

RSU 54/MSAD 54

**Meeting of Board of Directors
January 4, 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 January 4, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. at Skowhegan Area Middle School Cafeteria.

ATTENDANCE BOARD MEMBERS (813 present, 186 absent):

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

1. Call to Order

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

a. Flag Salute followed.

2. Good News and Recognitions

Tristen Hinkle, Marti Stevens Learning Center, shared information on various projects the students are participating in, including volunteering with the Back Pack Program, Food Cupboard and Animal Shelter. Agriculture-based learning projects include maple syrup production, honey, gardening and raising laying and meat chickens. The team of teachers from Marti Stevens Learning Center, including Tristen, Ashley McDonald, Josh Harris and Jim Goodwin have been named 2024 Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Teachers of the Year!

3. Approval of the Minutes – 12/7/23

ON A MOTION BY Sarah Bunker, seconded by Theresa Howard, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors’ meeting of 12/7/23 into the record. (813 yes)

4. Communications

a. Letters

Superintendent Moody acknowledged and accepted letters of intent to retire from the following:

- Vivian Champagne, Adult Education School Office Assistant, effective June 30, 2024.
- Sherri Arris, Custodian at Bloomfield Elementary School.
- David Leavitt, Support Serviced Manager, effective June 30, 2024.

Superintendent Moody acknowledged and accepted a resignation from Glenn Rich, Ed Tech at Bloomfield Elementary School.

b. School Personnel

Zachary Longyear, Principal at Skowhegan Area Middle School, announced that there will be an iPower Parent Presentation at the school on Monday, January 8th from 6-7:30 pm.

c. Visitors

There were no visitors who wished to speak.

5. Committee Reports

a. Personnel Committee – 12/7/23

ON A MOTION BY Theresa Howard, seconded by Samantha Delorie, the Board voted to accept the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting of 12/7/23 into the public record. (813 yes)

Theresa Howard, Committee Chair, reviewed the minutes. There were no recommendations.

b. Educational Policy/Program Committee – 12/12/23

ON A MOTION BY Karyn Curran, seconded by Sara Smith, the Board voted to accept the minutes of the Educational Policy/Program Committee meeting of 12/12/23 into the public record. (813 yes)

Karyn Curran, Committee Chair, reviewed the minutes. There were no recommendations.

6. Superintendent's Report

a. Vacancies, nominations, recommendations

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

ON A MOTION BY Jean Franklin, seconded by Karyn Curran, the Board voted to approve nominations page one. (813 yes)

c. Report on Assessments Payments to Date

Superintendent Moody shared that as of January 4, 2024, Cornville, Mercer, Norridgewock and Smithfield were current on their monthly assessments, with January due on the 20th. Canaan and Skowhegan were outstanding for December and January. Assessments are due on the 20th of each month.

d. Update on New School Construction Building Project

Superintendent Moody shared that the building project weathered the storm very well. Steel is in place for two of the wings and the project is going good. Fly over videos are being posted on the website.

d. Review/Update of Federal Projects/Federal Funds

Finance Director, Melannie Keister, continues to work on reimbursements for ARP grant funds which end on 9/28/24. We are working through technology purchases as part of federal ARP funds per our pandemic recovery plan and the move to 1:1 computing. As part of our budget process the district will need to budget additional technology funds to continue technology purchases moving forward.

e. SRO Update

Superintendent Moody met with Attorney Michael Buescher to review potential liability of hiring SRO from Skowhegan, and he feels that as long as we do not assign the SRO to a specific school, there is no liability issue. Mr. Moody will have a conversation with the Somerset County Sheriff, the Skowhegan Police Chief, and District Attorney prior to the next board meeting. The town of Skowhegan has indicated that they will remove their support of the SRO program, a program they have supported for over 20 years, if the district votes to add a second SRO from the Somerset County Sheriff's department. Superintendent Moody suggested that it would hurt the district to lose the current SRO and stated that this partnership has been very successful from his perspective. The Board will consider a decision at the next meeting.

f. Other

Superintendent Moody updated the Board on the process of Student Serving on School Board. Mr. Moody, Mr. Hatch and Mr. Bellerose met with Senior, Carly McCabe, who has applied to be a student on the School Board. She will be observing at our next meeting and should the board vote to support her nomination, will officially be joining the Board at the February 8th meeting.

The January 9th Educational Policy/Program Committee meeting has been moved to January 16th.

The February Board meeting has been adjusted to February 8th.

An updated Board calendar with budget timeline will be shared with the Board before our next meeting.

The current budget year will be a challenging one but is one we have planned for over the past three years. This year's budgeting process will include our traditional review format as well as leveraging the budgeting component of the District's new accounting software.

Superintendent Moody anticipates having an update regarding negotiations for the Board at its next meeting.

Julian Payne (Cornville) asked if there was an option to run the budget through AI.

7. Assistant Superintendent and Support Services Manager

Assistant Superintendent Hatch going well with grants. The EASE grant has allowed us to extend the additional counselors hired through ARP funds for another year. With the additional counselors, there is no longer a significant waitlist for services.

The District is applying for The “1st Ten Community School” grant (\$250,000 over 3 years), which focuses on the first ten years of life, and will provide funds to help coordinate our three schools coming together and help align our programming. The grant will also allow us to focus on supporting families in the earlier years which will help improve those pathways.

Mr. Moody shared that after speaking with staff, the focus on professional development has been positive in regard to the impact and challenges of educating students today.

Support Services Manager David Leavitt updated the Board on storm recovery. Buses are running and two of the nine vans thus far have been totaled. He is working with insurance adjusters to assess the damages from the December storm.

The new school construction faired the December storm well. Concrete continues to be poured with the erection of steel continuing through the month of January.

Currently the district is down three bus drivers, and with several retirements, we will be looking to fill five custodial positions. The District will be providing pre-K bussing next year.

Mr. Moody acknowledged staff who handled the December storm – staff were phenomenal. Warming centers were set up at Mill Stream, Margaret Chase and Canaan schools; SRO Daigneault and his wife were praised for the home cooked food delivered to the warming center at Margaret Chase.

Mr. Moody commented on the Board Appreciation bags from the Administrators, handed out as a token of their support for Board Appreciation Month. Chair Quinn commended Board members for the focus on doing what’s best for kids.

8. Old and Unfinished Business

There was no old and unfinished business.

9. Introduction of New Business

There was no introduction of new business.

11. Adjournment

The Board adjourned at 7:49 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Moody, Superintendent of Schools