

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Wedge at 6:00 PM. The following members were present:

Ms. Sylvia Wedge, Chair	Mrs. Cortvriend, Clerk	Mrs. Marge Levesque
Mr. Richard Carpender, V. Chair	Mr. Jamie Heaney	Mr. Michael Buddemeyer

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Asst. Supt. Jermain, Patti Cofield, Attorney Updegrave, Mr. Littlefield
Christine Tague (7:00 PM)

A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to R.I. Law 42-46-5, Exceptions (a)(1) Job Performance/Personnel Matters, (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and/or Litigation; or (a)(8) Student Discipline. So voted 6-0.

Public Session recessed at 6:01 and resumed at 7:20 PM.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Ms. Wedge reported that an Executive Session was held, and one vote was taken on a collective bargaining issue. Ms. Wedge announced that the annual Portsmouth Public Education Foundation's Fall Social will be held on Thursday, October 23rd from 6:00 to 8:00 PM at Green Valley. She also announced that Melville School's Fall Festival will be held on October 25th from 10:00 to 3:00 PM; and a reception at the Edward King Senior Center in Newport will be held on October 25th from 5:30 to 8:00 PM.

Ms. Cortvriend announced that she distributed the minutes of Portsmouth United's August 12th meeting per IRS rules.

2. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Dr. Lusi reported that we had a very good opening of school for students, teachers, and administrators. She visited all of our schools during the first few weeks of school. She attended classrooms, met with principals, and attended curriculum nights and open houses. Dr. Lusi attended Professional Development for lab classrooms, math and science teachers at PHS. The lab classrooms are working on teaching and learning practices we need to improve student learning. She was impressed by the professionalism and real commitment of our teachers and how lucky we are to have the East Bay Educational Collaborative as a resource for leading those trainings. She thanked our transportation provider for a good opening of the school year. Donna Medeiros and George Silvia attended an administrative team meeting and were a great help in changing our policies and procedures regarding transportation. Dr. Lusi announced that she and Mrs. Cofield attended a Media Relations Summit on September 25, a joint seminar with Aramark and RISSA. They are sponsoring a number of Professional Development summits for central office staff. The next session is on Human Resources, and we will be sending Susan Fairhurst and Patti Cofield. Dr. Lusi also reported that the Funding Our Future group, for

which she is the superintendents' representative, is having another funding conference this fall. It is being held on November 18th, at Bryant University, from 8:30 AM to 12:00 PM. "Save the Date" cards will be coming out by the end of next week. John Myers from Augenblick, Palaich, and Associates, will be the keynote speaker. He is from the group who worked on the funding formula for Pennsylvania. Last year, there were only two states, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island without a funding formula. Now there is just us. They also do work in the area of teacher compensation. Mr. Myers is willing to do something informal the previous day. If any of the Board members is interested in attending, please let me know.

- a) Teaching and Learning: Assistant Superintendent Jermain reported that it was very encouraging to attend the open houses and see the curriculum nights. Teachers have been very busy informing parents of expectations in the classroom and curriculum. In Grades K-5, the teachers have been attending Math Investigations training; and we have had Professional Development at all levels in the Tienet system, which is used for students with IEPs. We are going to add PLPs to that system. We are also having more Professional Development in the use of technology as a work tool and to enhance learning in the classroom. Regarding the I-Plan training, one session has been offered already, and we will have additional trainings. In order for a teacher to renew his/her certification, they have to participate in Professional Development activities or coursework that is aligned to their I Plan. Students and teachers have been prepping during the last month and will continue throughout the next two weeks. The trimester report card is being implemented to monitor student learning and also enable parents to better understand the skills and concepts we are teaching to our children. Mrs. Jermain thanked the Guidance Director, Michael Monahan, for facilitating the meeting with guidance counselors regarding using the data, looking at what we are doing, and why we are doing it. It is backed up by data to be more proactive and to be able to put supports in sooner rather than later. She also thanked the Technology Department.
- b) Finance and Operations: Ms. Tague reported that the preliminary In\$ite filing was submitted and that we had very few issues that came back in the area of Quality Assurance. A major accomplishment was acquiring the software and support to develop a plan to meet the objectives of the July 1st new Chart of Accounts that is required by law. Ms. Tague intends to give a presentation to the School Committee on the new Chart of Accounts at a future meeting.
- c) High School Liaison: Ms. Larsen announced that the PHS students have been busy preparing for Spirit Week, which is taking place the week of October 14th. Tuesday is Pajama Day, and the Canned Food and Miles of Quarters drives begin. All proceeds go to charity. Wednesday is Color Day. The Powder Puff football games will be held after school, and the Goofy Games will be held in the in the new gym that evening from 6:30 to 8:00 PM. Thursday is Class Day, and each class dresses up in a different theme and decorates the gym with their theme. Friday is Red/White/Blue Day, and the Canned Food and Miles of Quarters drives end. A Pep Rally will be held the last period on Friday. The Homecoming

