
**Portsmouth School Board
Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

Minutes of the March 11, 2008 Meeting

A meeting of the Portsmouth School Board was held on Tuesday, March 11, 2008 in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers at Portsmouth City Hall.

Attendance

PRESENT: 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

ABSENT: Dr. Mitchell Shuldman (Chair)

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

Call to Order

Vice-Chair Ristaino called the regular meeting of the Portsmouth School Board to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers at Portsmouth City Hall.

Moment of Silent Reflection and Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-Chair Ristaino called for a moment of silent reflection, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mrs. Clayburgh, former School Board member and current City Councilor.

Vice-Chair Ristaino turned the meeting over to the Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Lister mentioned that during the moment of silent reflection we should remember those men and women who serve in the military protecting our country. He further asked that we keep in mind those within the Portsmouth School Department family who are going through difficult times. Dr. Lister stated that Chair Shuldman's father is ill; Mrs. Germaine Brigham, a retired teacher, is hospitalized and Ms. Dorothy Bickford, a teacher at Dondero, whose mother has passed away.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 11, 2008 Board meeting were presented for approval. Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Mr. Legg. The motion was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes (continued) The minutes of the February 12, 2008 Board meeting were presented for approval. Ms. Garrity moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker. The motion was unanimously approved.

The minutes of the February 14, 2008 Budget Work Session and Special Meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Legg moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity. The motion was unanimously approved.

Oath of Office – New Board Member

Oath of Office

Vice-Chair Ristaino explained that with the resignation of Mr. Carson Smith from the School Board, a letter, dated March 11, 2008, has been written to the City Clerk from the Board appointing Ms. Leslie Stevens to complete the vacant term of office. This letter will be signed by all the Board members and then mailed to Ms. Kelli Barnaby. Vice-Chair Ristaino asked for a roll call vote to approve this letter. The vote was unanimous.

Dr. Lister stated that he would like to publicly thank Mr. Smith for his contributions to the Board over the last two years. He further stated that a letter has been sent to Mr. Smith from the Board thanking him for his work on behalf of the Portsmouth School Board.

Vice-Chair Ristaino turned the meeting over to Dr. Lister to administer the *Oath of Office* to Ms. Stevens. The Board welcomed Ms. Stevens to the Board with congratulations.

Communications

**2007-2008
Scholarship Booklet**

Dr. Lister reviewed the communications with the Board. The Board received a copy of the 2007-2008 Scholarship booklet from Portsmouth High School. This is an annual booklet that represents thousands of dollars worth of scholarships available to the students. Dr. Lister wanted to publicly thank businesses and individuals that contribute to these scholarships.

Harbour Lights

A copy of Harbour Lights, the Little Harbour School newsletter has been provided to the School Board.

**Celebration
Graduation**

The Board received a letter from Ms. Nancy London, Fundraising Co-Chairperson for *Celebration Graduation* requesting funding to support *Celebration Graduation*.

Motion: Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity, to approve \$500 to be sent to *Celebration Graduation* for the chemical-free party for

graduating seniors, with the understanding from the Business Administrator that we have the funds. A roll call vote was taken. The motion was unanimously approved.

***The Coalition
Communities -
Education Funding***

A memo has been received from Ms. Pat Remick from *The Coalition Communities* on education funding. Dr. Lister stated that a future meeting would be scheduled with Ms. Remick to discuss the effects of legislation regarding recommended education funding in New Hampshire.

***Baseball Team
Spaghetti Dinner
Fundraiser***

A notification has been received from the Portsmouth High School Baseball Team regarding a spaghetti dinner fundraiser. This fundraiser will take place on Saturday, March 29, 2008 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the North Church Parish House on Spinney Road in Portsmouth.

***Music Boosters
“Magical Musical
Chocolate”
Fundraiser***

A notification has been received from the PHS Music Boosters regarding a fundraiser to benefit the Music Boosters and support the musical scholarships for Portsmouth students. The “*Magical Musical Chocolate*” will be featuring exquisite desserts along with vocal and instrumental performances by Portsmouth students. This extravaganza will take place on Wednesday, March 12, 2008 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the PHS Cafeteria.

***Draft Copy of
School Board
Retreat Minutes***

A “draft” copy of the School Board retreat minutes to be taken up at a next Board meeting.

***Professional
Learning
Community Article***

An article regarding “*What is a Professional Learning Community*”? Mr. Zadravec stated that this article is for informational use at this time and at a future meeting would be discussed by the Curriculum Council regarding the use of time for professional collaboration specific to early release days. Mr. Zadravec further stated that this article would provide the Board with some background regarding the work the teachers are doing.

