

***DRAFT – This minutes will be voted on at the 9/24/08 Meeting  
Durham, Freeport, & Pownal  
Reorganization Planning Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
September 3, 2008  
Pownal Elementary School~Pownal***

***Members Present:*** , Allan Purinton, Jennifer Kaplan, Laurie Poissonnier, Rick White, Cliff Ruprecht, Nelson Larkins, Fred Palmer, Rhonda O’Shea, Tim Giddinge, John Gleason, Sherry Dietrich

***Advisors Present:*** Shannon Welsh, Superintendent of Schools, Durham; Elaine Tomaszewski, Superintendent of Schools, Freeport and MSAD #62.

***Also Present:*** Bob Kautz, Facilitator; Cathy Messmer, Business Manager, Durham, Diane Boucher, Business Manager, Freeport/MSAD #62, and 3 members of the public

***Not Present:*** Amber Snell, Paul Schumann, Wesley Bennett

- The meeting convened at 7:02 pm.
- The previous meeting minutes were reviewed and accepted.
- There were no questions asked from the previous meeting.
- It was asked if there were any public comments and/or questions. It was stated the Freeport School Committee voted unanimously to put the referendum on the ballot in November and it was hoped there would be detailed information regarding consolidation given to the public to make an informed decision
- The letter from the Commissioner regarding the review of the Plan was discussed. There was some discussion regarding the school choice recommendations from the commissioner. Some deletion of the wording for school choice was recommended. It was stated that all revisions would be voted on as a whole once discussed. It was explained that Attachment 7 would be updated and submitted as well. # 12 was discussed and stated that it needed more detail. The draft language was read and discussed. It was asked if the Commissioner gave a level of what would be acceptable for revisions. It was explained there were quite a few different people at the DOE that would review the Plan in pieces. It was asked what would happen if the RPC left the Plan the way it is. It was stated it was already asked for more detail. #13 was discussed and what the recommendations asked was to delete specific wording which was the same as Item 1. It was asked what if the wording was deleted and one of the towns rescinded the decision to give up choice did the other towns have recourse. It was believed that the other towns would have grounds for recourse. It was explained that Freeport and Durham do not currently have a contract and that Durham students have the right to continue with the school they currently attend which was agreed upon by both towns. #13A changes were read and discussed. It was stated the language was stated differently from any of the other pieces of the Plan. It was stated this piece sounded like appeasement. It was explained the public will get more

information and the review was what the Commissioner has required for information. The wording also gave some support of what analysis has been done within the RPC discussions. It was stated the revised wording was consistent with what the RPC has done so far. #13d was discussed. There was some explanation about legal issues surrounding school choice and how the titles should be changed to reflect it. The changes were read and discussed. It was explained most of the changes were paraphrased from the recommendation letter. There was no disagreement on the changes. The submittal page would then be resigned and the Plan sent back to the Commissioner with the revisions. The changes recommended were accepted by the consensus of the committee.

- There was a question asked about why there it was recommended that the RPC have the lawyers review the Plan when it had already been accomplished. It was stated that this was to just reiterate this should be done and the submittal letter were state that it was accomplished previously.

- The Communications Subcommittee recommendations were reviewed by Laurie, Laurie, Nelson, and Rhonda made up this subcommittee. Public forums were recommended with a power point and handouts to inform voters. It was stated each town should have a meeting and then also have meetings with parent groups. A FAQ sheet should be given by each subcommittee and mailed to townspeople. All meeting dates should be listed. It was recommended that all information sheets should be posted within the town at designated places. It was recommended there could be a website for the RPC to access information. There were other recommendations for other ways to inform the public. There was question about how much money was available for printing and mailing costs. It was explained there are no additional funds available. The amount left was not exactly known, but it was requested the amount be communicated to the RPC. It was stated that bulk mailing is quite expensive. It was suggested the information could be sent electronically within the schools to emails. It was stated that Durham's mailings would be about \$300 which they have done in the past. There may not be enough money to mail out the FAQs for each town. There was discussion about funding and what pieces could be funded. It was asked if The Forecaster allowed this kind of information to be posted freely. Amy Anderson stated she would check into this. It was recommended that some of the questions be put within the mailing and state where answers were posted within communities. It was stated it would be best for Freeport to find the money to mail the information to their townspeople. Public forums will be televised and repeated. It was asked what the process would be for the approval of the FAQ sheets. This would be discussed later in the meeting. It was asked what the timelines would be. It was explained the timelines would need to be followed and each date would be firm. Some decisions would need to be made during the meeting. The website was discussed and it was explained the KIDS RSU had a website that could be used as a model. It was recommended within each school website there would be link to the RPC website. It was asked when the mailings would go out. It was stated mailings should be done

