

R. J. Grey Junior High School Council  
Summary of Minutes  
April 11, 2006

The R. J. Grey Junior High School Council met on Tuesday, April 11, 2006. In attendance were Craig Hardimon, Francesca Ricciardi, Kathleen McDonagh, Karyn Finamore, Celeste Margolius, Jeanne Goulet and Pat Higgins. March minutes were revised and accepted.

Craig Hardimon gave his Principal's Report:

**Project Wellness** was held on March 15, 2006 at Merrimack College and it was a success. The PW Steering Committee will meet to review participant's survey results and begin planning for next year.

**MCAS testing** occurred March 27 – April 5, 2006. Attendance was high and students and parents were very cooperative. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires that the tests be administered in a particular order which poses a challenge in the administration of it. The final testing session of this academic year will occur from May 15 – May 19, 2006.

**Running in the hallways**, while always an issue at this age, has increased. Craig held two grade-level assemblies where he addressed safety concerns and reiterated the expectation that students behave in a safe and respectful manner at school. The students have responded well.

**7th Grade Dance** was held on March 24. The school plans to work more closely with representatives from Danny's Place to coordinate the scheduling of social events because there was a conflict of events that evening.

**Information Session** for sixth grade parents will be held April 26 from 7-8:30 P.M. The following week, interested parents will had an opportunity to tour R.J. Grey.

**New England Association of Schools and Colleges ("NEASC")** has notified RJ Grey that R.J. Grey is scheduled for a ten year re-evaluation. The New England League of Middle Schools ("NELMS") also provides schools with a process of self-improvement and involves an evaluation process similar to that conducted by NEASC. RJ Grey just recently, 2004, went through the NELMS process. The key difference between NEASC and NELMS is that NELMS' process is specifically designed for middle schools. Craig noted that undertaking any evaluation program, while beneficial, involves intensive commitment and significant time from the faculty and staff. He emphasized that NELMS recommendations are being actively addressed. Undertaking a new evaluation process would impact our current momentum. Craig recommended that R.J. Grey forgo the NEASC process and focus on our own customized process for self-study and evaluation. Central administrative and JH leadership has accepted his recommendation.

**Advisory Program** status was provided by Pat Higgins. The goals of the program include: every student known well by at least one staff member; giving students a sense of belonging; enhancing communication, connections and relationships between staff and students; and facilitating problem solving. Certified staff would be trained advisors for the program. Students and advisors would meet for forty (40) minutes once a week. Each class and lunch would be shortened on that day. This program could be considered an additional class for certified staff and could violate the spirit, if not the letter, of the teachers' contract. If staff supports the advisory program, the teachers' association would draft a letter for the contract. If the program is endorsed by the faculty, curriculum development and training could occur next year. Initially, advisory groups would likely be organized by team, although it was recognized that this was not ideal and it would be better for a student to have an advisor off team.

The next School Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 9, 2006.