***Special Education
Taskforce***

Dr. Lister presented two “draft” letters that came about from the recent School Board retreat. Dr. Lister stated that the Board would like to set up a *Special Education Taskforce* in the City of Portsmouth to discuss research, reorganization, future special education needs, and meeting the needs of our special education students as well as all of our students. Dr. Lister further indicated that the taskforce would be represented by School Board, City Council, parents, teachers, administrators, and others.

***Letter to Carol Shea
Porter and the
Legislative
Delegation***

Dr. Lister further presented a “draft” letter to Representative Carol Shea Porter and the other members of the Legislative Delegation asking them to come to Portsmouth to discuss the issue of special education, especially around funding.

Motion: Mr. Legg moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity to allow the Superintendent to send out the memo for the *Special Education Taskforce*.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Motion: Ms. Garrity moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker to allow the Superintendent to send out the letter to the legislative delegation inviting them to Portsmouth regarding special education. The motion was unanimously approved.

RECOGNITION OF STAFF/STUDENTS

Student Government Day

Dr. Lister reported that Student Government Day would take place on Wednesday, March 19, 2008. Dr. Lister stated that this is the thirty-first annual Student Government Day in Portsmouth. There will be students representing city officials such as the Police Chief, Fire Chief, Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and School Principals. Dr. Lister reported that there would be no City Council or Board student representatives this year. Dr. Lister would keep the School Board informed as to the activities scheduled for that day so that Board members would have an opportunity to participate.

FINANCIAL

Financial Reports from January and February 2008 and Cost Center 207 – Special Education

Mr. Bartlett passed out financial reports for January and February as well as an update on Special Education cost center 207. Mr. Bartlett stated that the January and February financial summaries are on target and are consistent with monthly progress from the previous years resulting at this time of year by percentage spent to date despite the fact that we had an additional payroll due to leap year this year. Mr. Bartlett also informed the Board that some minor negative numbers in cost centers 152, 174, and 177 are as a result of coding corrections and timing issues, which should be rectified and zeroed out for the March month end report. Mr. Bartlett further discussed Special Education cost center 207, specifically the tuition and fees funds. Mr. Bartlett stated that he has met with the Special Education Department regarding the revised revenue and expense budgets and the potential year-end shortfall. The negative \$183,000 shortfall to date will be offset somewhat by some grant funding, and the moving of funds from one line item to another, which would help reduce this shortfall by the end of the year. Mr. Bartlett further stated that again this year we would have to take some of the potential savings in the general fund to support the 207 budget. He stated that the expenses in cost center 207, the ones that are not covered by tuition, are in fact Portsmouth students. He stated that he would have a clearer picture at the next meeting in March. Mr. Bartlett also indicated that he has provided a line item in the general fund budget for next year to help support fund 207. Mr. Bartlett reported that there has been a strain on the general fund from increased overtime in maintenance from snowplowing and overtime in the custodial accounts due to various custodial injuries and illnesses. Mr.

Bartlett stated that while there has been a savings with the snowplowing contractor, the maintenance department handles the smaller storms, of which, we have had quite a few. Mr. Bartlett also reported that the salary and benefit line items should balance out at year-end.

Vice-Chair Ristaino stated that a financial report format work session has been scheduled for Monday, March 31, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. in the Boardroom at Little Harbour.

***Financial Report
Format Work
session***

PUBLIC COMMENTARY SESSION

***“Are You Smarter
Than A Dondero
Fifth Grader”***

Dondero fifth grade students were present to notify the School Board of an upcoming fundraiser to support the fifth grade class trip to Camp Calumet in Center Ossipee in May 2008. This fundraiser, game show, “Are you Smarter Than a Dondero Fifth Grader?” will take place on Friday, March 28, 2008 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Portsmouth High School.

Hayden Diemer

Mr. Hayden Diemer read, “*We are fifth grade students from Dondero School. We want to invite you to our upcoming fundraiser, Are you Smarter than a Dondero Fifth Grader?*” Dondero parents, teachers, and students have been working together since August to create an evening of food, fun, excitement and education”.

Alex Bock

Mr. Alexander Bock read, “*On Friday, March 28th the doors at Portsmouth High School will open at 5:00 p.m. when you will have a chance to grab a quick dinner and review the wonderful selection of penny sale and raffle items. Tickets will be on sale and all drawings will be held later in the evening*”.

Emily Favaloro

Ms. Emily Favaloro read, “*The show begins at 6:00 p.m. with Dondero students competing against some of Portsmouth’s biggest celebrities – Mayor Ferrini and Superintendent Lister top the list. The evening promises to be lots of fun and hopefully will raise lots of money, too. This fundraiser will support our class trip to Camp Calumet in Center Ossipee in May. This four-day, three-night experience will link our in-school learning to real-life experiences in the environment. We are very excited to attend Environmental School this year with our fifth grade friends from Little Harbour*”.

