

**PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL BOARD PUBLIC MINUTES FOR JANUARY 29, 2013**

COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

PORTSMOUTH, NH

DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2013

TIME: 6:30 [or thereafter]

- 
- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Stevens called the meeting to order at 6:51 p.m.
- II. **ROLL CALL** - LESLIE STEVENS (CHAIR), TOM MARTIN (VICE CHAIR) ANN WALKER, KENT LAPAGE, PATRICK ELLIS, DEXTER LEGG, MITCHELL SHULDMAN, CAROL CHELLMAN, MARY OLEA, ED MCDONOUGH, (SUPERINTENDENT), STEVE ZADRAVEC (ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT), STEPHEN BARTLETT (BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR) AND OLIN JOHANNESSEN (EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE).
- III. **INVOCATION**
- IV. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** - Chair Stevens led in the pledge of allegiance.
- V. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**
- a. JANUARY 22, 2013
- MOTION: Motion to accept the minutes of January 22, 2013 by Mr. Ellis  
SECOND: Ms. Walker  
DISCUSSION:  
VOTE: Unanimously Approved
- VI. **PUBLIC COMMENT** - NONE
- VII. **WORKSHOP SESSION ON FY 2014 BUDGET**
- i. LISTER ACADEMY – As a result of several districts touring the program offered at RJLA over the years, many districts have duplicated services and alternative programming to keep students in district due to budget restraints. Understanding that this pattern is not anticipated to change, the Administrative team conducted focused research and discovered that there is a small group of students that require the type of school culture, small population and specific environment offered at RJLA to be successful to graduate. When looking at next year’s budget, Principal Roy decided to recommend making some drastic changes after being notified that two staff members would be reassigned. Principal Roy began to look at what remaining staff could do to create new opportunities for this specific population in order to succeed and how her school could join in theory and in practice in new school reform. With this in mind, Principal Roy created the new goal for RJLA:
- To create rigor, relevance and relationship with multiple pathways for attaining and demonstrating mastery, utilizing a blend of classroom, community and workplace learning that is aligned with the common core that can be customized for personalization with a system of tracking proficiencies for competencies for all students.*
- Principal Roy stated that she is focusing on how to move toward competency based learning by visiting what she considers 4 pioneering school districts throughout New England. Board Members followed up with the following comments and questions:
- Clarification on competency based learning. Students would not necessarily attend high school 4 years. Students would achieve competency in all subject areas and be eligible for graduation. Mastery is the must but time would be a variable.

Clarification on how much RJLA has saved the district over its existence. If all 12 current students were Out of District placements, it come at a high cost. Because of the expertise of RJLA staff, the district has been able to educate and handle more vulnerable students otherwise sent out of district. Ms. Roy will provide a breakdown of exact costs if all 20 RJLA students were sent Out of District.

Clarification on how a student is enrolled at RJLA. If a student enrolls directly from Portsmouth Middle School, it is a team decision. At Portsmouth High School, SST team decisions are made. Currently, there are 3 non-coded students attending RJLA. While it is a practice that Nancy thinks has merit, it also comes with difficulties. RJLA will only accept coded students beginning next year. At least half are involved in the court system.

Clarification on the reduction in available seats next year. RJLA will accept 14 students from Portsmouth, a difference of 6 seats. Historically, Portsmouth has consistently filled all 20 seats. Does the district now run the risk of not meeting the demands of all kids benefiting from this type of program? Principal Roy was not sure of the impact or what now happens to students who may have been accepted if 20 seats were available but she encouraged the board to think of the proposed changes as a different approach to educating RJLA's student population. Principal Roy stated that losing two staff positions would be challenging not only delivering instruction but just having fewer bodies in the school. Staff members transport students to Great Bay Community College, the high school and on a day when a student is escalating, it will be very challenging.

Would there be value or space for the program at PHS? Principal Roy stated that every square inch of RJLA is utilized and to her knowledge, there isn't any open space at the high school. That being said, a space at the high school would need to be completely self-contained. RJLA students thrive in a small space that allows them to create an identity. RJLA's values and belief and how staff members interact may be different than what is shared by the high school staff.

Clarification on how tuition is set – Tuition is based on the cost to operate the program net of general fund transfer, divided by the number of available spaces that exceed the Portsmouth base of 12 -14 students.

- ii. UPDATE FROM JANUARY 23, 2013 INFORMATIONAL MEETING – A third letter has been received requesting to exercise the retirement option. Mr. McDonough shared his collected notes from the previous informational meeting and invited members to the second meeting scheduled for Thursday.

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- IX. **ADJOURNMENT** - Motion to adjourn by Mr. Legg at 8:15 p.m. and seconded by Mr. Ellis. Unanimously approved.