises. She was not in agreement with much of the language in the policy relative to the responsibility of public schools and the observance of religious holidays and activities. Mrs. Gandia suggested language that reflects observances for holidays will be aligned with the district’s core values and beliefs, and the inclusion in the policy that students in the district should be provided five minutes per day to exercise their right to freedom of assembly and participate voluntarily in the free exercise of religion. She indicated that many holidays have religious background, such as Santa Claus, the candy cane, St. Patrick, the shamrock, and St. Valentine. Mrs. Gandia provided feedback on the display of the US flag and the State flag and when they should be flown.

I. School Board Comments

Mr. York reported that the Capital Planning Committee will meet on October 11 to discuss the findings of the building-wide assessment.

Mr. Bourque reported that he met with the Superintendent, Board of Selectmen Chair and the Budget Committee Chair the other day. He indicated that he asked why all meetings are not held at Town Hall. He noted the sound is better and it is a conducive meeting place. He commented that it may be possible to work out having the School Board meetings at Town Hall and it was nice of the Town to offer.

**II. CONSENT AGENDA**

A. Public Minutes:

- September 20, 2017

***Mr. York made a motion to approve the public minutes of September 20, 2017. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 3-0-1, with Mr. Barka abstaining.***

**III. REPORTS**

A. Curriculum Report

The October curriculum report was provided for the Board.

B. Principals Reports:

- GMS and LMS

Reports from GMS and LMS principals were provided for the Board.

- CHS

Mr. Lonergan presented the CHS Principals report to the Board.

- 1:1 Program Update

Mr. Perez provided an update on the CHS 1:1 program. He reported the year is going well and teachers are embracing the technology. Eliot Bamford will start a basic training for Google with teachers after school and staff

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can make requests on other applications for which they would like some assistance. Two presentation were held in faculty meetings and Mr. Pelletier is providing training for teachers as well. Three teachers will be attending a conference in Massachusetts and students are getting acclimated to the technology.

Mr. Perez mentioned he has not yet surveyed the teachers on what they need and want for professional development. He noted that the newly passed law for student surveys requires surveys to be relative to academics or the school needs permission from parents to opt student in. He asked the School Board to confirm when surveying students on Chromebooks that the survey is an academic survey.

*The School Board was in agreement that the Chromebooks survey for students is an academic survey.*

Mr. Perez reported three senior students are going to do professional development for students with Google for their senior projects. Topics include digital citizenship and searching for apps for teachers with confirmation from the IT department, and online signups for parents on parent conference days/nights.

Mr. Bourque asked how many teachers are 100% vested in the program. Mr. Perez indicated that some teachers that were anticipated to push back are really diving into the program. He commented teachers are trying to entrench in Google Classroom.

Mr. Bourque asked if there is feedback from students on whether they like the program. Mr. Perez indicated students have expressed that they like the program. He mentioned there are a few seniors who were using their own devices that were concerned about using a Chromebook.

Mr. Lonergan commented the important piece is that there has been an amazing amount of collaboration among teachers. Mr. Perez agreed that staff is embracing it.

Mr. York asked about the expectation of the teachers. He indicated when we started the program, the plan at that time was that all teachers would be proficient in use by now. Mr. Perez clarified they will be proficient by the end of this year.

Mr. York commented if that is the case we should expect all teachers to be using Chromebooks in all their classrooms by the beginning of next year. Mr. Perez commented that he was not sure about ordering them to do that as it may be a contractual issue.

Mr. York commented it is not a contractual issue. He indicated there are some students not using Chromebooks and using longhand and it is confusing. He was concerned it can be difficult for the students to complete their assignments.

Mr. Perez indicated by the end of the year teachers will know how to use Google Apps. He noted he is not aware of a school that has made an expectation of teachers to have to use them.

Mr. York commented if we expect our students to be using them, we should have the same expectation of teachers. He indicated that if one section of a combined classroom is using Chromebooks and the other section is not, it is difficult for the students to do the work.

Mr. Perez indicated he was aware of the class Mr. York is referring to and the teacher is learning.

Mr. Lonergan commented there are times and places when you class instruction, watching videos and other classes that do not apply well. There are many applications for this in many classrooms. He noted we have had two years of experience, but with a limited amount of students who have had Chromebooks. He believes all teachers will be proficient by the end of the year as many are using them for the first time. He offered to determine which teachers are proficient and the status of the rest and bring a report to the Board.

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Mr. O'Neill commented it is cultural educational pedagogical change. He noted the emersion of the building happened more quickly and teachers are working hard to implement Chromebooks into pedagogical practices. He indicated it takes time to get comfortable and understand how to use the technology, but we are making good progress. He believes the technology is being used by the teachers throughout most of the building. Mr. O'Neill noted the bigger question is: how are we improving student learning outcomes and how will we measure the changing student outcomes? How will they be different? He commented, for example, we assume college and career ready skills are improving, but how do we know that. He indicated we should be defining some of the kinds of metrics to determine how we are improving the education of our children.

