
**Portsmouth School Board
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Minutes of the May 27, 2008 Meeting

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, May 27, 2008 in the library at Portsmouth High School.

Attendance

PRESENT: Dr. Mitchell Shuldman (Chair), Mr. Brendan Ristaino (Vice-Chair), Ms. Rebecca Emerson, Ms. Sheri Ham Garrity, Mr. Kent F. LaPage, Mr. Dexter Legg, Mrs. Leslie Stevens, Mrs. Lisa Sweet, and Mrs. Ann Walker

PARTICIPATING: Dr. Robert J. Lister (Superintendent of Schools), Mr. Stephen Zadravec (Assistant Superintendent), Mr. Stephen T. Bartlett (Business Administrator), Mrs. Linda Briolat (Employee Representative) Mrs. Ann Mayer (SAU 50 Representative) and Ms. Abigail Rockefeller (Student Representative)

Call to Order

Chair Shuldman called the regular meeting of the Portsmouth School Board to order at 7:00 p.m.

***Moment of Silent
Reflection and
Pledge of Allegiance***

Chair Shuldman called for a moment of silent reflection, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Dr. Lister mentioned that during the silent reflection we should keep in mind Memorial Day and all those that have served in the military around the world.

Communications

Dr. Lister reviewed communications received over the past two weeks.

***Retirement
Reception Invitation***

A copy of the invitation to the retirement reception held in the foyer at Portsmouth High School this evening from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. This is an annual event honoring retiring teachers who have served the City.

***The Exchange
Times/Exchange
City***

A copy of *The Exchange Times*, a newspaper developed by the Portsmouth Middle School sixth graders who recently attended Exchange City.

Art-Speak Letter

A copy of a letter Dr. Lister wrote to Art-Speak in pursuit of finding an appropriate restoration and home for the Ben Franklin painting that was rescued from the fire at New Franklin School in the 1980's. Dr. Lister stated that once this painting has been restored, he would like to find a

good “home” for it within the City. He further stated that it is a very good painting of Benjamin Franklin.

***FEMA Press
Release***

A copy of a FEMA press release stating that FEMA is going to be involved with the fourth grade curriculum. Dr. Lister explained that this pilot program is to teach basic emergency preparedness skills to fourth grade students throughout New England.

***Portsmouth High
School Senior Week***

A copy of the Portsmouth High Senior Week informational packet has been provided to the Board.

Median Ages Article

An article provided by Rebecca Emerson, for informational purposes only, regarding median ages for the State of NH.

***Quarterly Work
Session with City
Council***

A copy of a letter from Mr. John Bohenko regarding quarterly work sessions with the City Council. Mr. Bohenko stated that the City Council, preferred, in lieu of quarterly work sessions, that if the School Board has specific issues that they communicate it with an agenda request for a work session on a case-by-case basis.

***NH Charitable
Trust***

A letter from the NH Charitable Foundation stating that the Portsmouth School Department has been awarded a \$35,000 grant from the Portsmouth Fund for Excellence in Education to promote district initiatives. Dr. Lister stated that he would be working with Mr. Zdravec to set-up a grant competition with the Portsmouth and SAU #50 teachers during the summer and early fall.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF AND STUDENTS

***Recognition of
Retiring Teachers***

Chair Shuldman and Dr. Lister recognized and congratulated the teachers retiring from the Portsmouth School Department for their many years of service to the City of Portsmouth. Dr. Lister stated of those retiring the least number of years working in our system is twelve years and the most is forty-three years. These teachers have impacted thousands of students.

Chair Shuldman and Dr. Lister presented gifts of appreciation to:

Diana Anderson	Susan Anderson
Jane Ansaldo-Church	Laura Barone
Dorothy Bickford	Donna Blessing
Thomas Bolko	Karen Cox
Joanne Dodge	Mary Carey Foley
Susan Foye	Jacqueline Hinton
Jan McManus	Lorraine O’Connor
Doreen Sterndale	Joseph Wesolowski
Cynthia Whitney	

Mr. LaPage wanted to express his gratitude and congratulations to the retiring teachers. He stated that the combined number of years totals 542 years.

Leave of Absence

Mr. Zadravec reported that Ms. Elizabeth Humphreys is requesting a leave of absence for the 2008-2009 school year in order to pursue an educational professional development opportunity. She has been admitted to the PhD Program at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Betsy has been employed with the Portsmouth School Department since 1997. She is completing eleven years as a Preschool Teacher at PEEP.