Billy Valway

Billy Valway read, “*We have been busy helping by creating questions, making posters and selling student-made greeting cards. Our parents and teachers have met many, many times to work on the guest list, program, set, raffle items and of course the food options. Several members of our*

community have also signed up to help with this event. It's gonna be a great night! We look forward to seeing you at Portsmouth High School on March 28th. Thank you".

Mrs. Elizabeth Valway, parent at Dondero, passed out flyers for this event to the School Board members.

Ms. Garrity asked what the time frame is for this event as well as the type of categories that the questions will reflect. Ms. Favaloro responded that the fundraiser would run from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. with questions in math and basic fifth grade questions – not like the TV show questions.

Dr. Lister thanked all the students and parents at Dondero School as well as Ms. Jill LeMay, Principal Dondero School.

Mr. Ducharme introduced Mrs. Nancy Novelline Clayburgh to address the first reading of the PHS Student Conduct Policy.

***First Reading PHS
Student Conduct
Policy - Robert
Ducharme and
Nancy Novelline
Clayburgh***

Mrs. Nancy Clayburgh, 405 F.W. Hartford Drive, Portsmouth. Mrs. Clayburgh stated that during the summer of 2006, when she represented the School Board on the athletic committee as the committee chair, she was asked to re-write the athletic contract and the coach's handbook, as directed by the NHIAA. The committee was made up of parents, teachers, coaches, administrators and students. Mrs. Clayburgh stated that they came up with a contract that is now in existence and has worked very well during the last two years under the leadership of Mr. Rus Wilson. During the work on the athletic contract there was a lot of discussion regarding making this contract for all students. Mrs. Clayburgh stated that it was decided to focus on the task at hand and re-write the athletic contract then reconvene to work on a student conduct policy for all of the students at PHS. Mrs. Clayburgh explained that a different group made up of parents, teachers, coaches, administrators and students met during 2007 and have written the Student Conduct Policy, which is to be used by all of the students at PHS including athletics. Mrs. Clayburgh read a letter addressed to the School Board members from Mr. Rus Wilson, PHS Athletic Director: *"I apologize for not being here in person, but I am attending the girl's basketball banquet, celebrating their very successful season. I had the pleasure of being a member of the student behavior policy committee and sat through many interesting discussions regarding the pros and cons of a student behavior policy. I write in support of what is before you this evening. The committee spent a vast amount of time examining all aspects of the proposed policy, and, while it is not perfect, it does put a policy in place that holds the students, who participate in any extracurricular activity, accountable for their behavior. The high school has taken many positive steps over the past couple of*

years to raise expectations across the board and the students have responded accordingly. We have had a student behavior policy in effect for student-athletes for the past two and it has worked extremely well. We have heard anecdotal and first hand testimony of numerous students who have refrained from improper activity in order to honor their athletic commitment. It is the hope of the committee that the privilege of participating in any extracurricular activity will help our students make good decisions that will affect all aspects of their lives”.

Mrs. Clayburgh thought Mr. Wilson’s letter expressed how the committee felt about this policy and she distributed a copy of his letter to the members of the School Board.

Middle School

Mrs. Clayburgh expressed how pleased she was that the School Board hired JCJ Architects working with Lisa DeStefano. Mrs. Clayburgh further stated that everyone on the city level is also very pleased. She believes that within the next two and one-half years we will be standing in our new/renovated Middle School. Mrs. Clayburgh stated that in looking at the High School project, the process would take between two and one-half to three years to be completed.

NECAP Test Scores

Mrs. Clayburgh congratulated Dr. Lister and the teachers in the Portsmouth School Department with the NECAP test results. PHS did, once again, very well. She further stated that grades three through eight did extremely well also and that it takes the “village” of Portsmouth School Department, teachers, administrators, custodians, clericals, to educate our children.

Steve Cirillo PHS Student Conduct Policy

Mr. Steve Cirillo, Music Teacher, stated that he served on the committee with Mr. Ducharme and Mrs. Clayburgh and feels as though the policy is very well written and that everyone hopes for high standards for all of the children.

Music Boosters “Magical Musical Chocolate” Fundraiser

Mr. Cirillo wanted to invite the School Board to a fundraiser to benefit the Music Boosters and support the musical scholarships for Portsmouth students. The “*Magical Musical Chocolate*” will be featuring exquisite desserts along with vocal and instrumental performances by Portsmouth students. This extravaganza will take place on Wednesday, March 12, 2008 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the PHS Cafeteria. Mr. Cirillo stated that this is our annual “chocolate festival”; so if you like chocolate along with some wonderful music, please attend.

Vice-Chair Ristaino declared that the Public Commentary Session closed.