Mr. Barka commented with any large technology roll out you will never get 100% of people on board. He noted some will fight the change because it is not what they are used to doing. He suggested staying the course and it will catch on.

Mr. Bourque commented he is not sure if it is possible to measure utilization and how it is improving, but he believes that the utilization will help them in the future.

Mr. Barka commented Google Office makes things easier to share and use. He indicated it is the next level of communication.

**IV. OLD OR UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. High School Graduation Requirements
  - IKF High School Graduation Requirements
    - Diploma Options (discussion)

Mr. Lonergan, Mrs. Callinan and Mr. Perez discussed high school graduation requirements and policy parameters with the Board. A discussion regarding diploma options occurred at the Sep 28 meeting and may be a point of discussion on this agenda.

Mr. Bourque asked if there should be separate requirements for graduation for some students. He asked who sets the criteria for those individuals and what are the numbers?

Mr. Lonergan commented that the CHS diploma is 24 credits and the district required Geometry to be a graduation requirement. He noted it is not a state requirement. He explained the state changed regulations on math that say student have to have four math courses. He indicated three can be math course and one can be a class in which math is used. He added those courses have to be identified. Mr. Lonergan indicated that Geometry is the issue. He noted that there are two or three students at CHS who will not be able to meet the Geometry requirement. Typically high schools give those types of students a certificate of attendance. Mr. Lonergan believes those students should receive a CHS diploma. He noted there could be other regular education students that fall into that category. He indicated he is in favor of rigor and high standards, but he believes for a small number of students it is an unfortunate circumstance they will find themselves in. He added the state does require that students pass Algebra.

Mr. York asked what kind of classes would be substituted for those students to take.

Mrs. Callinan commented students that struggle would fall into the track of a transition math course.

Mr. York commented those are not math credits. He indicated you are just giving them three years to complete the course.

Mr. Lonergan clarified they are math credits as they can take personal finance or another course that involves math.

Mrs. Bandurski commented the class of 2018 will be impacted by the requirement and the individuals it impacts may not be able to meet the requirement. She indicated they are taking a transition course and will have four years of math. She believes it is not fair that they are being penalized for something that is not a state requirement.

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Mr. York commented we made the requirement of Geometry in 2014 and asked how many students are involved.

Mrs. Callinan indicated there are only two senior taking Geometry this year. She noted they could not take it in previous years.

Mr. York asked if there are any student in 2018 that are in jeopardy. Mrs. Callinan indicated that there are none, but there will be students in 2019.

Mr. York asked why they are behind. Mrs. Bandurski indicated that vocational programs make it hard to fit some subjects into the schedule. She commented whether they have a disability or not, it is unfair to penalize them by not offering educational opportunities because we have requirements that are stricter than the state.

Mr. Bourque asked if when these individuals were freshmen you would know if they would meet the criteria.

Mrs. Bandurski explained it would be difficult for them to meet the criteria and have to offer them educational opportunities that benefit them. She indicated there are different types of exceptional students with different issues that impact them and we have to think outside the box.

Mr. Bourque asked if grade 9 is too early to identify they will not meet the criteria. Mrs. Callinan indicated that it is too early to tell. Mrs. Bandurski commented it has reached the point where we know they cannot complete Geometry.

Mr. York commented that he is hearing the students did not take Geometry because they wanted to do different things.

Mrs. Bandurski indicated that is inaccurate.

Mr. York commented if the students are identified you should know earlier. He stated they took Algebra I and then did other things.

Mrs. Bandurski indicated if everything falls into place they will be on track to complete Algebra II in their senior year.

Mr. Barka asked how many schools require Geometry as a requirement for graduation. Mr. Lonergan answered none that he is aware of.

Mr. Barka asked when we implemented this requirement, did we get ahead of ourselves and forget about the problems that may arise with some students.

Mr. Bourque commented we should not stop them from receiving a CHS diploma just because they cannot do Geometry.

Mr. York asked if the students just struggle in math. He asked if they are in a special program or just students that are struggling with math.

Mrs. Bandurski indicated that we are talking about two different students who have different situations. She commented that she reviewed everything. She noted we need to have a waiver for Geometry because it is not a state requirement.

Mr. York commented taking three years of the same course is stretching the RSA.

Mr. O'Neill commented there are people that can take Calculus and complete it in a year, but some may require a longer period of time to complete a course and should not be penalized for that. He noted we are not talking about a large population of students. He indicated the principal would have to approve the request. Mr. O'Neill explained

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that he is not trying to change the rigor of the diploma or eliminate Geometry; he is suggesting an alternate way for some of these students who cannot complete the requirement in the timeframe to receive a diploma.