Motion: Ms. Garrity moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Ristaino to accept the leave of absence of Ms. Elizabeth Humphreys. The motion was unanimously approved.

FINANCIAL

April Financials

Mr. Bartlett reported that the April financials are on track for the end of the year. He stated that areas of concern are the Special Education tuition account, the maintenance account, the space rental account, and the transportation account with respect to the transportation of homeless children. There will be savings in salary and benefits, energy, and property and liability insurance line items.

Mr. Bartlett reviewed cost center 207 year-end estimate report. He reported that there is a potential general fund support of \$192,615. Mr. Bartlett explained that he will net out all the line items in the general fund and he will move over this amount to 207. Mr. Bartlett stated that \$100,000 of this amount was budgeted in the general fund under line item 165. Chair Shuldman asked for an explanation of our obligations to the homeless with regards to transportation. Mr. Bartlett explained that if there is a homeless child living in Portsmouth that came from an out-of-town school, we are obligated to transport this student back to its out-of-town school. Mr. Bartlett explained that in some cases we have been reimbursed fifty percent of the costs by the out-of-town school. Mr. Bartlett stated that these expenses are very unpredictable because you never know when this homeless situation will occur.

PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

Portsmouth Middle School - Demographics

Ms. Patricia Gormley, 579 Sagamore Ave, Portsmouth. Ms. Gormley, a member of the Middle School study circle, was present to speak about demographics. She stated that she attended one of the workshops and commends the School Board for having this open discussion and community input. She stated that the School Board needed to consider demographics in order to not “over build” the Middle School. She stated that the architects stressed flexibility as the numbers could go either way in the future. Ms. Gormley noted that the architects were discussing

building a school for between 636 to 696 students when currently the Middle School population is 533 students. This would equal a building over 20%, which is very significant. Ms. Gormley urged the School Board to look at the spikes in the New Hampshire school statistics from 2000 to 2008, and note that the numbers are going down (5th grade class size this year 153; last year 195; and the year before 186). She also noted that during the discussions concerning the transition that the use of trailers could be used and she urges the School Board to not preclude anything that could make it easier for the students and faculty.

***Class Size at
Dondero School***

Mr. Chris Adams, 6 Nixon Park, Portsmouth. Mr. Adams was present to address the Board with his concerns regarding the increase in class size at Dondero School. He stated that he has two daughters at Dondero School, one in first grade and one in third grade. When his oldest was in first grade the classroom size was sixteen students with a full-time paraprofessional assigned to the classroom. His first grader is in the same classroom with sixteen students but without a paraprofessional. In comparing this first grade without a paraprofessional, he has noted that there are no “extras” for example a science project. He also stated that there are numerous students in the class with social/behavior issues that take up a lot of the teacher’s time. In speaking with the classroom teacher, he was informed that she has been able to only get through 80% of the curriculum as compared to when his older daughter was in 1st grade with a full-time paraprofessional assigned to the classroom. He stated that these young children need a solid foundation and he is concerned regarding the loss of 20% of the curriculum. Mr. Adams stated that he has learned that next year the second grade class size will increase to twenty students and no paraprofessional. Mr. Adams urges the School Board to carefully consider the class size at the early grade levels.

***Middle School
Demographics and
Class Size at
Dondero School***

Mr. Patrick Ellis, 235 McKinley Road, Portsmouth. Mr. Ellis is present to address the demographics of the construction/renovation of the Portsmouth Middle School. He stated that the demographics of Portsmouth were very different twenty years ago and will be very different twenty years from now. Mr. Ellis stated that when designing a school for fifty to seventy-five years; please do not restrict the size today, which would sacrifice our students tomorrow. He did not believe we needed a school to house one thousand students but one that would accommodate growth. Mr. Ellis also wanted to address the student to teacher ratio at Dondero School as well as being a problem at the other elementary schools and also the Middle School. Mr. Ellis stated that he has a son in third grade at Dondero School. When looking at the NECAP test scores at Dondero School for the third grade class scored very well, which he feels that small class size attributed to these test results. Mr. Ellis felt that if there were larger class sizes, then the teacher would focus on the students that needed more help at the bottom to help get them up.

