

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by the Chairman, Mr. Carpender, and the following members were present:

Mr. Richard Carpender, Chair
Ms. Sylvia Wedge, Vice Chair

Mrs. Marge Levesque, Clerk
Mrs. Cynthia Perrotti

Ms. Marilyn King
Ms. Angela Volpicelli

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Asst. Supt. Jermain, Christine Tague, Patti Cofield, Rick Updegrove

Absent: Mr. Michael Buddemeyer, Amy Larsen (High School Liaison)

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque 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 PM and resumed at 7:00 PM.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Mr. Carpender announced that Mr. Buddemeyer was on vacation. He also welcomed Cynthia Perrotti to the Committee. Mrs. Perrotti thanked the School Committee and School Department for their warm welcome. Mrs. Perrotti elaborated on her education and career. Mr. Carpender reported that the Strategic Plan will soon be forthcoming. In June, the Future Search Committee will reconvene for a special workshop to finalize the plan. Mr. Carpender announced that he attended the Middle School's performance of *Grease* last week, and the students did a great job. He also announced that Senior Projects will be presented next week, and he is on the judge's panel for some of them. He stated that if anyone is interested in judging, they should call Mr. Littlefield. Mr. Carpender announced that a special meeting will be held tomorrow night at 6:30 PM in the Portsmouth Room to approve a bid award; then the Committee will be meeting with the Town Council in the Chamber. Finally, Mr. Carpender reported that an Executive Session took place prior to this meeting to discuss a collective bargaining/litigation matter. No motions were made, and no votes were taken. A motion was made by Ms. Wedge to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. Seconded by Mrs. Levesque. So voted 6-0.
2. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Dr. Lusi welcomed Mrs. Perrotti to the School Committee. She thanked the non-certified employees, the school-based administrators, and the Central Office administrators for formally agreeing to salary freezes for the coming school year. She stated that the *Newport Daily News* published a very nice Op-Ed on the freezes in yesterday's newspaper. She reported that she, Mr. Carpender, and Mrs. Wedge, were scheduled to attend a meeting of the Aquidneck Island group yesterday, but it was postponed until June. That group asked RIPEC to study regionalization and sharing services island-wide. She congratulated our varsity cheerleaders for receiving the Rhode Island Interscholastic League's Sportsmanship Award. This is our second team to receive a sportsmanship award this year. Dr.

Lusi acknowledged that the Strategic Planning process continues. The Future Search Conference follow-up meeting will be held on June 10th at 7:00 PM at Hathaway School to look at the final draft of the Strategic Plan. We look forward to bringing it forward towards the beginning of the school year.

Dr. Lusi announced that the approval of the minutes and the rescission of teacher non-renewals were being withdrawn from the agenda.

- a) **Teaching and Learning:** Assistant Superintendent Jermain reported that NECAP science testing has taken place at the elementary level. Lab classrooms are also continuing at the elementary schools. Eighteen teachers will attend training in August to further their math content knowledge, and we are trying to be clearer in our expectations at each grade level in ELA. Mrs. Jermain stated that an article in the *Providence Sunday Journal* by Julia Steiny highlighted Portsmouth High School and all the work in Physics First, as well as our use of technology tools to help encourage learning and student engagement. Teachers from Portsmouth High school Gail Darmody and Patti McCarthy were presenters at the recent national Technology Seminar held in Providence. Both teachers demonstrated using RIEPS (Rhode Island Electronic Portfolio System) and Safari Platform. This tool enables teachers to hold learning discussions online with students, as well as work with other educators to hold professional discussions on education. The tool also prepares our students for higher learning institutions which use these tools as a matter of practice in day to day life on college campuses and universities to submit their work or work with their professors and fellow students. Mrs. Jermain also reported that summer school registration and payments will be done online this year for the first time, and payments may be made through PayPal or by mail. She thanked Lisa Murphy, our Summer School Coordinator; and Rose Muller, our IT Director, for assisting with the effort. On June 1st, we will have a Kindergarten website that contains information on what families should expect when they come into our school system.
- b) **Finance and Operations:** Ms. Tague stated that she will be attending a meeting at RIASBO tomorrow to discuss the FY'09 stabilization money. She reported that although the application isn't due until May 29th, we have already received the first half of the total \$475,000 payment. She also reported that employee training on the new Chart of Accounts has begun, and the district should go live on July 1st. Her plan is to have her staff present the Chart of Accounts information to the School Committee at the June 9th meeting.
- c) **High School Liaison:** Absent.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of the minutes of the meeting held April 21, 2009. This item was withdrawn and will be presented on the next agenda.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- a) **Clerk Resignation.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, “that the School Committee accepts the resignation of Sandra J. Stevens from the position of Clerk, Category A, at Hathaway, Melville, and Elmhurst Schools, effective the last day of the 2008-09 school year.”
- b) **Dept. Chair Resignation.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, “that the School Committee accepts the resignation of Suzette M. Almeida-Louro from the position of Modern World Languages Department Chair, effective the last day of the 2008-09 school year.”
- c) **Senior Project Coordinator Resignation.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, “that the School Committee accepts the resignation of Patricia McCarthy from the position of Senior Project Coordinator, effective the last day of the 2008-09 school year.”
- d) **Teacher Retirement.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, “that the School Committee acknowledges the resignation for retirement of Leslie J. Ainsworth, Regional Special Education Teacher at Portsmouth High School, effective with the last day of the 2008-09 school year.”
- e) **Teacher Retirement.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, “that the School Committee accepts the resignation for retirement of Fran Dutelle, Intense Resource Teacher at Melville School, effective with the last day of the 2008-09 school year.”
- f) **Teacher Retirement.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, “that the School Committee accepts the resignation for retirement of Albert D. Sweet, Jr., Physical Education Teacher at Portsmouth Middle School, effective with the last day of the 2008-09 school year.”
- g) **Rescission of Teacher Non-Renewals.** The Superintendent recommends adoption of the following resolution, “that the School Committee rescinds the non-renewals as presented.” This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

A motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Ms. Wedge and seconded by Mrs. Levesque. So voted 6-0. Dr. Lusi stated that for this year only, we allowed teachers to submit rescindable letters of retirement. The deadline to rescind was May 4th.

5. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

a) **IT 2009 Update and Future Plans.** Mrs. Rose Muller gave an update on the projects and initiatives underway or that have been implemented in 2009 to support the School Department's initiatives in using technology to improve student achievement and teacher support. The goal is to improve abilities to create efficiencies and improve communication which enable more efficient use of time. Mrs. Muller stated that through the use of technology, we are getting more done in less time. We have been able to move teaching and learning initiatives forward more readily and to reallocate resources (time, money and people) to other initiatives, which improve teaching and learning and student achievement. She stated that there are only four members of our Integrated Technology Team that service 3,000 students, 400 staff members, 1200 workstations, and the networked infrastructure. From July 1, 2008 to present, the Integrated Technology team has completed 1,896 tech requests from users. In addition to the team's normal duties, they have implemented many projects including the following:

- Electronic Special Education Process
- Electronic Elementary School Report Cards - saved in electronic format yearly
- iParent at Middle School - parents and students can access grades online. Teachers do not print out routine progress reports
- Many processes initiated on our website
 - Online appointments for registration
 - Electronic PSD Registration process -
 - Regular registration,
 - Kindergarten registration and screening
 - Summer School registration
 - Kindergarten Website
- Student enrollment folders in electronic format - Graduation year of 2022 - all electronic folders
- Savings in time and resources by modifying practices:
 - Encourage the use of share drives on the network
 - The use of WebPages for school notices
 - The use of editable forms and electronic signatures for reduction of paper and postage costs
 - Lunch status process - now using email and file management on network
 - Use of Google Spreadsheets for sign up purposes
 - Examining the nurse's record keeping process to reduce data entry and paper output and to create electronic health records
 - One of the first districts in state to go in this direction
 - Online forums for teaching and learning discussion and curriculum mapping
 - Online calendars for teachers and administration
 - Common storage for human resource documents

- Centralized printers has resulted in a reduction of printed material and ink and toner costs
- Organizing the copy machines and utilizing the features on them for scanning and emailing documents
- Consolidating servers which saves energy and permits central administration of servers
- Online facility scheduling system to standardize the process for using school department facilities and potentially capturing revenues
- Alert Now emergency automated calling system
- Research Open Source applications
 - Implementing an open source “Help Desk” application for tech requests
- Networked telephone system, free building to building calling (Admin, HS, MS, Hathaway)

Mr. Carpender commended Mrs. Muller and her staff. Dr. Lusi thanked Mrs. Muller, her team, and Mrs. Jermain. She stated that we have four guiding principles of the Portsmouth School Department, and the third is regarding the efficient use of resources. She stated that the Berkshire Report found that we don't have enough resources, and we know that people time is one of our most valued resources. Saving time is important in the effective and efficient use of resources, as time is money.

