

**Meeting of Board of Directors
March 20, 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 20, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at Skowhegan Area Middle School Cafeteria.

ATTENDANCE BOARD MEMBERS (956 present, 43 absent):

Mark Bedard (Skow-53) PRESENT Janet Burrill* (Canaan-43) ABSENT
Sarah Bunker (Mercer-16) PRESENT
Jeannie Conley (Skow-53) PRESENT
Valerie Coulombe (Norr-46) PRESENT
Karyn Curran (Skow-53) PRESENT
Becky Eldridge (Norr-46) PRESENT
Lauren Fox (Mercer-16) PRESENT
Jean Franklin (Canaan-43) PRESENT
Daniel Frey (Smith-27) PRESENT
Tanya Groce (Skow-53) PRESENT
Samantha Hilton (Norr-46) 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

At the direction of Music Teacher, John Lawson, Mill Stream Elementary School’s 4th and 5th grade chorus students performed the song *Obwisana*.

Chair Quinn introduced Samantha Hilton (Norr) to the Board.

3. Approval of Minutes – 3/6/25

ON A MOTION BY Sarah Bunker, seconded by Sara Smith, the Board voted to accept the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting of 3/6/25 into the public record. (956 yes)

4. Communications

a. Letters

The Superintendent acknowledged and accepted a letter of resignation from Roxanne Davis, Reading Specialist at Mill Stream Elementary School, effective June 2025.

b. School Personnel

There were no school personnel who wished to speak.

c. Visitors

Cornville resident, Julian Payne, commented on state election laws and his belief that several district towns have been out of compliance with statute when appointing vacant seats to the Board.

Cornville resident, Vicky Wofford, commented on the biological differences between males and females and the importance of protecting female athletes and the safety concerns that exist between the sexes.

Elijah Wofford shared his opposition to boys playing girls sports.

Skowhegan resident Cecile Gray, commented on today's dismantling of the Department of Education. He also commented on chromosomal versus biological differences, the importance of dehumanizing people and the need to treat all people with kindness.

Karen Martin, newly elected Mercer Selectperson, spoke on budget cuts at the federal and state levels and urged the Board to consider additional cuts to avoid additional tax burden on residents. She also discussed Title IX and the potential impact on the budget.

5. Committee Reports

a. Personnel Committee – 3/6/25

ON A MOTION BY Theresa Howard, seconded by Michelle Taylor, the Board voted to accept the minutes of the Personnel Committee meeting of 3/6/25 into the public record. (956 yes)

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

b. Support Services Committee – 3/13/25

ON A MOTION BY Jean Franklin, seconded by Valerie Coulombe, the Board voted to accept the minutes of the Support Services Committee meeting of 3/13/25 into the public record. (956 yes)

Jean Franklin, Committee Chair, reviewed the minutes and asked the Board to vote on the following recommendation:

ON A MOTION BY Jean Franklin, seconded by Sara Smith, the Board voted to approve the listed donations: \$300 from Caroline and David Webber for SAMS Students in Need; \$40 Anonymous donation for MSES Science Fair Materials; \$625,000 from KVCAP Building Better Beginnings; \$840 in donations to Canaan Elementary School in remembrance of the “Gift Lady”. (956 yes)

6. Superintendent’s Report

a. Vacancies, nominations, recommendations

ON A MOTION BY Jean Franklin, seconded by Lauren Fox, the Board voted to approve nominations page one. (956 yes)

Superintendent Moody shared that positions are posted for Anticipated Early Childhood Special Education positions as a result of moving forward with the State’s Cohort 2 to move all CDS programming for 3-4 year olds to the school districts, which are 100% state funded. This move should help students earlier in their education by reducing the need for interventions while reducing the cost of programming long-term.

b. Report on Assessment Payments to Date

Superintendent Moody shared that as of March 20, 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 that we remain ahead of schedule on the building project. We have 4.4M in fundraising and are on track to complete the project with zero impact to local taxpayers. He commended the local community and Maine's congressional delegation who championed our fundraising efforts. MSAD 54 is one of the only school districts in the state to fully fund their local project through fundraising. Superintendent Moody also shared that because the district was able to convince the state to not bond the local portion (include it in the state's multi-year loan) the district will not be forced to pay unnecessary interest costs.