Parade will be held on Saturday at 12:45 PM, followed by the Football Game against Barrington at 1:30 PM. This year, certain football and soccer teams that had won state championships in the past have been invited to attend. The Homecoming Dance will be held Saturday night at 7:30 PM.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2008, meeting. So voted 5-0-1. Mr. Heaney abstained due to his absence from that meeting.

4. **SPOTLIGHT**

- a) **Student Graduation – Awarding of Diploma to Casey Guerrero.** Principal Littlefield introduced Miss Casey Guerrero, who was a member of Class of 2006, a member of the National Honor Society, and an outstanding student. He stated that through circumstances beyond her control, her education came to an abrupt halt during the spring of her senior year. The high school never lost contact with Casey, and she never lost focus on her goal. They developed a plan on how she could regain her credits through studying at the community college. Mr. Littlefield and Mrs. Wedge were honored to present Casey with her high school diploma. Mr. Carpender congratulated Casey on following through with her goal of graduating from Portsmouth High School.
- b) **Close-Up Program.** Dr. Lusi introduced High School Senior, Joshua Miranda, who has been active in the Close Up program for the past three years. Joshua stated that he is running Close Up this year as his Senior Project, and he gave a Powerpoint presentation on what he has done so far. He stated that the goal of the Close Up program is to promote good citizenship in the United States; and this year, there are 20 Portsmouth High School students involved. The group will spend a week in Washington, DC, meeting with key people in government, law, business, and media, to gain real-world insights into how DC works. They also meet with members of Congress to discuss hot issues with policy experts and talk with journalists about how the media shapes policy. They will also visit the monuments to connect history to the roles they play in our democracy today. The first thing Joshua did for his project was create a website and a few ads for it. He stated that his final goal is to plant the seeds for some type of civics course at Portsmouth High School. Dr. Lusi stated that she would like to invite Joshua back to a School Committee meeting in the spring to see his final product.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- a) **Appt. - Student Activity Advisors, PHS.** A motion was made by Mr. Carpender and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the appointments of the listed individuals to the Advisor positions at Portsmouth High School for the 2008-09 school year. So voted 6-0.

6. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

- a) **Field Trip Request.** High School Teacher, Kimberly Cunningham, requested this week-long field trip to the Dominican Republic in March 2009 for the purpose of building a safety shelter and preschool for underprivileged children through a program called, "Builders Beyond Borders." Ms. Cunningham will be taking 5 students on the trip. In all, 30 students and 6 adults from other high schools will be there from March 14th to the 22nd to work on the project. Three of our students are doing this as their senior project. A motion was made by Mr. Carpender to approve the field trip request for the students to go to the Dominican Republic as part of the Builders Beyond Borders. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 6-0. Ms. Cunningham stated that parents had to sign a Policy Statement Authorization and Release form in order for their children to participate.
- b) **Update on High School Assessment Scores and Changes in Graduation Requirements.** Mr. Littlefield and the Director of Student Services, Mike Monahan, reported on the High School assessment scores and changes in the graduation requirements. Mr. Littlefield showed the SAT scores of the class of 2008, compared to the Rhode Island and National averages. He stated that about 80 percent of our seniors take the SATs. He reported that an SAT preparation course was instituted in our summer program. Mr. Littlefield then showed the Grade 11 Assessments for the 2008 NECAP, which was the first year that NECAP testing was administered to high school students in Rhode Island. He reported that at Portsmouth High School, we have aligned our curriculum in all areas with NECAP (New England Collaborative Assessment Program) standards. Our teachers participate regularly in professional development activities designed to familiarize them with research-based, best instructional practices. We have supports in place, such as full inclusion for special needs students, to ensure ALL students have access to the rigorous curriculum necessary for success. Mr. Littlefield then explained the reading assessments, indicating that 81 percent of Portsmouth High School students were proficient. PHS is ranked 5th in Rhode Island. In the math assessment scores, Portsmouth High School had 36 percent proficient. It was a new standard offered for the very first time. He stated that 36 percent nearly met the standard, and we were ranked 5th. In the writing assessment, Portsmouth High School had 58 percent proficient, and 37 percent were almost proficient. They ranked 5th. In the science assessment, 37 percent met standard, and 48 percent nearly met it. They ranked 3rd. New for the class of 2012, students will take all four tests. The Board of Regents expects students to individually achieve at a Level 2, which is nearly proficient.

