

CONWAY SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
August 10, 2009

1 A meeting of the Conway School Board was held on Monday, August 10, 2009 at 6:30
2 p.m. in the cafeteria at the Kennett High School.

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4 **Members present:** Chair Sheryl Kovalik, Assistant Chair Kelley Murphy, Dick Klement,
5 Janine McLauchlan, Syndi White, Richard Breton, and Randy Davison. Superintendent
6 Carl Nelson and Assistant Superintendent Bob Godamski were also present.

7 **Signing of Manifests (6:20 p.m.)**

8 **1. Call to Order at 6:30 p.m.**

9 **2. Salute to Flag at 6:30.**

10 **3. Approve Minutes – None.**

11 Sheryl noted that she had sent an email memo to board members regarding
12 conversation that was held at the last board meeting regarding alternative education.
13 She received two email back that were addressed to the entire board so those two
14 emails and Sheryl's original email are entered below into the minutes to become a
15 matter of record. The net result of these exchanges is that she has asked for some
16 slight change in procedure in terms of how the board receives the hiring information so
17 the board can get a better understanding of why it is we have been getting so many
18 alternative certification candidates as they come forward. 1. we are going to include
19 the number of applications received by the interviewing group so that we understand if
20 we are falling off in terms of total applicants for some reason; 2. we will know how
21 many are interviewed; and 3. if an alternative certification candidate is chosen they are
22 going to include a memo as to why that was the best candidate in this particular
23 situation. This will clarify a lot of the conversation we have been having and give us all
24 of the information up front. There is some concern that because we have no contract
25 right now and because we have a low starting salary for teachers, we may not be
26 getting as many applicants for our open positions. This will help us find out if that is in
27 fact true and we will take the information as we get it and will work with it going forward.
28 We want to have the best possible candidates for our students in all the positions. She
29 thanked Randy and Syndi for their input and feedback.

31 **From:** Sheryl Kovalik

32 **To:** Rick Breton ; Kelley Murphy ; Justin Frechette ; Janine McLauchlan at the White
33 Mountain Board of Realtors ; Dick Klement ; Randy Davison

34 **Sent:** Thursday, August 06, 2009 5:47 PM

35 **Subject:** Memo from the Chair

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39 Dear Fellow Board Members,

40 Having arrived late to the last board meeting, I did not have the benefit of the complete
41 picture regarding the conversation/argument that was ensuing relative to alternative
42 certifications. I have had considerable feedback since then from a variety of sources.
43 As a result I am asking you to consider the following:

44 The Conway Policies clearly identify that we will hire the best available candidates for
45 open positions in our school district. Every employee and elected official is obligated to
46 follow our policies. Further, the State of NH created the Alternative Certification options
47 for a specific purpose and provides a strict oversight for their use. Therefore, when our
48 district employees put forth candidates under Alt. Cert. they do so because it is their
49 considered opinion that this is in the best interest of fulfilling the policy and meeting the
50 educational needs of our students. The alternative option is to hire permanent
51 substitutes, which clearly does not meet the intent of our policies. Since our policies do
52 not outline certification/qualifications for full time substitutes such a choice does not
53 ensure the “best available” candidate is hired. Moreover, it delays the act of hiring
54 employees – which is our responsibility. In addition, our performance guidelines provide
55 probationary periods to ensure that our new employees meet our expectations or they
56 can be non-renewed. While some may think that there is a financial benefit to a
57 permanent substitute (no benefits), in reality the cost to our students can be quite high.

58 The recent increase in Alt. Cert. candidates is due to a variety of circumstances – not
59 the least of which is the economy. We are receiving fewer and fewer total applicants for
60 open positions. While some of you may argue that this is because we have low starting
61 salaries, be advised that increasing the starting salaries has been a CEA negotiating
62 objective for at least two years. Progress has been made, but stalled with the recent
63 impasse in negotiations.

64 The argument that these Alt. Cert. candidates cost the district more money is not valid.
65 We have a fixed budget for course reimbursement for our staff. Yes, it does limit how
66 many teachers may obtain course reimbursement, but it does not add to our budget.

