

## SOMERSWORTH SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

August 23, 2022

City Hall Chambers

7: 00PM

1. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Larson called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Upon call of the roll, the following members were present: Maggie Larson, Todd Marsh, Kari Clark, Barbara Wentworth, Mark Richardson, Susan Tierney, Gerri Cannon, Paul Hackworth and Mandy Demers.
2. **COMMENTS BY VISITORS:** Jude Yoder stated I am here to discuss the changes to the JBAB policy regarding trans and gender non-conforming students. I have been a resident my entire life, so I think that I know it pretty well. I know every way to get into this town and every way to get out of it, even so coming back has been harder recently because I know a lot about this town, and it knows a lot about me. When I realized I was trans I was really young, so I smothered that knowledge until just a few years ago and came out publicly just a few months ago. There are many reasons I waited to fully come out, more often than not it was simply my own denial to blame but, in the weeks, leading up to telling my family and friends many abstract fears became very concrete. Those fears being one, will I be asking too much of others, two, can I now withstand others denial of my reality while healing from my own self-denial, three, how will this affect my safety and four how will this affect the safety of my loved ones. Since I have been home this summer, I have watched white supremacists' groups come more and more out into the open using violent language and more recently making outward threats in Somersworth. I have watched your board reverse what was rather a progressive policy and I have watched my relationships with family and friends crumble. It is hard to come back here because I can see the tide turning and I cannot grieve anymore about my childhood home. I am sorry for such a lengthy exposition, but I need this to be very clear. Though they may be expressed or worded differently thoughts like these go through every trans persons mind before they come out and they are often amplified for trans youth. If you come out, are you going to be safe, are you going to be cared for, are you going to have a house, will your relationships change for the better. Another former Somersworth student and others from the community have come to tell you about statistics, I can't know if you were listening, but I am not going to repeat what you should already know, the important part is that they are upsetting to say the least. The debate right now swirling around trans kids and schools has been painted as deeply complicated and controversial in many ways by media. It has painted trans kids as threats specifically to their peers and their guardian's control over their children. There are absolutely moments where sharing information between parents, teachers and other school staff is important to the safety and health of our children. As our Superintendent said in an article back in June that schools contact parents for a number of things such as field trips, medical information, sports information etc. I resent however her unthoughtful comparison of these things to a student's choice to change their name or be out publicly at school or at home. The policy change is absolutely a threat to your trans students, let's consider if a student is changing their name in PowerSchool as was the original issue discussed, they either have parents who don't use PowerSchool, or they have already discussed this with their parents. You may see this as a greater argument for why this information should be freely shared with a guardian but there is a fundamental difference between these day-to-day communications such as field trips and a choice to come out to a family or community. Outing is harmful for obvious reasons, and they may face violence in or out of the home, they may lose housing or so on, but it also takes away the student's sense of control and autonomy. That feeling can often cause panic and suicidal ideation. When legislation handling similar topics of a students bill of rights passed through the NH house of reps this summer it was voted down. Members of both parties expressed concerns about the conflictions and stress that this would put on students and school staff members. In addition, the NH Attorney General's office stated that there were concerns about how legislation and policies like this would be infringing on students' rights. And finally, you also need to take into account how this will affect your students' relationships with your schools and your teachers. Will your students feel safe, will they feel they have access to support and information, if they are worried about coming out to a parent will they come to you for help when they need it or will they turn to other sources, their peers, the internet, unreliable sources. Information on the internet can be unreliable and often confusing and at times disheartening, the easiest information to find about queer experiences are the dangers and risks that it poses, none of which are inherent to being queer but inherent to a world of fear and bigotry. It is a parent's job to make them feel safe enough to talk to them about their identity, if a child has determined it is not safe to be out at home, they should still be able to begin the process of exploring their own identities with the love

and support of the community behind them. It is not the school's place to initiate these conversations for families. This policy takes resources from already vulnerable people and gives power to abusive parents and guardians. Across this country policies are being passed that lessen the safety of trans students, treating them as lesser people, stripping them of autonomy and the ability to step into their own. This policy makes you a part of that movement. You align yourselves with those who seek to make trans children pathologized, treated as threats and overall, less to find peace and joy in their existence. As these policies, bills and laws become more intense and as

### **3. CONSENT CALENDAR:**

**3.1** Removal of items from the Consent Calendar

**3.2** Approval of Consent Calendar: A motion made by Cannon seconded by Hackworth to approve the consent calendar as presented. VOTE: motion passed unanimously. Approved were:

**3.3** Somersworth School Board Meeting Minutes June 14, 2022

**3.4** Somersworth School Board Nonpublic Meeting Minutes June 14, 2022

**3.5** Somersworth School Board Goal Setting Session Minutes June 25, 2022

### **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

**4.1 Superintendent's Update:** Supt. Lane stated that it is great to be back and great to see the board and that she hopes that everyone had a restful summer. She stated that school starts next Wednesday for grades K-8 and grade 9. She stated that the freshman will have their own day to kick off the year. She stated that the high school adopted a model that is used in many schools to have freshman in so they can get to know their schedule, do team building and help with the transition. She stated that the upper classman will start on September 1<sup>st</sup>. She stated that the bus routes are posted on the SAU website for anyone who needs to know which bus their child is on. She stated that we will be having an email that is going out with links. She stated that the new teacher orientation is taking place on Friday the 26<sup>th</sup> and the entire staff will be back on the 29<sup>th</sup>. She stated that it has been a busy summer. We have had some facilities upgrades, the high school concession stand is getting some repairs to support the balcony, the exterior façade wall at the kitchen at the middle school has been replaced, the windows at the middle school are being replaced but we are waiting for the windows to be delivered and we have upgraded the wireless access points for better connectivity. She stated that professional development has been taking place over the summer. Each school has their own plan and has been doing professional development on things such as unit planning, curriculum and leadership development. She stated that we also had an administrative retreat today and did some goal setting we will share with the board. She stated that last Thursday we attended a training with I Love You Guys on emergency preparedness. She stated that you never want to think that you are going to need this, but you want to be prepared. She stated that 40 people attended, we had eight officers from the police department, members of the fire department, Stewart's ambulance, our administrators, the Rollinsford Principal, Farmington Superintendent and Tri City Christian Academy administration. She stated that the emergency response team is meeting this week as safety is a huge focus for us. She stated that during COVID school meals were free for everyone however that waiver has expired, and we are back to business as usual. She stated that we sent out a large mailing to everyone in the district and we are encouraging all families to fill out the free and reduced meals paperwork. If you have any questions, you can reach out to Katie in our office. She stated that the COVID response management team met twice in August, and she put the protocols in the packet. She stated that the only change is to the CDC guidance, it used to be that when you were exposed to someone who tested positive and you were unvaccinated then you were automatically sent home, now that is not the case. She stated that as long as you are not showing symptoms you can stay in school. She stated that we won't have to send as many kids home. She stated that everything else on the protocols stay the same. She stated that she will be emailing it out to families. She stated that in terms of hiring, there is a lot in the news, and we are hearing some pretty challenging situations not just in NH, it is a nationwide problem. She stated that we are very fortunate, over the summer we hired 24 professional staff, and we still have five left but out of about 200 professional positions that is not bad. She stated that is a testament to the work we do in our schools and our administration. She stated that we have taken the higher road to not go after people in other districts as I am

experiencing that on the other end. She stated that she wanted to convey to the community that we do have a few openings, but we are open and there are no concerns that we don't have staff to meet the student's needs. She stated that we will continue our theme of "ONE" for this year, and we all need to work together and continue our collaboration and if we do it will make a really good year.

## 5. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

### 5.1 Standing Committees:

- **Budget & Revenue Committee:** None
- **Buildings, Grounds and Transportation Committee:** Richardson stated that we met last Tuesday, and we talked about the CIP and security upgrades, and we bumped them up to the top of the CIP as we think that security is important. He stated that we also discussed the weight room upgrades that were done with funds from last year. He stated that it was very outdated, and the equipment needed to be replaced. He stated that our next meeting will be in the weight room to see it firsthand.
- **Educational Programs & Community Outreach Committee:** None
- **Policy Committee:** Tierney stated that they will meet on August 30<sup>th</sup>.

### 5.2 Reports of Ad Hoc Committees:

- **Somersworth Mental Health and Wellness Commission:** Marsh stated that July 13<sup>th</sup> was their last meeting and they discussed shifting from a summit to a charette to provide a more targeted focus. He stated that they are meeting tomorrow at the SAU at 6:00pm.