He emphasized that we cannot settle for mediocrity, we must strive for excellence and cannot do that with a high student to teacher ratio. Mr. Ellis feels that possibly re-districting would help serve the needs for all of the students. Mr. Ellis urges the School Board to look at putting more teachers in Dondero School.

Chair Shuldman closed the public commentary at 7:45 p.m.

AGENDA

***Procedures and
Policies/Student
Disciplinary
Committee -
Rus Wilson***

Dr. Lister informed the Board that Mr. Rus Wilson; Athletic Director is at an out-of-town tennis match and that Mr. Jeff Collins, PHS Principal is here to discuss their experience with the Student Disciplinary Committee and the procedures they followed under the Student Athletic Policy. Mr. Collins stated that the Student Disciplinary Committee is headed by Mr. Rus Wilson, the Athletic Director, the Principal and a Coach. It has worked extremely well in the past two years and has been a wonderful process with approximately one-half dozen students going through the disciplinary process. Mr. Collins reported that the police department sends him reports on student violations, an investigation takes place, and then there is a hearing. The student is invited to come to the meeting with their parents and also their coach or others to support them. There have been instances where athletics have lost three quarters of the season up to a year. There are other instances where the student discipline has been doing community service to remain on the team. Mr. Collins stated that this allows the team to maintain a team concept with those that are on disciplinary action practicing with the team (coaches discretion). He further stated that they take into account what the students and parents think would be appropriate disciplinary action. There are instances where the student is allowed to “buy-back” games by performing community service. Mr. Collins stressed that by keeping the procedures and guidelines consistent, yet flexible in disciplinary action, allows for fairness to all.

Mr. LaPage stated that disciplinary hearings have been at an all time low compared to four years ago when it was at an all time high when the Board started to look at a new Student Athletic Policy and Procedures. Mr. LaPage questioned that now that there are consistent disciplinary procedures in place, are the athletes putting their best foot forward if they want to participate? Mr. Collins responded that there are good kids as well as those that are not. But, overall, the kids are thinking twice about

getting into trouble and having their privileges taken away. Ms. Garrity questioned whether or not it would be difficult to implement this same policy and procedures for the extracurricular students and Mr. Collins stated that they will replicate the same as what has been done for the

athletes in a very timely manner. Chair Shuldman stated that Mr. Collins would be asked to address his experience with the Extracurricular Activity Policy once it has been in place for a while. Chair Shuldman also stated that the Board is trying to come up with a *Quality Education Index* that will have all of these statistics. Mrs. Sweet stated that she understands that a lot of people have been working on the procedures and policy for athletic student discipline, but she is having difficulty understanding what jurisdiction the school department has with regard to the 24/7/365 policy. She questions why the school department has to deal with consequences of a violation that occurs when the student is not in school (i.e. on school vacation or weekend). Mrs. Sweet is wondering if we are overreaching our bounds. The community has the police and the home has the parents and the school has the school. Mr. Collins stated that it is very complicated when it is outside Portsmouth High School or occurring outside the general school day. Vice-Chair Ristaino stated that two very important items came about as a result of the formation of this disciplinary committee: (1) Formation of this committee was a judicial panel of individuals who these students see every day, they know them, like them and trust them because at the same time they are helping these students grow by their mistakes. (2) This raised the academic standard for our students and this committee is seeing that all of our students are doing what they are supposed to do and come to school to be educated. We need to put our trust in the individuals that we have hired to make the tough decisions.

Date for School Board Retreat in August

Chair Shuldman asked for a date in August for the summer School Board Retreat. Dr. Lister stated that the members of the Board could e-mail dates that they would be available during the month of August.

Summer meeting dates:

Tuesday, June 10th - Middle School Meeting at 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 10th - School Board Meeting – City Hall

Tuesday, June 24th - School Board Meeting – Board Room, Little Harbour

Tuesday, July 8th - School Board Meeting - To be determined

Tuesday, August 5th - School Board Meeting - To be determined

Dr. Lister will confirm the dates and places of the meetings and let the Board members know. Mr. LaPage stated that the City Planning Board might already be meeting at the chambers on July 8th.

Middle School Update

Chair Shuldman stated that there are two pieces of information that JCJ Architecture needs from the Board this evening: (1) Direction of what size we would like to have them consider in their design, and (2) whether we are going to build to the right or to the left of the current Middle School building.