Mr. York asked when it stops and why is it math. He commented there have been lengthy conversations pushing the Board toward this rigor and the Board requested Geometry as a requirement. He indicated at the same time changes were being made to have Algebra I at LMS. He believes the request is to water down the math program. Mr. York commented we are awarding three credits of math to get through one year of math. He indicated he has a personal problem with that and that was not what the Board agreed to at that time. He commented the Board wanted to set up a program and agreed to make things more rigorous at the middle school with the understanding Pre-Algebra would go away and Algebra I would take its place. Mr. York indicated it seems as if there is a desire to make changes. He commented that the Board needs to see what the math curriculum is going to be like to be able to do that. He asked how are we going to manage any student to get through the fourth year in math. He stated that students will take the easiest courses in math just to graduate.

Mr. Bourque clarified that is not what is being discussed. He indicated there are a very small number of students who may not be able to meet the Geometry requirement, but will still have to attain 24 credits. He recalled discussing this four years prior and this conversation did not emerge. He wondered if the Board overlooked it.

Mr. O'Neill commented a little empathy is needed for someone to say you will get a diploma if the principal believes you have been working very hard. He indicated he is not trying to water down the diploma or give students the easy option. He noted it is only that a few children are taking a bit more time getting through.

Mr. Lonergan commented six or eight years ago, these students would have dropped out of high school. He indicated these are students who may never be able to understand this type of course or work.

Mr. O'Neill explained we are looking for a process that would ensure that Guidance and Special Services are recommending it and the Principal is approving it. He noted there has to be good documentation. He indicated it would be a process that ensures rigor remains at CHS, but that has a little empathy for some of those students who deserve it.

Mr. Bourque suggested revisiting the policy with language regarding a process for students who may not be able to navigate all the requirements of graduation.

Mr. York commented the administration needs to work on reviewing all the classes in the math program. He indicated the Board needs to have the curriculum so we can determine if all students are meeting the requirements for graduation, or we need to fix it.

Mr. O'Neill commented that we can look at if we are teaching those things in what we offer.

Mr. York commented we need to follow the state requirements and the Board needs to look over the math curriculum so we can see what will be part of middle school so they can get into the high school. He believes there is a small percentage of students that struggle, but at the same time our math scores are about average. He indicated we may not be as robust in teaching math as we should be. He noted at some point something was hard for all of us and we had to fight our way through it. He commented even if we waive Geometry, how will we know that same student is getting those same requirements done successfully.

Mrs. Callinan indicated we have foundation classes now.

Mr. York commented it would be easier to see the curriculum and be able to determine what is needed.

Mr. O'Neill indicated the math curriculum was approved by the Board last year.

- Infinite Campus GPA Information

Mr. Pelletier provided information for the Board regarding GPA information in Infinite Campus. He indicated that grades are posted two times a year, at the end of Semester 1 and at the end of Semester 2. He noted the numbers in

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there now are “in progress” grades, which fluctuate constantly. He noted that we noticed there is no real way to see how the student has progressed in their years at CHS. Mr. Pelletier reported a new report has been created in the portal to allow parents to get an unofficial transcript and parents will be able to check “in progress” grades to see if their child is still on track.

Mr. York expressed appreciation for the new report. He asked if the class is not an Honors class, but the student completes an Honors project, how does it get reported?

Mrs. Callinan indicated that parents do not see that side of the numbers, but parents would see an H noted. She commented the proper weight is applied for the course and our job is make sure every student who completes an Honors Option is added in.

Mr. York commented as a parent he would like to see the points that are associated with that.

B. Policies:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:

- ACE Procedural Safeguards: Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Handicap/Disability

***Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve Policy ACE, Procedural Safeguards: Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Handicap/Disability. Mr. York seconded. The motion carried 3-0-0.***

- BEDG Minutes and Public Records

***Mr. Barka made a motion to approve Policy BEDG, Minutes and Public Records. Mr. Bourque seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.***

Mrs. Flynn asked the Board to rescind Policy KBA, Public’s Right to Know in light of the approval of Policy BEDG, Minutes and Public Records.

***Mr. Barka made a motion to rescind Policy KBA, Public’s Right to Know. Mr. York seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.***

- EBBC Emergency Care and First Aid

Mrs. MacDonald was concerned that school district staff would be administering the opioid antagonist. She believes that the police department should administer the treatment. She asked how many overdoses have occurred in Litchfield.

Community members in the audience indicated that there have been several overdoses and some deaths occurred.

Mrs. Flynn commented that the police department may not arrive in time.

Mr. O’Neill commented if someone can be saved it is the honorable thing to do.

Mrs. MacDonald asked why the police do not carry it and why there is no DARE officer in our schools.

Mr. Barka commented that the DARE program has been discontinued as it did not have any impact.