**5.3 City Council update:** Austin welcomed everyone back and welcomed back the staff and students.

**5.4 Student Representative Report:** None

## 6. PRESENTATIONS

**6.1 Summer Academy & SHS Summer School Presentation:** Nancy Michaud, Coty Donohue and Chris Tebo gave a presentation on Summer Academy. See attached presentation. Tierney stated that one of the goals of summer school was to reduce learning loss and asked if we are using a matrix. Tebo stated that we use NWEA testing at the high school and see what the data says. Michaud stated that we do benchmarking as we get back to school and we compare that to end of the year data. Demers asked if they could clarify the attendance. Michaud stated that we had 129 students at Idlehurst, and we had 83% of students attending, we had great attendance. Marsh stated that it was a great presentation but what stands out to me is that you are already thinking about next year. Thank you for your efforts and he looks forward to next year. Larson stated that when she visited it was wonderful and it was great to see so many students. Thank you to the staff.

## 7. NEW BUSINESS

**7.1 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP):** Krauss stated Attached is the draft of the FY 24-29 Capital Improvement Plan. Below is a description of the changes that were made from the prior year CIP.

### Additions

- Maplewood Parking Lot Reconfiguration/Paving
- High School Entrance Security Upgrades
- District Wide Paving- HS Bus Loop, Middle School Front Parking, other district wide paving
- SAU Office Secure Entrance Upgrades
- District Wide Security Upgrades (Updated Locks and Badge Card Readers)

### Reductions

- Middle School Cafeteria Wall Repairs- Completed
- Special Education Van- Combined with District Wide Bus

### Other Changes

- Combined Middle School and High Schools Roof Replacement into one project
- Updated Figure for Middle School Window Replacement- Front of the building in process of being completed
- Updated Figure for Maintenance Truck with Plow
- Updated Figure for Middle School Bathroom Renovations

We have also identified other projects that we are gathering information on that could be future CIP items.

#### **Other Capital Improvement Projects**

- Tree Removal/Trimming
- Maple Wood Vinyl Siding
- AC in the Middle School Gym and Idlehurst Gym and Café
- Idlehurst Irrigation
- District Wide Floor Scrubbers

She stated that it will be brought back to the next meeting as an action item. A motion made by Wentworth seconded by Richardson to waive board rules to read by Title only. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously.

**8. OLD BUSINESS/ACTION ITEM:** Larson stated that the board met in June to do a goal setting session and they have the following board goals:

1. The school district will review and modify the communication plan (i.e., strategies, formats) throughout the district to maximize consistency and increase effectiveness.
2. The school district will monitor student enrollment and report to the school board to understand fluctuations in order to optimize enrollment.
3. The school district will monitor staff retention and report to the school board in order to increase and support staff.
4. The school board will increase visibility and engagement throughout the community with respect to current policies and procedures.

#### **9. FUTURE MEETING DATES/SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS**

- **September 12, 2022, Somersworth School Board Meeting**
- **September 22, 2022, Somersworth Building, Grounds and Transportation Meeting**
- **September 27, 2022, Somersworth School Board Meeting**
- **October 11, 2022, Somersworth School Board Meeting**
- **October 25, 2022, Somersworth School Board Meeting**

#### **10. Closing Comments**

**10.1 Visitors:** John Reister from Sterilray a company in Somersworth gave a demonstration of his FAR-UV products.

**10.2 Board Members:** Hackworth stated that he has to resign due to moving wards. He stated that it has been fun serving with you all and he learned a lot and hopefully he can get back on. He stated that this will be his last meeting, thank you. Wentworth stated that it is hard to be up here, but I know that it is also hard to be out there. She stated that mental health is a top priority for me and part of what I campaigned about, kindness and inclusivity. She stated that she feels that the board and I had no intention of creating a policy that was more detrimental to trans people and it was my understanding that it was more inclusive, and it had to do with official changing of forms. She stated that as a board I think we worked hard and it may be frustrating at times to do all the motions and then have people come out but we are here for the public and it may be frustrating for us to do something again but we as a board represent and answer to the public and going against any human goes against the fabric of what I am. She stated that we will figure this out. She stated that they did an amazing job for the summer program and the high school is near and dear to my heart to make sure that everyone graduates and is successful. She stated that it feels really good and positive. She stated that someone asked me how it