AGENDA

***Revised Letter to
City Council
Regarding Middle
School***

Vice-Chair Ristaino stated that at the City Council meeting on March 3, 2008, the City Council made a motion asking the School Board to do two things. The first was to revise a letter that the School Board sent to them in July and the second was to give them monthly reports. Vice-Chair read the letter to the City Council, written by Chair Shuldman: *“Dear Mayor Ferrini and Portsmouth City Councilors: In an effort to continue building a greater level of trust, transparency, and communication with the community, the Portsmouth School Board wished to submit this revised letter in order to clarify our request to the City Council on July 10, 2007. The Portsmouth School Board is prepared to support a Parrott Avenue site if the City Council will provide the necessary funds to develop conceptual design alternatives for a Parrott Avenue site that supports grade six, seven and eight, meets the educational narrative, provides for sufficient athletic fields, addresses parking, parent drop-off, and bus safety. We look forward to working together to benefit Middle School students and our community,”* Signed by Dr. Mitch Shuldman, Chair of the School Board and the rest of the Board.

Motion: Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity to approve the letter to be sent to the City Council. A roll call vote was taken. The motion was unanimously approved.

Vice-Chair Ristaino stated that once all signatures have been obtained the letter will be sent to the City Council.

Drop Out Report

Dr. Lister provided a list of statistics regarding the drop-out rate at Portsmouth High School and at the Portsmouth alternative school. Dr. Lister explained that he provides these statistics every year because he wants the Board and the public to know that of the nineteen students that left school early last year, which is 1.7% of the student population, each one has been followed and it has been noted that they have received many opportunities to become re-engaged in school. Dr. Lister further indicated that he has found that these students typically return to school. Dr. Lister added that even though they return to school they are still counted as originally being a drop-out. Dr. Lister further explained that with the use of on-line courses and virtual high school there are many opportunities for these students to stay engaged in school. Dr. Lister stated that Portsmouth is very fortunate to have a very low drop-out rate. Dr. Lister stated that he has statistics that go back to 1990 through this past year with the number of drop-outs, our student population and the drop-out rate. Our drop-out rate in 1997/1998 was the highest which is 4.58%. Dr. Lister explained that with the diligent efforts of the teachers,

administrators and more opportunities to stay in school, this rate has dropped to the lowest it has been at 1.7%. Dr. Lister indicated that the kinds of interventions these students have been involved in through counseling, work opportunities, classroom opportunities, and family involvement have played a big part in keeping students in school. Some of these students are high risk and it has been an effort by all involved to keep these students engaged in school. Dr. Lister will make these statistical reports available to anyone who would like to review them.

Mr. Legg questioned the State drop-out average. Dr. Lister stated that he thought that the State drop-out average is 5.5% - 6% and that we are well below that level. He further stated that the NH legislature has suggested keeping students in school until the age of eighteen, where they currently can drop-out at the age of sixteen. He further stated that we are well below the State average drop-out level.

Mrs. Walker stated she is extremely proud of our low drop-out rate. She further stated that in an article provided by Dr. Lister statistics in California indicated that one out of every three students do not graduate from high school.

Mrs. Sweet stated that this is an amazing accomplishment for our schools and noted that the statistics showed that the percentage spiked during a few of the years and wondered what factors would have caused that. Dr. Lister explained that he felt that the economy and population changes in Portsmouth at that time had something to do with the increases in the drop-out rate during those years. Dr. Lister stated that he has been keeping information on every student that has dropped out of school since 1990 and felt that trends could be another factor taken into consideration on these statistics.

Mrs. Briolat asked how many of these students have been in the school system from the beginning. Dr. Lister stated that with the mobility rate in the schools less than half of the students that have dropped out have been with us since kindergarten and first grade.

Mr. LaPage stated that he felt that the State drop-out rate is closer to 18% with an extremely large drop-out rate in the south central part of the State. Dr. Lister will e-mail the Board members with the accurate State drop-out rate percentage.

Ms. Emerson questioned if the summary on the students took into consideration or tracked their home or outside of school life. Dr. Lister stated that is why the students' names are not on this report because many teachers have known them throughout the grades. Some items not included on this report are involvement with the courts, the police and

other organizations in the City that help families. Dr. Lister further indicated that the educational levels and economic factors of the families play a part in the risk factors for the students.