67 Finally, I am directing you to review your board packets as quickly as possible when
68 they are received. If you find any candidates for hiring that are of concern, please
69 contact Carl Nelson and arrange for a deeper review of the candidates with the chair of
70 the interviewing committee as well as direct feedback from the recommending
71 administrator. Once you get the information you request, if you are still dissatisfied,
72 please contact me with your concerns prior to the board meeting.

73 I do not want to squelch valid debate, but we are dragging real people along in the
74 process and I would like to treat them all with respect. If we have a truly valid concern,
75 the candidate will be pulled from the list prior to the public meeting. If I determine that
76 this issue is simply based on not wishing to hire any Alt. Cert. candidate then we will

77 proceed forward and you will be invited to vote according to your position. The majority
78 will decide the vote.

79 In summary, it is my observation that many of the recent concerns stem from a lack of
80 trust for the interviewing and hiring committees. This can not be tolerated. It is slowing
81 our process and creating rifts in our organization. We must work together toward a
82 common goal of excellence. Clearly this has been working or we would not have come
83 this far. Continued efforts at cooperation and collaboration will result in continued
84 improvement.

85 Thank you for your attention to this matter.

86 Sincerely,

87

88 Sheryl Kovalik

89 Chairperson

90

91 **From:** glodwhite@aol.com

92 **To:** skovalik@roadrunner.com ; rick.breton@wachoviasec.com ;
93 murphychaos@ncia.net ; wubr@verizon.net ; rekcreation@juno.com ;
94 goodoldstuff@myfairpoint.net

95 **Sent:** Monday, August 10, 2009 1:43 PM

96 **Subject:** Re: Memo from the Chair

97

98 Response to Memo from the Chair:

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100 "The Conway Policies clearly identify that we will hire the best available candidates
101 for open positions in our school district."

102 That is the reason I question the large percentage of hires in the past few months of
103 people who are not certified. Some of these candidates have never taught or have
104 never taken a course in teaching. In the case of those hired for teaching and/or
105 administration of special education, it is especially disconcerting to see lack of
106 qualifications. To have special education personnel that will need to "learn on the
107 job" put our children with special needs at risk. If a teacher does not have training in
108 how to work with students who have a wide variety of learning styles and limitations,
109 does not know how to write an IEP or identify accommodations and modifications
110 appropriate for the disability, then that child will not be receiving FAPE according to
111 the law.

112

113 Since I have become a board member, we have hired a High School Principal,
114 Special Education Director, Career and Technical Center Director, Eagle Academy
115 Coordinator, Special Education Coordinator. All have been hired without the

116 appropriate certification in place. The problem arises when you then hire unqualified
117 teachers who are being supervised and mentored by staff who do not have the
118 educational background to provide the training and supervision needed. I am not
119 saying that these are not wonderful, creative people who may do a superb job in
120 their positions. I am saying that it is very important to maintain the standards and
121 criteria that have been established.

122
123 As board members it is our responsibility to ensure that we hire highly qualified
124 teachers as defined by the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The criteria for "highly
125 qualified" educational personnel was established because of the inconsistencies in
126 certification and training of teachers in districts throughout the country. Alternative
127 certification programs were established for two main reasons: One was to help
128 people who were highly qualified in another field apply their knowledge to the
129 teaching profession and easily gain the skills needed to teach effectively, the other
130 was to help fill positions when there were no other certified candidates, as occurs in
131 rural areas or in critical shortage positions. Alternative certification programs were
132 never meant to totally replace or circumvent traditional college programs in teacher
133 /administrator education. Hiring a few personnel without the appropriate formal
134 education, training and experience does not compromise the system. Hiring a large
135 amount certainly can.

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137 "It is my observation that many of the recent concerns stem from a lack of trust for
138 the interviewing and hiring committees. This cannot be tolerated."

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140 My response to this comment is that questioning the qualifications of each candidate
141 who does not possess the appropriate certification is not an indication of a lack of
142 trust. It is an indication of an abundance of concern on the board member's part. It
143 is ultimately the board's responsibility to hire highly qualified staff. If candidates are
144 brought before us by the administration for our review and vote, then it is our
145 responsibility to question lack of qualifications.