Mr. O’Neill commented DARE has had some criticism in terms of its impact. He indicated the SRO has not been filled for some reason. He noted there is a need for some training in this area.

Mrs. MacDonald commented that Project Safeguard must not be having an impact either.

Mr. O’Neill commented it occurs in many schools, but it is a community problem, as well as state and national. He indicated public schools are the only institutions left where we have large groups of students and people together at one time for a long period of time.

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Mrs. MacDonald believes the police department should have input.

Mr. York commented in one of our schools staff is undergoing CPR training. He indicated the school nurse and staff are certified in CPR. He was concerned that there would be too many staff members who would be able to administer the antagonist and feels the district should not have that kind of liability.

Mr. O'Neill commented if we have a nurse who is trained and a designated staff member who is properly trained that would enable administration of the antagonist in the event of an overdose. He indicated if we can revive an affected person we should. He noted he understands the argument and it would have to be monitored. He added the district is not looking to train 30 or 40 people in each building. Mr. O'Neill commented it would be appropriate to have the nurse and a designated person trained in each building.

***Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve Policy EBBC/JLCE, Emergency Care and First Aid. Mr. York seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.***

- IMDA School Ceremonies, Observance and Patriotic Exercises – tabled

*The policy was deferred to the following meeting so the Board could review the statements and suggestions made previously in the meeting.*

- JCA Change of School or Assignment

***Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve Policy JCA, Change of School or Assignment. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.***

- BCAB School Board Member Use of Social Media

***Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the School Board Member Use of Social Media guidelines to be added to the Code of Ethics. Mr. York seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.***

- Revision:
  - IJOC Volunteers

***Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the revisions to Policy IJOC, Volunteers. Mr. York seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.***

**V. MANIFEST**

The manifest was circulated and signed by the Board.

**VI. PUBLIC INPUT**

**A. Community Forum**

Natalie Hirte, 14 Lund Street, addressed Mr. York's comments about students who take three years to complete a class. She commented that it shows Mr. York lacks the knowledge of a special needs classroom. Mrs. Hirte explained her son does the same work as the other students, but his homework takes him longer than normal. She indicated it may take him longer to complete his classes, but he has to work that much harder. She noted for any student like that not to get credit for the years he did the work is not fair and is insulting.

Mrs. Hirte commented that it is good that the schools strive to push the students to go as high as possible. She indicated she would be curious to find out how many students. She noted that some students do not want to go to college right after high school and questioned why they have to be on that path. Mrs. Hirte asked why not have a basic diploma option for those students, and if they desire to go to college later they can take those classes. She asked if the state requires less credit than the district, why not have the option of a lesser credit diploma for those students who do not want to be on that path?

Mr. O'Neill agreed that we have to find ways to make education challenging, interesting and enjoyable for children. He explained in the 1990's we started realizing those skill sets for career and college are similar and when we see

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high school focused on rigorous courses it is good because the skill sets are not that different. He indicated every child who graduates from CHS should graduate with skills needed for college and career because not that different.

Mrs. Hirte commented the state requires less credits than CHS so why not give those children the lower credit diploma so that the students can go into a career.

Mr. O'Neill indicated the state minimum is a minimum and we have a more reasonable outcome for our students.

Mrs. Hirte commented that some students go on to college after graduation and quit after one semester because they discovered it was not what they wanted. She indicated that the trades are very important and we should not ignore them. She noted we need to find a middle ground for those students who are interested in the trades and make sure students who want to be on that college path are engaged and prepared for college.

Nate Cooper, LEA President, commented he was not at the last meeting and asked if any decision was made on the formulation of a search committee for the superintendent. Mr. Bourque indicated it was discussed, but no decision was made.

Mr. O'Neill indicated a survey has been posted and the data is being compiled. He noted that the district has begun advertising. He commented he intends to have conversations with the LEA President and the LSS President about membership on the search committee.

Mr. York commented in our curriculum report there was a math review summary that spoke of what we discussed tonight. He indicated after reading it and hearing what was presented, there is a disconnect between what the Director of Curriculum is providing for information about the math program and what the Guidance, Principal and Director of Special Services are trying to convey. He commented that the whole idea behind what is happening at the middle school was to make sure the students are coming better prepared after hearing what the high school said was occurring in 2014 and before. He believes the Board should review the math review report and the ideas for what is going forward.

**VII. APPROVAL OF NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

**A. Approval of Non-Public Minutes:**

- Non-Public Draft Minutes of September 20, 2017

***Mr. Bourque made a motion to approve the non-public minutes of September 20, 2017. Mrs. MacDonald seconded. The motion carried 3-0-1, with Mr. Barka abstaining.***

**IX. ADJOURN**

***Mr. Barka made a motion to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. Mr. York seconded. The motion carried 4-0-0.***

Respectfully submitted,

Michele E. Flynn  
Administrative Assistant to the School Board