

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL BOARD PUBLIC MEETING FOR OCTOBER 28, 2014

NEW FRANKLIN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PORTSMOUTH, NH

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2014

TIME: 7:00 PM [or thereafter]

NOTICE: AT 6 PM, IN THE NEW FRANKLIN CONFERENCE ROOM, THE SCHOOL BOARD WILL HOLD A NON- MEETING WITH COUNSEL.

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. INVOCATION

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

V. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

- a. OCTOBER 14, 2014 BUSINESS MEETING

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

VII. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

- a. ELEMENTARY EXTENDED LEARNING SUMMER CAMPS, PRINCIPAL SHEA & MR. BILL DUNCAN

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. ITEMS OF INFORMATION

- i. 2014-15 TUITION RATES
ii. *BOARD AND ADMINISTRATOR*, 2014
iii. PHS PROFILE, 2014
iv. *NEW FRANKLIN GAZETTE*, FALL 2014
v. CITY JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE
vi. *SEVEN KEYS TO EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK*, GRANT WIGGINS, IN SEPTEMBER 2012 ASCD EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

b. CORRESPONDENCE

- i. MEMO FROM BARBARA DOYLE RE: TEACHER AWARDS

c. ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

- i. PRINCIPAL CHARLIE GROSSMAN, LHS

IX. OLD BUSINESS

- a. UPDATE ON ADMINISTRATION'S PLC SMART GOAL AND ACTION STEPS TO IMPROVE FEEDBACK

X. NEW BUSINESS

- a. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH ASSOCIATION OF PORTSMOUTH TEACHERS
- b. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF PHS LATIN TEACHER

XI. COMMITTEE UPDATES

XII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. PHS ECO CLUB SOLAR UPDATE, NOVEMBER 12
- b. WORKSHOP ON LISTER ACADEMY SUSTAINABILTY, NOVEMBER 25
- c. WORKSHOP ON LATER START AT SECONDARY LEVEL, DECEMBER 9

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL BOARD PUBLIC MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 14, 2014

CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS

PORTSMOUTH, NH

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2014

TIME: 7:00 PM [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, PATRICK ELLIS, LENNIE MULLANEY, JEFF LANDRY, NANCY NOVELLINE-CLAYBURGH, GARY EPLER, ED MCDONOUGH (SUPERINTENDENT), STEVE ZADRAVEC (ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT), STEVE BARTLETT (BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR), OLIN JOHANNESSEN (EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE) JULIA ADLER (STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE) & 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. SEPTEMBER 23, 2014
- MOTION: Motion to accept the regular meeting minutes of September 23, 2014 by Ms. Walker
SECOND: Ms. Mullaney
DISCUSSION:
VOTE: Unanimously Approved
- VI. **PUBLIC COMMENT - NONE**
- VII. **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**
- a. S2S MENTOR PROGRAM, DEB HEATH-BARLOW –Daniel O’Leary, (PHS Junior) along with three other students, traveled to San Antonio to participate in a program funded by the *Military Child Education Coalition*. This program identifies unique challenges facing military-connected children, increases awareness of these challenges in military and helps them succeed academically and acclimate to a new school. This particular conference encouraged students to return to their own schools and put into practice what they had learned. After returning, Daniel met with Principal Collins who suggested combining the program with a request he had received from a separate committee looking to begin a freshman mentor program. Student planning resulted in seventy-nine (79) mentors attending a one-day training in August and being trained on relationships, “finding your way” and academics. Twenty (20) staff advisors now work with mentors in matching students up.
- b. INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES EXCURSIONS TO COSTA RICA, FRANCE, SPAIN AND ROME BY DEPARTMENT HEAD NANCY MODERN AND STUDENT PARTICIPANTS – Ms. Nancy Weaton-Modern introduced students who recently traveled to four countries. Ms. Modern commented how fortunate the district is to have seasoned teachers willing to work fundraisers and that have worldwide connections, saving students thousands of dollars towards travel costs and making it affordable for all. Students shared their difficulties traveling in a

foreign country and communicating in a foreign language as well as the life changing experience of living with a host family. Board members followed up with questions and commented on the articulation of each student and what a pleasure it was to see and hear their enthusiasm.

Students who traveled to each country:

SPAIN	FRANCE	ITALY	COSTA RICA
Asleigh LaPorta	Zoe Sprankle	Ivey Telles	Molly Flagg
Nora Dicesare	Bridget Keavney	Mark Hunter	Ginger Ruesswick
Natalie Tague		Sai Narra	Ashley Jurus
Danielle Egeland			
Gerty Flagg			

VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. ITEMS OF INFORMATION

- i. POLICY COMMITTEE MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 19, 2014 & OCTOBER 9, 2014
- ii. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE, OCTOBER 2014

b. CORRESPONDENCE

- i. THANK YOU LETTER FROM PHS TEACHER, LYNDA BETTCHER

c. ADMINISTATOR REPORTS

- i. PRINCIPAL GEORGE SHEA, NFS – Principal Shea welcomed one paraprofessional and two new staff members in special education and ESOL this year. New boilers are in place for winter and LED lights are soon to be installed. New Franklin is in its second year of the 21st Century Grant with close to 40% of the students (roughly 97 students) participating in at least one after school enrichment class. Principal Shea reported that several local companies have reached out with programs or monies to support students. A local grocery chain provided equipment for students to go “mining” and invited everyone to tour the store to learn about eating healthy. A local building supply store awarded the school with grant funds which allowed students to create a nature trail, providing kids an opportunity to be “hands on” with ecology. The back playground breaks ground this week and equipment delivered next week. Principal Shea thanked New Franklin’s active parent group who raised \$55,000 in one year to install the new playground. School Board members followed up with questions and comments.
- ii. PRINCIPAL KATE CALLAHAN, DO – Principal Callahan welcomed new hires to third grade and kindergarten. Last spring Principal Callahan met with kindergarten teachers who felt that kindergarten students and their parents might benefit from an orientation day. This fall, Dondero conducted its first kindergarten orientation with 100% of parents participating. Principal Callahan stated that results are already visible in parents who are engaged and part of Dondero’s culture. Ms. Cheryl Harrington (Grade 3) wrote a grant

providing Dondero students with a greenhouse. Students are learning about winter hardy vegetables such as kale and will harvest and prepare the vegetables. Principal Callahan finished with the school's new initiative *Donero Gives Back*. Students and teachers are giving back to the community by: cleaning beaches, collecting clothing for Crossroads and collecting canned goods for the Seacoast Food Pantry. This year Professional Development is focused on identifying what students know, setting individual goals, and how to meet those individual needs while teaching the entire classroom. School Board members followed up with questions and comments.

- iii. PRINCIPAL CHARLIE GROSSMAN, LHS –Principal Grossman will report at the next regularly scheduled School Board meeting.
- iv. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR STEVE BARTLETT, FINANCIAL – Mr. Bartlett reported that fluctuations in the first three months are typically due to changes in steps and tracks. Mr. Bartlett's budgetary concerns continue to be energy and special education. With reports stating that energy costs could soar 40%, Mr. Bartlett stated that it is important to continue putting efficiency measures into place such as the one at New Franklin. The city and school have applied for an energy grant, which would offset energy costs greatly if received.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

a. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF POLICIES (2nd READING):

- i. (GBAA) SEXUAL HARASSMENT- EMPLOYEE/STAFF– Chair Stevens clarified the committees continuing work on updating all policies. The update on policy GBAA is not in direct response to any events that may have occurred. It is simply time for review and renewal.

MOTION: Motion to accept policy GBAA – Sexual Harassment, Employee/Staff by Ms. Clayburgh

SECOND: Mr. Legg

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

- ii. (GBAA-R) SEXUAL HARASSMENT- EMPLOYEE REPORT FORM

MOTION: Motion to accept policy GBAA-R – Sexual Harassment, Employee/Staff Report Form by Ms. Mullaney

SECOND: Mr. Ellis

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

X. NEW BUSINESS

i. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF POLICIES (1st READING):

- 1. (JKAA) USE OF RESTRAINTS AND SECLUSION –

MOTION: Motion to accept the first reading of policy JKAA – Use of Restraints and Seclusion by Mr. Ellis

SECOND: Ms. Walker

DISCUSSION: Board members requested clarification surrounding SRO's and the policy's limitations.

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

XI. COMMITTEE UPDATES

- a. POLICY

XII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. K-12 ART, TBD
- b. ELEMENTARY/PMS GUIDANCE UPDATE, MAY 26, 2015
- c. STRENGTHENING STEM INITIATIVES, TBD


- XIII. ADJOURNMENT** - Motion to adjourn at 8:51 pm by Ms. Clayburgh and seconded by Ms. Mullaney. Unanimously approved.

