

**Portsmouth School Board  
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

**Minutes of the September 13, 2005 Meeting**

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, September 13, 2005 in the Council Chambers at the Portsmouth Municipal Complex.

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***Attendance***

**PRESENT:** Mr. Kent F. LaPage (Chair), Mrs. Nancy Novelline Clayburgh (Vice-Chair), Mrs. Nansi Craig, Mr. Clay Hayward, Mr. John Lyons, Jr., Mr. Carvel Tefft, Mr. Charles Vaughn, Mrs. Ann Walker

**ABSENT:** Mr. Raimond Bowles

**PARTICIPATING:** Dr. Robert J. Lister (Superintendent of Schools), Mr. Steven Zadavec (Assistant Superintendent), Mr. W. Peter Torrey (Business Administrator), Mr. Andrew Kinaci (Student Representative), Mrs. Linda Briolat (Employee Representative), and Mrs. Ann Mayer (SAU 50 Representative)

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***Non-Public Session***

Prior to the regular meeting, the Board met in a non-public session in the Legal Department Conference Room. This non-public session was called to order at 5:09 p.m. and adjourned at 7:05 p.m. and was held in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II. (a) and (b).

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***Call to Order***

Chair LaPage called the regular meeting of the Portsmouth School Board to order at 7:09 p.m.

***In Memory***

Chair LaPage called for a moment of silent reflection. He asked people to remember former Superintendent of Schools Timothy F. Monahan, who died on August 31<sup>st</sup>. He said Mr. Monahan was a long-standing community leader in the City of Portsmouth and within the Portsmouth School Department. Chair LaPage said a number of former school board members and educators attended the wake and funeral and shared Mr. Monahan's wisdom and knowledge of how to run a school system. He said many of the things that have been implemented today were the

***In Memory  
(continued)***

result of Tim's hard work in the past. Mr. LaPage extended the Board's condolences and thanks to the Monahan family.

Chair LaPage asked the Board to keep in their thoughts the family of Marilyn Colbert, the mother of Kathy Anania (high school computer technician) who died on September 11<sup>th</sup>. He asked the Board to keep Kathy and her family in their thoughts and extended to them the condolences of the School Board.

***Hurricane Katrina***

The Chair stated that since the Board last met, the Country has undergone a national tragedy with hurricane Katrina and the flooding of the Gulf Coast. He said that in addition to the loss of lives, thousands of lives have been disrupted. He said education for the students of that region has come to a standstill, and we must consider how unfortunate these students are. He said people have left this area to travel to that region to help things get back to normal. Mr. LaPage said that while sitting at the football game last week, he thought how nice it would be for those students if things could return to normal soon and they could be sitting at their school's football game. He said the hearts of the people in this community go out to the people in the Gulf Coast, and they wish them all the best. The Chair stated there are a few students from that area who are attending Portsmouth schools because their families have come to live with relatives in Portsmouth.

Mr. Vaughn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

***Financial Forms***

Mr. Torrey stated that Board members need to sign the MS-25 and DoE-25 forms that are being circulated this evening. He said the MS-25 is required to be filed by the Department of Revenue Administration, and the DoE-25 is required by the Department of Education. Both forms provide budget information for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2005.

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**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

***Letter from APT re:  
Negotiations***

The Board received a letter from Janet Lovering, President of the Association of Portsmouth Teachers, and Linda Briolat, Chief Negotiator, stating the Association of Portsmouth Teachers, NEA-NH, desires to bargain a master contract for the contract year beginning July 1, 2006. The Chair stated that since it is an election year, he will appoint himself and Vice-Chair Clayburgh to begin negotiations, with another Board member to be appointed after the election. Mrs. Briolat stated that she has no

issue with that.

***Letter Commending  
Portsmouth Student***

Dr. Lister read a letter from Donna Drew of Milo, Maine in which she commends her grandson, Jacob Drew, with saving her life by performing the Heimlich maneuver, which he was taught at New Franklin School. Mrs. Drew said she and Jacob were home alone when she began choking, and he performed the Heimlich maneuver several times before her passageway was opened.

Dr. Lister said Mayor Sirrell sent Jacob Drew a letter of congratulations, and the Superintendent said he wrote a personal note of congratulations to Jacob. The Superintendent also thanked the staff at New Franklin School for making this training available to the students. Mr. Vaughn suggested a letter of commendation from the Board be sent to Jacob and his instructor from last year so that people are aware how important these extras are that are provided to the students.