Direction from School Board to JCJ Architecture

Motion: Mr. Legg moved, second by Ms. Garrity, that the School Board

***with Regard to
Design***

charge JCJ Architecture with developing design alternatives based on option three as identified in their May 20, 2008 document and as discussed at the last School Board meeting. Option three is headed “*Student Core of 650 Students, Auditorium for 750 and Reduced Gym*”.

Discussion:

Chair Shuldman wanted to thank the responses from the community from the last workshop, which focused on parking, building a LEAD building and demographics. He further noted that a comment that was received stated that they were surprised that the School Board hadn't decided which demographic study to believe in yet. He stated that the School Board's job is to look at all the information that has been received from a number of sources and to make value judgments. The School Board's Association put out three sets of numbers for the Middle School based on whether simple progression numbers (in the 600's), then they took the five-year average. Those are the numbers that were predicted out to 2014 that JCJ has. Then a three-year weighted average which took it to the mid to upper 500's. The NH State Department projections between 2000 and 2030 stated an increase statewide of 10.7% (10-14 year old students), produced by the US Census Bureau Population Division in the year 2005. Chair Shuldman stated that the numbers are all over the map. He also stated that it was recommended to him that he look at the Rockingham County statistics as a better predictor. Ms. Emerson stated that Community Development broke that down even further as Portsmouth is different than other towns within the county. Mr. Legg stated that this is a good starting point for him. He stated that what he looks at is the intent of the City. The City Council has made it very clear that they want a vital City that will continue to grow. The City wants to address affordable housing, which is one of the gating factors of whether people will come into your community or not, and they are going to try to address the creation of jobs, which is another gating factor of whether people will come into your community or not. Mr. Legg stated that at the last meeting one of the gating factors is the education system, both quality and capacity. We cannot do anything shortsighted that will stop our growth if we build a school too small. JCJ presented a building with capacity for growth but can handle the existing population in a comfortable way. He further stated that there are a number of young families in Portsmouth and believes that people are choosing to live in a city versus the suburbs because of the quality of life a city offers.

Mrs. Stevens stated that possibly we should look at our elementary school demographics before we talk about the middle school demographics. Dr. Lister stated that our numbers are not going down at the elementary school level. Vice-Chair Ristaino stated that we needed to start the planning process as the Middle School is in need of renovations now and we need to empower JCJ Architecture to start designing and move on. He

further indicated that we couldn't overlook Newington's demographics as well as they are one of our "customers" feeding students into our Middle School. Mrs. Stevens stated that flexibility is the key for down the road. Mr. LaPage further agreed that we need flexibility. He stated that last year's kindergarten had 65 additional students and this year has surpassed by 85 additional students. Mr. LaPage likes the number of 650 but feels that the auditorium needs to be larger than the 750 to encourage both parents to attend events. He also feels we need a larger gym (11,000 square feet vs. 7,000 square feet). Ms. Emerson wants the Board to work together to develop a happy medium. She feels that she needs more information regarding the justification for the size of the auditorium and the gym and cannot support the motion. Ms. Emerson also stated that we needed to share resources, such as The Music Hall, or the high school and keep the taxpayers in mind as we go through this process. Mrs. Walker stated that she cannot support the motion and agrees that we need a larger gym and auditorium. She did agree with the number of students. Mrs. Sweet needed to know how many basketball teams at the Middle School. Mr. Stokel reported that there are fourteen different basketball teams. He also stated that when the students go to the high school to share the resources it does take time away from instruction. Vice-Chair Ristaino stated that he does support the motion because it is flexible. The design team needs to come up with drawings so that we can see the auditorium and the gymnasium. Mr. Stokel stated that the theatre program has difficulties putting on a play in the gymnasium as the acoustics are terrible plus there is no place to build and store the sets at either The Music Hall or the high school. They currently do not have a theatre program at the Middle School but have numerous students involved in the Seacoast Repertory Theatre and the Ogunquit Playhouse. Mr. Stokel also stated that there have not been any band or orchestra productions at the Middle School and has moved all concerts to the high school auditorium with rehearsals in the band room, chorus room or cafeteria.

