

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOL BOARD PUBLIC MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 25, 2014

DONDERO ELEMENTARY

PORTSMOUTH, NH

DATE: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2014

TIME: 7:00 PM [or thereafter]

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Chair Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.
- II. **ROLL CALL** LESLIE STEVENS (CHAIR), DEXTER LEGG (VICE-CHAIR), ANN WALKER, TOM MARTIN, PATRICK ELLIS, JEFF LANDRY, LENNIE MULLANEY, GARY EPLER, NANCY CLAYBURGH, EDWARD MCDONOUGH (SUPERINTENDENT), STEVE ZADRAVEC (ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT) AND STEPHEN BARTLETT (BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR)
- III. **INVOCATION**
- IV. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Chair Stevens led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- V. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
- VI. **SPECIAL PRESENTATION: RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION: SUCCESS AT DONDERO** – Principal Callahan and Ms. Aista Kazlauskas (Grade 2) provided a Response to Intervention (RTI) update and its impact in the classroom. Since last year, 44 students have received RTI for academic and behavior intervention, with 33 receiving targeted reading instruction. Twenty one (21) students made an entire years growth. Through RTI efforts, only four students out of the 44 needed special education services, clearly showing that efforts in place are preventing the need for special education services. By reviewing data patterns, teachers are better determining how to provide targeted instruction to each student.

To increase literacy intervention, classroom teacher schedules were adjusted to allow time for the literary team to better support students. Each case manager’s background, knowledge and specific skillset were matched to each student’s needs. Classroom schedules were then created considering these new intervention schedules to assure core curriculum would not be disrupted. Feedback from teachers brought to light the need for more user-friendly tools to collect data and a more practical RTI referral forms that was easier for parents to understand. Ms. Kazlauskas reported that the biggest shift in thinking for teachers is understanding that their role is an integral part in the RTI process. Although there is more work for teachers during their prep time, the successes of supporting students earlier and better are well worth the effort. Board members followed up with questions and comments.
- VII. **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**
 - a. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**
 - i. *BOARD & ADMINISTRATOR*, NOVEMBER 2014
 - ii. **INVITATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN PORTSMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SEARCHES & TIMELINES**
 - iii. **SCHOOL FACILITIES CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**
 - b. **CORRESPONDENCE**
 - i. **USDA LETTER OF CONGRATULATIONS TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS FOR BRONZE AWARD –USDA *HEALTHIER US* SCHOOL CHALLENGE**

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

- a. **WORKSHOP: LISTER ACADEMY SUSTAINABILITY** – Lister Academy serves a diverse population extremely well, paying for the program through out of district tuition. Principal Roy stated that if RJLA is to continue supporting this particular student population, two questions need to be answered. Can we educate students in-district for less than the cost of transporting/tuitioning out of district? If so, how do we provide transparent financial stabilization given the current state of declining, dependable out of district options?

RJLA has three funding components: budgeted tuition in the general fund for Portsmouth students, SAU 50's agreed upon contribution, and tuition received from out of district students. When the program first opened, out of district students were being turned away. By FY08, the student population was divided 50/50 with Portsmouth and students outside of Portsmouth. By FY10, out of district funding levels began to decline. The next few budget cycles were offset by efforts in repurposing funds and a balance carry over. In FY12, carry over funds were gone and Mr. Bartlett found it necessary to transfer funds.

Some factors in RJLA's enrollment reduction include the development of in-district alternative options by home districts, successful RTI efforts, and the implementation of new CHINS and truancy petition regulations. The last factor is the inherent disruption in the lives of this particular student population. Principal Roy has made as many adjustments in staffing and the operating budget as possible, going so far as to personally assume the guidance role. Further cuts could not assure student safety.

As of today, RJLA enrollment consists of four (4) out of district students with two more scheduled to arrive in December. Due to reductions and the complexity of this population, the district normally caps Portsmouth students at fourteen (14). Currently twenty (20) Portsmouth students attend RJLA with two (2) on the waiting list. Total enrollment is capped at twenty six (26).

Students who attend RJLA are students with needs exhausted by all available alternative programming and the court system. Principal Roy does not believe, as district and government budgets get tighter, that funding issues or being able to forecast enrollment will get better under the current model. Board members followed up with the following questions: Is data available to show different cost options for the services provided our own students? Are students better off remaining in the district in which they live despite cost? Could there be savings in relocating the program? What resources would Principal Roy like to see added? What do students do after graduation? What is the dropout rate? Have we compiled financial information from other districts to see if they are experiencing the same issues?

RJLA's original financial model allowed the district to build out an operating model, which unfortunately, will never come back. The district must assume that programming will become self-funded going forward and should look to create a new operating model that is appropriate and assures that each Portsmouth student receives the services necessary to become successful after graduation.

- b. **WORKSHOP SESSION: DISCUSSION OF FY 2016 BUDGET GOALS** – Superintendent McDonough shared a memo addressing the loss of grant funding and reminded the Board that the district's 21st Century grant will soon expire. Energy costs have far exceeded the current year's budget and are expected to increase dramatically next year. Traditional fixed costs, such as teacher retirement and health insurance, continue to rise as well. City Manager Bohenko has asked city departments to provide a status quo budget by December 17th. Board members then discussed laying out areas that over time the Board would like to focus on to become the best district in New Hampshire.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- a. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH SCHOOL CUSTODIANS, AFSCME, LOCAL #1386

MOTION: Motion to accept policy JKAA – Use of Restraints and Seclusion by Mr. Walker

SECOND: Mr. Martin

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

- b. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF TENTATIVE AGREEMENT WITH PORTSMOUTH PARAPROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION

MOTION: Motion to approve tentative agreement with Portsmouth Paraprofessional Association by Ms. Walker

SECOND: Mr. Ellis

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

- c. CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF EXTENDING PRIMEX PROPERTY AND LIABILITY INSURANCE THROUGH FY 2017

MOTION: Motion to approve extending Primex Property and Liability Insurance through FY 2017 by Mr. Martin

SECOND: Ms. Walker

DISCUSSION:

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

X. COMMITTEE UPDATES

XI. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. WORKSHOP ON LATER START AT SECONDARY LEVEL, DECEMBER 9
b. FY 16 BUDGET PRESENTATION: JANUARY 13, 2015

XII. ADJOURNMENT - Motion to adjourn at 8:40 p.m. by Ms. Walker, seconded by Mr. Martin.