***Walking Program***

Dr. Lister spoke about the newspaper article, "Getting kids to walk," a walking program for students and their families sponsored by the Step It Up Seacoast Coalition in hopes of getting children moving to combat the national problem of childhood obesity. Dr. Lister said the coalition is made up of several local organizations to encourage physical activity within and outside schools. He thanked the Foundation for Seacoast Health for providing opportunities in the Seacoast area. He said maps of walking trails in the Seacoast area will be produced and distributed. Mr. Vaughn moved the article be accepted and placed on file, with thanks to the Seacoast newspapers for promoting the program. Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Health Awareness  
Memo***

The Chair stated the Board has in its folders this evening a memo from Deb Clark of the nursing department and Dr. Lister recommending methods to prevent mosquito bites and information on bacterial meningitis. The memo provides two websites where parents can obtain additional information.

***School/Staff  
Responses to  
Hurricane***

The Chair read a letter dated September 12, 2005 from Superintendent Lister stating how proud he is of the students, staff and parents in the Portsmouth school district for their efforts in assisting people who were affected by hurricane Katrina. He said that all schools have participated in fund drives, yard sales, bake sales, and other activities to raise funds and resources to be sent to the Gulf states.

The Chair referred to a newspaper article about a family from New Orleans who have temporarily relocated to Portsmouth and is staying with relatives. The kindergarten student is attending Little Harbour School.

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### **PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION**

No one had signed up to address the Board.

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### **RECOGNITION OF STAFF/STUDENTS**

#### ***Field Trip Requests Postponed***

The Chair stated the request from PASS (Portsmouth Alternative Secondary School) for two overnight field trips will be presented at the September 27<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. (The Superintendent is awaiting additional paperwork.)

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### **PERSONNEL**

#### ***Professional Nominations***

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of Alyssa Freeman to the position of grade one teacher at Little Harbour School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of Stephanie McSherry to the 60% position of grades 2/5 teacher at Little Harbour School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of Courtney Randall to the position of system-wide instrumental music teacher. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of Erika Carey to the position of guidance counselor at the Portsmouth Alternative Secondary School (PASS). Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of Lisha Rowe to the

***Professional  
Nominations (cont.)***

position of KIDS Program Counselor at Portsmouth Middle School. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zdravec presented the nomination of Joanne Simons to the position of Reading/Title 1 Director. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Coaching  
Nominations***

Mr. Zdravec presented the nomination of Maura O'Malley to an interim position of freshman girls' soccer coach. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zdravec presented the nomination of Geoffrey Ward to the position of freshman football coach. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the nomination be approved. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Vaughn stated that he is very pleased to see that Portsmouth High School graduates have returned to the City after college and have been hired to teach in the schools. He believes that makes our school system stronger. Mrs. Clayburgh said that five out of the six teacher nominations have Masters Degrees. She knows that is no longer required, but thinks it is wonderful that the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent strive to hire those with higher education.

***Request to Apply for  
Teacher Exchange  
Program Approved***

Dr. Lister presented a request from Erin Bakkom, Middle School teacher, for permission to apply to the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program for a six-month or six-week exchange during the 2006-07 school year with a teacher from the United Kingdom. Mr. Vaughn moved the Board allow Ms. Bakkom to apply for and participate in a teacher exchange program with a teacher from the United Kingdom; Mr. Lyons seconded the motion. Superintendent Lister stated there is no cost to the Portsmouth taxpayers other than Ms. Bakkom's salary. The teacher coming over here from the United Kingdom will be paid by his/her own school district. The Superintendent answered questions from the Board. The motion was then unanimously approved.

***Request to Postpone  
Sabbatical***

Dr. Lister presented a request from Doreen George, a high school teacher who had received Board approval for a sabbatical for the first semester of this school year pending a suitable

***Request to Postpone  
Sabbatical (cont.)***

replacement was found. Ms. George would use the sabbatical to work on the K-12 science curriculum. He said they were not able to find a suitable replacement, so Ms. George agreed to postpone her sabbatical for one year and is teaching at Portsmouth High School this year. Ms. George has requested that she be allowed to take the sabbatical during the first semester of the next school year (2006-2007). Mr. Vaughn moved the Board approve postponing Ms. George's sabbatical until September of 2006, Mrs. Walker seconded the motion. Mr. Lyons said this discussion proves the teachers in Portsmouth go above and beyond the call of duty for the benefit of their students. He said the teachers worked with the Board when the Board had difficulty with the Statewide property tax, and they make this City what it is. He asked the administration express the Board's thanks to Ms. George and wish her the best of luck. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Lister, responding to an earlier comment made by Mrs. Clayburgh, reported that 72% of Portsmouth teachers have a Masters Degree or above, and several have Doctorates. He said the sabbaticals and teacher exchanges are just as important to people as the college programs because they enable the teachers to bring back experiences/knowledge to the students in their classrooms. He said he appreciates the Board's willingness to approve this request.