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147 It would be extremely difficult and excessively cumbersome for us to contact Carl
148 and then meet with the chairperson of each interviewing committee prior to every
149 vote on personnel as the Chairperson has directed us to do in her memo. I propose
150 that if a candidate is not certified, then an explanation should be attached to each
151 proposal to hire. That way everyone gets the same information at the same time. If a
152 board member still feels that the candidate is unqualified, then a brief comment
153 before voting is appropriate. I agree that it is not appropriate to dissect someone's
154 resume in public. However, to simply say "I am going to vote against this candidate
155 because he/she is not certified and does not meet the criteria for a highly qualified
156 teacher" is very appropriate and lets the public know the reason for our vote.

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158 The bottom line is that the public, especially the parents of students in our schools,

159 have the right to know if each teacher and administrator is certified in the area for
160 which they are being hired, and whether they meet the standards and criteria set
161 forth in the job description for the position.

162

163 Respectfully submitted for public record,

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165 Syndi White

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168 **From:** Conway Village Antiques

169 **To:** Sheryl Kovalik ; Rick Breton ; Kelley Murphy ; Janine McLauchlan at the White
170 Mountain Board of Realtors ; Dick Klement ; glodwhite@aol.com

171 **Sent:** Thursday, August 06, 2009 8:31 PM

172 **Subject:** Re: Memo from the Chair

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174 Having served as Certification Chair for 16 years in Fryeburg for teacher certification, I
175 can't swallow the process and the applicants that have come forward this year in
176 Conway. Our community and students deserve better. When I saw the alternative 5
177 candidate for a general position (a general elementary position and only interviewing
178 two) and the special education candidates I had to air my dissatisfaction and objections
179 for using such a flawed process. I believe that it is our duty as board members to speak
180 our peace when valid concerns develop. I don't believe that many of the candidates
181 brought forward could possibly be "the best" candidates. In my opinion more often than
182 not in almost every case, a CERTIFIED candidate is a more "highly qualified" candidate
183 than someone who does not hold certification! In addition, the budget does take a hit
184 due to the fact that we have committed ourselves to providing the funds to get the
185 uncertified candidates up to standards. So although it may not increase our budget, it
186 certainly expends more of it than would otherwise be necessary. I don't feel the hiring
187 process should include individual board members calling principals. The nature of a
188 public session prior to hiring is a concern. I would suggest that any recommendation
189 putting anyone forward who requires an alternative certification be accompanied with a
190 letter stating why this person is the "most highly qualified." Although I do empathize
191 with those who are in the process of being hired, we are a public school with public
192 meetings. I think that the public has a right to know which teachers are certified and
193 which ones aren't and where the school board members stand on adherence to this
194 standard. Alternative certification should be a rare exception only under the most
195 critical conditions. I do not feel that this has been the case of late. I have forwarded
196 your memo and my response to Syndi White as you mistakenly sent it to Justin.

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198 Randy

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200 **4. Personnel**

201 **A. Consider Establishing 1:1 Sp. Ed. Aide Positions**

202 **Motion:** by Kelley, seconded by Dick, to consider positions as a group;
203 voting on them individually.