Recent State Test Scores

Mr. Zadravec reported on recent eleventh grade State test scores. Mr. Zadravec stated that over a month ago the third through eighth grade testing scores came out and because this is the first year that the eleventh graders have adopted the NECAP tests, the State needed a process to develop a baseline of data and setting the standard. The eleventh grade scores need to be looked at as a starting point. Mr. Zadravec further stated that this is how the school department also looks at the scores; where are we starting and where do we want to end up. He further stated that the State average for the percentage of students proficient in reading was 67%, where the Portsmouth eleventh graders are at 81% proficient in reading. Mr. Zadravec stated that this is a very impressive percentage statewide as well as for us. He further indicated that math has raised some questions statewide; the State average for the percentage of eleventh grade students proficient in math was 28%, where the Portsmouth eleventh graders are at 45% proficient in math. Mr. Zadravec stated that we are pleased that we are doing better relative to the State average, but not pleased with the 45% of our students being deemed proficient in math. Another area testing was writing, the State average for the percentage of eleventh grade students proficient in writing was 33%, where the Portsmouth eleventh graders are at 56%. Mr. Zadravec stated that the high school works with the students and he applauds the teachers and administrators at PHS for getting the students involved with this testing. It is not something that the students see as very connected with their school, it is not counted in their grades and it is not something that is required to pass. Mr. Zadravec also applauds the students who put in a good effort on this test and took it seriously. Mr. Zadravec stated that the information obtained from this testing will be a place to start and to move from here in setting some goals as to how we look at this data to better understand the relative strengths and weaknesses in these areas. This information will also help identify those students that are struggling and what can be put in place to help make them successful. Mr. Zadravec noted that tomorrow (March 12th) is an early release day and that the high school teachers and staff will be working in groups to discuss what is needed to put into place to help effect students successes in these areas. Mr. Zadravec further stated that the teachers would continue to look at the third through eighth grade data through the State software, *Performance Tracker*, which helps to analyze the data.

Ms. Garrity asked Mr. Zadravec to elaborate on comments made by Mr. Collins regarding some of the feedback from the testing. Mr. Zadravec stated that some of the feedback was that the math test was difficult, which indicated that a high standard was set there, and some of the other

feedback was around the length of time it took to take the test.

Mr. LaPage stated that he is very happy to see that we were higher than the State, but is very unhappy to see where the State average was. Mr. LaPage hopes that the Department of Education is taking a serious look at these results and finds them unacceptable. Mr. LaPage stated that when looking at the overall State average of 28% proficiency in math, this indicates that there were a lot of schools below 20% proficiency in math. Mr. LaPage suggested that a comparison of the eleventh grade results to their other years of testing would be valuable to see how we are doing progressively as a school system. Mr. LaPage stated that we would also need to analysis how students were doing within our system from kindergarten or first grade versus those students that may have been transferred in and never took the testing within our system before.

Mr. Zadavec stated that there is no satisfaction within the Department of Education as to the results of this Statewide testing. There is no satisfaction as to where the State levels are right now. A lot of emphasis and effort in looking at curriculum alignment, factors to improve student success, and focus on improving the numbers from where they are right now. Mr. Zadavec stated that comparison of growth of proficiency percentages for the third through eighth grades has been an ongoing tool to view the progress of the children annually within the Portsmouth School Department. These eleventh graders never took any comparable tests. Mr. Zadavec stated that supplement other assessments in place of those missing gaps will help to see how our students are progressing.

Mrs. Sweet asked if the same testing is given in Vermont and Rhode Island and asked if they showed relatively low achievement in math and writing. Mr. Zadavec indicated that it is the same test and did understand that reading was up higher as a relative strength than math and writing.

***Sabbatical Requests
for 2008-2009***

Mr. Zadavec reported on a sabbatical leave request from Ms. Joy Bryan Markley, a special education teacher at New Franklin, for the second semester of 2008-2009. During this sabbatical, Joy proposes to use her experience and areas of expertise to research effective strategies of enriching student understandings in the area of math. Her proposal includes the expansion of an after school enrichment program and doing school tutorials to work with specific students. Her proposal is based on current research and presents a unique opportunity for the district to focus additional resources on meeting the needs of all elementary students in math.

Motion: Mr. Legg moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker to approve this request for a sabbatical leave for Ms. Markley for the second semester of 2008-2009.

Mrs. Walker stated that she is very pleased that this sabbatical is such a bargain for our school system and the taxpayers because this teacher is going to be working to improve the area of math within the elementary schools, the foundation of student education. She is also very pleased with the rubric that the committee came up with to determine this sabbatical.

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

***Resignation of Mr.
Kirc Cone***

Mr. Zadavec presented a resignation from Mr. Kirc Cone effective at the end of the 2007-2008 school year. Mr. Cone is resigning from his position as a math teacher. He was originally hired at the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year and will complete two years with the Portsmouth School Department.

Motion: Ms. Garrity moved, seconded by Mrs. Walker that we accept the resignation of Mr. Cone effective at the end of the 2007-2008 school year. The motion was unanimously approved.

***Nomination of
Professional Staff
for 2008-2009***

Mr. Zadavec presented the nomination of the professional staff for 2008-2009. Mr. Zadavec stated that he is pleased to present the slate of re-nominations as outlined in the collective bargaining agreement of the Association of Portsmouth Teachers in the timeline of notification by March 15th. Mr. Zadavec stated that all of the re-nominated teachers are highly qualified for their positions and represent some of the highest quality educators that any district is lucky enough to have.