- b) **Request for Donation to PHS Post Prom Party.** Mrs. Joanne Lake was present on behalf of the Post Prom Party, which is scheduled for June 17th at the Elk's Lodge in Newport. Mrs. Lake explained the purpose of the Post Prom Party and asked the Committee to donate funds in support of the party. A motion as made by Ms. Wedge to donate \$1,000 to the PHS Post Prom Party. Seconded by Mrs. Levesque. Dr. Lusi stated that in the past, the donation has been taken out of the Gate Receipt account. So voted 6-0.
- c) **Update on FY 2009-10 Budget.** Presented by Dr. Lusi.
Dr. Lusi stated that we recently became aware that the warrants for School Department (Building and Technology) are in the budget; however, as Ms. Tague talked with Mr. Faucher, we learned that there are differing assumptions regarding who is paying for it. In last year's budget discussions, the Committee agreed to take on the FY'09 payment. However, we have learned that the Town Finance Director is assuming that we would also be paying the interest payment on the FY'10 Building and Technology Warrants, which was not our understanding. Dr. Lusi stated that she, Mr. Carpender, and Ms. Tague have been discussing that, and a letter will be sent to Mr. Driscoll before tomorrow night's meeting. The building warrant is approximately \$10,500, and the Technology Warrant is just under \$9,000. The larger issue is that as the warrants continue on the payment becomes approximately \$45,000 per year per warrant. We would be carrying in our budget five times \$44,000 for the Building Warrant, which right now, we would get 30 percent back on from State Housing Aid, and 5 years of Technology Warrants, for

which we do not get any reimbursement. That comes to roughly half a million dollars. We have not budgeted for that, and under Senate 3050, the tax cap is declining by a quarter of a percentage per year.

- d) **Discussion/Action – Potential Elmhurst Closing.** Dr. Lusi recommended keeping Elmhurst open one more year. She made clear that it is not without risk, even if our assumptions do hold. If they do not hold, we will be looking at other cuts that the School Committee has done due diligence on. All of those cuts were not things the Committee desired to do in any way. Mrs. Levesque stated that she would not be opposed to waiting a year and seeing what the Facilities Subcommittee comes up with contingent with what we get from the Town. Mrs. Perrotti suggested moving the Elmhurst students into the available wing at Portsmouth Middle School to preserve the Elmhurst community and culture. Dr. Lusi stated that that was a very creative idea. The advantage she sees is that we would be moving fewer classrooms of kids. The potential disadvantage is when RGB was doing its study, we initially hoped we could have an early childhood program districtwide at Portsmouth Middle School. She likes the idea of keeping Pre-K to Grade 1 together. They had discussed the issue of lowering toilets and blackboards, etc., and Dr. Lusi was told that it was not a cost-effective approach. Mrs. Perrotti pointed out that it would save the purchase of additional buses.

Mr. Carpender read an email from Mr. Buddemeyer, who was away on vacation. Mr. Buddemeyer indicated that he would like to keep Elmhurst open for another year. Mr. Carpender stated that he has reservations about the risk of closing the school. He feels that moving everyone over to Portsmouth Middle School still puts us at a certain amount of risk if there were to be a large influx of students in the future. He agrees with Mr. Buddemeyer and Dr. Lusi. He would favor keeping it open for the coming year. He clarified that his opinion is based on knowing what we know now. He believes we can close the gap. He stated that there are three courses of action: The Committee could move to close Elmhurst; they could move to keep Elmhurst open for another year and close it at the end of that time; or they could do nothing at this time. He is not in favor of voting to say that the Committee will keep Elmhurst open.

Mrs. Levesque stated that she prefers to wait and take no action. Dr. Lusi stated that she is intrigued by Mrs. Perrotti's idea of moving the entire school. She tends to think that that move would only be temporary; but if the bottom really did fall out of our budget, it would be disruptive but maybe less disruptive to relocate Elmhurst to a single place. She doesn't think we can responsibly deliver on the plan to move 4th and 5th graders to Portsmouth Middle School and divide K to 3rd graders in the other two elementary schools later than tonight. Mr. Carpender asked if Mrs. Perrotti's idea were feasible, if we could make the move in a shorter time period. Dr. Lusi replied yes, but she would want to talk with her leadership team to see what it would entail. There definitely would be fewer classrooms to move. Classrooms could be scheduled now, and we wouldn't

have to reroute buses all across Portsmouth. Mr. Carpender stated that if we took no action tonight, we would be leaving Elmhurst open; and if the bottom does fall out, the entire school would be relocated to Portsmouth Middle School.

Ms. Volpicelli stated that all the ideas are very creative; however, she feels that this is just too short of a time period to do all this. She is leaning towards leaving it open for a year and seeing what happens.

Maria Wood of 32 Harris Avenue stated that she can't see the set up at Portsmouth Middle School being appropriate for elementary kids, and they would have to make significant changes to the library.