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

MEMO

October 21, 2014

To: Edward McDonough, Superintendent

From:  Stephen Bartlett, Business Administrator

Re: 2014/2015 Tuition Rates

Based on completion of the DOE 25, I have calculated the tuition rates for FY 2014/15 as follows:

	Elementary	Middle	High
Non Area Tuition Rates:	\$ 15,802.79	\$ 15,903.13	\$ 15,588.31
SAU 50 Area Tuition Rates		\$ 15,370.09	\$ 14,823.25



CEEB# 300520

PORTSMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL

50 Andrew Jarvis Drive, Portsmouth, NH 03801 (603)436-7100 Fax (603)427-2320

Interim Principal

Mary D. Lyons

Assistant Principals

Shawn C. Donovan

Andrew K. Korman

Counselors

Melanie W. Mazzone

Laurie J. Relinski

Jamie K. Garneau

Amy L. Donovan

Shanyn L. Grenier

Class of 2015

Class of 2016

Class of 2017

Class of 2018

College Counselor

THE SCHOOL: Portsmouth High School is a public, comprehensive high school, grades 9-12, with a current enrollment of approximately 1,100. Accredited by the New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and the State of New Hampshire, the school serves the communities of Portsmouth, Rye, Greenland, New Castle and Newington, New Hampshire.

THE FACULTY: Portsmouth High School faculty consists of 50 men and 75 women, 73% of whom hold a Master's degree or higher.

THE COMMUNITY: Portsmouth, New Hampshire is a small city with suburbs and a population of 25,000. Situated on the banks of the Piscataqua River, Portsmouth boasts a historic seaport atmosphere encompassing a major colonial reconstruction known as Strawberry Banke and a diverse arts community. Additionally, historic Portsmouth Naval Shipyard continues to employ highly trained workers in the repair and maintenance of nuclear submarines. Located minutes from the University of New Hampshire, Portsmouth is less than an hour from both Boston, Massachusetts to the south and the White Mountains, lakes and ski areas, to the north, and beaches to the east.

THE CURRICULUM: With the exception of a few mini blocks, all classes meet for 90 minutes a day, 5 days a week. Each 1-credit course meets for 90 days. The average class has 20 students. Students must complete 4 credits of English, 3 credits each of Math and Science, 3 1/2 credits of Social Studies, 1/2 credit each of Fine Arts, Health and Computers and 1 credit of Physical Education. Portsmouth High School offers 192 courses within 18 departments with a variety of academic levels of difficulty. ****Please Note:** In the fall of 2012, the International Languages Department renamed the courses in Spanish and French to align with the Common Core. The course formally called Spanish 1A is Spanish 2.

THE HONORS AND AP PROGRAMS: Portsmouth High School offers Honors classes in English 9, English 10, and English 11, Expository Writing, American Studies I, Algebra 2 and 3, Pre-calculus, Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, Ecology and Physical Science. Advanced Placement courses are offered in English 12, Modern European and United States History, Calculus, Biology, Physics, Spanish and French. Admission to Honors and AP classes is based on student application and recommendation. Please note that Expository Writing and Anatomy and Physiology are both highly rigorous, dual enrollment courses. They are weighted the same as an AP course.

DUAL ENROLLMENT: College courses are offered at Portsmouth High School during the day and students can earn dual credit, meeting both high school and college requirements. Project Running Start, through Great Bay Community College offers Expository Writing, Introduction to Business, and Accounting. The Dual Enrollment Program through Southern New Hampshire University offers Anatomy and Physiology and Culinary Arts.

THE GRADING SYSTEM: 26 Credits are required to graduate from Portsmouth High School. Credits are earned by the quarter. A semester is two consecutive quarters. Therefore, for a semester long course, the student will receive one full credit for passing both quarters or half credit for passing one quarter. Credits are posted at the end of each quarter. Report cards are issued after each term (four times during the year.) Marks are recorded by letters which are interpreted as follows:

A+ = 98 - 100	B+ = 90 - 92	C+ = 82 - 84	D+ = 75 - 76	F = Below 70	WF - Withdrew Fail
A = 95 - 97	B = 87 - 89	C = 79 - 81	D = 72 - 74	P = Pass	WM - Withdrew Medical
A- = 93 - 94	B- = 85 - 86	C- = 77 - 78	D- = 70 - 71	TR = Transferred	NC - No Credit
				WP = Withdrew Pass	AU - Audit No Credit

WEIGHTED CLASS RANK: For college application information, class rank is calculated at the end of the sixth semester. Calculations are completed at the end of the third quarter of the senior year for the purpose of determining the final class rank for graduation. Class rank is based on grades received in all subjects.

A+ = 4.33, A = 4.0, A- = 3.67, B+ = 3.33, B = 3.0, B- = 2.67, C+ = 2.33, C = 2.0, C- = 1.67, D+ = 1.33, D = 1.0, D- = .67, F = 0

Courses in English, Social Studies, Math, Science, Foreign Language and Computers are weighted 1 - 5 based on level of difficulty with 5 being AP and Honors. Other elective courses are assigned a weight of 3. For example: Students in a Level 4 class who receive an "A" gain 16 points (4X4) toward class rank.

UNWEIGHTED GRADE POINT AVERAGE: The unweighted GPA, including all course work, is determined at the end of 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th semesters.

SAT STATISTICS: Class of 2014
Number of Test Takers 224

Range	Critical Reading	Math	Writing
600-800	67	71	52
500-599	84	75	84
400-490	63	61	64
Below 400	10	17	24
Portsmouth	M=537	M=540	M=521
National	M=497	M=513	M=487
New Hampshire	M=524	M=530	M=512

POST SECONDARY EDUCATION
CLASS OF 2014

4 Year College	67%
2 Year College	14%
1 Year and Other Educational Programs	2%
Military	1%
GAP Year	3%
Employment	13%

Clubs/Activities/Co-curricular Options

Amigo Program
 Anime Club
 Bike Club
 Black Student Union
 Color Guard
 Comedy Club
 Costuming Club
 Debate Club
 Drama Club
 Environmental Change Org.
 Epitome
 Fiber Arts Club
 French Club
 Friends of Rachel
 Gay/Straight/Transgender Alliance
 Global Cause
 Gourment Club
 History Club
 Instrumental Ensembles
 Interact II
 Invader Club
 Latin Club
 Madrigal Singers
 Peer Leadership
 Percussion Ensemble
 PHS Business Club
 PHS Chamber Vocal Jazz Ensemble
 PHS Contemporary Vocals

PHS Men's Ensemble
 PHS Penguin Plunge
 PHS Surf Club
 PHS Treble Choir
 Players Club
 Programming Club
 Project Purple
 Recycle-It-Project
 Ski Club
 Skills USA
 Spanish Club
 Teen Literary Club
 Ultimate Frisbee
 Yearbook Club

SPORTS

Baseball
 Basketball
 Cheerleading
 Cross Country
 Field Hockey
 Football
 Golf
 Ice Hockey
 Lacrosse
 Soccer
 Softball
 Special Olympics
 Spring Track
 Swimming & Diving
 Tennis
 Volleyball

Students in the Class of 2014 were accepted at the following Colleges and Universities