Larry Fitzmorris inquired about why the SAT scores fell from #4 in 2007 to #12 in 2008. Mr. Littlefield explained that there were about 35 students who didn't take the test in their senior year. He stated that the Class of 2008 was the first class to unanimously achieve the standard on Senior Project, an outstanding class of men and women. If you look at that class' performance on previous tests and AP scores, we were not surprised that that particular class showed up as a dip in our SAT scores. One class does not

constitute a trend. However, we are not taking this lightly, we are watching it carefully, and are looking for more information for significant subgroups in this class that did not measure up to their peers. Performance on standardized tests was not the strength of the class of 2008. Dr. Lusi added that the SAT prep class has been reinstated. Mr. Littlefield stated that Senior project was required for the first time last year, and that may be part of the issue. He feels that the Class of 2008 was tested to death. In fact, we made them take the PSAT twice in school during the day. This year, we are having students take the PSAT on a Saturday morning, so that they will have a testing experience similar to the one they will have when they take SATs.

- c) **Graduation Report on the Class of 2008.** Mr. Littlefield and Mr. Monahan gave a presentation on the graduation statistics of the Class of 2008. This class was part of a milestone. Back in 2002, when the proficiency concept started to become real, they wondered how they were going to pull it off. However, the feeling in the hallways after the senior projects were finished last May was indescribable. The teachers have stepped up to the plate. Mr. Monahan referred to the chart “Ten Years at a Glance” of where our graduates have gone after high school since 1999. He also reviewed the number of senior transcripts processed, which has more than doubled in 10 years. One of the future considerations is to work towards having a transitional plan for every student by 2012. We need to work to connect what we are doing in the classroom with what they are going to do after high school. Mr. Carpender stated that the Class of 2008 had the third highest number of students going on to 4-year colleges over the last 10 years. Mr. Littlefield summarized Senior Project and stated that unfounded rumors have been circulating that students dropped out of school because of Senior Project. He stated that about 11 students dropped out, and there were five students who simply had to finish their senior projects because they had an issue with their academic integrity and had a hearing before a board.
- d) **Separate Employer Identification Number for the School Department.** Dr. Lusi informed the Committee that Mr. Driscoll and Mr. Faucher were invited to attend the meeting, and Mr. Faucher was present. Dr. Lusi described what was handed out in the backup. She stated that in the Berkshire Implementation Plan, Tax Reporting was addressed. The report recommended that shared services be explored under the payroll section. If we decided not to share services, then we would establish a separate tax payer number. The timeline for completion of this is January 2010. Berkshire felt that there were systems issues within the town and school departments that would have to be fixed, and meetings would need to take place to see if shared services could take place. Dr. Lusi stated that these meetings have not taken place and that Mr. Faucher would like to see the change happen sooner rather than later. Ms. Tague stated that there is a reconciliation process that has to go back and forth with the general ledger and the report submitted to the state and federal government. She doesn't think the timing right now is appropriate, especially since we are mandated to implement the State's new Uniform Chart of Accounts by July 1, 2009. Ms. Tague stated that the state is also looking at

