Ms. Patterson opened the meeting and requested that Ms. Ardinger and Mr. Dunn serve as committee members to ensure a quorum. Both agreed.

Three policies were discussed, and the committee unanimously voted to recommend that the full board move forward with all three, as follows:

1. Policy #713, Anti-Idling
Business Administrator Michele Croteau reviewed the Anti-Idling policy. Adoption of this policy is one of the actions the Board is taking to qualify for CHPS certification for the new elementary school buildings. There were no additional changes made to the policy, so it will go before the full Board at the November meeting for a second reading and consideration for approval.

2. Policy #424.4 Unpaid Leaves of Absence
Director of Human Resources Larry Prince reviewed the policy on unpaid leaves of absence. This policy had a first reading at the August 2011 meeting and was referred back to the Communications Committee for further review and revision. Several changes were made to the policy, including clarifying that the School Board will make the decision about unpaid leaves of absence upon recommendation of the Superintendent, and that unpaid leaves will not ordinarily be considered equivalent to teaching experience for salary advancement purposes.

3. Teacher Evaluation Policy
Legislation passed in the last session of the NH legislature, Senate Bill 196, requires NH School Boards to adopt a teacher evaluation policy. Superintendent Chris Rath reviewed the three statutes, relating to a district’s decision not to re-nominate or re-elect a teacher, that were amended by Senate Bill 196. The changes to the original statutes include changing the number of years a teacher must teach in a district before being given the right to a hearing and the reasons for non-renewal; eliminating the requirements in the statute that a district notify a teacher in writing that performance is unsatisfactory, that failure to correct deficiencies may lead to non-renewal and that the teacher be given a reasonable opportunity to correct deficiencies prior to non-renewal; clarifying that establishing the criteria for non-renewal rests in the sole discretion of the
school board and that “teacher” means any professional employee of any school district whose position requires certification as a professional engaged in teaching.

In addition, Senate Bill 196 amended RSA 273:A-4, that requires collective bargaining agreements to have workable grievance procedures, by adding that no grievance resulting from non-renewal will be subject to arbitration or any other binding resolution. If a collective bargaining agreement has a binding arbitration provision, that provision is null and void at the expiration of that contract. The amended law does not prohibit a Board from negotiating a binding arbitration clause into the collective bargaining agreement, but provides that any binding arbitration clause in an agreement becomes null and void at the end of that contract.

The Committee reviewed and revised the draft policy provided by the New Hampshire School Boards Association. The Teacher Evaluation Policy will be presented for a first reading at the November School Board meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Patterson, Chair
Christine Rath, Superintendent, Recorder