Dr. Lister stated that he is very proud to nominate the two hundred and seventy-four plus teachers.

Motion: Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity to approve the nomination of the professional staff for 2008-2009. A roll call vote was taken. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadavec read the list of professional retirements as of June 2008:

***Professional
Retirements,
June 2008***

Diana Anderson, Reading Teacher at Little Harbour School, twelve years with the Portsmouth School Department. She has been a Reading Teacher at Dondero, Little Harbour, and New Franklin.

Susan Anderson, Guidance Counselor at Portsmouth High School, thirty-four years with the Portsmouth School Department. She has been a Guidance Counselor at Portsmouth High School for all of the thirty-four years.

Jane Ansaldo-Church, Grade 2 Teacher at Dondero School, thirty-two years with the Portsmouth School Department. She has worked at Little Harbour, New Franklin and Dondero. She has been a Special Education Teacher and a Grade 2 Teacher.

Laura Barone, Science Teacher at Portsmouth Middle School, thirty-three years with the Portsmouth School Department. She has worked at Portsmouth Middle School all of those thirty-three years.

Dorothy Bickford, Grade 4 Teacher at Dondero School, twenty-eight years with the Portsmouth School Department. She has worked at Little Harbour, New Franklin, Wentworth, Brackett, and Dondero.

Donna Blessing, KIDS Teacher at Portsmouth Middle School, thirteen years with the Portsmouth School Department. She has worked at New Franklin and Portsmouth Middle School.

Thomas Bolko, Grade 6 Teacher at Portsmouth Middle School, forty-three years with the Portsmouth School Department. He has worked at Atlantic Heights School as Acting Principal, and has worked at Brackett, Haven, Little Harbour, Lafayette, Jones, Wentworth and Portsmouth Middle School.

Karen Cox, Speech Teacher at Dondero School, twenty-seven years with the Portsmouth School Department. She has worked at PEEP and Dondero.

Susan Foye, Math Teacher at Portsmouth High School, thirty-three years with the Portsmouth School Department. She has worked all thirty-three years at the High School.

Jacqueline Hinton, Grade 3 Teacher at Dondero School, seventeen years with the Portsmouth School Department. She has worked at Brackett and Sherburne, and Dondero.

Jan McManus, Grade 5 Teacher at Dondero School, thirty-one years with the Portsmouth School Department. She has worked at Jones, Wentworth, and Dondero.

Lorraine O'Connor, Special Education Teacher at New Franklin, twenty years with the Portsmouth School Department. She has worked at Portsmouth Middle School, High School and New Franklin.

Doreen Sterndale, Resource Room Teacher at Dondero School, eight years with the Portsmouth School Department. She has worked all eight years at Dondero.

Joseph Weslowski, Welding Teacher at Portsmouth High School, twenty-nine years with the Portsmouth School Department. He has worked at Portsmouth High School for all of those twenty-nine years.

Vice-Chair wanted to thank these teachers for their dedicated service to the Portsmouth School Department.

Dr. Lister stated that there would be a Board celebration and numerous retirement get-togethers, as we get closer to the end of the school year.

Motion: Mr. LaPage moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity to accept these retirements from the Portsmouth School Department. . The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Zadavec presented two requests for leaves of absence.

Ms. Kathleen Hnatow is requesting a leave of absence for the 2008-2009 school year. She is expecting her first child. Kathleen was hired in 2005 and will complete three years with the Portsmouth School Department.

Leave of Absence

Motion: Ms. Garrity moved, Mrs. Walker seconded to approve the request for a leave of absence for the 2008-2009 school year. The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Rebecca Remsen is requesting a leave of absence beginning the 2008-2009 school year through approximately December 1, 2008. She is expecting her first child. Rebecca was hired in 2003 and will complete five years with the Portsmouth School Department.

Motion: Mrs. Walker moved, Mrs. Sweet seconded to approve the request for a leave of absence for approximately the first half of the 2008-2009 school year. The motion was unanimously approved.

Communication

Background Information

Ms. Emerson wanted to speak briefly on a couple of communication issues. She stated that recently there was an article in the newspaper regarding an unfair labor practice she was requesting all necessary background information. Dr. Lister suggested that he set up a meeting with Ms. Emerson to help determine her needs. Dr. Lister further stated that he is always available to the Board to answer any questions or to provide any needed materials. Dr. Lister further explained that the reason for the Board orientation was to help new Board members get an overview of all of the issues and aspects of the operations of the Portsmouth School Department. Ms. Emerson wants to have as much knowledge as she can to help her in dealing with any items that may come up, or items that were previously going on before the new Board members came onto the Board.