Acadia University	Emory University	Nichols College	The Culinary Institute of America
Albany College of Pharmacy	Endicott College	Northeastern University	The New School
Alfred University	Fashion Institute of Technology	Norwich University	The Ohio State University
American Institute of Business	Fisher College	Ohio Wesleyan University	The University of Alabama
American University	Florida Gulf Coast University	Pace University, New York City	The University of Findlay
Arizona State University	Florida Institute of Technology	Pennsylvania State University	The University of Iowa
Assumption College	Florida State University	Plymouth State University	The University of Tampa
Auburn University	Fordham University	Post University	Tufts University (Engineering)
Averett University	Franklin Pierce University	Pratt Institute	Tulane University
Babson College	Goucher College	Providence College	United States Military Academy
Bard College	Great Bay Community College	Purchase College	United States Naval Academy
Bates College	Green Mountain College	Purdue University	Universal Technical Institute
Belmont University	Greensboro College	Quinnipiac University	University at Buffalo
Bentley University	Hamilton College - NY	Randolph College	University of Arkansas
Berkeley City College	Hawaii Pacific University	Randolph-Macon College	University of British Columbia
Bethany College	Hofstra University	Regis College	University of California, Berkeley
Boston University	Husson University	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute	University of California, Santa Cruz
Brandeis University	Iona College	Rhode Island College	University of Colorado at Boulder
Bridgewater State University	Ithaca College	Rhode Island School of Design	University of Connecticut
Brigham Young University, Idaho	Johnson & Wales University	Ringling College of Art and Design	University of Delaware
Bryant University	Kalamazoo College	Rivier University	University of Denver
Bucknell University	Keene State College	Roanoke College	University of Evansville
Carnegie Mellon University	Kenyon College	Rochester Institute of Technology	University of Hartford
Case Western Reserve University	King's College	Roger Williams University	University of Maine
Castleton State College	Lakes Region Community College	Sacred Heart University	University of Maryland
Champlain College	Lasell College	Saint Anselm College	University of Massachusetts
City University of New York	Lehigh University	Saint Joseph's College-ME	University of Miami
Clark University	Lehigh University	Saint Leo University	University of Mississippi
Clarkson University	Lesley University	Saint Michael's College	University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Coastal Carolina University	Lewis & Clark College	Salem State University	University of New England
Coker College	LIM College	Salve Regina University	University of New Hampshire
Colby College	Louisiana State University	San Diego State University	University of New Haven
Colby-Sawyer College	Loyola University Maryland	Santa Clara University	University of New Haven
Colgate University	Lycoming College	Sarah Lawrence College	University of North Carolina Greensboro
College of Charleston	Lyndon State College	Seton Hall University	University of Pittsburgh
College of the Canyons	Macalester College	Simmons College	University of Puget Sound
Colorado College	Manhattan College	Smith College	University of Rhode Island
Colorado State University	Manhattanville College	Sonoma State University	University of Rochester
Columbia College Chicago	Marist College	Southern Maine Community College	University of San Francisco
Concordia University - Montreal	Marquette University	Southern New Hampshire University	University of Southern California
Connecticut College	Marymount Manhattan College	Southern Vermont College	University of Southern Maine
Cornell University	Massachusetts College of Art & Design	Springfield College	University of the Pacific
Curry College	McDaniel College	St. Francis Xavier University	University of Vermont
Dalhousie University	Mass College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences	St. Lawrence University	University of Wisconsin, Madison
Daniel Webster College	Merrimack College	State University of New York	Virginia Intermont College
Dartmouth College	Miami University, Oxford	Sterling College	Virginia Polytechnic Institute
Dean College	Middlebury College	Stetson University	Wagner College
Dickinson College	Midwestern State University	Stevens Institute of Technology	Wake Forest University
Drexel University	Montana State University, Bozeman	Stonehill College	Washington State University
East Carolina University	Mount Holyoke College	Stony Brook University	Wentworth Institute of Technology
Eastern Nazarene College	Mount Ida College	Suffolk University	Wesleyan University
Eckerd College	Nashua Community College	SUNY College at Cobleskill	Western Connecticut State Univ
Elon University	New England College	SUNY College at Geneseo	Western New England University
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	New Hampshire Institute of Art	SUNY College at Oneonta	Westminster College
Emerson College	New York University	SUNY Fredonia	Wheaton College MA
Emmanuel College	Newbury College	Susquehanna University	Wheelock College
	NHTI - Concord's Community College	Syracuse University	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
		Temple University	Worcester State University



Principal's Notebook: School Improvements, by Mr. George Shea

October seems to be the month when Sixth Grade New Franklin alumni come back to visit their elementary stomping grounds. They graduated in the Spring donning pigtails and baseball gloves and return in the Fall full of swagger and cell phones, commenting on how small all the kids look and how much has changed since they left. Usually, it's easy to point out that they've experienced more change than the school, but this year, when an alum took a few laps around the building and said "Were you waiting for us to leave to do all this cool stuff?" it was hard to deny how much had changed and say "Geez, I guess so." The changes have been gradual of course, but in the past six months, the New Franklin campus has experienced significant enhancements to validate the middle schooler's resentment.

Back Playground Project

Last week, we broke ground on the back playground project. (see picture p. 5) The need for some playground equipment in the back of the school has been a topic of discussion for at least

nine years. Along the way, different groups and individuals have taken stabs at fundraising and planning; there was a car wash in 2007 and a former student held a weekly yard sale to raise funds for back playground equipment. But playground equipment, along with install and site prep is really expensive, approximately equivalent to the revenue of 11,000 cars washed or 220,000 used VHS tapes sold.

Last January, a steering committee formed to create an action plan for raising the necessary funds to complete the project. In less than nine months, after generous outpouring of financial and volunteer support from New Frank-



Doing the math around the new climbing boulder.

lin families and a broad spectrum of local businesses, individuals and organizations, over \$50,000 has been raised for the project and kids will be rock-climbing, hanging and swirling out back by early November.

Nature Trail

Last year, our Schoolwide Teaching and Learning



Grade 4 writers on the nature trail.

Team set out to explore ways to provide New Franklin students with rich outdoor learning experiences and enhance our Life and Earth Science units through an authentic outdoor laboratory. In February, the school received a grant from Lowe's to build an interpretive Nature Trail. Last June we hacked, sliced, trimmed and ultimately broke through the dense thicket of invasive species behind the front playground to create a looping path through the forest (Seascape Landscaping actually donated the heaviest hacking).

At 489 feet, 6 and 13/32 inches (thanks to Mr. Fleischer's class for the data), the main trail moves through numerous forest and land types and features diverse plant life. Many classes have already been hitting the trail for Science and Literacy work and we're poised to begin Phase II of the project, which will see the creation of an outdoor classroom, an observation deck by the wetlands and a G.I.S. map detailing

First Grade

A great big THANK YOU to the NFS PTO for generously funding our annual first grade field trip to Applecrest Farm in Hampton Falls! This October day-trip is always one we look forward to. Our guided tour of farm operations includes seeing the packing line, the cider mill, the giant apple peeler, and the farm store. First Graders also enjoy a wagon ride through the orchard, some quality apple picking time, and a mouth-watering snack. Apple cider and warm cider doughnuts...super yummy!

First graders have been busy setting our hopes and dreams, learning our classroom routines, and creating a community of learners. Twice a week our first graders meet in Open Circle. They

love moving their chairs over for 20 minutes of team building. We have learned our "school listening look", how to give and receive compliments, and ways to calm ourselves down.

As for reading, writing, and math, here's a sneak peek at what's been happening...

*First grade readers are using many strategies to make sure their reading looks right, sounds right and makes sense. Not only are the kiddos enjoying reading their books, but they have also been busy retelling stories, having conversation about the characters, and making thoughtful connections to the text.



*The focus of our Writer's Workshop time is Small Moments. Writers are picking stories from their lives and taking a small part of it to stretch across pages. First graders describe small moments as "seed stories; not watermelon stories!"

*Our Math Superstars have been hard at work recording tally marks, learning counting strategies, comparing numbers in many rounds of Top-It, traveling forwards and backwards on number lines, solving some tricky addition and subtraction number stories, making complements of 10, exploring math materials, and occasionally squeezing in a quick game of SPLAT!

Fifth Grade

Students in Mrs. Jacoby's class, Mr. Fleischer's class and Mrs. McGuigan/Carr's class may be seen sitting in chairs in a circle in their classrooms where they are learning strategies that enhance their abilities to listen, cooperate and problem solve, while engaging in



teacher directed lessons. Fifth grade classrooms are joining other grades in our school community as we implement *Open Circle*. Teachers have recently completed training to help launch this program. Students have responded with enthusiasm to this initiative that promises to enhance classroom and school community.

Fifth graders can also be seen investigating trees in their neighborhood and schoolyard. They are looking for a particular three

lobed leaf that is characteristic of maple trees. We recently enjoyed a visit from Mr. Whisler who has generously volunteered to once again donate an enormous amount of time to a maple syrup project that incorporates math, science and even small business skills. Be sure to let fifth grade students or teachers know if you have a maple tree in your yard that you would be willing to include in this project. We can all look forward to the spring, which will commence the much anticipated sweet success of this enterprise!

Second Grade

Second graders have been setting up their community as readers. They have been monitoring their reading by making sure their reading looks right, sounds right, and makes sense. When we come to unfamiliar words we use a variety of strategies to figure out the word. We have lots of strategies to use. We look at the picture for a clue. We look for smaller words within the word. We **always** think about what would make sense. We don't give up!

It is like riding a bike. Sometimes reading is on the flat and easy to ride. Sometimes we come to a big hill and have to work a little harder and then sometimes we get to ride down hill and the reading is a breeze!

In math we have started working on our math facts. We want to know our double facts such as $4+4=8$ as fast as we can say our name. We also need to know our combinations of 10 in a snap.

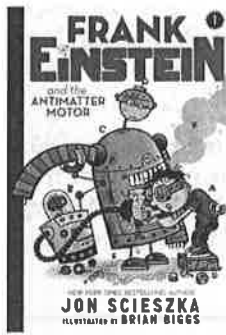
Then we use these facts as our helper facts to learn more facts. If we know $8+2=10$ then we know $8+3=11$. Knowing $7+7=14$ can help us solve $7+8$. We have been using ten frames to help us organize and explain our thinking.

