

Approved 03/11/2008.

5.1

**NEWPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting**

Tuesday, February 12, 2008, 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER. Chairperson Charles P. Shoemaker, MD called the Regular February Meeting of the Newport School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Frank E. Thompson Middle School Beatrice Berman Bazarsky Performing Arts Center and Cafeteria.

ROLL CALL. Attendance was as follows: School Committee Members: Chairperson Dr. Charles P. Shoemaker, Vice Chairperson Robert J. Leary, David R. Carlin, Hugo J. DeAscentis, Jr., Jo Eva Gaines, Dr. Thomas P. Galvin, and Thomas S. Phelan; School Department: Superintendent of Schools Dr. John H. Ambrogi and School Committee Counsel Neil P. Galvin.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

MOMENT OF SILENCE.

- **Elzora Francoise Tabolinsky:** who passed away on Sunday, January 20, 2008, at St. Clare Home. Mrs. Tabolinsky was the mother of Carol Potter who is a clerk at Newport Public Schools Administration.
- **Ellen S. Murphy:** who passed away suddenly on Wednesday, January 30, 2008, at Rhode Island Hospital. Mrs. Murphy was an active member of many Aquidneck Island organizations. Mrs. Murphy was the initial coordinator for the Newport County Fund of the Rhode Island Foundation, and oversaw several grants to Newport Public Schools.
- **Eileen V. Shanley:** who passed away on Monday, February 11, 2008 at Newport Hospital. Mrs. Shanley taught Home Economics at Rogers High School before her retirement from teaching. Mrs. Shanley was also the mother of Brian Shanley, a very active parent involved with the Newport Public Education Foundation.
- **Norman F. Millington, Sr.:** who passed away on Sunday, February 10, 2008 at Newport Hospital. Mr. Millington was a custodian for the Newport Public Schools for 23 years, retiring in 1996.

1.0 PUBLIC COMMENT.

Mr. DeAscentis requested that a letter of concern received from Mark & Penny Rinfret, Portsmouth residents, grandparents of Rogers High School students concerning the conflict of high school graduation dates be read into the record and be a part of the minutes of this meeting under public comments.

To Whom It May Concern:

We are longtime Portsmouth residents and grandparents who happen to have high school seniors in Portsmouth and Newport school systems this year. Since graduation ceremonies for the Portsmouth and Newport school systems are scheduled to run concurrently, we will be forced to choose to attend one and miss the other of these once-in-a-lifetime events.

Naturally, this has us very upset and also surprised. The Aquidneck Island Community is unique in its geographical layout and strong inter-community relationships. We have to believe that we are not the only family to be affected by this oversight for such a significant event. This is especially surprising, given that measures were taken to avoid scheduling conflicts for prom nights! School administrators, where are your priorities?

The conflict originates with Rogers High School, which has traditionally held its graduation ceremony on Thursday night. The "rationale" we were offered for the change was somehow tied to the new "180 day mandate", though we find that a bit hard to digest. We have contacted a number of administrators and were met with bureaucratic indifference or unwillingness to reconsider.

We expect the other families in the Aquidneck Island communities may be faced with a similar situation – if not this year then in future years. If so, we encourage you to add your voices to our request to reconsider. Certainly, it is not too late or too late or too difficult to make an adjustment to the schedule. Responsible parties simply need to care enough to make it happen.

*Yours truly,
Mark & Penny Rinfret, 328 Indian Avenue, Portsmouth, RI 02871*

Dr. Shoemaker indicated that the administration is aware of the concern and will respond to the concerns expressed.

2.0 LAYOFF PROCESS

2.1 Pre-Deprivation Hearing. Dr. Ambrogi briefed the Committee on the Pre-Deprivation Process. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to open the Hearings at 7:06 p.m. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0). Dr. Ambrogi explained that the individual teachers, the Teachers' Association of Newport and the National Education Association Representative Jane Argentieri, and the School Committee all received copies of the non-renewal / suspension / layoff notices sent to the nineteen (14) General Education (non-renewal), five (5) General Education (suspension/layoff), and twenty (20) Continuing Education Staff Members (non-renewal) and that these hearings were needed to comply with the March 1, 2008, notification deadline. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi reviewed the Layoff Process with the Committee and stated that this Process could be mitigated if state law permitted a notification deadline of May 1st. Chairperson Dr. Charles P Shoemaker stated that individual teachers and/or their representatives might have an opportunity to address

the Committee if they so desired. No teachers and/or their representatives addressed the Committee.