A roll call vote was taken. The motion was approved, seven to two (Voting in favor of the motion: Vice-Chair Ristaino, Ms. Garrity, Mr. LaPage, Mr. Legg, Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. Sweet, Chair Shuldman) (Voting against the motion: Ms. Emerson, Mrs. Walker)

Chair Shuldman opened the floor to a motion and discussions regarding the placement of the Middle School on the site.

***Direction to JCJ
Architecture from
School Board on***

Motion: Mr. LaPage moved, seconded by Mrs. Stevens, that we empower JCJ Architecture to consider all land other than the deed restrictive land known as the Peirce Trust land and to look at all other options.

Placement

Discussion:

Mr. LaPage stated that any encroachment onto the Peirce land other than for recreational use would be a legal battle for numerous years to come. Mrs. Dwyer stated that the Peirce land includes the athletic fields to where the building begins and is restrictive for development anything other than recreational use. Ms. Garrity questioned whether or not it would be in the Board's best interest to restrict JCJ Architecture as they were told from the beginning that there is a certain amount of land to the left and to the right. Ms. Emerson expressed her concern regarding what if the buildings to the right do not want to sell to the City. Chair Shuldman stated that the City has been talking with the owners of the properties and that they all have expressed an interest to sell. Dr. Lister stated that we should let JCJ do their job and come back with pictures and drawing and then have a conversation and move forward. Mr. Legg noted that after listening to JCJ and Mrs. Dwyer that we allow JCJ to develop conceptual designs and work out the pros and cons to building on either side of the building and present them to the Board. If the option is to build to the left we may find it is worth the cost. Mr. Legg did not feel that the Board should limit JCJ at this phase. Vice-Chair Ristaino agreed and does not support the motion.

A roll call vote was taken. The motion was not approved, three to six (Voting in favor of the motion: Ms. Emerson, Mr. LaPage, Mrs. Walker) (Voting against the motion: Vice-Chair Ristaino, Ms. Garrity, Mr. Legg, Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. Sweet, Chair Shuldman)

Motion: Vice-Chair Ristaino moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity to empower JCJ to look at the Parrot Avenue location on the left and on the right to develop design alternatives.

A roll call vote was taken. The motion was approved, seven to two (Voting in favor of the motion: Vice-Chair Ristaino, Ms. Emerson, Ms. Garrity, Mr. Legg, Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. Sweet, Chair Shuldman) (Voting against the motion: Mr. LaPage, Mrs. Walker)

Motion: Ms. Emerson moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity to suspend the rules and adjust the agenda for the remainder of the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

Agenda Adjustment

Chair Shuldman reported that he conferred with Dr. Lister and Vice-Chair Ristaino and the agenda has been adjusted to the following in order to adjourn closer to 10:00 p.m.:

1. Quality Education Index – to be discussed at a later time
2. Infinite Campus/Virtual High School Update – it was decided that this

would be discussed at a work session with Ms. Susan Birrell during one of the summer meetings to discuss the technology plan.

3. History of Graduation/PHS Report – to be discussed at a later time
4. AREA Agreement Update – Dr. Lister would report back with a timeline as to solving the AREA agreement issue with Newington before we have to report to the State.

***Elementary School
Numbers***

Dr. Lister stated that he was pleased that Mr. Ellis and Mr. Adams stayed, as we owed it to them to give them some feedback on the class size issue at the elementary schools. Dr. Lister stated that he and Mr. Zdravec have been meeting with the elementary school Principals as they have been watching the numbers in the elementary schools. Dr. Lister stated that he has a sheet hanging on the wall, which he updates daily with attendance numbers, which actually change weekly. He further indicated that they are trying to bring some equity to the elementary schools and that class size is very important to all of us and we want to maintain class sizes. Dr. Lister also noted that we have had the luxury to have sixteen and seventeen students in a class. We looked at all three elementary schools, how many classrooms they had, how many teachers they had, as well as looking at special education, special needs and we are still reshuffling this to have equity at all of the schools. We are concerned about clarity in the schools. We did take one teacher recently out of Dondero School and reassigned to New Franklin School and a new position from Dondero School to Little Harbour School. Dr. Lister stated that a notice had gone out from Dondero School, which he wished had not gone out about numbers as he has spoken to at least six to eight parents within the past couple of days regarding the same issue. Along with keeping the class size down, Dr. Lister is asking those parents to work with us as there are some classes that have students with behavioral needs and things are changing with how students are coming to school and what the teachers are responsible for. We all need to work together on this, as it is very important.