During our Writer's Workshop we are writing personal narratives and learning how to add detail and focus on one small moment. We have been learning

Cont. on p.3

Coming Attractions! By Mrs. Patterson, Library/Media Specialist

It's been a busy fall for new books at the New Franklin Library! While we're waiting for the 9th Diary of a Wimpy Kid, The Long Haul*, to be released on November 4th, we've been reading like crazy! Here are some of our new favorites:



Frank Einstein and the Antimatter Motor by Jon Scieszka

The start of a new series, this book is all kinds of funny and wacky science to boot. Frank Einstein, kid genius, invents robots who can learn on

their own (hasn't he seen the movies where this never works out?!?) Grades 4 - 5



Leroy Ninker Saddles Up by Kate DiCamillo
Another spin-off! This time its Leroy Ninker from Mercy Watson, and he's out to fulfill his dream of being a cowboy. What he needs is a horse. What he gets is Maybelline. Grades 2 - 3



Pig and Small by Alex Latimer.
It's hard to find fun things to do together when you're a pig and a bug wanting to be friends. (Hint: sweaters come in different sizes for a reason.) Picture book

100 Bears by Magali Bar-dos.
Can you count to 100? Prove it! Over and over with very fun art. Picture book



The Chicken Squad by Doreen Cronin
The chicks from *The Trouble with Chickens* get their own spin-off series! This is the first in what is sure to be a really fun series with very cute chicks seriously obsessed with solving crimes and solving mysteries. Grades 2 - 3

Fun Fact Ms. Patterson learned when she met Jeff Kinney at the Rhode Island Children's' Book Festival 2014, Jeff Kinney still has a day job!

Kindergarten

Kindergarteners are settled into their new school learning the rules, routines



and building a community.

We've finished up our Star Student unit, which focused on letters, names and learning about new friends. Kindergarteners began the Foundations program and observed painted lady caterpillars turn into butterflies!

October brings the beginning of Open Circle, apples, pumpkins, bats, spiders, nursery rhymes and all the fun activities that go with them....rhyming, pat-

terning, letters and sounds, counting, number recognition, life cycles, sorting, graphing, etc. A field trip to Emery Farm will finish out October with pumpkin picking, a corn maze, tractor ride and petting zoo. November brings more about pumpkins, harvest and learning about the 1st Thanksgiving.

We look forward to filling you in on your child's transition to kindergarten during parent/teacher conferences.

Second Grade cont. from p. 2

from our favorite Master Writers. Noticing the craft moves they use can help us make our writing more powerful. *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen has helped us notice, name, and try out several writing moves.

We have been learning to read an atlas and have been talking about the different types of businesses in our community. We will be taking a field trip in

early November to see places in our community like the Library, Fire Department, and the Police Department. Meanwhile, in science we will use our inquiry skills to learn about what is in different types of soil. In second grade the learning never stops!



Music by Ms. Karen Smith

Greetings from the music room! It is wonderful to be back at NFS. I look forward to another fun-filled year with all of our NFS students. If you haven't had a chance to stop by and see our new music rug, come by anytime!

Fall has been a busy time for us. Our kindergarten, first, and second graders have recently started working on our holiday music for the annual K-2 Holiday Concert. This year our K-2 Holiday Concert will be held on Tuesday, December 16th at 6:30pm in the gym. We can't wait to



see you there!

Third graders have started their study of the ukuleles and fourth graders are already working on learning the recorder. This year, our fourth graders will be presenting a recorder holiday concert in December. They have

been working very hard already, and I hope you are impressed by their performance in just two months. Our fifth graders are working on strengthening their skills on the pitched percussion instruments (xylophones) as well as performing chants and songs in two

and three parts.

I am happy to announce that 33 fifth graders have joined the NFS band this year! This is the largest number we've had in three years, and I look forward to watching their growth throughout the year. In-school lessons have already started up, and after-school band will begin on Thursday, November 6 from 3-4pm in the music room. Our first band concert will be on Wednesday, December 17 starting at 7:00pm in the PHS auditorium.

For the most up-to-date information on what is happening in the music room, please visit the NFS Music Webpage (often!) at <http://nfsmusic.weebly.com>.

Third Grade

The third graders have been hard at work becoming rock stars! We kick started the year with our rocks and minerals unit. A field trip to Ruggles Mine was definitely a walls searching for that treasured mineral. sedimentary, and metamorphic rock, form, and a mineral.

On the reading circuit, students are delving traits as they go. We are discussing the rageous or shy, adventurous or stubborn. listen to third graders share ideas about

In writing we are recalling fond memories dents are writing about special people, places or objects in their lives. They are tasked with taking a small moment in time to write about in great detail. We're looking forward to listening to the finished products.



highlight as we dug and hammered away at the rock They learned how three different rocks, igneous, They can also tell you the difference between a rock

into their just right books and uncovering character author's purpose behind making a character be cou- Book groups are also underway. It's enlightening to their reading.

as we prepare to write our personal narratives. Stu-

Fourth Grade

The fourth grade has started out the school year learning all about New Hampshire geography and our state symbols. Did you know that the state fruit is the pumpkin or that the Connecticut River divides New Hampshire and Vermont?

We love kicking off the year in Science with a hands-on, inquiry- based unit on the skeletal system. The kids will begin the unit by observing and then dissecting a mystery object. This inquiry unit will lead the fourth graders into many discussions about our skeletal system: why we need it, how many bones are in our body, and how it allows our bodies to move. Keep your ears open around the fourth grade wing for clues about the mystery object!

Gaining independence is an important skill we work on in fourth grade and Book Clubs are a great way to practice and instill independence in our fourth graders in a fun and engaging way. All of our kids have been a part of a Book Club that has focused on character. Some titles include "Poacher Panic", "Shiloh", and "The Mouse and the Motorcycle". In order to participate in the conversation about the reading, the kids are required to get their assignments done ahead of time. This certainly takes some planning and time management to be prepared for group. Book Clubs are always a great way to encourage rich conversations around books and to help develop original thinking.

So far in math, we have covered topics such as place value, addition and sub-

traction of whole numbers, and fact fluency. Please remember, practicing your math facts at home is critical to math success in fourth grade. We have shown the students different ways to practice, but if you need help finding resources, please let us know. Multi-digit multiplication is on the horizon.

Be on the lookout for a new homework routine called "Weekly Math" which will reinforce addition and subtraction of whole numbers, and eventually include multi-digit multiplication.



Be A Buddy Not A Bully! by Alyssa Brown and Joy Testa-Cutting, School Counselors

An orange wave went through the halls of NFS during the month of October to raise awareness about Bully Behavior. In collaboration with the elementary counseling team, lessons were developed and implemented by the Portsmouth High School Service Learning Students in every classroom. This les-

son focused on defining bully behaviors and identifying trusted adults at home or school who can help. Please stop by the hallway of the counseling offices to view the student display of helping hands! Orange bracelets were provided to all students and staff that state: "I'm an upstander." To continue

to increase awareness, we will welcome TIGER back in March to perform an entire school assembly. The Open Circle curriculum will reinforce positive ways to interact with each other and seek solutions on how to deal with unkind behaviors.

ESchool News! By Heather Pettis, PTO



NEWBURYPORT
FIVE CENTS SAVINGS
BANK

We are thrilled to announce that the Newburyport Five

Cents Savings Bank has awarded NFS PTO with a \$2,000 grant for our Fifth Grade Environmental School at the Seacoast Science Center in May! The week long Environmental School Program is pivotal in the environmental education of our students and we are truly grateful for the generous support of Newburyport Five Cents Savings Bank!



Schoolwide Teaching and Learning Team by Elizabeth Cross, Parent Representative

The Teaching and Learning Team is a small group of teachers, parents, and school administrators whose goal is to find creative and fun ways to provide some outside-the-box learning opportunities for our students. The committee meets monthly and at the October meeting they identified five areas in which members would like to foster further learning through some hands-on (or feet-on, in one case) activities.

The five areas include:

"Walk This Way"--how can we incorporate more walking opportunities?

Public writing--how to provide more opportunities to showcase our students' writing.

Science work--are there ways we can promote scientific habits?

The garden--what are the next steps for our garden and how can we use it in our regular teaching curriculum?

Parent outreach nights--how to bring our families together through instructive, fun, and creative events.



NFS Student Council, Fall 2014



The NFS Chicago Marathoners: Ms. Smith, Ms. Monmaney and Ms. Sweet



Jonathan Benett, Deputy Regional Administrator for the U.S. Department of Agriculture learns about the New Franklin gardens from some Grade 4 guides.



Principal's Notebook, cont. from p.1

habitats and species along the trail.