Mr. Carpender stated that hearing no motions, he was moving on to the next agenda item.

- e) **Notification of Revised Basic Education Plan.** Dr. Lusi reported that there have been hearings underway regarding a revised Basic Education Plan (BEP) for the State, and the last hearing is tonight. However, it is very clear in the public notice that they also welcome written comments, as well. Dr. Lusi has also heard that the new Commissioner has asked that the new BEP be costed out. Dr. Lusi does believe there is still time for people to make comments. Dr. Lusi stated that she was on the BEP Committee over a year ago, and after the group met two or three times, RIDE decided they wanted the action to be faster, so the committee was used as a focus group. She stated that the BEP document was reduced from 500 pages to 45 pages and is available on the RIDE website. She stated that the new document is very different from the current BEP, which was passed in 1986. A revised BEP came out in 1989. There is a long list of indicators in every section in the old BEP. When you read it, it talks about schools and very little about districts. When you read the new document, it does not have the long list of indicators. The new document is much more about expectations than it is about specific itemized indicators. She likes the new document because it is much clearer about the types of systems we are aiming for for students. Having a well-articulated curriculum, multiple assessments that track student learning, etc.

Dr. Lusi is a little nervous about the emphasis on meeting all the social needs of kids and their families. While she very much agrees that kids and families have social needs that go beyond the school and that do influence their ability to learn, the document could be read to imply that if the other service providers cease to exist, schools should be responsible for providing all of the services themselves. There is nothing in the new document about athletics, and Dr. Lusi is somewhat ambivalent about that. There are pieces about the arts and co-curriculars; however, it does not talk about extra-curricular activities. She thinks this document may become the articulation of what the State would be willing to pay for, such that if a district wants athletics, then they have to pay for it. When districts execute a Caruolo action, some people are nervous because the new

document doesn't clearly itemize the things that you need to have. What the State does with performance indicators remains to be seen. Dr. Lusi recommended that everyone looks at the new document on the RIDE website.

f) **Ratification of Personnel Contracts.**

- 1) **Council 94.** A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and was seconded by Mrs. Levesque to ratify the personnel contracts for Council 94. So voted 6-0. Dr. Lusi stated that they agreed to a salary freeze, saving \$69,295.
 - 2) **PSAA.** A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and was seconded by Mrs. Levesque to ratify the personnel contracts for PSAA. So voted 6-0. Dr. Lusi stated that they agreed to a salary freeze, saving \$27,886.
 - 3) **Susan F. Lusi, Superintendent.** A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and was seconded by Mrs. Levesque to ratify the personnel contract of Dr. Lusi. So voted 6-0.
 - 4) **Colleen Jermain, Assistant Superintendent.** A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and was seconded by Mrs. Levesque to ratify the personnel contract of Colleen Jermain. So voted 6-0.
 - 5) **Christine Tague, Director of Finance and Administration.** Mr. Carpender stated that while Ms. Tague has agreed to a freeze, there are other items she wishes to consider further. This item was withdrawn from the agenda.
 - 6) **Don Davidson, Facilities Supervisor.** A motion was made by Ms. Wedge and was seconded by Mrs. Levesque to ratify the personnel contracts for Don Davidson. So voted 6-0.
- g) **Report on April Financials.** Ms. Tague stated that she will report out on the April and May financials at the June 9th meeting. She also stated that there wasn't much change from her March summary memorandum.

6. **SUBCOMMITTEE AGENDA**

a) **Facilities.**

1) **Approval of Payments for PHS Gymnasium.**

- a) A motion was made by Ms. Wedge to approve the payment of Invoice #1351, dated 4/9/09, in the amount of \$1,512.00, to Aquidneck Construction, for work performed on the High School Gymnasium. Seconded by Mrs. Levesque. So voted 6-0. The work was to furnish and install a downspout on field house.

