

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL BOARD PUBLIC MINUTES FOR SEPTEMBER 23, 2014

PORTSMOUTH MIDDLE SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER

PORTSMOUTH, NH

DATE: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2014

TIME: 7:00 [or thereafter]

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- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.
- II. **ROLL CALL** – LESLIE STEVENS (CHAIR), DEXTER LEGG (VICE-CHAIR), ANN WALKER, TOM MARTIN, PATRICK ELLIS, LENNIE MULLANEY, JEFF LANDRY, NANCY NOVELLINE-CLAYBURGH, GARY EPLER (7:24 P.M.), ED MCDONOUGH (SUPERINTENDENT), STEVE ZADRAVEC (ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT), STEVE BARTLETT (BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR), OLIN JOHANNESSEN (EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE) AND ANN MAYER (SAU 50 REPRESENTATIVE)
- III. **INVOCATION**
- IV. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Chair Stevens led the board in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- V. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**
- a. REGULAR BUSINESS MEETING, SEPTEMBER 9, 2014
- MOTION: Motion to accept the regular meeting minutes of September 9, 2014 by Ms. Walker
SECOND: Ms. Mullaney
DISCUSSION:
VOTE: Unanimously Approved
- VI. **PUBLIC COMMENT - None**
- VII. **SPECIAL PRESENTATION** – Board members thanked Assistant Principal Davis for their guided tour of the middle school.
- VIII. **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**
- a. ITEMS OF INFORMATION
- i. REVISED SCHOOL BOARD WORK PLAN – On November 25, Superintendent McDonough expects to share another cohort update.
- b. CORRESPONDENCE
- i. NH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIAL EDUCATION DETERMINATION LETTER - Mr. McDonough noted that the district has met all requirements in special education and commended the work of Director Joanne Simons.
- ii. Mr. McDonough announced that City Council approved the bonding resolution for the new field lights at Portsmouth High School. Installation is expected to begin in the spring.
- IX. **OLD BUSINESS**
- a. CONSIDERATON AND APPROVAL OF POLICIES (2nd READING):
- i. (GBAA) SEXUAL HARASSMENT- EMPLOYEE/STAFF - Attorney Dwyer requested that policy GBAA be tabled until the next school board meeting in order to correct wording intended for the student policy.
- ii. (GBAA-R) SEXUAL HARASSMENT- EMPLOYEE REPORT FORM- Tabled until next regularly scheduled School Board meeting.

iii. (JBAA) SEXUAL HARASSMENT – STUDENTS

MOTION: Motion to accept policy JBAA – Sexual Harassment, Students by Ms. Clayburgh

SECOND: Mr. Legg

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

iv. (JBAA- R) SEXUAL HARASSMENT - STUDENT REPORT FORM

MOTION: Motion to accept policy JBAA – Sexual Harassment, Student Report Form by Ms. Mullaney

SECOND: Ms. Walker

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

X. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. UPDATE ON HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION, K-12 PROGRAM – Assistant Steve Zdravec introduced, Ms. Laura Burbine, Ms. Kathy Casperson and Ms. Kathy Birse-Siegel.

Wellness Coordinator Ms. Burbine shared the benefits that the *Partners for Success* grant is providing middle school students. All work through the grant needs to be evidence based and built on solid principals of prevention. The foundation for reporting is based on assessing different protective factors and risk factors. Statistics are clearly showing that the more protective factors that a child has in his/her life, the less chance he/she will participate in risky behaviors later on. What are some protective factors that help students not to choose to participate in risky behaviors?

- Parents that set realistic yet high expectations and communicate those expectations to their children clearly
- Children who experience academic success
- Strong bonds with community, faith and sports/extracurricular activities

What are some risk factors that can negatively affect a child?

- Chaotic family lifestyle without structure
- Uninvolved parents
- Parents or siblings involved in drug use or risky behaviors
- Academically failure
- Mental health issues including depression, ADHS or social issues

Ms. Burbine and Mr. Matt Mitchell recently instituted a 12-week prevention curriculum that will be taught during student activity periods. The curriculum is a brain-focused curriculum, showing how anxiety affects an adolescent's brain, how they learn and how they are able to self-regulate. Ms. Burbine concluded by thanking the many generous community members who have donated their talents and time creating the professional banners hanging throughout the new foyer.

Ms. Kathy Birse Siegel, Department Head for the Physical Education Department, recently completed a two year revision of the physical education curriculum. The updated curriculum will be based on national standards. Board members reviewed the new curriculum standards by grade. Board members commended MS. Siegel for her work observing other schools to view how they teach and assess students.

b. UPDATE ON 9-12 MATH PROGRAM – Mr. McDonough recently published this year’s progress report and received a handful of emails requesting to hear more about high school math. Assistant Superintendent Zdravec shared how the Portsmouth School District compares to New Hampshire, nationally and locally in New Hampshire. All slides show math scores improving at a higher rate than the state. Grade 12 math scores are the highest in the nation. With so much comparison in the media of different nations, Mr. Zdravec stated that New Hampshire scores are actually higher than Finland’s. Only after being combined with the other 49 states, the score drops, creating a much lower national score. In New Hampshire, the district has consistently compared well. Positive contributing factors are: the first class of full day kindergarteners are now old enough to test and are their scores are proving that all day kindergarten, along with early intervention methods are improving math scores district wide. Middle school math has received considerable focus, resulting in above state and national performances. There is hope that SAT scores will replace assessment tests at the high school level and that students will take testing more seriously.

c. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF EMPLOYMENT

i. GRADE 5, DONDERO ELEMENTARY

MOTION: Motion to approve the employment pf Ms. Amanda Allen as Grade 5 Dondero Elementary, one year contract, by Ms. Walker

SECOND: Mr. Landry

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

XI. COMMITTEE UPDATES

a. JBC - Vice-Chair Legg thanked Mr. Davis for the guided tour of phase III. The JBC continues to work on the punch list and expects to receive a full report soon from independent soil experts identifying the cause of settlement issues and any associated costs to permanently fix the issue. Monitored measurements do show a declining rate of settlement. Mr. Johannessen inquired if construction plans were taken into consideration by the security team last year when evaluating security measures for the district. Superintendent McDonough reported that they had.

XII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. ELEMENTARY/PMS GUIDANCE UPDATE, MARCH 24, 2015
- b. K-12 ART, TBD
- c. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMMING, TBD
- d. RE-EXAMINING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOREIGN LANGUAGE, TBD
- e. STRENGTHENING STEM INITIATIVES, TBD

XIII. ADJOURNMENT – Motion to adjourn at 9:08 p.m. by Mr. Ellis and seconded by Ms. Mullaney. Unanimously Approved.