A Greener Building

This summer our aging boilers in the basement were replaced with three condensing boilers that operate at over 98% efficiency. District officials were able to leverage city capital improvement project funds to extend the boiler project to a complete overhaul of our heating system including better insulation and



Grade 1 teacher Amy Spivack poses while new insulation is installed in her room.

numerous energy-saving controls. This school year we'll also see the addition

of three photovoltaic solar cells on the roof to gather solar energy and convert it directly into usable electricity. Long-lasting and highly efficient L.E.D. lights will replace our existing fluorescent lights. These physical plant improvements will have a significant impact on decreasing annual energy expenditures and our school's energy footprint.

These are just three of the "big ticket" site improvements New Franklin has seen this year. Like our students, New Franklin is in a continuous state of developing and improving, and I couldn't begin to describe the many enhancements staff, students and parents have made to our classrooms and hallways. All of these improvements come on the back of great effort by many people. Sustained growth and achievement are more often products of systemic efforts than individual accomplishments. I want to say thank you to the many teams and supporters who have contributed to improving the New Franklin experience for our students.

New Back Playground Underway by Celeste Ledoux, Co-Chair, Playground Committee

For many years, children and teachers at NFS have been asking for new, age appropriate playground equipment, such as climbing structures and chin up bars, for the back playground. "If we had a playground, we'd have something to do back there that was more physical," commented Ryan Lalime, a 2013/2014 Fifth grader who helped with fundraising. Construction of the back playground has begun and is expected to be completed by the end of October.

In the spring, New Franklin School (NFS) students enthusiastically loaded their pockets each morning with spare change to contribute to the "Change Challenge" a student-wide fundraising effort organized to support funding for a new school playground. The Change Challenge was the idea of two of last year's fifth grade students who took a leadership role in the fundraising campaign. "We're 5th Graders so we kind of think of it as our gift to NFS," said one of those leaders, Abbey Forest. In addition to coordinating and marketing the Change Challenge amongst their peers, the students presented to the NFS Student Council who unanimously voted to contribute \$1,500 to the cause.

"The importance of play in a child's academic and social development is

often overlooked. By bringing new playground equipment to the New Franklin community, we can make further inroads towards engaging and developing young learners," said George Shea, Principal.

Though maintained by the City of Portsmouth, playground equipment at all City elementary schools has historically been funded by the Portsmouth Education Partnership (PEP) through private fundraising efforts. At NFS, play space is split between the front and back of the school, limiting student access to equipment during recess. While the City of Portsmouth's Capital Improvement Plan and Budget contain financial commitments to the City's school buildings and maintenance of the current playgrounds, it does not include funds for new equipment. "We are supportive of any private effort being made to support our children," added Portsmouth School Facilities Director Ken Linchey. While the funds were raised privately, Mr. Linchey's involvement in the planning and construction was critical to the project's success.

The Build Now Play Forever Playground Campaign was a success due to the overwhelming support from

NFS students and families. The grassroots support was critical in bringing in corporate and private foundation support including The Kids Bank at Piscataqua Savings Bank, Centrix Bank, David Barrows Adventure Fund and The Norman Knight Charitable Foundation.

The Campaign is approximately \$1,500 short of fully funding the \$53,000 project. For more information on the project or how you can contribute, go to www.nfspto.org/playground.



Ground broken for back playground: 10/21/14

SB
10/28/14

Joint Budget Committee

The Joint Budget Committee is established for the purposes of advising the City Manager and the City Council on issues pertaining to the development of the Annual Budget.

7 Voting Members

- Chair, Mayor Robert J. Lister
- (2) City Councilors, to be appointed by the Mayor
- (2) School Board Members, to be appointed by the School Board Chair
- Fire Commission member, to be appointed by the Commission Chair
- Police Commission member, to be appointed by the Commission Chair

5 Non-voting Ex-officio Members

- City Manager John P. Bohenko
- Finance Director Judie Belanger
- Superintendent of Schools Ed McDonough
- Fire Chief Steven Achilles
- Police Chief Stephen Dubois

Charge of the JBC

- The JBC shall advise the City Manager and City Council on the adoption of guidelines for the preparation of the proposed FY16 budget by January 15th.
- City Staff will provide information to the Committee on factors impacting the development of the municipal budget.
 - Health Insurance rates
 - Retirement rates
 - Contractual Obligation impacts
 - Any and all other costs which would impact the Operating Budget
- JBC Agenda Format
 - Anticipated to have one meeting a month from September through March
 - Agenda to be put together by the Mayor and City Manager with input from various departments and elected officials
 - At the beginning of each meeting, opportunity for any elected official to bring up a topic and speak to it
 - At the end of each meeting, opportunity for citizens to speak
- The Committee shall not assume responsibilities of the City Manager or the City Council as outlined in the City Charter.

SB
10/29/14

Seven Keys to Effective Feedback

Grant Wiggins

Advice, evaluation, grades—none of these provide the descriptive information that students need to reach their goals. What is true feedback—and how can it improve learning?

Who would dispute the idea that feedback is a good thing? Both common sense and research make it clear: Formative assessment, consisting of lots of feedback and opportunities to use that feedback, enhances performance and achievement.

Yet even John Hattie (2008), whose decades of research revealed that feedback was among the most powerful influences on achievement, acknowledges that he has "struggled to understand the concept" (p. 173). And many writings on the subject don't even attempt to define the term. To improve formative assessment practices among both teachers and assessment designers, we need to look more closely at just what feedback is—and isn't.

What Is Feedback, Anyway?

The term *feedback* is often used to describe all kinds of comments made after the fact, including advice, praise, and evaluation. But none of these are feedback, strictly speaking.

Basically, feedback is information about how we are doing in our efforts to reach a goal. I hit a tennis ball with the goal of keeping it in the court, and I see where it lands—in or out. I tell a joke with the goal of making people laugh, and I observe the audience's reaction—they laugh loudly or barely snicker. I teach a lesson with the goal of engaging students, and I see that some students have their eyes riveted on me while others are nodding off.

Here are some other examples of feedback:

- A friend tells me, "You know, when you put it that way and speak in that softer tone of voice, it makes me feel better."
- A reader comments on my short story, "The first few paragraphs kept my full attention. The scene painted was vivid and interesting. But then the dialogue became hard to follow; as a reader, I was confused about who was talking, and the sequence of actions was puzzling, so I became less engaged."
- A baseball coach tells me, "Each time you swung and missed, you raised your head as you swung so you didn't really have your eye on the ball. On the one you hit hard, you kept your head down and saw the ball."

Note the difference between these three examples and the first three I cited—the tennis stroke, the joke, and the student responses to teaching. In the first group, I only had to take note of the tangible effect of my actions, keeping my goals in mind. No one volunteered feedback, but there was still plenty of feedback to get and use. The second group of examples all involved the deliberate, explicit giving of feedback by other people.

Whether the feedback was in the observable effects or from other people, in every case the information received was not advice, nor was the performance evaluated. No one told me as a performer what to do differently or how "good" or "bad" my results were. (You might think that the reader of my writing was judging my work, but look at the words used again: She simply played back the effect my writing had on her as a reader.) Nor did any of the three people tell me what to do (which is what many people erroneously think feedback is—advice). Guidance would be premature; I first need to receive feedback on what I did or didn't do that would warrant such advice.

In all six cases, information was conveyed about the effects of my actions as related to a goal. The information did not include value judgments or recommendations on how to improve. (For examples of

information that is often falsely viewed as feedback, see "Feedback vs. Advice" above and "Feedback vs. Evaluation and Grades" on p. 15.)

Decades of education research support the idea that by teaching *less* and providing *more* feedback, we can produce greater learning (see Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Hattie, 2008; Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). Compare the typical lecture-driven course, which often produces less-than-optimal learning, with the peer instruction model developed by Eric Mazur (2009) at Harvard. He hardly lectures at all to his 200 introductory physics students; instead, he gives them problems to think about individually and then discuss in small groups. This system, he writes, "provides frequent and continuous feedback (to both the students and the instructor) about the level of understanding of the subject being discussed" (p. 51), producing gains in both conceptual understanding of the subject and problem-solving skills. Less "teaching," more feedback equals better results.

Feedback Essentials

Whether feedback is just there to be grasped or is provided by another person, helpful feedback is goal-referenced; tangible and transparent; actionable; user-friendly (specific and personalized); timely; ongoing; and consistent.

Goal-Referenced

Effective feedback requires that a person has a goal, takes action to achieve the goal, and receives goal-related information about his or her actions. I told a joke—why? To make people laugh. I wrote a story to engage the reader with vivid language and believable dialogue that captures the characters' feelings. I went up to bat to get a hit. If I am not clear on my goals or if I fail to pay attention to them, I cannot get helpful feedback (nor am I likely to achieve my goals).