Mr. Zdravec stated that during the meeting with the Student Services Director, the Reading Director and the three elementary school Principals, a week or two ago, they were asked for their most accurate projections of what the classes will look like next year. From that time until today the numbers have changed. There is less certainty with the kindergarten enrollment numbers than in the upper grade levels and we are bottom heavy. In collaboration with all the administrators, we are trying to find some level of equity with the resources we have with reallocation as needed to meet the needs of the students. A student ratio for the elementary school and not by grade levels is:

New Franklin with 15 teachers = ratio of 18.5 students to one teacher
Dondero with 19 teachers = ratio of 16.5 students to one teacher

Little Harbour with 23 teachers = ratio of 18.7 students to one teacher

Mr. Zadavec further noted that the 19 at Dondero and the 23 at Little Harbour reflected that change that Dr. Lister spoke of, the one teacher reduction at Dondero and the one teacher addition at Little Harbour. After the discussions with the administrators, it was decided that the most equitable thing to do to meet the needs of the students where they were was to move one teacher from Dondero to New Franklin equaling 16 teachers for a ratio of 17.4 students to one teacher and Dondero down to 18 teachers for a ratio of 17.4 students to one teacher. There are still some concerns of class size throughout all of the elementary schools. We do know that class size is related to student test scores and achievement. We know that when we do class size right, small classes with personalized instruction, that gives us the greatest benefit – we believe in student learning.

Mr. LaPage stated that re-districting that was done eight to nine years ago, Dondero had the highest housing stock and he fears that with the aging of the Portsmouth residents, this area could once again be hit with a number of new families moving in. Mr. LaPage stated that re-districting went very well last time and that he would very much like to present a motion that the School Board form a subcommittee to look at re-districting.

Dr. Lister stated that this is not just about numbers, but it is the needs that the students have now such as behavioral, which is very different. Chair Shuldman suggested that possibly Dr. Lister, over the course of the summer in working with the administrators, bring back suggestions and ideas as to the possibility of re-districting. Dr. Lister stated that with the Middle School project, he fears that if re-districting is taken on, we will take on more than we can handle. Dr. Lister stated that re-districting is an issue that created a lot of upset parents when they found out their children were going to another school. Ms. Emerson questioned the policy regarding residency – if the child lives in one district and the grandparent lives in another district, can the parents voluntarily change the district that their student is in? Dr. Lister stated that there is a very strict residency policy that prohibits parents enrolling their students in another district from the one they live in. Mrs. Sweet stated that we need to advocate and make a case for a “reasonable” class size and stick with it for the number of classes and the resources necessary to maintain that “reasonable” number. Dr. Lister stated that more importantly we need to develop short and long-range goals to help the immediate situations rather than jumping into re-districting. Dr. Lister reminded the Board that the next big issue is the Middle School and the next school to be looked at will be Little Harbour School for renovation and then back to New Franklin and Dondero Schools. He stated that the infrastructures of these elementary schools do not warrant increasing the number of classrooms. We do not

have enough rooms. Mrs. Walker stated her concerns with the rising class sizes and the student behavioral issues that the teachers now have are greater. She stated that we need to look at adding back paraprofessionals especially to those classes that have students with behavioral issues and/or high class sizes.

Ms. Emerson would like to know how many kindergarten students are enrolled for next year at each elementary school. Dr. Lister will make that information available to all the Board members.

Mr. Legg suggested that the issue of class sizes and space or lack of space has been as a result of the budget pressures placed on us from the City Council and is a cost issue. He stated that at this budget cycle the Board came in at the budget level that they asked and yet they still cut the budget. Next year's cycle will be even more difficult. He would like to suggest a meeting with City Council in the fall and take them through some of these issues and prepare them and lay out our educational philosophy and what drives it. We need to let them know, with the support of the community, that small classrooms are the driver of individual education and to do that we need the proper number of teachers. Mrs. Sweet questioned whether or not we have seen a bump in first grade from those parents that kept their children in private kindergartens. Mr. Zadavec stated that there has been an increase in first grade numbers.

Chair Shuldman stated that there would be a work session in the fall to look at re-districting with short and long-term alternatives.

Motion: Vice-Chair Ristaino moved, seconded by Ms. Emerson to suspend the rules and go past 10:00 p.m. Seven in favor, two against (Mr. LaPage and Ms. Garrity).