June 15th is the date for substantial completion of the building itself with the whole project wrapping up by the end of September.

d. Update on Federal Funds

Superintendent Moody shared that he was asked to testify on Capitol Hill earlier in March by the National Association of School Superintendents. He was joined by a representative from Higher Education and CTE education. The three of them testified and answered questions. Superintendent Moody was pleased to share that he had the opportunity to talk with both Senator Collins and Senator King, who both gave him a significant amount of their time and were deeply interested in the impact that the loss of Federal funds could have on schools and local economies around the State of Maine.

Superintendent Moody reported that federal funds accounted for roughly 11% of MSAD 54's spending in FY25:

- Title funding of just under 2 million dollars account for 23 full-time staff who provide instruction, interventions and supports for our neediest learners.
- Special Education funding (\$738,376) accounts for 15 full-time ed techs.
- Other funding includes Nutrition (Est. 1.25M), REACH 21st Century (295k, 33 staff), AEFLA (113k), MCCA (33k), Perkins (124k), 1st Ten Comm. (125k), CTEARP (101k), Gear Up (30k), EASE (142k).
- The District anticipates roughly 400k in Medicaid billing in FY25, and is increasing revenue projections in next year's budget to lower the impact on local property taxes.

Superintendent Moody reviewed the updated FY26 Budget Summary, which is currently up 5.05% (\$2,470,237). The net increase without CTE/Bond is 1.961%. The reason CTE/Bond are removed for analysis is that they are 100% state funded. The local impact of the increase is 1.891%, which represents the true impact locally, which is consistent with the district's 7-year average which has been held to a 2% local increase annually. The most significant impact to individual towns will come from the state's shifting of valuations, which does result in some towns in the district being impacted more than others. MSAD 54 is a 100% valuation district, which means the state numbers dictate what is spent by town; student count is not considered. The budget does not include increases to health insurance which are not expected until April 11th. We will continue to work through the budget and will develop additional reductions should they be needed in anticipation of the mandated Health Insurance Increase, which is expected in early April.

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 local increase without health insurance sits at 1.891%. The Superintendent also shared that 75.35% of the budget increase is employee costs, and that this status quo budget already includes.

f. FY26 Calendar Review

The 2025-2026 proposed District Calendar was reviewed and Superintendent Moody recommended the Board's approval.

ON A MOTION BY Michelle Kelso, seconded by Michelle Taylor, the Board voted to approve the 2025-2026 District Calendar as proposed. (956 yes)

g. Other

Superintendent Moody shared the following:

- An informational sheet was shared from Full Plate/Full Potential, on how proposed cuts to school meals would create unnecessary burdens on 75

schools in Maine. Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) would substantially decrease the number of schools eligible and make it harder for families to apply for free or reduced-price school meals. It is likely that cuts to federal nutrition programs will be passed on to local taxpayers.

- Superintendent Moody attended the State Teacher of the Year (TOY) Gala over the weekend and shared the program which featured our own Kaley Brown (SAHS Social Studies/Business Teacher). Both Kaley and her mother Debora Tanner (former Somerset County TOY) were recognized at the gala.

7. Assistant Superintendent and Support Services Manager

The Assistant Superintendent reported on the following:

- Feedback from staff on the March 14th Workshop Day “Choose Your Own Adventure” was very positive.
- The KVSA Showcase will be held at Cony High School on March 27th. Board members and legislators are welcome to attend. Students and staff from area school districts will be showcasing various projects they are doing. Our REACH Program will present as well as SCTC Digital Graphics will be displaying various projects and activities.

Jessica Brown, Assistant Support Services Manager reported preparations continue for the move into the new school.

8. Old and Unfinished Business

Wayne Wofford reiterated that discussion about Title IX is about fairness and safety and said it is important to keep our girls safe.

Dan Frey asked, in order to assure the community that we are talking about this, is there anything we can do as a Board that would secure federal funding?

Superintendent Moody has met with area legislators and followed up with the attorney to verify that we are not in violation of any federal laws.

Olivia Huff shared that the Theater Team won Regional Theater Competitions for the sixth year in a row and will be competing at States in the upcoming weekend.

9. Introduction of New Business not listed on the Agenda

Desiree Libby proposed that the Board authorize a cooperative agreement to allow students who are interested in joining the Lawrence High School LaCross Team. Following questions and comments, the following recommendation was made:

ON A MOTION BY Daniel Frey, seconded by Desiree Libby, the Board voted to authorize entering into a cooperative agreement with Lawrence High School’s LaCross Team. (956 yes)

10. The meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Moody, Superintendent of Schools