Information becomes feedback if, and only if, I am trying to cause something and the information tells me whether I am on track or need to change course. If some joke or aspect of my writing *isn't working*—a revealing, nonjudgmental phrase—I need to know.

Note that in everyday situations, goals are often implicit, although fairly obvious to everyone. I don't need to announce when telling the joke that my aim is to make you laugh. But in school, learners are often unclear about the specific goal of a task or lesson, so it is crucial to remind them about the goal and the criteria by which they should self-assess. For example, a teacher might say,

- The point of this writing task is for you to make readers laugh. So, when rereading your draft or getting feedback from peers, ask, How funny is this? Where might it be funnier?
- As you prepare a table poster to display the findings of your science project, remember that the aim is to interest people in your work as well as to describe the facts you discovered through your experiment. Self-assess your work against those two criteria using these rubrics. The science fair judges will do likewise.

Tangible and Transparent

Any useful feedback system involves not only a clear goal, but also tangible results related to the goal. People laugh, chuckle, or don't laugh at each joke; students are highly attentive, somewhat attentive, or inattentive to my teaching.

Even as little children, we learn from such tangible feedback. That's how we learn to walk; to hold a spoon; and to understand that certain words magically yield food, drink, or a change of clothes from big people. The best feedback is so tangible that anyone who has a goal can learn from it.

Alas, far too much instructional feedback is opaque, as revealed in a true story a teacher told me years ago. A student came up to her at year's end and said, "Miss Jones, you kept writing this same word on my English papers all year, and I still don't know what it means." "What's the word?" she asked. "Vag-oo," he said. (The word was *vague*!)

Sometimes, even when the information is tangible and transparent, the performers don't obtain it—either because they don't look for it or because they are too busy performing to focus on the effects. In sports, novice tennis players or batters often don't realize that they're taking their eyes off the ball; they often protest, in fact, when that feedback is given. (Constantly yelling "Keep your eye on the ball!" rarely works.) And we have all seen how new teachers are sometimes so busy concentrating on "teaching" that they fail to notice that few students are listening or learning.

That's why, in addition to feedback from coaches or other able observers, video or audio recordings can help us perceive things that we may not perceive as we perform; and by extension, such recordings help us learn to look for difficult-to-perceive but vital information. I recommend that all teachers videotape their own classes at least once a month. It was a transformative experience for me when I did it as a beginning teacher. Concepts that had been crystal clear to me when I was teaching seemed opaque and downright confusing on tape—captured also in the many quizzical looks of my students, which I had missed in the moment.

Actionable

Effective feedback is concrete, specific, and useful; it provides *actionable* information. Thus, "Good job!" and "You did that wrong" and *B+* are not feedback at all. We can easily imagine the learners asking themselves in response to these comments, What *specifically* should I do more or less of next time, based on this information? No idea. They don't know what was "good" or "wrong" about what they did.

Actionable feedback must also be accepted by the performer. Many so-called feedback situations lead to arguments because the givers are not sufficiently descriptive; they jump to an inference from the data instead of simply presenting the data. For example, a supervisor may make the unfortunate but common mistake of stating that "many students were bored in class." That's a judgment, not an observation. It would have been far more useful and less debatable had the supervisor said something like, "I counted ongoing inattentive behaviors in 12 of the 25 students once the lecture was underway. The behaviors included texting under desks, passing notes, and making eye contact with other students. However, after the small-group exercise began, I saw such behavior in only one student."

Such care in offering neutral, goal-related facts is the whole point of the clinical supervision of teaching and of good coaching more generally. Effective supervisors and coaches work hard to carefully observe and comment on what they observed, based on a clear statement of goals. That's why I always ask when visiting a class, "What would you like me to look for and perhaps count?" In my experience as a teacher of teachers, I have always found such pure feedback to be accepted and welcomed. Effective coaches also know that in complex performance situations, actionable feedback about what went right is as important as feedback about what didn't work.

User-Friendly

Even if feedback is specific and accurate in the eyes of experts or bystanders, it is not of much value if the user cannot understand it or is overwhelmed by it. Highly technical feedback will seem odd and confusing to a novice. Describing a baseball swing to a 6-year-old in terms of torque and other physics concepts will not likely yield a better hitter. Too much feedback is also counterproductive; better to help the performer concentrate on only one or two key elements of performance than to create a buzz of information coming in from all sides.

Expert coaches uniformly avoid overloading performers with too much or too technical information. They tell the performers one important thing they noticed that, if changed, will likely yield immediate and noticeable improvement ("I was confused about who was talking in the dialogue you wrote in this paragraph"). They don't offer advice until they make sure the performer understands the importance of what they saw.

Timely

In most cases, the sooner I get feedback, the better. I don't want to wait for hours or days to find out whether my students were attentive and whether they learned, or which part of my written story works and which part doesn't. I say "in most cases" to allow for situations like playing a piano piece in a recital. I don't want my teacher or the audience barking out feedback as I perform. That's why it is more precise to say that good feedback is "timely" rather than "immediate."

A great problem in education, however, is untimely feedback. Vital feedback on key performances often comes days, weeks, or even months after the performance—think of writing and handing in papers or getting back results on standardized tests. As educators, we should work overtime to figure out ways to ensure that students get more timely feedback and opportunities to use it while the attempt and effects are still fresh in their minds.

Before you say that this is impossible, remember that feedback does not need to come only from the teacher, or even from people at all. Technology is one powerful tool—part of the power of computer-assisted learning is unlimited, timely feedback and opportunities to use it. Peer review is another strategy for managing the load to ensure lots of timely feedback; it's essential, however, to train students to do small-group peer review to high standards, without immature criticisms or unhelpful praise.

Ongoing

Adjusting our performance depends on not only receiving feedback but also having opportunities to use it. What makes any assessment in education *formative* is not merely that it precedes summative assessments, but that the performer has opportunities, if results are less than optimal, to reshape the performance to better achieve the goal. In summative assessment, the feedback comes too late; the performance is over. Thus, the more feedback I can receive in real time, the better my ultimate performance will be. This is how all highly successful computer games work. If you play Angry Birds, Halo, Guitar Hero, or Tetris, you know that the key to substantial improvement is that the feedback is both timely and ongoing. When you fail, you can immediately start over—sometimes even right where you left off—to get another opportunity to receive and learn from the feedback. (This powerful *feedback loop* is also user-friendly. Games are built to reflect and adapt to our changing need, pace, and ability to process information.)

It is telling, too, that performers are often judged on their ability to adjust in light of feedback. The ability to quickly adapt one's performance is a mark of all great achievers and problem solvers in a wide array of fields. Or, as many little league coaches say, "The problem is not making errors; you will all miss many balls in the field, and that's part of learning. The problem is when you don't learn from the errors."

Consistent

To be useful, feedback must be consistent. Clearly, performers can only adjust their performance successfully if the information fed back to them is stable, accurate, and trustworthy. In education, that means teachers have to be on the same page about what high-quality work is. Teachers need to look at student work together, becoming more consistent over time and formalizing their judgments in highly descriptive rubrics supported by anchor products and performances. By extension, if we want student-to-student feedback to be more helpful, students have to be trained to be consistent the same way we train teachers, using the same exemplars and rubrics.

Progress Toward a Goal

In light of these key characteristics of helpful feedback, how can schools most effectively use feedback as part of a system of formative assessment? The key is to gear feedback to long-term goals.

Let's look at how this works in sports. My daughter runs the mile in track. At the end of each lap in races and practice races, the coaches yell out *split times* (the times for each lap) and bits of feedback ("You're not

swinging your arms!" "You're on pace for 5:15"), followed by advice ("Pick it up—you need to take two seconds off this next lap to get in under 5:10!").

My daughter and her teammates are getting feedback (and advice) about how they are performing now compared with their final desired time. My daughter's goal is to run a 5:00 mile. She has already run 5:09. Her coach is telling her that at the pace she just ran in the first lap, she is unlikely even to meet her best time so far this season, never mind her long-term goal. Then, he tells her something descriptive about her current performance (she's not swinging her arms) and gives her a brief piece of concrete advice (take two seconds off the next lap) to make achievement of the goal more likely.

The ability to improve one's result depends on the ability to adjust one's pace in light of ongoing feedback that measures performance against a concrete, long-term goal. But this isn't what most school district "pacing guides" and grades on "formative" tests tell you. They yield a grade against recent objectives taught, not useful feedback against the *final* performance standards. Instead of informing teachers and students at an interim date whether they are on track to achieve a desired level of student performance by the end of the school year, the guide and the test grade just provide a schedule for the teacher to follow in delivering content and a grade on that content. It's as if at the end of the first lap of the mile race, My daughter's coach simply yelled out, "B+ on that lap!"