- 2.2 Non-Renewal/Suspension/Layoff of Personnel.** Hearing no further discussion, Mrs. Gaines made a motion to adopt a resolution for the non-renewal of the teaching contracts of the following personnel at the end of the 2007-2008 school year: General Education—Non-Tenured: Rachel Andrews, Andrea Clark, John C. Dusel, Talia Leary, Marybeth Viera, Raleigh Brennan, Rocco Danella, Linda Hogan, Steven McNiff, Christine Wirth, Jamie Butterworth, Stephanie DeAscentis, Donna Kelly, and Jennifer Murgo and Continuing Education Non-Renewals – Cindy Boswell, Mary Buckwalter, Robert Dimery, James Grundy, Suzanne Harkness, Alice Jones, James Kenney, Jeffrey Lemler, Michael Melchione, Marilyn Moffatt, Mary Ann Quick, Patrick Rossoni, Alina Sargent, Sandra Smith, Angela Soto, Peter Silveria, Patrick Sullivan, Dorcas Taylor, Susan Von Villas, and Patrick Wells. Mr. Carlin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0). Mrs. Gaines made a motion to adopt a resolution for the suspension / layoff of the teaching contracts of the following personnel at the end of the 2007-2008 school year: General Education Tenured—Suzsanne Blais, Theodore Hackman, Michal Kuriscak, Laura Caster and Florence Hazen. Mr. Carlin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0). Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi then read aloud the approved names (attached) of those individuals to receive non-renewal / suspension / layoff letters, as presented.

2.0 STUDENT ACTIVITIES.

2.1 Student Council:

- 3.1.1 Update—Amelia Dias.** Ms. Dias reported that an Arts Showcase is being held at RHS this week as part of the Senior Projects. Local artists will be performing and holding workshops at the school over the next few days. Student Council is planning "*Pennies for Patients*", and students are looking forward to winter recess next week. Dr. Ambrogi indicated that he was very proud of the RHS student body today. Their behavior was exemplary and the dance performance was a very nice event. Mr. DeAscentis reported on the success of this year's mock trial team. Rogers mock trial team may make the finals this year.

4.0 RESOLUTIONS AND CERTIFICATES OF ACHIEVEMENT. None.

- 5.0 CONSENT AGENDA.** Mrs. Gaines made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda, as presented. Dr. Galvin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

- 5.1 Approval of Minutes.** Mrs. Gaines made a motion to consent to the approval of the Special Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, January 22, 2008 as follows. Dr. Galvin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

- **Special Meeting Minutes of Tuesday, January 22, 2008.** No changes.

5.2-5 Personnel Actions.

5.2 Resignations. N/A

5.3 Retirements.

Mrs. Gaines made a motion to consent to the retirement of Sharon Amaral, Grade 1 Teacher, Coggeshall; Patricia Carney, Educational Diagnostician, Administration; Raymond Fisher, Carpentry Teacher, NACTC; Robert Jenkins, Custodian, RHS; Joyce Johannis, Speech/Language Pathologist, Carey/TMS; Joan Kelly, Kindergarten Para Educator, Carey; Kathleen Loftus, Social Studies/Language Arts, TMS; Kathleen Lynch, Special Educator, RHS; Anne McGloin, Psychologist, Carey/Coggeshall/Cranston-Calvert; Elizabeth Silvia, Grade 8 Math Teacher, TMS; Laurie Swistak, Grade 5 Teacher, Cranston-Calvert; Jean Wickenden, Librarian, TMS; and Nancy Young, Physical Education / Health Teacher, Carey; all effective at the end of the 2007-2008 school year. Dr. Galvin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Mr. Leary read from one of the retirement letters.

"The Newport School Department has provided me with a wonderful career and I hold the highest regard for all the staff I have worked with over the years. I wish to extend my gratitude to the Newport School Department for providing me with the state of the art professional development that has greatly enhanced my skills as a speech/language pathologist. In addition, I will miss working with the exceptional families and children of Newport."

5.4 Leaves of Absence. N/A

5.5 Appointments/Transfers/Recalls.

Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the Appointment of Soraya Griffiths, Para Educator, Special Education, Underwood effective February 13, 2008 through the end of the 2007-2008 school year. Dr. Galvin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

5.6. Requests for Home Instruction.

Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the following Requests for Home Instruction: Branden (4th) and Lauren (2nd) Blejske, Madisen L. Adams (2nd), and Jacob (2nd) and Conner Ford (K). Dr. Galvin seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (7-0).