making towns come onboard to the new chart of accounts structure. Maybe doing it as a shared effort will make sense in the future, but not at this point in time. We may also want to look at an integrated financial system because of the new chart of accounts. Mr. Buddemeyer asked about the pros and cons are of outsourcing the School Department's payroll. Ms. Tague stated that the Town does not encumber their salaries like we do, and it could cost approximately \$20,000 to outsource it. Encumbrances in school departments are very important in the budgeting purposes. Dr. Lusi stated that there would be no savings in time or payroll staffing for the School Department by outsourcing, as all of the steps done internally would still be required. Keeping track of payroll is our primary budgetary concern. The downside for us is we don't have any reduction in staff, we have a loss of controls, and we would pay an additional \$20,000. The advantage for the Town is that they do not have to run the reports to pay the taxes. The larger question before this Committee and the next Committee and Council is whether or not they want to pursue the option of shared services. Berkshire recommended a process where there is close communication and work between both sides. They recommended that both sides put together a proposal outlining how services would be provided and what the costs would be. That is not something that occurs in a couple of weeks. Dr. Lusi stated that our Attorney, Rick Updegrave, advised her not to sign the Memorandum of Agreement to implement a separate EIN without bringing it to the School Committee. Mr. Heaney stated that perhaps our best course of action would be to meet with the Town Council. Mr. Carpenter stated that with the workload Ms. Tague is under, as well as the other recommendations within the Berkshire report that are ongoing efforts, he doesn't think that we have the resources to pursue this right now. Mrs. Levesque stated that she doesn't feel we have enough information to make a decision on this subject tonight. Mr. Carpenter made a motion that the School Committee directs the Superintendent to communicate with the Town Administrator that we cannot take this project on at the current time, and that they would like to, as indicated in the Berkshire Performance Audit, investigate the benefits and potential cost savings of a shared service for payroll and benefits. Seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend. So voted 6-0.

- e) **Approval of Policy #5131 – Student Transportation Services, 2nd Reading and Adoption.** A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the proposed changes as a second reading and adopt Policy #5131, Student Transportation Services, as presented. So voted 6-0.

- f) **Approval of Policy #5131.1 – Student Transportation Services, Walkers and Riders, 2nd Reading and Adoption.** A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the proposed changes as a second reading and adopt Policy #5131.1, Student Transportation Services, Walkers and Riders, as presented. So voted 6-0.

- g) **Approval of Policy #5131.2 – School Bus Code, 2nd Reading and Adoption.** A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the proposed changes as a second reading and adopt Policy #5131.2, School Bus Code, as presented. So voted 6-0.
- h) **Approval of Policy #5131.3 – Transportation Guidelines, 2nd Reading and Adoption.** A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the proposed changes as a second reading and adopt Policy #5131.3, Transportation Guidelines, as presented. So voted 6-0.
- i) **Approval of Policy #5131.4 – Video Cameras on School Buses, 2nd Reading and Adoption.** A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the proposed changes as a second reading and adopt Policy #5131.4, Video Cameras on School Buses, as presented. So voted 6-0.
- j) **2008-09 Budget Adjustments.** A motion was made by Mr. Carpenter and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the realignment of the bottom line budget allocation of \$34,743,070 as presented. So voted 6-0.
- k) **FY'09 Financial Update.** A motion was made by Mr. Carpenter and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to accept the financial update as presented. So voted 6-0.
- l) **Strategic Planning Update and Next Steps.** Dr. Lusi reported that she has not heard back from the Rhode Island Foundation regarding her grant request for Strategic Planning. She announced that Jan Williams will be coming to meet with the administrative team on Thursday to review the Berkshire report. Dr. Lusi stated that she will request the School Committee's support of a budget proposal for Strategic Planning at the next meeting. She hopes to hear back from the Rhode Island Foundation by then.

7. SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA

- a) **Finance.** No report.
- b) **Policy.** Mrs. Levesque stated that a Policy Subcommittee meeting would be scheduled in the near future.
- c) **GCOC.** No report.
- d) **Facilities.** Mr. Buddemeyer reported that a Facilities Committee meeting was held on September 24th, where we met with RGB and went over preliminary findings and saw a slide show of pictures. The group is starting to prioritize life safety and ADA issues, based on state standards. The next meeting will be held on November 12th, and dollar figures will be put in place. Then they will prioritize again. Mr. Buddemeyer stated that

regardless of the dollar figures, the School Department will need to address the life safety and ADA issues.

Mr. Carpenter made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Heaney. So voted 6-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Patti Cofield
Recording Secretary for

Terri Cortvriend, Clerk