***Business  
Administrator  
Position***

Dr. Lister said the Board has received a copy of the posting for the position of Business Administrator to fill the vacancy that will be created when Mr. Torrey retires. He asked for the Board's approval of this posting. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker, the posting be approved. Mr. Vaughn said it is with great regret that Mr. Torrey will leave the school system. He said he has worked closely with Mr. Torrey, not only within the School Department but on the Trustees of the Trust Funds, and found that he is possibly one of the best budget people that he knows. He said Mr. Torrey has done a tremendous amount for the City in saving money, and has worked very closely with the building program. Mr. Vaughn said it will be difficult to find someone to replace Mr. Torrey. Mr. Hayward said he agrees with Mr. Vaughn; he has worked with Mr. Torrey for five years on various committees, and saw that he has done a fantastic job. He said Mr. Torrey's leaving will be a tremendous loss to the School Department. The Chair stated that Mr. Torrey will be working with the Board for a few more months, and has indicated a willingness to work during next year to help out whoever takes the job. The motion to approve the posting was

unanimously approved.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### ***Joint Building Committee***

Joint Building Committee: Chair LaPage reported the High School dedication ceremony was held last month, and it was one of the most enlightening ceremonies that he has ever attended. He said the District was honored to have Governor Lynch and Commissioner Tracy in attendance and speaking, and that it was a great day to show off what we have. He thanked Assistant Mayor Grasso and Board Member Walker for coordinating the program. He thanked Team Design, Inc. and Hutter Construction for donating the programs. Chair LaPage said he has received many comments from people who were impressed with the dedication program and the format of the dedication ceremony. The Chair thanked Mr. Torrey for the slide presentation that outlined the entire construction process, and said this was a highlight of the event.

Mr. Torrey reported the Joint Building Committee met on August 24<sup>th</sup> and discussed drainage issues and the dedication ceremony. The Committee did not discuss the punch list items; that will be discussed at the next meeting on September 28. Mr. Torrey said the project is still under budget.

#### ***Athletic Committee***

Athletic Committee: Mrs. Craig stated she will have a report from the Athletic Committee at the next meeting.

#### ***Curriculum Council***

Curriculum Council: Mr. Zdravec reported the first meeting of the Curriculum Council will be held next Thursday, September 22, in the Board Room at Little Harbour School. He distributed a memo outlining the dates of future meetings. Mr. Zdravec said he would like the Curriculum Council to pay special attention to the ways to assess student learning.

#### ***NECAP Report***

Mr. Zdravec stated that he will report on the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) tests at the next meeting.

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### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### ***Early Release Request***

The Board received a copy of the Staff Planning and In-Service Time (early release) Request for the 2005-2006 school year. Dr. Lister said these early release days are contingent upon approval

***Early Release  
Request (cont.)***

by the State Department of Education. Dr. Lister said the proposal was developed with the building principals and staff, and they are looking forward to these professional development activities for all teachers and staff. Mr. Lyons moved the Board approve the Staff Planning and In-Service Time Request as presented; Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion.

Mrs. Walker asked if an article in the newspaper was correct when it stated the elementary schools and Middle School students will be taking the NECAP tests and the High School students will continue to take the NHEIAP (New Hampshire Education Improvement Assessment Program) tests. Dr. Lister stated that is correct.

Mr. Tefft said that Commissioner Tracy and Dr. Lister recognized at the dedication that Portsmouth's test scores were higher than they had been before. Mr. Tefft said the cost per student has been discussed many times over the last few years. He said the Board's answer to that has been a program put into place a number of years ago to address each child's needs, and the results of decisions made by the Board are reflected in the increased test scores.

***Request Approved***

The motion to approve the early request proposal was unanimously approved.

***District's Proposed  
Technology Plan***

Dr. Lister stated that Mr. James Andrews, High School computer teacher; Mr. Tom Lotz, network administrator; and Ms. Rhonda Johnson, elementary computer teacher; were present this evening. He deferred to Mr. Tefft, a member of the Technology Committee. Mr. Tefft reported the members of the Technology Committee, including Mr. Andrews, Mr. Lotz, and Mr. Hayward, put their hearts and soul into this technology plan.