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1. **1:1 Sp. Ed. Aide at JFS** – Dick noted this is a 7 hour per day position. We offer ½ day kindergarten. The IEP is detailed enough so that it is requiring additional hours for this particular child. He wanted to note that all of the requisitions we are looking at tonight for these new positions were not included in the budget passed in April. Two of them are reimbursable to us from other districts but the total impact is in the \$180,000 range. Carl explained the time frame and how IEPs change in the spring that can come into play. Randy noted that 1:1 is the most restrictive. He was assuming that these were new students coming into the school system. Carl stated Brenda has outlined this in her memo. **6 in favor, 1 opposed (Dick), 0 opposed.** Dick asked where will we find the money for this. Carl stated that this is the question that the principals will now get asked to find within their budget. It may very well be that we have to tap the special ed reserve fund at the end of the year. There may be some other things happen as the school year goes on that may change. Dick asked if it is possible to get a list of how many we put on over the last “X” number of years and how many came off. He asked Maureen for this a couple of years ago but got a “fuzzy” answer. He feels this may give us some insight. Sheryl stated that that information in a vacuum will not be very helpful and we need to have some other benchmark to measure it against. For example, does the state track this number, is there a state average. If they don’t, how can we actually measure because the population changes. Without a benchmark it can be dangerous. Syndi stated the Special Ed Review Committee would be a good entity to look at this in terms of what are the needs, what are the trends, where are the missing pieces in staff development, etc.. Carl stated he will send this information over to Pam and see how she wants to pursue it.
 2. **Part-time 1:1 Sp. Ed. Aide at JFS – 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.**
 3. **Part-time 1:1 Sp. Ed Aide at KHS – 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.**
 4. **Part-time 1:1 Sp. Ed. Aide (Reimbursable) at KHS – 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.**
 5. **1:1 Sp. Ed. Aide (Reimbursable) at KHS - 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.**
 6. **1:1 Sp. Ed. Aide at KHS - 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.**
 7. **1:1 Sp. Ed. Aide at KHS** – Randy stated his comment on all of these is at the end of the school year these plans were put in place and we should have been notified in advance of August. **7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.**
 8. **1:1 Sp. Ed. Aide at KHS - 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.**
- B. Consider Regular Personnel Changes**

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1. FYI – Transfer of David Sedileau

Motion: by Rick, seconded by Janine, to review item 2 through 10 with the exception of 5 as it has been withdrawn.

2. Approval of Request for Child Care Leave (Melissa Cyr) - 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.

3. Accept Resignation of Doriene Micio –

Motion: by Dick, seconded by Randy, to amend letter to withdraw “with regret” due to the fact that the letter was written on July 28th.

Vote on amendment to Motion: 3 in favor (Dick, Rick, Randy), 4 opposed (Sheryl, Kelley, Janine, Syndi), 0 abstained.

Dick noted that we don’t have to approve this resignation, that we have the option to have the person stay until a replacement has been found for this person. Carl stated we do have that option but he talked with the principal and the principal would just as soon have us move on. Most of the time that is the way the principals feel. Once a person has decided that they are mentally somewhere else, it is best to let them move on. Carl noted that health insurance, dental insurance, and any courses that have been reimbursed for all come in to play and the person has to pay that back. This seems to be very successful.

Vote or original item: 4 in favor (Sheryl, Kelley, Syndi, Janine), 3 opposed (Dick, Randy, Rick), 0 abstained.

4. Election of Project SUCCEED Personnel for 2009-10 - 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.

5. Election of Frederick Bierweiler as Property Management Teacher at KHS (withdrawn)

6. Election of Gail Campbell as Family and Consumer Science

Teacher at KMS – Dick referred to Kelley on this for clarification of her qualifications. Kelley stated she previously taught at the middle school while a teacher was on leave of absence. She is familiar with the building. Kelley stated she came very highly recommended by the interviewing committee. She holds a teaching credential and this is just a content area change. Randy asked where are we going with the certification on this one. Is this an Alt 4? Kelley stated Family and Consumer Science is a critical shortage area. In the last 10 years of hiring we have not been able to find on first run a certified candidate. Randy asked if this is one of the programs that other schools are looking at eliminating as there is a critical shortage because schools are not offering it. Sheryl stated we should support the recommendation for hire as it is already in the schedule and ask the administrators to give us an opinion as to the long term value of this particular program. **6 in favor, 1 opposed (Randy), 0 abstained.**