***School Board
Meetings at the City
Council Chambers***

Ms. Emerson further suggested that all of the School Board meetings should be held at City Hall so that the meetings could be televised. Dr. Lister stated that the first meeting of the month is for the School Board to use the City Council Chambers and he will look into the regular use of the chambers.

Mr. LaPage also felt that it was a good idea to meet at the chambers, but when the School Board has met at the schools it brings the Board to the schools to give them an opportunity to tour around the buildings and to get an overall sense of the buildings. Mr. LaPage did ask Mr. Alan Brady whether or not the meetings could be broadcast from the schools but, was discouraged by Mr. Brady due to the technology involved with broadcasting off site.

Mrs. Sweet does agree with Mr. LaPage and Ms. Emerson that we need to meet in the chambers as often as we can, but it is important that the Board also have meetings at the schools. Ms. Emerson stated that possibly they could meet during the day at the schools. Vice-Chair Ristaino stated that possibly Dr. Lister could report back to the Board on additional chamber meetings, a meeting with school principals and a tour of the schools prior to Board meetings at the individual schools throughout the year.

***City Council
Reports on the
Middle School***

Ms. Emerson stated that she would hope that all of the School Board members would be involved in the development of the monthly progress reports on the Middle School project as well as the possibly of presenting them along with Dr. Lister. Dr. Lister stated that this topic would be on the next Board meeting agenda. Mr. Legg stated that Dr. Shuldman indicated to him that he planned to meet with the Mayor and City Councilors to find out what they would like to see on the monthly progress reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Curriculum Council

Mr. Zadravec reported that the main topic of the recent Curriculum Council meeting was focused on professional work accomplished during early release days. The teachers have been able to move their conversations forward in collaboration, developing interventions and responses to the data that we have received, to share resources and expertise in working with children and making the best use of these early release days in a variety of ways. Mr. Zadravec is working toward bringing ideas forward for the Board's review at the next meeting for next years early release days. The number of early release days has been increased from four to eight this year to work on items district-wide.

***First Reading of the
Extracurricular
Activities Policy***

Mrs. Kathleen Dwyer reported that the *Extracurricular Activities Policy* has a few items that needed correction for the second reading. Mrs. Dwyer stated that under the second violation of the Extra Curricular Activities it states, “*If the student commits a second offense within twelve months (12) months of the first violation the student will no longer be permitted to participate in practices and will be removed from any association with the extracurricular activity for a full twelve (12) months ...*” It should read, “*extracurricular activity for up to twelve (12) months.....*” The disciplinary committee for extracurricular activities would include a department head to treat all students fairly and consistently. An athlete activity would involve the Athletic Director; a non-athletic activity would have a designated department head to deal with infractions with respect to extracurricular activities. Mrs. Dwyer will rework the wording to make it clearer. The disciplinary committee would be chaired by the Athletic Director and/or the department head and consist of the Principal and/or Assistant Principal. This policy will replace the athletic policy. Mrs. Dwyer stated that all students are subject to the normal discipline policy of the school system and would be held accountable depending on what policy they have violated. Mrs. Dwyer stated that extracurricular activities are considered a privilege and the policy has been developed to make sure that the children obey the school rules and other laws in order to be a good citizen. Mrs. Dwyer stated that the Policy Committee would be meeting at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 13, 2008. Ms. Rockefeller stated that the Committee wanted to leave the policy broad so that a fair system is set up with flexibility and discretion to judge each case on its merit. Mrs. Sweet does not like the way the consequences of the policy is written and how they would be played out. Ms. Rockefeller stated that this policy was written in a broad manner to take into account timing and infractions.

Motion: Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Mr. Legg to move the first reading of the *Extracurricular Activities Policy*. A roll call vote was taken. The motion was approved seven to one (Voting in favor of the motion: Mr. Ristaino (Vice-Chair), Ms. Emerson, Ms. Garrity, Mr. LaPage, Mr. Legg, Mrs. Stevens, and Mrs. Walker) (Voting against the motion: Mrs. Sweet).

***First Reading of the
Student Conduct
Policy***

Mrs. Dwyer submitted the *Student Conduct Policy* for the first reading. Ms. Garrity stated that this is a new policy. Mr. LaPage questioned what the difference is between the second paragraph in the *Student Conduct Policy* and the *Bullying Policy*. Mrs. Dwyer explained the difference is that bullying is a series of ongoing acts where this is a single act.

Motion: Mrs. Walker moved, seconded by Ms. Garrity to approve the first reading of the *Student Conduct Policy*. A roll call vote was taken. The motion was unanimously approved

***Policy Committee
Meeting Minutes of
February 19, 2008***

Mrs. Mayer questioned that once these two policies are accepted as final readings will the athletic policy be rescinded. Mrs. Dwyer stated that this would happen in the fall. The athletic policy would come out of the agenda book and these two policies would go in.