Mr. James Andrews, High School computer teacher, was invited to the podium to address the proposed District Technology Plan for 2005 – 2008. Mr. Andrews reported the District is required to submit a technology plan to the State Department of Education every three years in order to remain eligible for e-Rate funding and some of the title funds that are available for technological programs. He said the proposed plan encompasses this school year and the two years following. Mr. Andrews reviewed the process that was followed in the development of the plan, and he thanked the people who worked on the plan throughout the summer. He said one theme that is repeated throughout the application is "integration:" how to best teach



***District's Proposed  
Technology Plan  
(cont.)***

what we teach using technology. Mr. Andrews reviewed the four goals of the proposal: maintain the infrastructure; technology staff reorganization; a revised K-12 technology curriculum; and a technologically fluent staff.

Mr. Hayward stated the Technology Committee reviewed the plan over and over again.

Mr. Hayward moved the School Board approve the proposed District Technology Plan for the years 2005 through 2008. Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion. Mr. Lotz joined Mr. Andrews at the podium and, along with Mr. Tefft and Dr. Lister, answered questions from the Board. Mrs. Briolat stated it is frustrating for the classroom teachers when the machines are not working, and said it is extremely important that the computers be up and running all the time. Mrs. Mayer questioned the high school computer requirement. Mrs. Walker stated her experience has been that many people assume that people coming out of college have computer skills. Mr. Vaughn expressed concern for a group of students who may not have access to a computer at home, and said it is especially important for these students to learn keyboarding skills. Mr. Lyons said the State does not require anything; they have established what they believe should be minimum standards, and the reason for this is to allow for local control. Mr. Lyons said the district needs to spend more money on technology as we live in a world where it is less important about what we know and more important to know how to find the information out. Mrs. Clayburgh said the Board had to make drastic cuts to its budget in the past, and it is now time to get the computer program back on track. She thanked the Technology Committee for putting together this plan. Mr. Lyons moved the question. In a roll call vote, the District's Technology Plan for 2005 – 2008 was unanimously approved.

Mr. Andrews thanked the Board for its support. Mr. Tefft recognized Ms. Johnson for her contributions to the plan, especially in the area of special education.

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**CONTINUING BUSINESS**

Dr. Lister thanked members of the Technology Committee for putting together the plan. He agreed with Mrs. Briolat that this is work in progress and the district needs to continue to meet the needs of the students and staff.

***Posting for  
Technology Director***

Dr. Lister said he wants to hire a technology director for a one-year position, and requested the Board to approve the proposed posting for the position. Mrs. Craig moved the Board approve advertising the technology director position; Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion. Chair LaPage said this position would get the technology department back on track. Mr. Lyons said he believes the posting is superb, however, he would prefer to delete the words "one year position" as he fears this would prevent some highly qualified candidates from applying and he believes this should be a permanent position. Mr. Lyons said the burdens placed on educators are amazing, and support from a technology director position would allow the teachers to teach. Chair LaPage reminded the Board the position was cut due to budget restraints. In a roll call vote, the Board unanimously approved the posting for the Director of Technology.

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**FINANCIAL**

***Extension of PEEP  
Lease at Community  
Campus***

Mr. Torrey reported his office received information from the Foundation for Seacoast Health, the agency that owns the Community Campus and leases space to various non-profit groups, that they are in the process of revising its leases; therefore, all lease renewals will be for one year instead of the usual three year period. Mr. Torrey said that PEEP (Portsmouth Early Education Program) leases space at the Community Campus. The lease for this school year would remain the same, with no changes in the current terms. He said the Board will notice a change with future leases.

Mr. Lyons moved the Board authorize the Superintendent to enter into a one-year extension of the PEEP lease. Mr. Tefft seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.

***AREA Tuition Rates,  
2005-2006***

Mr. Torrey presented the AREA (Authorized Regional Enrollment Agreement) tuition rates for the 2005-2006 school year. He said that he has discussed these rates with the Business Administrator from SAU 50. He said the rates are based upon the figures included in the DoE-25 form. Mrs. Mayer questioned the increase, and stated it represents at 10.9% increase. She said the towns have not seen a double-digit increase in over 12 years. Mr. Torrey reviewed information and said the reason people are seeing a jump is because the Portsmouth school district had a zero budget increase in 2003-04 and the average high school membership is down by approximately 40 students.