- 290 **7. Consider Election of Rebecca Arthur as World Language**
291 **French/Spanish Teacher at KHS** – Randy stated his on-going
292 concern with the lack of experience of educators in this district is
293 phenomenal. **7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.**
- 294 **8. Consider Election of Denise Sachse as Math Teacher at KHS** – **7 in**
295 **favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.**
- 296 **9. Consider Election of Lowrie Robertson as 33% Music Teacher at**
297 **KHS** – **6 in favor, 1 opposed (Dick), 0 abstained.**
- 298 **10. Election of Summer of Learning Personnel** – Dick requested that
299 Brian Hastings be told that the board is not going to endorse this and
300 he will have to get these funds from somewhere else in his budget.
301 Sheryl instructed Carl to have a conversation with Brian Hastings.
302 **Motion:** by Rick, seconded by Sheryl, to amend the item to correct the
303 math. **Vote on amendment: 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.**
304 **Vote on item as amended: 6 in favor, 1 opposed (Dick), 0 abstained.**
- 305 **C. Consider Approval of Job Description for Vice Principal at KHS** –
306 **Motion:** by Kelley, seconded by Randy. **7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0**
307 **abstained.**
- 308 **D. Consider Approval of Job Description for Dean of Student at KHS** –
309 **Motion:** by Kelley, seconded by Randy, to review, discuss, and vote. **7**
310 **in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.**
- 311 **5. Presentation of School Programs/FYI Items**
- 312 **A. KHS Student Representative – None.**
- 313 **B. Principals’ and Directors’ Reports – None.**
- 314 **6. Public Comments** – **Lloyd Jones** (Conway Daily Sun) asked if Mr. Cole is
315 retiring as a math teacher. Carl stated he is continuing as a soccer coach. He
316 asked if anyone has been appointed to the CEA chairman position? Sheryl
317 stated no one has been appointed at this time but she will discuss this with them.
318 **Doug Swett** stated was very disappointed on the vote for drug testing new
319 teachers; it should have gone the other way. Doug referred to 4.B.3 where
320 somebody agreed to work and now they are leaving. Carl explained the Board’s
321 options. Sheryl also explained how this works. **Lloyd** stated at the last meeting
322 the board talked about joining a law suit and asked if this will this be discussed
323 later. He was asked to relay to the Board that Teletalk came back 30-0 in
324 support of joining the lawsuit.
- 325 **7. Old Business – None.**
- 326 **8. Instructional Issues**
- 327 **A. Consider First Reading of Revised Policies**
328 **Motion:** by Rick, seconded by Dick, to review each item individually.
- 329 **1. JLIF – Moving Violation** – Rick noted the second paragraph should
330 also include “student”. **7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.**
- 331 **2. IGD – Cocurricular and Extracurricular Programs** – **7 in favor, 0**
332 **opposed, 0 abstained.**

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3. EGA – Student Internet and Network Access – Dick thinks the students and the parents should be aware that these computers are school property. The students, nor staff, should expect any privacy in anything they do on these computers. **7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstained.**

B. NECAP/AYP Overview – Bob Godamski reported. He handed out a real basic overview to all board members. The overall good news is if you look at the mean scale scores from 2005 to 2009 in the area of reading, math and writing, every single school at every single grade level has demonstrated growth. **Conway EI** – when looking at NECAP results, the goal is to move all students into level three and level four. The mean scale score for Conway EI in writing is 15 points higher than the state. Reading has shown phenomenal growth throughout the district in the last few years. Math is coming along. They put in a new math program in the elementary schools. They expected an implementation lag, but there has not been much of a lag. Conway EI - level 1 under reading, there are two grade levels with no students in level one; this is amazing. **John Fuller** - reading mean scale scores are above state average. Math scores were a bit lower but on 1 and 2 points mean scale scores below the state. Writing is the same mean scale score as the state. **Pine Tree** – there are no students at reading level one, this is phenomenal. In grade six 88% of the kids are at level three and four. Grade six in math, 91% of kids are in level three and four. Middle School reading, 7th and 8th grade, is 1 point above state and 4 points above state on mean scale score. Great job on performance. They didn't make AYP because of attendance rate. Randy is in hopes that what he sees as a board member when the sixth graders go to the middle school, these scores don't decrease. Bob addressed that 7th grade was 1 point above state and 8th grade was 4 points above state. Syndi has been doing a lot of research on it is not unusual to see scores dip as children go into middle school. **KHS** reading mean scale +3 over state, math +2 over state, and writing continues to go up. **Middle School** scores are much, much higher. Bob stated you need to be very careful in comparing high school to elementary. Randy noted that sending town's students NECAP scores are low in 9th grade. Some are not coming in as prepared as other students in the district. Perhaps due to curriculum and what is being delivered. Sheryl stated they are aware of this and they are watching this carefully. Coordinating with the two SAUs is important and difficult work. Bob then reported on **AYP** – The target numbers keep going up every other year. It gets harder and harder to meet target number. 2008 and 2009 performance, **Conway EI** improved their target number in every category. Conway EI made AYP for the second year in a row

