

School

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would make it significantly easier to address the issues with the vendor.

In another matter, Julia Held of the school panel, gave the first reading of the Jamestown School Department's proposed Policy on Bullying and Cyber bullying. Following the reading, School Committee member William Brennan questioned

whether the policy was an expansion of the Rhode Island state laws on bullying. Held pointing out that the law, in fact, mandates that each school department have a policy on bullying. Whitehouse concurred saying that the policy represented "parameters not procedures." The issue of whether or not the policy should include adults or whether it should be specific to children was also raised. Kallfelz expressed concern that students have a policy

for addressing potential abuses by adults. Whitehouse said that there are numerous policies and laws in place to address any potential abuses by adults. The committee agreed to keep the bullying policy specific to children. Another reading of the policy will be given at the next meeting.

Another significant concern for the School Committee during Thursday's meeting concerned the possible overcrowding of buses.

Director of Student Services Robert Fricklas offered his report on the current status of the busses and indicated that the busses should not be overcrowded. It is possible that some students are not riding their assigned bus, he said, but rather are opting to walk to another stop in or

der to board a bus with a later departure time. If that is occurring, he said, it would account for the reports of overcrowding. Several methods of insuring that students ride their assigned busses were discussed. The committee agreed to continue to monitor the situation.

Smoke alarms save lives when batteries are fresh

The Rhode Island Association of Fire Chiefs (RI-AFC) is urging Rhode Islanders to change the batteries in their smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors when they turn back their clocks this fall. Clocks should be turned back one hour at 2 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 2.

In 25 percent of the reported fires in homes equipped with smoke alarms, the devices did not work, most often because of missing, disconnected or dead batteries. Smoke alarms that are properly installed and maintained play a vital role in reducing the number of deaths and injuries, and have contributed to a nearly 50-percent decrease in fire deaths since the late 1970s.

In partnership with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the RIAFC offers the following tips regarding smoke alarms:

Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home.

Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.

Test smoke alarms at least monthly by pushing the test button.

If cooking fumes or steam sets off nuisance alarms, replace the alarm with one that has a "hush" button. A "hush" button will reduce the alarm's sensitivity for a short period of time.

Smoke alarms that include a recordable voice announcement in addition to the usual alarm sound, may be helpful in waking children through the use of a familiar voice.

According to the NFPA, nearly 900 lives could be saved each year if all homes had working smoke alarms.

For information on smoke alarms and creating an escape plan, call your local fire station or log onto www.nfpa.org.



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