- b) A motion was made by Ms. Wedge to approve the payment of Invoice #1374, dated 5/13/09, in the amount of \$1,957.82, to Aquidneck Construction, for work performed on the High School Gymnasium. Seconded by Mrs. Levesque. So voted 6-0. The work was for lock-out devices.
- b) **Finance.** No report.
- c) **Health and Wellness.** Ms. Volpicelli stated that the Health and Wellness Subcommittee met on Monday, May 11th, at the Administration Building. The school updates were proposed and finalized. There was discussion and determination of goals for next year. After discussion on this past year and observations from our different team members, the following goals were set for next year:
1. To bring more awareness to the elementary schools on how to follow the policy and implement changes that will help change the culture away from using food to celebrate. Some suggestions were:
 - a) Celebrating all students with a birthday as a collective group, posting their names and allowing an extra 10-15 minutes of recess/activity.
 - b) Offering students to share a special activity, game, or show and tell to honor their birthday in the classroom/school.
 - c) Get families and teachers to reflect upon other alternatives or not allow food for celebration. This was brought up because of food safety preparation concerns, allergies, etc.
 - d) Work with the schools to try to change the culture of celebrations to be more healthy, using fresh fruits, healthy snacks, etc.
 - e) Work with teachers and help share out with them the importance of not using food and candy as rewards.
 2. Create a middle and high school focus group that will meet twice a year to review food quality and food service initiatives.
 3. A film project will be organized for next fall in November at Portsmouth High School featuring the film *Two Angry Moms*, to bring more community awareness to health and wellness. This is a documentary about the farm-to-plate concept in the schools. These mothers spoke out and made a change in the schools.

The schools gave an update on their health and wellness activities:

Portsmouth Middle School: School Nurse Teacher Nancy Souza reported that there are 22 staff members enrolled in The Biggest Loser contest, and they have lost 146 pounds so far. Other things they are doing are: Morning Fitness, Walk-to-School Day, Zumba,

Staff Wellness Day, and Fitness calendars in Health class. Mrs. Souza writes a monthly article for the newsletter regarding a health topic.

Melville School: Physical Education teacher Pamela Storme reported that they have been doing Hoops for heart with the American Heart Association. They have had afterschool activity clubs, which include Speed Stacking, Kinder Tumble, and soccer pedometer work in gym class.

Hathaway School: Parent Blair Kinder reported that this is the second year that Hathaway has challenged all students to participate in a voluntary Health and Wellness program called, "Hathaway Healthy Kids." This is a calendar activity program which is designed to encourage and motivate students to increase physical activity and make healthier food choices at home with family and friends. At the end of each month, all participating students are eligible for a raffle, and winners receive a prize that promotes movement and exercise. One student per month is selected to be "Principal's Pal," and has the opportunity to share a healthy lunch with Dr. Martin. Students who complete the goal receive a medal and certificate on Student Recognition Day. This activity has been a great success.

Elmhurst School: Parent Jean Lehane reported that their goals and offerings for this year include Harvest Day, held on November 8th, with a Thanksgiving theme which was very successful. Karate, yoga, and a student walking club were offered. Some potential upcoming events for spring/fall 2009 include:

- A yoga session currently in progress
- Healthy Road Show with Chartwells aimed at Grades 4 and 5
- Reading day with Chartwells aimed at Grades 1-3
- Potential in-service with Green Grocer or other vendor
- Stretching and Strengthening class
- Health Fitness calendar
- Focus groups to study student issues in Health and Wellness
- More healthy food choices at breakfast and lunch
- Partnering with farmers and local growers

Portsmouth High School: School Nurse Teacher Carolyn DiGioia reported that a program called, "Vaccinate Before You Graduate," has been initiated. All senior health records are reviewed to determine which students are eligible for "catch up" immunizations. Portsmouth High School has taken part in this program since it began approximately seven years ago. It involves five clinics which take place throughout the school year. On May 26th, examples of two different types of salads will be presented to the students: Chickpea Salad and Broccoli/Carrot Salad. It is felt that more exposure to salads is essential, and they are trying this with the entire student population. There will

be a table set up in the dining area. This is done in the East Bay; it stimulates interest and has been a good marketing tool.

In conclusion, additional work will continue such as:

- Policy will continue to be posted in handbooks and monitored.
- A member will visit each PTO to share our message and suggestions.
- Fundraising alternatives will continue to be explored.
- Farm-to-School and Chartwells will continue moving forward.
- Jeannette Bessinger (Dietician) can offer 10 second quick breakfast tips and healthy eating on a budget which will be shared on the listservs.
- A link will be created for Health and Wellness on our website.
- Chartwells and the schools will encourage families to sign up for eBites (the online newsletter).
- Assistant Superintendent Jermain will share out Senior Project ideas and topics. Ideas such as marketing, signage improvements, and picture advertising were discussed. It was mentioned that two members of the Health and Wellness committee and others are available to be mentors. The creation and maintenance of a website was also broached.

The meetings for the 2009-10 school year will be held on the first Monday of the assigned month. The next Health and Wellness meeting will be October 5, 2009, at the Administration Building.

d) **Policy.** No report.

A motion was made by Ms. Wedge seconded by Mrs. Levesque to adjourn the meeting. So voted. The Public Session adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Patti Cofield
Recording Secretary for:

Marge Levesque, Clerk