Superintendent of Schools John H. Ambrogi, Ed.D., distributed the approved Personnel Actions (attached) dated February 12, 2008, as presented.

6.0 DISCUSSION

6.1.1 High Expectations for All Students: Alternate Learning Program

Dr. Ambrogi introduced Mrs. Patti DiCenso, RHS Principal and Eric Thomas, TMS Principal who explained the concept of the Newport Alternative Learning Program. This new alternative program being piloted this year, is an alternate program for students that don't fit into the traditional high school model. ALP Teachers Matt Brayman, Michal Kuriscak, Theodore Hackman and Jen Proloux introduced some of the students of the ALP, including Ricky Otero, Hector Martinez, Antonio Barber, Greg Santiago, Meaghan Woolhouse, Brittany Jenkins and Jessica Ferrar. Student essays were shared with the committee and a presentation on the program was made. Discussion of the program was held.

6.1.2 High Expectations for All Students: Elementary Reading Academy

Dr. Ambrogi introduced Jennifer Booth, Principal of Cranston-Calvert Elementary School, Adrian P. Poland, Literacy Coordinator and Kathryn Caroulo, Academy Teacher. A presentation on the success of the reading academy was presented. Students have shown significant gains in their reading levels since the beginning of the year. Discussion of the program was held, with several members of the committee expressing their concerns over the small number of children being included in the program. It was explained that with this being the first year, many parents expressed apprehension about the program. Now that the program is in operation, parents are able to see the successful results in their children and word of mouth is helping to spread the success of the pilot program. It is expected that the program will operate with close to capacity for the 2008-2009 school year.

6.2 Subcommittee Reports:

6.2.1 Newport School Committee/Newport City Council Liaison. No report.

6.2.2 Policy. Subcommittee Chairperson Mrs. Gaines reported that the policy committee has met and prepared a change to the Anti-Bullying Policy that will be considered under the action section of the agenda tonight.

6.2.3 Wellness. No report.

6.2.4 Rhode Island Association of School Committees (RIASC). No report.

6.4.5 Substance Abuse Prevention Task Force. No report.

6.4.6 Building Subcommittee. Nothing to report. Mr. DeAscentis is hoping to receive some reports on some fire safety issues and the utilization of the third floor gym at Coggeshall.

6.4.7 Ad Hoc Committee on Academic Eligibility. Mr. Carlin reported that the committee will be holding its initial meeting in the near future.

7.0 ACTION.

7.1 Newport Public Schools Policy Amendments.

7.1.1 Mrs. Gaines presented changes to the Anti-Bullying Policy which incorporates “cyber-bullying” into current policy. This policy change is presented for first reading. It was noted that counsel has not reviewed the proposed changes. Mrs. Gaines made a motion to approve the first reading of the proposed changes to Policy 5.4.6 Anti-Bullying as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion which was carried unanimously (7-0).

7.2 Benefits Cost Share for School Committee Members.

Mr. Phelan made a motion to implement a 25% cost share for those school committee members who access the health, dental and/or life insurance plans which are offered by the school department to its employees. This 25% cost share would be effective in January 2009 at the swearing in of the newly elected school committee. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Gaines and was carried (4-2-1) with Mr. Carlin, Mrs. Gaines, Mr. Phelan and Dr. Galvin voting in favor of the motion, Mr. Leary and Mr. DeAscentis voting to oppose the motion and Dr. Shoemaker abstaining from the motion.

Mrs. Gaines left the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

8.0 Reports from Superintendent and Staff: Expenditure and Revenue Reports, Enrollment Reports, Damage Reports, and Superintendent’s Update.