was on the school board, and I had some ideas on how to make things perfect and she realized that it is not as easy as everyone may think. She stated that we are going to do the best we can as a board for Somersworth. Clark stated that she did not have that thought in her mind when we created this policy and over the summer she talked to some families. She stated that in our thinking we were doing something good, but it hurt some people and to bring it back would be helpful to clean things up. She stated thank you for coming and sharing your life and what it means to you, it takes courage to share that, and I appreciate it. Tierney stated that she wants to defend my fellow board member for a comment that was made earlier, it was not the intent to berate people for not coming to the meetings, it was to acknowledge our efforts to be transparent the entire time. She stated that she still stands by our policy, we did a lot of work on that. She stated that schools can't take the place of parents. She stated that there are unfortunate situations for kids who aren't even trans in and schools have policies and procedures in place to help any student whose home is not ideal, and we cannot put ourselves in a situation where we say that we know better than parents and we are hiding things from parents. She stated that she understands how that comes across but we just can't take the place of parents, we are there to support families and I know that I say that and I know that is a controversial thing to say but I stand by that and we worked very hard as a policy committee to be strong and firm in our addressing that. Marsh stated that he would like to thank those that spoke tonight regarding the policy. He stated that he appreciates it and thanked them for sharing their thoughts and a little about themselves. He stated that there is a spectrum of thoughts regarding these discussions and that is ok. He stated that he thinks that the board did a good job with communication of the policy including reading the policy word for word. He stated that he has been on boards that would not have done that, and he appreciates that being done here. He recognized that most people aren't zoned in on what the board is doing. He stated that he doesn't fault people for that, but best efforts were made, and the vast majority of the board ran on improved transparency. He stated that he does support the policy being further reviewed and he thinks that areas can be clarified including parent/guardian approval for minor students versus adult students. He stated that my interpretation is that it may be silent on that because the current laws dictate adult students not needing guardian approval. He stated that he appreciates people who spoke tonight. He stated that he is sorry about the resignation of Paul, and he hopes that in the future you consider running again. He stated that he wished a successful new year to all the teachers, administrators and support teams. Demers thanked Paul and congratulated him on buying a home in this insanity and staying in our community. She stated that she is excited that it is a unique opportunity for other people who would like to have a voice. She stated that we all ran for the board on being underwhelmed with the transparency with COVID stuff and it is important to communicate to the community on how this gets filled. She encouraged people to take their passion and experience and want to have a say in the process to keep an ear out for the next steps. Richardson stated that it is very expensive to improve our facilities and he would much rather put it into salaries but the amount of money that is coming to us from a variety of sources and the administration going after the money from the federal government and many of the projects were completed with these funds. He stated that in the past we haven't spent that money on our facilities, and we have seen our buildings deteriorate. He stated that the district is doing a lot of catching up and moving forward. He stated that he can't thank admin enough. He stated that he is sorry to see Paul go, he has had some good things to say, and we have had interesting conversations. Thank you. Cannon thanked everyone for the presentation, it was great to see what the kids were able to do this summer. She stated that Paul is going to be a loss, you have been great, and I appreciate it. She stated that as someone who is a transgender person who couldn't come out for so many years and listening to comments tonight and over the past few months I believe that we need to take a second look at the policy that was brought forward and we need to see how we can make it right to make sure we are protecting the students as well as the community. She stated that it is a tough thing, I have been there, and it is a difficult place to be. Larson stated that it is the Somersworth Board's intent to be welcoming to all students regardless, and if that is not the intent from anyone on this board that is a problem for our community. The intent behind policy making was not to be divisive but we have to listen to our community and listen and hear them and welcome them to the table when it comes to making policies and decisions. I want to thank everyone who comes to speak, it does take a lot of courage and it is always welcome and we appreciate that. She stated that this intent is to be a safe, welcoming space for all, and I believe our size is welcoming, we are a small city and I think that we should also be a listening and empathetic community and that takes work and active listening and bringing representation to the table. She stated that she hopes that the school year goes well and my best to everyone.

**11. Non-Public:** A motion made by Hackworth seconded by Cannon to exit into nonpublic session in accordance with 91-A:3 II (b) Personnel. Upon call of the roll, motion passed unanimously. Exited into nonpublic session at 8:34pm. A motion made by Clark seconded by Hackworth to exit out of nonpublic session. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. Exited out of nonpublic session at 9:08pm. See Non-Public Minutes.

