

**ZOOM MEETING LINK:**

<http://us02web.zoom.us/j84087644273?pwd=UTBJUXNjYlpRYlZjM1hqQTUrWldMZz09>

**CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chair, Ms. Copeland, welcomed the School Committee members and the public to the Virtual Meeting of September 22, 2020. then led the group in the pledge of allegiance and requested a moment of silence in honor of our armed forces in harm’s way.

**1. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

RIGL 42-46-5 sections:

- (a)(1) Any discussions of the job performance, character, or physical or mental health of a person or persons provided that such person or person affected shall have been notified in advance in writing and advised that they may require that the discussion be held at an open meeting (advance notice has been provided);
- (a)(2) Sessions pertaining to collective bargaining or litigation, or work sessions pertaining to collective bargaining
- (a)(3) Discussion regarding the matter of security including but not limited to the deployment of security personnel or devices.

**2. MOTION TO SEAL EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES (September 22, 2020)**

Chair, Ms. Copeland, reported that an Executive Session had taken place prior to the Public Session. No votes were taken. She then requested a motion to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. Mr. Faerber so moved and Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0. EC=yes, FF=yes, AS=yes, TV=yes, KM=yes, JCP=yes.

**3. CHAIRPERSON’S REMARKS**

**A. Roll Call**

Emily Copeland:	Present	Thomas Vadney	Present
Juan Carlos Payero	Present	Fred Faerber	Present
Allen Shers:	Present	Karen McDaid	Present

Let the record reflect that all School Committee members are present this evening, September 22, 2020.

**Also Present:** Dr. Thomas Kenworthy, Superintendent; Ms. Elizabeth Viveiros, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Lisa Colwell, Pupil Personnel Director; Mr. Christopher DiIuro, Director of Finance and Administration; Ms. Mary Ann Carroll, Attorney for the Portsmouth School Department;

**B. School Committee Meeting Protocols**

Ms. Copeland made a couple of announcements in regards to questions/comments about the last School Committee meeting from the public. There was difficulty hearing the speakers during the virtual session with the wearing of masks and the distance from the microphone. The School Committee is adopting a new protocol that whoever is speaking may remove the mask and put it back on when they are done talking in order to ensure clarity and understanding for our audience. There was also the question of when we plan to resume in-person meetings. We have had our lawyer, Ms. Carroll, research where we stand on the Governor’s orders in regard to the number of people who are allowed to congregate and right now, up through mid-October, the Governor has put a physical limit of 15 people in public meetings. We are considering looking into allowing one or two people on a reservation basis but the reality is that until that number is raised, we will be doing mostly the hybrid meeting with the public unless they have some presentation or issue to be physically at the meeting virtually and the Administration and the School Committee members being a combination of virtual and in person.

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#### **4. PUBLIC COMMENT**

No public comment this evening.

#### **5. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

##### A. Personnel Update

Superintendent Kenworthy presented his list of personnel joining the PSD staff and congratulated them on their appointments.

##### Certified Teacher Hires

- Joshua Anderson                      ALT Teacher/PHS
- Annelise Hague                        Special Educator-Preschool/Melville
- Jenah Morrell                          Child Development Teacher/PHS
- Cintia Verissimo                        Spanish/PHS (0.6 FTE)

##### Coaching Re-Appointments

- Michael Stinton                        Head Coach Boys Soccer
- Jeff McGuirl                            Assistant Coach Boys Soccer
- Evan Carnevale                        Assistant Coach Boys Soccer
- Lauren Bulk                            Head Coach Girls Soccer
- Christine Higgins                      Assistant Coach Girls Soccer
- Kristina Morgan                        Assistant JV Coach Girls
- Jeff Rosa                                Head Coach Girls Cross Country
- Shaun Horgan                          Head Coach Boys Cross Country
- Mark Hedden                            Head Coach Girls Tennis
- Kasey Brown                            Assistant Coach Girls Tennis
- Regina Dublin                          Head Coach Cheerleading
- Kerry Vye                                Assistant Coach Cheerleading

##### B. Back to School Update

Superintendent Kenworthy reported that later in the meeting we will have a more extensive Back to School update presented by Assistant Superintendent Vivieros. However, he did want to report that since our last School Committee meeting, we have officially opened the 2020-21 school year. That began on September 14, 2020, with a gradual, phased-in opening. Last week that included a few grades as well as special populations. Starting this week, we will phase in more grades. So far, that has been going very good at all of our buildings. Kudos to all of our staff in all buildings, parents and students for staying informed of all the information and being ready to follow the new protocols. On September 15, 2020, we were able to host Commissioner Infante-Greene with a quickly arranged visit to Melville Elementary School. She was very impressed with a lot of the great things she saw there. This is indicative of all the great work that is taking place in all of our buildings to welcome students back.