as soon as possible if the forums are to be held in October. It was stated the Subcommittee needed to be complete by having 2 members added from each community and the subcommittee would be working through the rest of September and October. There was some discussion regarding dates for the public forums which are required for the referendum. It was explained that at least one public forum had to fall within 10 days before of the referendum. The public notice also needs to be sent. FAQ sheets from each Subcommittee should be ready by the first week of October. It was recommended that all information could be sent in one mailing. It was explained that recognizing that time needs to be set aside for discussing the composition of recommendations it was important to get the new community members of the Subcommittee chosen quickly. It was suggested that maybe the whole RPC be on the subcommittee. It was stated it would be critical to have 2 townspeople serve from each community with such a sensitive topic. This will also give fresh perspective to the project. It was recommended that rather than go through the posting maybe there people that are known that would be able to persuade to join. It was stated this idea may have the perception of the Subcommittee being biased. It was asked if the new members would have the responsibility of presenting at the forums or just to be a new and fresh face to give input to the Plan and public perception. It was explained it would be important to have more support. It was discussed that it would be difficult for new people to come in and understand the Plan within such a short amount of time. It was stated the objective should be to get accurate information out to the public first. Anything the group can do to show that they are being objective will help. It was explained it would be good to get a new perspective to help with this process. It was stated the new incoming members would not necessarily be asked to present Finance information at the forums for an example. It was explained it will be nice to have new incoming members help give the public a view of understanding and it would be good to broaden the composition. It would be up to the RPC members to present the factual elements of the Plan. It was suggested that each community be responsible to recruit new members for the Subcommittee. The recommendations are that new members would exclude school committee members, town council members and selectmen. It was suggested the new members needed to be selected by the following Monday. There was discussion within the members of the RPC of how these members would be solicited and also informed about the Plan and how to communicate meetings. There was also some discussion about having Subcommittee meetings before the RPC meetings. There was discussion about what the RPC would need to meet about in the future. It was suggested there be a Communications Subcommittee meeting on Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> and at that time each community present their choices to the Subcommittee. The RPC would then meet on Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>. The selection criterion for new members was discussed. It was recommended the criteria be a person who is responsible, fair and trustworthy. It was recommended the public information be presented objectively. It was suggested the members be willing to work to have the information presented

understandably to the public and allow them to make their own decisions. The committee was in agreement this is what should be expected from the new members and how information should be relayed to the public. There was more discussion about what should be objectively presented. It was suggested the members selected should have some background in public presentation as well as the criteria that was recommended by the subcommittee. It was suggested the deadline for the selection of new members be Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>. It was suggested that each community decide how to solicit members by caucusing after the RPC meeting. It was the consensus of the committee that each town would caucus afterwards. There was some discussion on the Communication Subcommittee meeting on September 17<sup>th</sup>. There was a concept discussed that Finance information should be viewed by an outside source. It was asked if it was feasible to do this. It was explained that Jim Rier from the State had reviewed the Finance information and felt it appropriate. It was suggested that Scott Poulin from Freeport be approached to review the cost model as a 3<sup>rd</sup> party just to verify the information. It was stated it would be a good idea to have the information reviewed. It was stated that the views will not change the decisions made by the RPC. It was agreed this would be a beneficial idea if there were no costs. It was also suggested the Finance Managers within the communities view the information. It was also suggested that Jake Clockadile from the State, Scott Poulin and the Freeport Finance Manager all review the information. Specific members of the RPC took the responsibility to contact these people to review the conclusions of the cost methods. It was suggested that anyone who reviewed the information attend the next RPC meeting on September 24<sup>th</sup> to give their views. It was stated the RPC members be informed of who reviewed the cost sharing methods. The recommendations of having a mascot and high school naming were set aside. The concepts were of the Communication Subcommittee were reviewed and there was a consensus the RPC was comfortable to have the subcommittee move on with their plans.

- John read the copy of his draft language to add to future letter to the Commissioner regarding the education subcommittee. It was explained at the last meeting there was a general sense this language should be presented in a cover letter to the commissioner and as a public statement. It was explained that the word “dedicated” was used in a general sense. It was the consensus of the committee to include this statement to the cover letter to the Commissioner and as a public statement.

- Future timeline was discussed. It was stated the future RPC meetings would be September 24<sup>th</sup> in Durham which was decided earlier and October 1<sup>st</sup> in Freeport.

- The frequently asked questions were discussed briefly. It was suggested that suggestions or questions should be emailed to the subcommittees and then the communications subcommittee would review them at their next meeting. All comments or suggestions or suggested changes should be replied to all RPC members. The subcommittee members would be responsible to address those issues. Each member of the communications subcommittee would take

| responsibility to pull together the faqs after the suggestions were given.  
• The meeting adjourned at 9:03pm.

Respectfully submitted by S.Brewer 9.21.08