376 so they are now off School in Need of Improvement. **John Fuller** a
377 couple of areas down 10ths of percent reading, most of their areas
378 have gone up. Education disability levels in math rose 6.5 points.
379 John Fuller is in year one of School in Need of Improvement due to
380 math. **Pine Tree** - all scores are going up. Math stayed pretty much
381 the same. **The Middle School** missed AYP because the participation
382 rate was on 94% and 88%, it needed to be 95%. We need to do a
383 better job at getting kids to do make up test and get their percentage.
384 Sheryl asked if there are programs at the middle school to encourage
385 attendance. Carl stated we just need to track the kids who are not
386 there for the test and make them take it. **High School** was the same,
387 test scores were excellent but missed target due to attendance by 1%.

388 **9. Business Affairs**

389 **A.** Consider Approving Donation of Labor and Equipment to Remove Dirt
390 Pile from Kennett to Pine Tree

391 **Motion:** Janine, seconded by Dick. **7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0**
392 **abstained.**

393 **10. Administrators' Reports** – There is an SAU Executive Board meeting on
394 Thursday, August 13th at 6:30 in the SAU office. Teachers are back on August
395 31st; students return on September 3rd. K8 Study Committee will meeting on
396 August 25th at 3:30 in the SAU office.

397 **11. Board Members' Issues – Board Discussion**

398 **Rick** noted the Mineral Springs area still looks like a field and we approved
399 money planting and cleanup. Carl stated he thinks Neal is waiting for property
400 management students to take part in this. Rick asked who is responsible for
401 mowing lawns back to 302. Carl stated this is part of the contract with the town.
402 Rick asked how often this is done. Dick stated he has spoken to the town and
403 Jim. The contract with them is to plow the roads and do general work. Dick
404 specifically asked Jim to go to the town and ask them to cut the grass the week
405 before graduation and the week before school starts. We need to have a
406 meeting and decide if we are going to pay them to cut that grass it is not in our
407 agreement. Carl will take some action with this. **Dick** asked where we stand on
408 the insurance claim on roof? Carl stated our attorney has a meeting set to get
409 everybody under one roof to discuss this and then if there is an agreement, he
410 will have a figure. **Randy** stated he has been big on certification this summer.
411 He would like to see that it goes back into the contracts that credit toward
412 meeting initial teaching certification will not be reimbursed by this district. This
413 was dropped in 2006-07 and he doesn't know why it was done. Carl stated these
414 particular items should not be discussed at this time; this is something that the
415 board members need to relay this to each other and have a discussion in non-
416 public session. Sheryl stated the negotiating team will do their best.

417 **A. Committee Reports – None.**

418 **12. Public Comments** – Lloyd asked if the board or Carl and Bob been able to do
419 research on tracking the number of drop outs that have to returned to school.
420 Carl stated there were about 9, two of them have almost aged out but a plan is in
421 place to pursue those individuals and bring them back into the school setting in
422 one form or another. Syndi asked if Bob has a report on the AP scores? Bob
423 stated he does not have them but he can get them.

424 **13. Nonpublic Session – RSA 91-A:3 II for Personnel and Student Matters**

425 **Motion:** by Janine, seconded by Rick, in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II, to go
426 into non-public session. By roll call vote, all in favor.

427 **The Board entered into non-public session at 8:02 p.m.**

428

429 Nonpublic Session Minutes

430

431 A parent/student request was discussed.

432

433 A personnel issue was discussed.

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435 **A motion was made by Kelley Murphy, seconded by Janine McLauchlan, to**
436 **return to Public Session and adjourn. The motion passed unanimously at 8:12**
437 **p.m.**

438

439 Respectfully Submitted,

440

441 Xann Teryek

442 Recording Secretary