Superintendent Kenworthy also reported that he had posted the results on the website of our walk-thru of the facilities by the by the team from the R.I Dept. of Education, the R.I. Department of Health, and the National Guard. They had a standard checklist that they followed and we had been following those guidelines in preparation for the opening of school. We showed them examples of everything we had in place. Dr. Kenworthy

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did receive a letter stating that there was no additional follow-up that our district needed to do here in Portsmouth. Our plan is to continue with the measures we have put into place.

### C. Portsmouth High School US News and World Report Ranking

This past week, US News and World Report put out their annual rankings of high schools across the country. This is a leading publication that people look to for this type of information. Portsmouth High School ranked #4 in Rhode Island, behind Barrington, East Greenwich and Classical High School. This puts us in the top 3% of high schools in the country.

## 6. TEACHING AND LEARNING

### A. Reopening Update

Assistant Superintendent Vivieros gave a presentation this evening on the highlights of the Reopening of School for 2020-21 Updates. The families participating in Distance Learning is presently 378 (355), which accounts for 14% of our families. Ms. Vivieros fully suspects that those numbers will continue to go down and families are wanting to come back. This is the result of all the good work that is being done by our staff and with the commitment to our families. She did indicate that if she ran the numbers again today, they would again be down.

Our district phased-in approach is working well with last week, Grades K, 1, 5, and vulnerable students were in-person in our buildings. All others were distance learning from home. The Grade K-6 students will be transitioning to full day, in-person learning by the end of the week and Grades 7, 8, and 9 will be transitioning to the hybrid model. Next week we will introduce the full in-person for Grades K-6 and the hybrid model for Grades 7-12. Ms. Vivieros presented learning plans for all of our buildings including in-person student learning and those participating in distance learning. The final captions on video of our students, staff and buildings was so uplifting and well done. It was a wonderful ending to the presentation on Reopening Updates.

## 7. APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

A. September 8, 2020

B. September 8, 2020 Executive Session

Chair, Ms. Copeland, requested a motion for approval of the School Committee minutes of September 8, 2020. Mr. Faerber so moved and Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0. EC=yes, TV=yes, AS=yes, FF=yes, KM=yes, JCP=yes.

## 8. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Homeschool Requests

Chair, Ms. Copeland, requested a motion for approval of the Consent Agenda as written. Mr. Faerber so moved and Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0. EC=yes, TV=yes, FF=yes, AS=yes, KM=yes, JCP=yes.

## 9. BUSINESS

A. Discuss Legislative Priorities

Chair, Ms. Copeland, requested a motion for Discussion Legislative Priorities. Mr. Faerber so moved and Mr. Shers seconded the motion. Ms. Copeland reported that the School Committee is a little early on this topic of discussion but they decided to get a jump start on it. Every year we have a list of items we would like our legislative representatives to work on. Ms. Copeland is now opening this topic and asking the School Committee if there are things they would like and also ask the Administration if there are needs they think the legislature should address. Mr. Vadney would like to continue to pursue the need for improvements on East Main Road.

Portsmouth School Committee  
September 22, 2020  
Public Session

Mr. Shers echoed that comment that even though the decision was made by the DOT that they could not do a road diet right now, road issues continue to exist and we need to continue to press for improvements to this road situation because if we don't push for it, it will lag and lag. Mr. Faerber also joined in his opinion that road safety and the road diet is needed. Ms. Copeland will speak to the Town Council about information they have regarding the DOT decision. There is a lot of support for this subject of road safety among members of the committee.

Ms. Copeland reported out that Field Trip legislation was on the list to get passed but got disrupted due to COVID. She feels this could go on the list as an item again this time.

Dr. Colwell, Director of Personnel Services, briefly discussed statewide transportation which includes transportation for students who attend out-of-district placements and high costs of special education costs for those students who exceed that threshold of our annual reporting. Dr. Colwell will draft some language to consider at the next meeting. Dr. Colwell also reported that there has been no flexibility to federal regulations regarding Special Education during this distance learning phase.

The topics to be included in our Legislative Priorities are:

- Transportation
- Road Safe
- Field Trip Funding

Ms. Copeland suggested that the committee will contact the Portsmouth Prevention Coalition to see if they have any topics they would like included in the priorities list. A draft will be prepared to present to the School Committee at a later date so we are ready for the December due date for this information. There is no vote on this business item. It is for discussion only.

### C. School Student Handbooks

Superintendent Kenworthy brought forth a discussion on the School Student Handbook. There is no approval needed for this item. The policy CHCA was approved a few years ago stating that School Student Handbooks for each of our schools will be presented to the School Committee on an annual basis. These are available to all students and families. They are online and if School Committee members see anything to be changed or updated, please let me know and I can make those changes.

## **10. ADJOURNMENT**

Chair, Ms. Copeland, requested a motion for adjournment of tonight's meeting. Mr. Faerber so moved and Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0. EC-yes, TV-yes, FF-yes, AS-yes, KM-yes, JCP-yes.

Upcoming Meeting

- October 13, 2020
- October 27, 2020

Respectfully submitted,  
Patricia Massarotti, Recording Secretary for:  
Thomas Vadney, Clerk

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