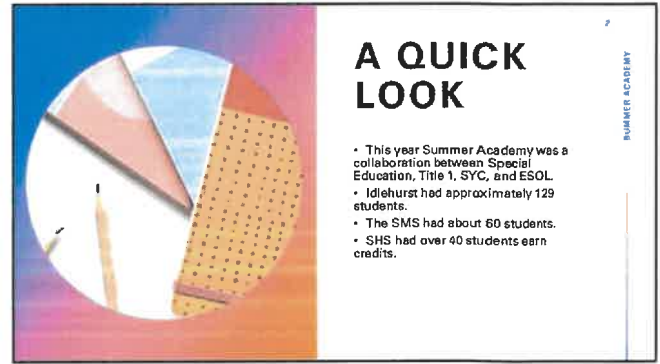
**12. Adjournment:** Motion made to adjourn made by Hackworth seconded by Clark. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:09pm.

Katie Krauss

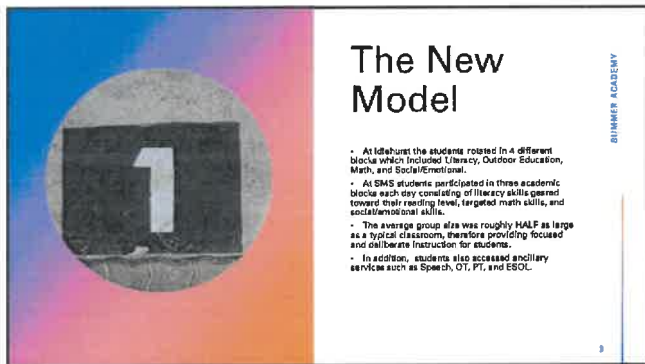
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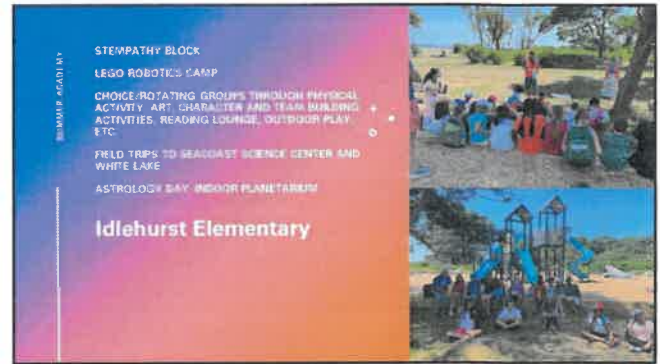
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4



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## SHS


3 WEEKS IN JULY (7/11-7/26)-4 HOURS PER DAY

4 CONTENT AREA TEACHERS WORKED WITH STUDENTS

OVER 40 STUDENTS EARNED COURSE CREDIT! MAJORITY OF CREDITS WERE FOR GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS IN MATH, SCIENCE, ENGLISH, SOCIAL STUDIES.

CREDITS WERE ALSO EARNED IN CTE COURSES AND ELECTIVES GAVE STUDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE BUILDING SKILLS OVER THE SUMMER.

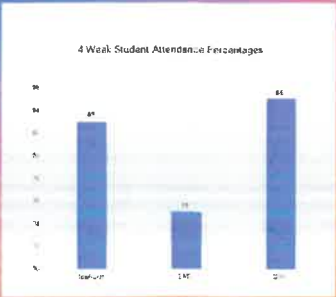
HELPS PREVENT LEARNING LOSS



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## Attendance

### 4 Week Student Attendance Percentages



Week	Attendance Percentage
Week 1	89
Week 2	78
Week 3	84

8

## STAFF SURVEYS

### Did you like the format/style of the Summer Academy Program?



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## Positives

- Students did all of the lessons at home prior to
- A major shout out goes to the staff who did the best at making sure all students were successful in all of their classes
- Students were very happy
- The staff group did a great job of making sure all students were successful in all of their classes
- The students were very happy to be in the program and to be able to learn from the staff
- The students were very happy to be in the program and to be able to learn from the staff

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## Thoughts for Next Year

-  Additional math data to assist in planning for groups
-  Creating alternative programs for some students
-  More lunch and snack options

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## STUDENT SURVEY

- Favorite thing about academic blocks: math games and fun learning activities
- If could change something: make them shorter
- SYC Afternoons:
  - 97% agreed SYC afternoons were fun (3% unsure)
  - 83% agreed they made new friends during SYC (10% unsure)
  - 90% agreed they made new connections with staff during SYC (7% unsure)
  - 90% agreed they looked forward to coming to SYC daily (13% unsure)
  - 100% agreed they like the field trips during SYC (10% unsure)
  - 80% agreed they learned new things during SYC (10% unsure)
- 73% agreed SYC helped them make more comfortable for the school year (10% unsure)

12





13