

ZOOM MEETING LINK:

<http://us02web.zoom.us/j/8364122385?pwd=bnNqZUJgVVYxWIAxUkd0aFloZnl4Zz09>

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Copeland welcomed the School Committee members and public to the virtual and in-person meeting held on the evening of September 8, 2020, in the library at Portsmouth High School. She requested everyone to join her in the pledge of allegiance and requested a moment of silence in honor of our armed forces in harms' 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

2. MOTION TO SEAL EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES

Chair, Ms. Copeland reported that an Executive Session had been held prior to this meeting and no votes were taken. She requested a motion to seal the Executive Minutes of September 8, 2020. Mr. Faerber made a motion to seal the Executive Session minutes. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0 with 1 member absent. EC=yes, TV-absent, FF=yes, AS=yes, KM=yes, JCP=yes

3. CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

A. Roll Call

Emily Copeland	Present	Fred Faerber	Present
Thomas Vadney	Absent	Karen McDaid	Present
Alan Shers	Present	Juan Carlos Payero	Present

Let the record reflect that five School Committee Members are present this evening, September 8, 2020, and Mr. Thomas Vadney is absent.

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

B. Prudence Island Visit

Ms. Copeland reported that she along with Superintendent Kenworthy and Assistant Superintendent Vivieros , went to Prudence Island as part of Superintendent Kenworthy's initial plan that he wanted to undertake outreach to various groups and it was felt that this was great opportunity to brief them on all the different options and school reopening. We had a visit with the Prudence Island School Foundation Board at the school.

Superintendent Kenworthy gave some opening remarks and Assistant Superintendent Vivieros answered a lot of questions for them. It was a very nice meeting, outdoors, with social distance guidelines followed.

Superintendent Kenworthy noted that it was his first visit to Prudence Island and he was very glad to have gone over for the meeting and some collaboration. Ms. Copeland thanked Ms. Catherine Homan for her assistance with transportation when the group arrived on Prudence Island. It was much appreciated.

C. Subcommittee Appointment

Ms. Copeland noted that Ms. Katherine Holtman had resigned her position as a member of the School Committee on September 1, 2020. Therefore, a couple of adjustments need to be made. She has asked Ms. McDaid to become Chair of the Policy Subcommittee. She then requested a volunteer to serve on this committee with Ms.

McDaid and Mr. Vadney. Ms. Copeland will fill that role until the November elections for School Committee members whose terms are up for re-election. She also requested a volunteer representative from the Portsmouth School Committee to attend SELAC meetings.

4. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

A. Racial Equity

Mr. Payero reported on the Racial Equity Subcommittee. The meeting was held on September 2, 2020. Items were reviewed that had been discussed at the previous meeting such as having a book to give the organization something to talk about as well as some structure. We want to have a very concise mission and vision that we are working on that allows for it to be integrated into all of our schools. The next meeting will be held the week of September 21, 2020, to make sure the entire district has the ability to start school on the right foot with a little bit of time and less on the plate. That information will be out shortly but we want this to be a representative committee so anyone interested, please reach out.

5. RECOGNITION

A. Catherine Holtman

Ms. Copeland recognized Ms. Holtman with a plaque in appreciation of her work for the staff and students of the Portsmouth School Department while serving on the Portsmouth School Committee. Ms. Holtman resigned her position on September 1, 2020.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Alan Shers, 40 Roger Williams Court, spoke as a citizen this evening and not a member of the Portsmouth School Committee. He indicated his outrage at the decision of Governor Raimondo to not allow football and volleyball during this fall's sports season. He feels this is "hypocrisy and poor planning at its best".

Ms. Tara Aboyoun, 167 Spring Hill Road, addressed the school committee with the following concerns:

- Outdoor learning spaces need to be revisited with possible increase in accommodations for more students.
- Increase in number of isolation rooms
- Chorus at school but only in outdoor locations
- Number of distance learning teachers seems inadequate for entire school
- Selection of hand sanitizers
- COVID checklist/walk thru. When will this take place?

The School Committee can listen to public comments during this section of the agenda but because they are not on the agenda, by law, they members cannot make any remarks.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE

A. Personnel Update

Superintendent Kenworthy reported out on his Personnel Update. The district continues to fill positions. It is expected that more appointments will be in the agenda for the next meeting. The following new positions have been filled. These new staff members are named as follows:

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- Madison Lane Art Teacher/Melville
- Madaline Maria Math Teacher – LTS/PHS
- Megan Tucker Special Ed Teacher/PMS
- Paul Santos Custodial B/Melville

Portsmouth School Committee
September 8, 2020
Public Session

We did have the resignation of one School Safety Officer, Dave Dyson. He was hired for Howard Hathaway School so we are slated to fill that position.

B. Staff Orientation Day & Professional Development

PSD staff was welcomed back for New Teacher Orientation and Professional Development on August 31, 2020, and September 2, 3, 9, 10, and 11, 2020. All the activities were building based and followed social distance guidelines. No large gatherings. We did an annual Welcome video which was sent out to staff remotely to view on their own.

C. School Reopening Update

Reopening of our schools takes place on Monday, September 14, 2020. Our reopening will be a gradual approach. We feel comfortable welcoming our students back in this hybrid scenario with the additional mitigation strategy we have put into place. Our approach will be phased in and starts next week, on Monday, September 14, 2020. Governor Raimondo has recommended October 13, 2020, for all students to be in-person full return to the buildings. We are going to take a “wait and see” approach and see where Superintendent Kenworthy feels comfortable with spacing and where the strategies have taken us and where things progress on the state level from there.