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Committee

Ms. Garrity stated that the Policy Committee met on May 16, 2008. The Committee reviewed the Student Conduct Policy, the Extracurricular Activity Policy, the Cheating/Plagiarism, Administering Medication to Students, and First Aid/Emergency Care. Policies before the Board for the Second Reading are the Student Conduct Policy, Extracurricular Activity Policy and Cheating/Plagiarism. Policies before the Board for First Reading are Administering Medication to Students and First Aid/Emergency Care.

Cheating/ Plagiarism Policy

Motion: Vice-Chair Ristaino moved, seconded by Mr. Legg to approve the second reading of the Cheating/Plagiarism Policy pending the most recent definition of plagiarism.

Chair Shuldman stated his concern regarding defining plagiarism in the context of today's world where plagiarism often happens and students do not know that they have plagiarized because they do not understand the concept before it that you must sight your sources. He noted that students do not understand what plagiarism is and what they are supposed to do. "Cut and Paste" is a big problem. Plagiarism is a conscience thing where you actually know that you are stealing. Ms. Emerson suggested adding the 2008 Webster's dictionary definition added to the policy. Mr. Legg stated that we update the definition.

A roll call vote was taken. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Administering
Medication to
Students and First
Aid/Emergency
Care Policies***

Motion: Vice-Chair Ristaino moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity to approve the first reading of Administering Medication to Students and First Aid/Emergency Care Policies.

Ms. Rockefeller noted that in the fourth paragraph the word "sever" should be severe and the word "physical" should be physician. Chair Shuldman noted that in the first paragraph the word "protest" should be protect.

A roll call vote was taken. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Student Conduct
Policy***

Motion: Vice-Chair Ristaino moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker to approve the second reading of the Student Conduct Policy.

A roll call vote was taken. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Extracurricular
Activity Policy***

Motion: Vice-Chair Ristaino moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity to approve the second reading of the Extracurricular Activity Policy as amended.

Discussion:

Chair Shuldman stated that discussions regarding 24/7/365 for the Extracurricular Activity Policy are similar to discussions regarding the Athletic Policy. The committee was asked to come back to report to the Board after implementation had been in place for a year which Mr. Collins reported this evening has been working very well. Chair Shuldman suggested the same with this Extracurricular Activity Policy. Taking the Athletic Policy and, as an issue of fairness, extending it to extracurricular activities. Mr. Legg stated that students perceived the old policy was unfair and if this policy gets passed we get a report back in one year to see if it needs refining. Mrs. Sweet still has difficulty with the 24/7/365 and will continue to listen and try to understand the concept as related to the varying consequences.

A roll call vote was taken. The motion was approved, seven to two (Voting in favor of the motion: Vice-Chair Ristaino, Ms. Garrity, Mr. LaPage, Mr. Legg, Mrs. Stevens, Mrs. Walker, Chair Shuldman) (Voting against the motion: Mrs. Sweet, Ms. Emerson)

Ms. Emerson would like to have all the policies on-line and to also receive a copy of the handbook that the student's receive.

***Joint Loss
Management
Committee***

Vice-Chair Ristaino reported on a recent Joint Loss Management Committee meeting. The Joint Loss Management Committee has helped in producing a \$10,000 reduction on our Property/Liability Insurance Policy. He further stated that this committee is to be commended for their work down on workplace safety issues and State compliance issues. The committee was instrumental in producing the State mandated Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) books throughout the school system. Material Safety Data Sheets provide necessary information for the handling of chemicals at various levels throughout the system. Vice-Chair Ristaino also reported that after a recent State Health Inspection, all schools passed except for the Middle School who received a conditional pass due to a cleanliness issue. The current three custodians keep the building clean as best they can. We need to consider as we discuss expanding the Middle School that another custodian or two be added to the staff.

NEXT AGENDA

***Agenda Items for
Next Meeting***

Chair Shuldman stated that if there are items for the next agenda, please e-mail them to him.

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be Tuesday, June 10, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers at Portsmouth City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment

There was no further business to come before the Board. On a motion by Vice-Chair Ristaino, seconded by Ms. Garrity, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

(Approved by the School Board on June 10, 2008)

Dr. Robert J. Lister
Executive Secretary

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