The advice for how to change this sad situation should be clear: Score student work in the fall and winter against spring standards, use more pre-and post-assessments to measure progress toward these standards, and do the item analysis to note what each student needs to work on for better future performance.

"But There's No Time!"

Although the universal teacher lament that there's no time for such feedback is understandable, remember that "no time to give and use feedback" actually means "no time to cause learning." As we have seen, research shows that *less* teaching plus *more* feedback is the key to achieving greater learning. And there are numerous ways—through technology, peers, and other teachers—that students can get the feedback they need.

So try it out. Less teaching, more feedback. Less feedback that comes only from you, and more tangible feedback designed into the performance itself. And, of course, send me some feedback on this article atgwiggins@authenticeducation.org.

Feedback vs. Advice

- › You need more examples in your report.
- › You might want to use a lighter baseball bat.
- › You should have included some Essential Questions in your unit plan.

These three statements are not feedback; they're advice. Such advice out of the blue seems at best tangential and at worst unhelpful and annoying. Unless it is preceded by descriptive feedback, the natural response of the performer is to wonder, "Why are you suggesting this?"

As coaches, teachers, and parents, we too often jump right to advice without first ensuring that the learner has sought, grasped, and tentatively accepted the feedback on which the advice is based. By doing so, we often unwittingly end up unnerving learners. Students become increasingly insecure about their own judgment and dependent on the advice of experts—and therefore in a panic about what to do when varied advice comes from different people or no advice is available at all.

If your ratio of advice to feedback is too high, try asking the learner, "Given the feedback, do you have some ideas about how to improve?" This approach will build greater autonomy and confidence over the long haul.

Once they are no longer rank novices, performers can often self-advise if asked to.

Feedback vs. Evaluation and Grades

- › Good work!
- › This is a weak paper.
- › You got a C on your presentation.
- › I'm so pleased by your poster!

These comments make a value judgment. They rate, evaluate, praise, or criticize what was done. There is little or no feedback here—no actionable information about what occurred. As performers, we only know that someone else placed a high or low value on what we did.

How might we recast these comments to be useful feedback? Tip: Always add a mental colon after each statement of value. For example,

- "Good work: Your use of words was more precise in this paper than in the last one, and I saw the scenes clearly in my mind's eye."
- "This is a weak paper: Almost from the first sentence, I was confused as to your initial thesis and the evidence you provide for it. In the second paragraph you propose a different thesis, and in the third paragraph you don't offer evidence, just beliefs."

You'll soon find that you can drop the evaluative language; it serves no useful function.

The most ubiquitous form of evaluation, grading, is so much a part of the school landscape that we easily overlook its utter uselessness as actionable feedback. Grades are here to stay, no doubt—but that doesn't mean we should rely on them as a major source of feedback.

Grant Wiggins provides additional insights about feedback at ASCD's Inservice blog:<http://inservice.ascd.org/category/educational-leadership>

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Grant Wiggins is president of Authentic Education in Hopewell, New Jersey; www.authenticeducation.org. He is the author of *Educative Assessment: Designing Assessments to Inform and Improve Student Performance* (Jossey-Bass, 1998) and coauthor, with Jay McTighe, of many books in ASCD's Understanding by Design series.

TO: Superintendent Ed McDonough
School Board Members

SB
10/23/14

FROM: Barbara Doyle

RE: The Barbara Doyle Classroom Fund

This year it gives me great pleasure to award 14 classroom teachers who applied for reimbursement of money they spent to enhance learning in their classrooms. There were teachers from all 5 of our public school in Portsmouth. This year we awarded **\$647.22** and in the 5 years that we have had the fund we have presented **\$2804.55**.

The following people were reimbursed this year:

Kathy Birse Siegel – PHS (Yoga mats & DVD)

Kathleen Curtin – PMS – Grade 8 (Audio splitters so that multiple students can use a computer to view material & student inspiration posters)

William McElroy – PMS – Grade 6 (Apple Lightning to VGA Adapter New – to be used with iPad mini)

Annette Meyerhorn – Dondero – Grade 1 (Build class library to support science & social studies)

Jess Fagan – Dondero – Grade 3 (Classroom supplies)

Ian Fleischer – NF – Grade 5 (Materials used for staking out & measuring the new nature trail behind the front playground. He will also produce maps of the trail & post informational signs)

Michelle Fijalkowski-Santy – LH – Grade 3 (Books & curriculum for social curriculum)

Kris Cerami – LH – Grade 4 (Books based on high interest, organizational material, & fabric for curtains)

Sue Ellen Corbett – LH – Grade 5 (Instructional material for below level readers. It is challenging to provide success to these students in order to develop a love for reading.)

Kate Arruda – LH – Grade 3 (Books for classroom library, craft supplies for nonfiction project & rug of the US)

Molly Smith – LH – Grade K (abc Stamping Set)

Heather Perigny – LH – Grade 3 (Kore Wobble chair. It is a stool that transfers stationary sitting activity, ideal for brainstorming sessions & other active setting environments.)

Lauren Littlefield – LH – Grade 4 (Math games to enhance number sense.)

Julie Woods – LH – Grade K (Math Literacy Centers for all year that will allow for differentiation.)

Little Harbour School

Charles Grossman, Principal
50 Clough Drive
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Phone: (603)436-1708

Fax: (603)427-2306

Elementary School Board Presentation- October 14, 2014

- 1) New Staff
- 2) Professional Development
 - a) October 10 Teacher Workshop Day- Close Reading and Text Bands
 - b) Child Study Team
 - c) Open Circle
- 3.) Recent news
 - a) Little Harbour School/ Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Mountains Partnership
 - b) Grade 2 Social Skills Intervention
 - c) Fifth Grade Class Gift
 - d) Lydia's Garden and Shed
- 4.) Future Events
 - a) PTA Pancake Breakfast and Fall Raffle- October 17, 7:00-11:00 AM
 - b) Currier Museum Trip
 - c) Halloween Parade



Hiking Mount Major --

Dave Anderson, Director of Education, Society for the Protection of NH Forests

A hiking primer for Little Harbour Elementary School, Portsmouth, NH

The Forest Society indoor presentation is an *introduction to hiking at Mount Major in Alton.*

There are ten (10) primary sections:

1. Introduction. Welcome to Mount Major, trailheads and parking lot kiosk
2. The Route: signs, blazes, map
3. Along the Trail – a scavenger hunt. “Can you find...?”
4. Unique Geology at Mt. Major
5. Cultural and historical resources
6. Wildlife
7. Forests
8. Upper slopes and ledges
9. The summit
10. Hike safe, stay safe

STUDENT WORKSHEET – study questions

1. What is a “kiosk?”
2. What is a “blaze”
3. What is a “water bar” designed to do?
4. What is the best estimate of how many hikers visit Mt. Major annually?
5. What color blaze is the main trail to the summit?
6. What evidence of erosion did you see? What causes it?
7. What is a “glacial erratic?”
8. What can split a solid piece of granite in half?
9. What force created the rounded northwest side and steep southeast side of Mt. Major?
10. What is the rounded side and steep side formation called?
11. What animals might live in the jumble of rocky talus boulders beneath cliffs?
12. Were there people living in farms on Mt. Major and in the Belknap Range?
13. Why or why not?
14. What evidence did you see of past agriculture?
15. What other evidence of human history did you see on Mt. Major?
16. Name three (3) animals that live in the forests of the Belknap Range or use adjacent wetlands and large lakes.
17. What is a “coniferous” tree? Give one example.
18. What is a “deciduous” tree? Give one example.
19. How many needles does a red pine have in each bundle? A white pine has how many?
20. What is a “flag tree?” What can it reveal?
21. What is a “cairn” and where are they generally found?
22. What did you find or see at the summit (to) of Mt. Major?
23. Name any three (3) of ten (10) items you should have in backpack when hiking in NH.

STUDENT WORKSHEET – Short answer questions

Name: _____

Teacher, class: _____

1. What did you expect and how did you feel when you first learned about the LHS Mt. Major field trip?
2. Did you look forward to the field trip or did you have any concerns? If so what?
3. Did the pre-trip visit by Dave Anderson of the NH Forest Society **help you to prepare** for your hike? Did you learn helpful information on what to expect?
4. **What did you learn** when you hiked on Mt. Major?
5. What did you **like best** about the hike on Mt. Major?
6. What did you **like least** about the hike on Mt. Major?
7. What would have **made the experience better**?
8. Was there anything **surprising or unexpected** about the experience?
9. **Would you recommend** this trip to next year's 4th grade students?

Kid-Friendly Mt. Major: a Magnet for Environmental Education

How can we teach the younger generation to care about land conservation? For the Forest Society, the answer has become as obvious as the yellow paint on the school buses pulling into and out of the Mt. Major parking lot.