<b><i>AREA Tuition Rates 2005-2006 (cont.)</i></b>	Mr. LaPage stated these are the costs to educate a child in Portsmouth, and it does not take long for these costs to escalate when a child who is not a resident of Portsmouth attends a Portsmouth school. He commended Assistant City Attorney Kathleen Dwyer and the principals for being vigilant and working very hard to identify those students who do not live in Portsmouth.
<b><i>Rates Approved</i></b>	Mr. Lyons moved the Board approve the AREA tuition rates as presented in a memo from Peter Torrey dated September 6, 2005. Mrs. Clayburgh seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.
<b><i>2005-2006 Fiscal Year Summary</i></b>	Mr. Torrey provided the Board with a final budget summary by cost center for the 2005-2006 fiscal year, reflecting the votes of the Board at its August 9, 2005 meeting.
<b><i>August 2005 Financial Report</i></b>	Mr. Torrey reported the August 2005 financial report was included in the Board packets. He said we are only two months into the new fiscal year. He said the budget is 25% spent because the City rolls over the funds for health insurance and the leave at termination funds. He said it is too early in the fiscal year to be worried, however, he expressed concern about rising energy costs.
<b><i>2004-2005 Financial Report</i></b>	Mr. Torrey also provided the Board with an annual financial report for the 2004-2005 budget. He reviewed highlights from this report with the Board.
<b><i>Lease with Exchange City at Wentworth School</i></b>	Mr. Torrey reported that during the non-public session the City Attorney, Robert Sullivan, reviewed at length the terms of a lease with Exchange City for the use of the Wentworth School for the period of time from 2006 through 2011. He said the lease would permit Exchange City to sub-lease portions of the school, but only with the School Board having final approval. Mr. Lyons moved the School Board authorize the Superintendent to enter into the lease as written by the City Attorney. Mr. Hayward seconded the motion. In a roll call vote, the motion was unanimously approved.
<b><i>Superintendent's Contract</i></b>	Chair LaPage reported the School Board, during its non-public session, discussed the contract for Superintendent Lister with Mr. Tom Flygare, City Negotiator. He said the contract will not be voted on this evening as it was not listed on the agenda; it will be placed on the next agenda for Board approval. Once

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approved by the Board, the contract will be forwarded to the City Council for approval.

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### **NEXT AGENDA**

#### ***September 27 Agenda***

The Chair cautioned the Board that its next meeting may be lengthy. The following items are scheduled to appear on the agenda: introduction of new teachers; opening of school reports from the Principals; report on NECAPs; a report from the Report Card Committee; and time will be allowed for community input about Class L versus Class I. He also said there may be a need for a non-public session.

#### ***Class L Versus Class I***

Dr. Lister stated the process he plans to use to discuss Class L versus Class I is that community members will have an opportunity at the next meeting to talk about Class L versus Class I. In the meantime, the Athletic Director is surveying athletes, parents and coaches, and is working with the NHIAA (New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association) to obtain information about the advantages and disadvantages of Class L versus Class I. The Athletic Director would then give a presentation to the Board at the October 11 meeting and give a recommendation. The Chair stated there are also different divisions within the classes. Mr. Lyons requested the Superintendent provide the Board with information on Class L and Class I at the next meeting.

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### **OTHER**

#### ***PHS Snack Shack***

Mr. LaPage reported that work is moving forward on the snack shack. He said the seed money approved by the Board has allowed for materials to be ordered. Dr. Lister said there are people in the community donating labor and materials to make this project happen. He thanked Mr. Chris Anderson, a Portsmouth High School graduate and parent, for his willingness to put some ownership into the high school that he attended. He thanked Ken Linchey, Maintenance Supervisor, for overseeing and coordinating this project. Mrs. Clayburgh thanked Board Chair LaPage for the countless hours he has committed to replacing the snack shack.

#### ***PHS Activities***

Mrs. Clayburgh said she has three kids who attend Portsmouth High School this year. She encouraged Board members to go to the high school at 2:30 p.m. to view the activity that is going on

after school. She listed the athletic and extra-curricular activities that are occurring.

***PHS Men's Ensemble***

Mr. Kinaci reported the Portsmouth High School Men's Ensemble will perform with the Yankee Clipper Chorus this Saturday evening.

***PHS PTSA Meeting***

Mrs. Clayburgh reported the High School PTSA (Parent, Teacher, Student Association) will hold its first meeting of this school year on September 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. in the high school library.

***Television Coverage of Sporting Events***

The Chair thanked Channel 22 and Guy Hampton for providing coverage of sport events. Mrs. Clayburgh mentioned there are a lot of athletic teams at the Middle School and a lot of students are going out for sports.

***PHS Band***

Mrs. Walker thanked the High School Band for performing at the High School dedication. She said they did a great job.

***Adjournment***

There was no further business to come before the Board. Mr. Vaughn moved, seconded by Mr. Hayward, the Board adjourn its meeting. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert J. Lister, Ed.D.  
Executive Secretary