8.1 Expenditure and Revenue Reports. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi reviewed with the Committee the Expenditure and Revenue Reports as of January 31, 2008. **Mr. Leary commended Dr. Ambrogi for his firm handle on the finances of the school department, reducing expenditures to fit the current declining enrollment and made a motion to accept the Expenditure and Revenue Reports, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0).**

8.2 Aquidneck Island Adult Learning Center Report. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi reviewed with the Committee the January 2008 monthly report from the Aquidneck Island Adult Learning Center. **Mr. Leary made a motion to accept the Aquidneck Island Learning Center monthly report as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0).**

8.3 Enrollment Reports. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi reviewed with the Committee the Enrollment Reports as of January

31, 2008. **Mr. Leary made a motion to accept the Enrollment Reports, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0).**

8.4 Damage Reports. N/A

8.5 Superintendent's Update. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi briefed the Committee on activities to date: Fire Safety Hearing; RI Schools Superintendents Association Meeting; Rhode Island Department of Education Meeting on New Schools; East Bay Educational Collaborative meeting; NACTC Governance meeting; Rhode Island Schools Superintendents Association Commissioner's Forum; Martin Luther King Celebration at Thompson Middle School and luncheon at Atlantic Beach Club; RI Interlocal Trust Underwriters Meeting; Evaluation Committee meeting; Parent Teachers Meeting, RI Interlocal Trust Annual Meeting; RI Interlocal Trust Board Meeting; Kids First Presentation; RIDE Progressive Support and Intervention meeting; and a Rhode Island Public Expenditures Council meeting. **Mr. Leary made a motion to accept the Superintendent's Update, as presented. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0).**

9.0 SUGGESTED MEETING DATES AND AGENDA ITEMS

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Ambrogi reviewed suggested meeting dates and agenda topics for the months of January 2008 and February 2008, as follows:

- Monday – Friday, February 18 – February 22, 2008:
Winter Recess [No School]
- Thursday – February 28, 2008:
RIDE Non-Renewal Hearing
- Thursday – February 28, 2008 – 4:00 p.m.:
Special Budget Workshop
Newport Public Schools Administration Center
- Wednesday – March 5, 2008 – 6:30 p.m. (Council Chambers):
Preliminary City Council & School Committee Budget Workshop
- Tuesday, March 11, 2008:
Regular Newport School Committee Meeting
Thompson Middle School Cafeteria
- Wednesday – May 21, 2008 - 6:30 p.m. (Council Chambers):
Newport City Council & School Committee Budget Workshop

Special Meetings may be scheduled, as required.

10.0 Executive Session.

At 8:50 p.m., Mr. Phelan made a motion to go into **Executive Session** under jurisdiction of Rhode Island State Law, Chapter 46, 42-46-5 – Exceptions (a)(1) Personal Matters, and the person or persons affected have been notified in advance in writing and advised that they may require that the discussion be held in an open session; and (a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0).

OPEN SESSION

At 9:20 p.m., the meeting was called in Open Session.

Adjournment. At 9:21 p.m., Mr. Carlin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. DeAscentis seconded the motion, which carried unanimously (6-0).



Charles P. Shoemaker, M.D.
Chairperson


John H. Ambrogi, Ed.D.
Clerk

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
NEWPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
MEMORANDUM

TO: Building Principals, Central Office Administration, and Union Presidents
FROM: John H. Ambrogi, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools *Jack*
RE: **Personnel Actions –February 12, 2008**
DATE: February 13, 2008

The following personnel actions were taken at the February 12, 2008 Newport School Committee Meeting:

5.3 RETIREMENTS

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Sharon Amaral	Grade 1 Teacher, Coggeshall	end of 07-08 School Year
Patricia Carney	Educational Diagnostician, Admin	end of 07-08 School Year
Raymond Fisher	Carpentry Teacher, NACTC	end of 07-08 School Year
Robert Jenkins	Custodian, RHS	end of 07-08 School Year
Joyce Johannis	Speech/Language Pathologist, Carey, TMS	end of 07-08 School Year
Joan Kelly	Kindergarten Para Educator, Carey	end of 07-08 School Year
Kathleen Loftus	Social Studies/Language Arts Teacher, TMS	end of 07-08 School Year
Kathleen Lynch	Special Education Teacher, RHS	end of 07-08 School Year
Anne McGloin	Psychologist, Carey, Cogg, CC	end of 07-08 School Year
Elizabeth Silvia	Grade 8 Math Teacher, TMS	end of 07-08 School Year
Laurie Swistak	Grade 5 Teacher, CC	end of 07-08 School Year
Jean Wickenden	Librarian, TMS	end of 07-08 School Year
Nancy Young	Physical Ed/Health Teacher, Carey	end of 07-08 School Year

5.5 APPOINTMENTS/TRANFERS/RECALLS

<u>Appointee Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Soraya Griffiths	Para Educator, Special Education, Underwood	2/13/08 through end of 07-08 School Year