Thanks to many generous donors, we and our partners are within \$200,000 of our fundraising goal of 1.8 million to purchase and protect two properties directly on Mt. Major and two more on nearby peaks. Once we own these parcels, we will become a co-host (along with the State of New Hampshire and private landowners) the many schools that bring students to Mt. Major for annual field trips. Informal surveys have tallied at least 23 schools regularly using the mountain—a situation that presents us with fantastic educational opportunities.

The Forest Society is working to develop pilot partnerships with two schools—Little Harbour Elementary in Portsmouth and Mt. Prospect High School in Alton—in the Everybody Hikes Mt. Major Outdoor Classroom Initiative. Both schools have expressed enthusiasm for working with us as a resource for more information and suggestions for activities revolving around Mt. Major's cultural history, natural history and conservation status. Resources developed as part of these partnerships would ideally be shared with other schools and community groups.

This project will rely on the successful completion of the Everybody Hikes Mt. Major campaign, and we are so close. Please consider donating, or increasing a prior donation, to this effort, and join with us in educating the next generation about the value of land conservation!



Fourth graders, teachers and chaperones from Portsmouth's Little Harbour Elementary School celebrate reaching the summit of Mt. Major during their annual field trip. Courtesy photo.

FOURTH-GRADERS PUT ENTHUSIASM FOR NATURE LESSONS IN WRITING

When fourth graders in Amy Kovick's class at Little Harbour Elementary School in Portsmouth were asked for ideas on improving the school's annual field trip up Mt. Major, they produced a stack of well-written, thoughtful proposals.

Jack wants to learn about animals, trees and Lake Winnepesaukee. Charlie is interested in knowing more about the scenery and the trails. Sophie wonders about Mt. Major's history.

The successful completion of the Everybody Hikes Mt. Major campaign will lay the foundation for the Forest Society to get involved in making these children's wonderful ideas a reality. Here are more of the fourth-grader's thoughts:

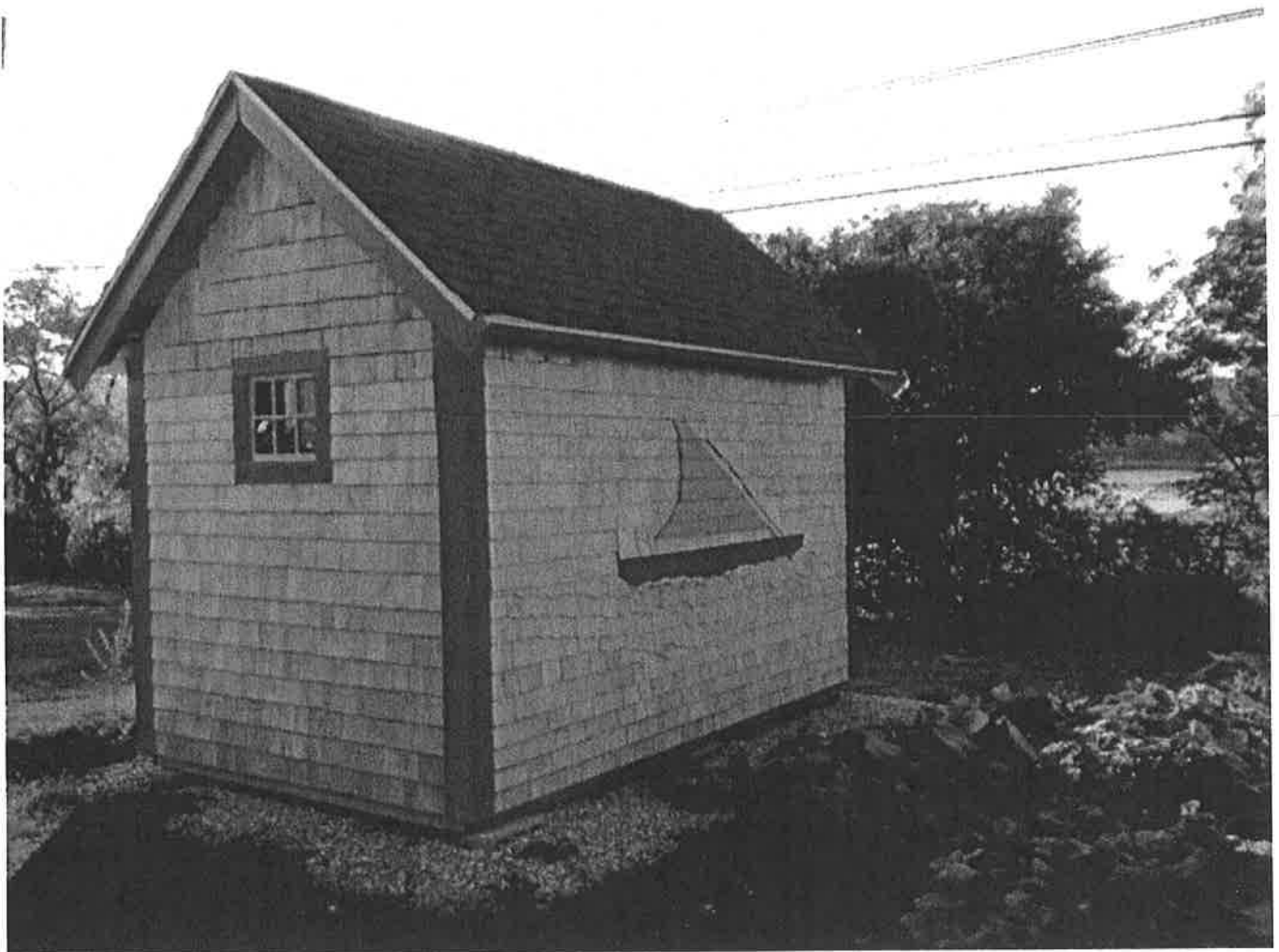
"No matter what, I always think a guide makes it better. You learn more, you get a better feel. I also think scavenger hunts are always fun, and they help you pay attention." — Jackson

"If a guide or expert had taught us about the wildlife and plants, we would have learned more during the hike." — Caden

"I think it was a lot of fun getting to hike and eat lunch at the top. But it would be better if we got to know what type of trees and animals lived on the mountain and to know when it was built and when it was open to people." — Haley

"I absolutely adored our magnificent trip to Mount Major! I love how we had big green forests around us, and I loved the fresh smell of the leaves and the air!" — Brady, who went on to write that he enjoyed learning stamina and self-determination but would have also liked to learn about animals, plants and trees.

From: **Charles Grossman** cgrossman@portsmouth.k12.nh.us
Subject: She'd
Date: October 9, 2014 at 8:21 AM
To: Charles Grossman cgrossman@portsmouth.k12.nh.us





TEACHER FEEDBACK UPDATE

FOCUS FOR THE YEAR

At the beginning of the school year, teachers were invited to expand their use of peer feedback as a mechanism to reflect on their practice as well as help us grow in our capacity to collaborate effectively and promote student learning. Teachers were asked to “thin slice” one another’s observations and offer feedback.

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

The K-12 administrative team meets monthly to collaborate in ways that model the Professional Learning Community (PLC) practices we continue to focus on with teachers. In addition to establishing common expectations in regard to teacher feedback, this group shares effective strategies in framing feedback to improve performance.

ADMIN PLC SMART GOAL

By February 2015, 80% of our teachers will identify that they have received effective feedback that has helped them reflect on their practice.

The Admin PLC will be administering an assessment survey to monitor progress on the goal. In addition, each principal is sharing a common article on effective feedback and facilitating shared learning on elements of effective feedback for improving practice.

IN-DISTRICT DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION COURSE

We are currently running an in-house professional development course on Differentiated Instruction, which is the assortment of instructional strategies necessary to reach all students. A key component of this course is peer to peer and administrative feedback on these practices with a chosen focus area for improvement by each participant. Ed and Steve are utilizing this opportunity to practice offering effective feedback as a component of the Admin PLC work.

PD COMMITTEE SMART GOAL FEEDBACK

This year, the Professional Development Committee will be providing feedback to all PLC teams on their SMART goals in November. The PD Committee is made up of teacher representatives, department heads, and administrators. The goal of the feedback is to establish a common set of criteria for SMART goals and improve the focus of our PLC practice.

New Hire:

Name: Anne Salloom **Bachelors** – Classics, College of Holy Cross,
Worcester, MA May 2014

Address: 578 Main Street
Staten Island, NY 10307

Position: Latin Teacher
Beginning second semester

Location: Portsmouth High School

Replacing: Joe Arnstein – Retiring end of
first semester

Effective: Approximately January 23rd, 2015

Step: 1

Salary: **\$19,669** Base \$39,129 187 days
Based on current contract for 94 Days

Funding Source: General Fund

Certification: In the process of becoming certified