Assistant Superintendent Vivieros updated the School Committee members and the public on the updated district learning numbers. She reported that a Distance Learning Survey was recently to families extending the deadline for families to return the survey, which closed on Friday, September 4, 2020. The numbers of families opting for Distance Learning have been continually changing all the way up to today, the date of September 8, 2020. Our Distance Learning percentage right now is 16.75%. Our total is presently 378 students which was well over 500 students last week. All Chromebooks have been distributed. There will be Virtual Chromebook information sessions for parents/Guardians on September 10, 2020. Assistant Superintendent Vivieros will reach out to parents via tweet to let them know about the Zoom sessions.

Dr. Lisa Colwell, Director of Personnel Services, reported on updates to our Special Education and Vulnerable Populations. She held a “Welcome Back” session for RBTs and Special Education staff on September 3, 2020, as a group and individually by building level. This was all related to start of school and she was able to share information to make them feel good about coming back. Students in our life-skills programs in each building are part of the in-person student population coming back in person. The Governor and the Commissioner of Education have been clear about looking at students who need to be in person in a very consistent way and we have prepared for that scenario. The Personnel Services Dept. has worked on services and transportation depending on what parents have chosen. The team has prepared PPE bags for distribution to RBTs and will be distributed to the schools this week. Dr. Colwell reported that about 95% of special education evaluations for students who could not be tested due to COVID school closure have been completed. The remaining 5% were not evaluated due to difficulty arranging times with the families. Dr. Colwell reported she is very proud of this effort and result. She has also contacted an outside agency to hire a “float nurse” to assist with medical needs across all schools.

Superintendent Kenworthy completed the Reopening Updates with a report on the Classroom and Ventilation Update. We had our RIDE facilities walkthroughs on Friday, September 4, 2020. The feedback we have received confirmed all the strategies and precautions we have taken. We are now awaiting a formal update.

Superintendent Kenworthy gave a slide show of classroom spaces and furniture set-ups in the classrooms, focusing on the spacing in the classrooms between desks, the protective shields between students at their tables

Portsmouth School Committee
September 8, 2020
Public Session

and the precautionary steps taken to ensure social distancing in the classroom. The PSD received favorable comments during the walkthroughs and it is suspected that this information will be reflected in our formal update.

In regards to sports, football and volleyball will not be allowed for the fall sports season. PHS will permit cross country, girls' tennis, soccer and sideline. Field hockey is also allowed but PHS does not have a field hockey program. The Portsmouth Middle School will not be having any organized school sports for the 2020-21 school year.

Superintendent Kenworthy reported late-breaking news this evening the US Department of Agriculture program that governs the district school lunch program is allowing all schools to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students until December 31, 2020, or when funds run out. Students who are distant learners may pick up meals from the PHS parking lot. Families are encouraged to fill out the free and reduced meal applications if this program changes at any point in the school year.

8. APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES

- A. August 3, 2020
- B. August 11, 2020
- C. August 11, 2020 Executive Session
- D. August 12, 2020 Workshop
- E. August 25, 2020
- D. August 25, 2020 Executive Session

Chair, Ms. Copeland, requested a motion for approval of the School Committee minutes. Mr. Faerber made a motion to approve the minutes of August 3, 2020; August 11, 2020, including the Executive Session of August 11, 2020; August 12, 2020 Workshop; August 25, 2020, including the August 25, 2020, Executive Session. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0. EC=yes, TV-absent, AS=yes, FF=yes, KM=yes, JCP=yes

9. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Homeschool Requests

Chair, Ms. Copeland, requested a motion for approval of the Consent Agenda. Mr. Faerber made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0. EC=yes, FF=yes, AS=yes, TV-absent, KM=yes, JCP=yes.

10. BUSINESS

A. Discuss/Action Superintendent Goals 2020/2021

Chair, Ms. Copeland, requested a motion for Discussion/Action Superintendent Goals 2020/2021. Mr. Faerber made a motion for Discussion/Action Superintendent Goals for 2020/2021. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0. EC=yes, FF=yes, AS=yes, TV-absent, KM=yes, JCP=yes.

B. Discuss/Action Superintendent Salary Increase for 2020/2021

Chair, Ms. Copeland, requested a motion for Discussion/Action Superintendent Salary Increase for 2020-2021. Mr. Faerber made a motion for Discussion/Action Superintendent Salary Increase for 2020-2021 in the amount of 1.5%. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0. EC=yes, FF=yes, TV-absent AS=yes, KM=yes, JCP=yes.

Portsmouth School Committee
September 8, 2020
Public Session

11. REPORTS

A. Financial Reports

1. Monthly Financials – May, 2020
2. Monthly Financials – June, 2020

Mr. DiIuro gave the Monthly Financials for May, 2020, and June, 2020. No votes needed for this agenda item. Information only. Audit will begin in October.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Chair, Ms. Copeland, requested a motion for adjournment of this evenings meeting. Mr. Faerber made a motion to adjourn the meeting of September 8, 2020. Mr. Shers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimous, 5-0. EC=yes, FF=yes, AS=yes, TV-absent, KM=yes, JCP=yes.

Upcoming Meeting

- September 22, 2020
- October 13, 2020

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