

**Meeting of Board of Directors
March 6, 2025, 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 March 6, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at Skowhegan Area Middle School Cafeteria.

ATTENDANCE BOARD MEMBERS (866 present, 133 absent):

Janet Burrill (Canaan-43) PRESENT	Mark Bedard* (Skow-53) ABSENT
Sarah Bunker (Mercer-16) PRESENT	Karyn Curran* (Skow-53) ABSENT
Jeannie Conley (Skow-53) PRESENT	Daniel Frey* (Smith-27) ABSENT
Valerie Coulombe (Norr-46) PRESENT	
Samantha Delorie (Norr-46) PRESENT	
Becky Eldridge (Norr-46) PRESENT	
Lauren Fox (Mercer-16) PRESENT	
Jean Franklin (Canaan-43) PRESENT	
Tanya Groce (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Theresa Howard (Corn-30) PRESENT	
Michelle Kelso (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Michael Lambke (Skow-53) PRESENT	
Desiree Libby (Norr-46) PRESENT	*Excused
Peggy Lovejoy (Skow-53) 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	
Wayne Wofford (Corn-30) PRESENT	

Olivia Huff (Student Rep) PRESENT

1. Call to Order
 - a. Flag Salute – 7:00pm

2. Good News and Recognitions

Margaret Chase Smith School Teachers/Lead Teachers Carla Seymour and Molly Fissette, presented to the Board. They shared a slide show of introductions by each teacher at the school.

3. Approval of Minutes – 2/13/25

ON A MOTION BY Michelle Taylor, seconded by Sara Smith, the Board voted to accept the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting of 2/13/25 into the public record. (866 yes)

4. Communications

a. Letters

The Superintendent acknowledged and accepted letters of intent to retire from Cynthia Violette, effective June 2025.

The Superintendent acknowledged and accepted a letter of intent to resign from Thomas Tubman, Social Studies Teacher at Skowhegan Area High School, effective 3/21/25.

The Superintendent acknowledged the resignation of Janice Malek, Norridgewock Board Member. Retired Teacher Becky Eldridge was appointed to fill the vacancy. Becky was introduced and welcomed to the Board.

b. School Personnel

There were no school personnel who wished to speak.

c. Visitors

Cornville resident, Julian Payne, commented on federal regulations regarding the executive order of Title IX and MSAD 54 to take action to adopt all federal guidelines.

Cornville resident, Vicky Wofford, commented on the segregation of males and females playing sports and asked the Board to abide by Title IX to protect our female athletes.

5. Committee Reports - There were no committee reports.

6. Superintendent's Report

a. Vacancies, nominations, recommendations

ON A MOTION BY Peggy Lovejoy, seconded by Sara Smith, the Board voted to approve nominations page one. (866 yes)

b. Report on Assessment Payments to Date

Superintendent Moody shared that as of March 6, 2025, all six towns (Canaan, Cornville, Mercer, Norridgewock, Skowhegan and Smithfield) were current on their monthly assessment payments, with March due on the 20th.

c. Update on New School Construction Building Project

Superintendent Moody updated the Board on the building project, which remains on pace. At the February 26th Dine and Discuss meeting, staff reviewed the new school's schedule and collaborated on preparations for coming together next year. The Department of Education will feature the new school on their website.

We are hoping to schedule tours of the new building for the Board by May.

d. Update on Federal Funds

MSAD 54 is following all federal guidelines. The district chose not to update the Title IX policy when it came out in 2024. Our policy reflects the previous Title IX revisions which have been referenced nationally as what districts should be following. Superintendents from around the state met with the Commissioner and the message was that federal funds would not be pulled based on the law and congress's appropriations of funds. The meeting was unclear on how this would be executed. MSAD 54 has roughly 4 to 5 Million dollars in grants that support district staff (Title programming, Special Education, Gear Up, REACH - 21st Century After School Program, etc.).

The Superintendent shared that the AASA, The School Superintendents Association, reached out requesting a Maine Superintendent testify on Capitol Hill on the importance of federal funding to public schools, especially poorer rural schools. The Superintendent will update the Board at the next meeting.

e. Presentation of FY26 Draft Status Quo Budget

Superintendent Moody distributed and reviewed the FY26 Draft Status Quo Budget to the Board. This budget was reduced \$1,233,466 from the prior budget shared with the board, and represents an overall budget increase of 5.07%, mostly as a result of pass-through funding from the state. CTE (\$652,515) and State Bonding of the New School (\$867,937) represent \$1,520,452 of the district's budget increase and are 100% funded by the state. The Superintendent explained when you back out the increases to CTE and the new school, which is 100% state funded, the overall budget is up 1.961%, or \$958,785. The Superintendent also shared that 75.35% of the budget

increase is employee costs, and that this status quo budget already includes several positional reductions including administrative reductions through consolidation in the new school.