Mrs. Garrity stated that the new *Student Conduct Policy* was just presented and approved for its first reading, the *Extracurricular Activities Policy* will be moved from the Instruction Section to the Student Section once it has been revised and had its final reading, and that the *Student Discipline Policy* will be addressed at the next Policy Committee meeting on Thursday, March 13, 2008. Mrs. Garrity stated that the upcoming policies for review will include; e-mail and electronic communication, attendance, vending machines, immunizations, distance learning and staff dress code. Mrs. Garrity further indicated that Dr. Lister would discuss staff dress code during negotiations. A decision was made by the committee to recommend the elimination of the hard copies of the policy book and to put the policies on line. Mrs. Dwyer will follow-up with Mr. Alan Brady and report back to the committee at its next meeting. Dr. Lister will also follow-up with Mr. Brady on placing the policies on-line.

***Student Trip Check
List***

Dr. Lister stated that, at the last meeting, the Board had the second reading and passed the *Student Field Trip Policy* with one of the changes being that the Superintendent would have accountability to make the decisions for approving out-of-state and overnight student trips. Dr. Lister developed a checklist for the overnight trips. He stated that there is never a problem with day trips as the Principals notify his office when they leave on a day trip and upon their return. Dr. Lister would like to review the checklist with the Principals, advisors and students to make sure that all of the items on this list are accurate. It was also decided that there would be quarterly presentations from students that have taken the overnight trips. Dr. Lister presents this list to the Board for their review and input. Mrs. Briolat stated that the teachers are always required to carry all emergency information and current automobile insurance coverage for all drivers. Ms. Emerson asked if the Board would see these checklists in a consent agenda format. Mrs. Sweet would require a plan before the trip so that they can take the photos and plan their presentation that they will make upon their return as well as their educational goals for the trip. Mr. LaPage stated that he approves the form, but does not want to eliminate

the students coming before the Board seeking approval for their overnight trips and presenting their educational goals ahead of time. He also understands that the Board is trying to streamline the meetings, but if this is to replace the students coming before the Board prior to their trip, he cannot approve it. Mr. Legg suggested using the word *expected* in place of the word *may* in the last sentence. Mrs. Walker stated that she would

like to still have the students tell the Board their plan after Dr. Lister has approved the trip with the Board. Mrs. Walker further stated that then the students could come back after their trip to tell us how much they had learned. Ms. Emerson feels that regarding potentially controversial trips, the Board would get advanced notice with the consent agenda and the Board would have the right to further discussions. Ms. Emerson would like to have the students come back after their trips to explain what they learned from their experience. Ms. Garrity stated that the policy does not eliminate students coming before us. Vice-Chair Ristaino stated that this checklist is before us for suggestions and/or additions; any trips that come before Dr. Lister can be handled the same way that they have always been handled. Vice-Chair Ristaino stated that the Student Trip Check List, with changes, would be added to our next agenda.

***Secondary Advisory
Area Meeting***

Vice-Chair Ristaino stated that because Chair Shuldman would like to make a formal presentation on the Secondary Advisory Area Meeting, this item would be placed on the next agenda. Mr. LaPage stated that he and Mrs. Walker were present at the last meeting and indicated that SAU #50 was disappointed in the budget as they could not understand why the Portsmouth School Department did not see the need for faculty increases in English and Language. Mr. LaPage stated that SAU #50 wants Portsmouth to keep fighting for a lower student/teacher ratio.

NEXT AGENDA

***Agenda Items for
Next Meeting***

1. Board Retreat Minutes
2. SPED Taskforce
3. Cable Commission
4. Education Funding
5. Schedule Date for Personnel
6. Early Release Dates
7. Student Trip Check List
8. Secondary Advisory Area Meeting

Vice-Chair Ristaino stated that if there are other items, please feel free to e-mail Chair Shuldman.

Dr. Lister wanted to again welcome Ms. Stevens as a member of the School Board and looks forward to her contributions.

Dr. Lister also wanted to state that we talk about how proud we are of the low drop out rate, how well we do on test scores, that we have the best teachers, but in reality no one is perfect, and we certainly have other things that we need to work on. Dr. Lister further stated that we have great teachers, great students, great parents, and a lot of support in the community. Dr. Lister would like us all to remember to be thankful for

what we have in this community and that everyone must work together to make this community even greater and to keep the focus on the prize, which is a quality school experience for kids..

NEXT MEETING

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be Tuesday, March 25, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment

There was no further business to come before the Board. On a motion by Mr. Legg, seconded by Ms. Garrity the Board unanimously voted to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Robert J. Lister
Executive Secretary

/vrk