

**RSU 54/MSAD 54**

**Meeting of Board of Directors  
October 5, 2023, 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 October 5, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at Skowhegan Area Middle School Cafeteria.

**ATTENDANCE BOARD MEMBERS (708 present, 291 absent):**

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

2. Good News and Recognitions

Jason Bellerose, Principal of Skowhegan Area High School, along with students, presented to the Board the Maine Supreme Court visit earlier that day. The court held oral arguments on three cases in the high school auditorium. Students shared their educational experiences from the event about being a citizen and the American Justice System. Representative Jennifer Poirier, on behalf of the Judicial Branch, thanked staff and students. Those in attendance shared that they were very impressed with how articulated and well-spoken the SAHS students were during the visit.

3. Approval of the Minutes – 9/21/23

**ON A MOTION BY Samantha Delorie, seconded by Michelle Kelso, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the Board of Directors’ meeting of 9/21/23 into the record. (708 yes)**

4. Communications

a. Letters

Superintendent Moody acknowledged and accepted a letter of resignation from Morgan Mott, Ed Tech at Mill Stream Elementary School.

b. School Personnel

There were no school personnel who wished to speak.

c. Visitors

A visitor spoke and shared concerns about educational programming.

5. Committee Reports

a. Personnel Committee – 9/21/23

**ON A MOTION BY Theresa Howard, seconded by Jean Franklin, the Board voted to accept the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting of 9/21/23 into the public record. (708 yes)**

Theresa Howard, Committee Chair, reviewed the minutes and asked the Board to vote on the following recommendations:

**ON A MOTION BY Theresa Howard, seconded by Samantha Delorie, the Board voted to support and approve an immediate one-time salary adjustment of the Superintendent’s 2023-2024 salary, by \$10,000, to correct a market error and appropriately compensate the position relative to other districts. (708 yes)**

6. Superintendent’s Report

a. Vacancies, nominations, recommendations

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

**ON A MOTION BY Samantha Delorie, seconded by Sara Smith, the Board voted to approve nominations page one. (708 yes)**

b. Report on Assessments Payments to Date

Superintendent Moody shared that as of October 5, 2023, Canaan, Cornville, Mercer, Norridgewock and Smithfield were current on their monthly assessments. Skowhegan was outstanding for August and September. Assessments are due on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month.

c. Update on New School Construction Building Project

Superintendent Moody clarified that the new school construction project has had zero impact on local taxpayers. The 60 Million Dollar Bond which was approved last spring and finalized this month, is 100% state funded. The state agreed to take this approach because of the success of MSAD54's fundraising efforts. The next bond (roughly 15.5 Million Dollars) is slated to be part local and part state. Based on current fundraising efforts the local only portion is expected to be less than \$2,000,000. The district's pending CDS request (for just over 1.9 million dollars, and which has been supported by Senators Collins and King, and Congressman Golden) could reduce the local tax burden to nearly zero. The district anticipates learning about final CDS by the winter.

d. Review/Update of Federal Projects/Federal Funds

ESSER II and ARP reimbursements are ongoing. The Finance Director and staff are working hard with federal compliance documentation to submit for reimbursement.

e. SRO Update

Superintendent Moody updated the Board on the status of the new School Resource Officer position. Follow up conversations with both the Somerset County Sheriff and Skowhegan Police Chief, as well as District Attorney Maloney and the Norridgewock Town Manager have occurred since the last board meeting. The town of Norridgewock will only support a Sheriff's Office SRO as they feel that is in the town's best interest. The District Attorney and school attorney agree that if the town of Norridgewock won't support an agreement to place a Skowhegan SRO at the Mill Stream School

with jurisdiction, it is in the best interest of the district and law enforcement that the district hire a sheriff's department officer for the new position. Chief Bucknam informed Mr. Moody that if the District elects to hire a Sheriff's officer for the new SRO position, the town will be pulling the Skowhegan SRO and will no longer support SRO's in our schools. Based on this information, the Superintendent shared he is unable to make a recommendation at this time and will be exploring options further.

Following Board members' comments and questions, it was decided that more time is needed for further discussions.

f. MSMA Annual Fall Conference for School Board – Oct 26 and 27

Superintendent Moody shared information on the MSMA Annual Fall Conference for School Board scheduled for October 26 and 27 and encouraged members to attend.

g. Elect Delegate an Alternate for MSBA Delegate Assembly – Oct 21

**ON A MOTION BY Theresa Howard, seconded by Jean Franklin, Samantha Delorie was elected as Delegate and Julian Payne as Alternate at the MSBA Delegate Assembly on October 21, 2023. (708 yes)**

h. Other

Superintendent Moody shared that interested Board members can borrow the newest edition of Maine School Law and Practice for Board Members, which are available in the Superintendent's Office.

Superintendent Moody shared that he had the opportunity to meet and have a positive conversation with the Director of the Cornville Regional Charter School to review statute and funding for charter school students participating in athletics. The Charter School Director agreed to pay their outstanding bills (\$17,352) and will be bringing the issue to his board to determine next steps.

7. Assistant Superintendent and Support Services Manager

Assistant Superintendent Hatch shared that the REACH Program will be hosting an Open House Celebration, *Celebrating 5 Years of Keeping the Lights on After School* on October 28<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the Middle School Gymnasium.

Mr. Hatch shared that we are continuing to fill open positions and hiring substitute teachers.

Building Administrators have been working hard to prepare for State Assessments in our schools.

The Support Services Manager reported that the Canaan project is wrapping up with CMP to set the new transformer for 3-phase power, and the roof will be finished over the weekend.

Mr. Leavitt shared that foundation is being poured and should be completed before the steel arrives in early December.

8. Old and Unfinished Business

There was no old and unfinished business.

9. Introduction of New Business

There was no introduction of new business.

10. Adjournment

The Board adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Moody, Superintendent of Schools