The Superintendent shared that Board Committees will begin reviewing their sections starting with Support Services meeting on March 13th and Educational Policy/Program on March 18th. He shared that the District received information from MEA in regard to Health Insurance, which has a potential increase of just over 17%. The district will continue to work through the budget as the board goes line by line through each warrant article.

Town valuations come from the State and are given their 3-year average or their most recent year, whichever is lower. The total valuation shift by town totals 10.06%. The district's funding formula is 100% based on state valuation, which the Superintendent explained has had a significant impact on several communities over the past few years.

f. Other

Superintendent Moody acknowledged the following:

- Aspire Planner was shared and passed around to view.
- The Superintendent suggested to the Board that we consider exploring options with the Madison School District around consolidation of schools. He shared that with the reduction in enrollments at both high schools, he felt that Skowhegan Area High School could accommodate the students from Madison in the future. He shared that if the district were to add Madison High School students to the roster, the enrollment would potentially increase to roughly 780 students. The Superintendent shared that with the challenging budgets ahead for both communities, it makes good fiscal sense to begin having these conversations.
- Superintendent Moody shared that he will be taking over the role of Director of the Kennebec Alliance, a state funded group of schools that collaborate to make regional purchases to drive down costs of a variety of products and services. Additionally, the district receives roughly \$130,000 from the state because it participates in this regional group as part of cost savings measures.
- The Superintendent informed the Board that the District has signed up with the state to provide CDS services as part of the 2nd Cohort of schools. This effort will provide the school with additional funding in FY26 to support transitioning child development services for 3 to 5 year olds and will start next school year. He shared that this is 100% state funded and will allow the district to provide services to kids at an earlier age, which is shown to have significant benefits to kids and does drive down costs long-term.
- The draft 2025-2026 draft calendar will be reviewed at the next meeting.

- The Superintendent attended the 2025 Teacher of the Year Gala, where Kaley Brown was recognized along with other 2024 County Teachers of the Year.
- The Superintendent thanked Renee Stevens and the River Hawk Bakery for the cookies distributed at the meeting.

7. Assistant Superintendent and Support Services Manager

The Assistant Superintendent reported on the following:

- The March 14th Workshop Day “Choose Your Own Adventure” will include a variety of sessions offered by staff as well. The District’s Professional Development Committee has worked hard planning the schedule that includes health and physical wellness sessions, financial sessions and student sessions. The Board is welcome to the morning opening with Mr. Moody speaking, followed by the keynote speaker, Larry Thompson. Mr. Hatch thanked administrators and instructional coaches for their involvement.

Jessica Brown, Support Services Assistant Manager reported that a transfer switch malfunctioned at the Canaan Elementary School. The school has been running on the generator until it is replaced on the 14th.

8. Old and Unfinished Business

There was no old or unfinished business.

9. Introduction of New Business not listed on the Agenda

Janet Burrill’s term on the Board (Canaan) is expiring. Samantha Delorie (Norr) has moved to Skowhegan, and thus this will be her last meeting as a Board member. The Superintendent and Chair thanked them for their service to the District and their communities.

Wayne Wofford (Corn) requested that the Board review policy that is specific to sports and gender identity and the importance of keeping our girls safe. He requested that the Board consider adopting a policy to prevent biological male athletes from participating in female sports and that the policy should prohibit district teams from competing with other schools that allow biological males to participate in female sports. The Chair responded that the discussion will be added to the March 20th agenda.

Amy Rouse announced that Skowhegan Area High School will be hosting the Maine Drama Festival this weekend on March 7 and 8.

10. Executive Session – Student Discipline Matter pursuant to *Title I MRSA §405(A)*

ON A MOTION BY Jeannie Conley, seconded by Jean Franklin, the Board voted to enter into executive session at 8:24 pm to discuss a Student Discipline Matter, pursuant to *Title I MRSA §405(A)*. (866 yes)

The Board returned to regular session at 8:34 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Moody, Superintendent of Schools