

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
OCT. 14, 2008**

School Board Members Present:

Peter Mello
Wayne Cooke
Richard Courcelle
Roberta Dress
Collin Fingon
Peter Forshay
Gina Fucci
Karen Gartner
Cindy Kilic-Murray

Member Absent

Christopher Book
Peter Fagan
Nicholas Ouelette

Also Present:

Superintendent Mary Moran
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
Peter Folaros
Peter Amons
Wil Cunningham
Bob Johnson
Paula Albro
Ellie McGarry
Kristen Hubert
Robin Browne
Lyle Jepson
Patricia Aigner

Motion by Gartner/Forshay to convene to executive session at 6:15 pm for the purpose of discussing personnel matters, the premature release of information regarding those subjects which would place the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Unanimously passed by those in attendance.

**EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

**PUBLIC
SESSION**

The Board came out of executive session at 6:50 pm.

ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Mello noted the absence of Commissioners Book, Fagan and Student Representative Ouelette

**MOTION:
MINUTES
9/23/08
MEETING**

Motion by Gartner/Fingon to accept the minutes of the Sept. 23, 2008 regular school board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**WRITTEN
COMMUN-
ICATION**

Written Communication - None

**ORAL
COMMUN-
ICATION**

Oral Communication - None

CAP Future Planning - Assistant Superintendent Bliss said the Curriculum, Assessment and Professional Development (CAP) Committee met last month and focused on the Action Plans, which are being presented this evening. The bigger question for the committee will be "What is its purpose?" and "How can it be more supportive?" Given the rise of professional development coaches and department heads, the committee does not serve the basic curriculum oversight that it used to. They hope to focus on the bigger questions in the future. Commissioners Dress, Kilic-Murray and Gartner serve on the CAP committee as well as some teacher leaders, administrators, and two community members. Ms. Moran said the committee has now taken on more of an advisory role.

**EDUCATION
REPORT**

**CAP
EDUCATION
REPORT**

**SCHOOL
ACTION
PLANS**

School Action Plans (Part I) - Mr. Bliss said tonight and next meeting will feature the building principals presenting their Action Plans. They will be highlighting some of the pieces of their Plans. Eventually the Plans will require Board approval. Mr. Johnson and Ms. Hubert presented

the primary Action Plans and shared some of the initiatives at their grade levels. Mr. Johnson discussed the goal / strategy / vision of a co-teaching / inclusionary instructional approach. Ms. Hubert explained the new Student Support Team (SST) model and said it is working very well so far. A goal for the new team is to see a reduction in the number of referrals. Ms. Hubert also reviewed the expansion of technology at the elementary schools including new equipment, software, and training. Commissioner Cooke commended the technology initiative and said Smart Boards are invaluable to the classroom. Ms. Hubert said Patricia Aigner has been fabulous in helping with this goal and staff training. Mr. Bliss said Ms. Aigner and the Technology Committee have been very helpful with setting up technology standards.

Ms. Albro presented the Rutland Intermediate School Action Plan. She said some initiatives are ongoing from last year, such as continuing with the technology equipment plan. Some classrooms have Smart Boards and more are being installed. This is the second year using the Renaissance Assessment software. The use of Math and Literacy Resource teachers continues. The two subgroups identified on the AYP as being in need, the free and reduced count students and those with disabilities, are working with tutors in small groups. A homework club will be starting and many students are involved with other after school programs. Ms. Albro said they are fine-tuning the enrichment block to make it more successful.

Ms. Albro reviewed some of the new initiatives at RIS. There has been training for teacher leaders in learning how to analyze data. There is a data team, which is accumulating information to bring to a three-day retreat being held in November, is a response to the Commissioner's Required Actions. After the retreat, they hope to focus on a few pieces of data in order to inform instruction. Two other new initiatives include implementing four blocks – the framework for the literacy program, and expanding the co-teaching model – similar to the K-2 team approach.

Mr. Mello thanked the building principals for their work on their Action Plans. Mr. Mello said the Board has taken steps to more effectively communicate with the public. Some of the most effective school - home relations happen at the building levels. He said there could be some effective partnerships at these levels which could be included in the Action Plans.

Act 68 Presentation - Ms. Moran said this is a review of the education funding system. Mr. Amons said the materials are distributed by the State and some pieces are included with tax bills. The State's purpose is to explain exactly how each school district's tax rate is formulated and also to help high spending school districts moderate their spending. The model presented shows that Rutland City's spending per pupil is below the state average. Mr. Amons explained the model and how the figures are computed. He also showed an example of the school property tax for a residence and two acres. 70% of Rutland City taxpayers are eligible for some kind of benefit from the income tax cap. He said that towns' tax rates are also dependent on their common level of appraisal – how close tax appraisals are compared to fair market values.

Mr. Amons explained how the Rutland City education tax rate is determined. Every method available to raise revenue helps to lower our cost per pupil. Ms. Moran said there are concerns about cuts in the federal government budgets, such as the program which funds the Tapestry program. These program cuts hurt students and she said we are continuing with political action to help preserve those funding sources. Mr. Bliss said as students get older, families do not tend to fill out the paperwork for the free-and-reduced-meal benefit. He reminded families that if they

are having a hard time economically, they should fill out the paperwork and see if they qualify for the benefit. It also generates revenue for the school district. Mr. Amons explained the state's cash flow sheet – how much money the community will collect from its taxpayers to pay into the education fund. Rutland City receives more than we pay. He said this determination is made because the City has a high percentage of non-taxable property relative to the number of children in the schools. Mr. Amons said education funding is not like regular municipal funding. If the school district cuts the budget by \$1, it will save the state education fund \$1 but will save Rutland City taxpayers only \$.23.

**ACT 68
PRESENT-
ATION, cont.**

Motion by Cooke/Courcelle to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 391 dated Oct. 10, 2008, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

**MOTION:
PERSONNEL
MEMO 391**

The non-licensed appointments were reviewed by Superintendent Moran. They are attached.

Motion passed by all those in attendance.

**BUSINESS
REPORT**

Business Report - None

**SUPERIN-
TENDENT'S
REPORT**

Announcements

- Congratulations to everyone for the terrific Oct. 8 walk-to-school event. She read a letter of thanks from Mr. Bliss to the Rutland City Police Department for all their help and support. Hundreds of students walked to school that day. Parents have been surveyed as part of the Safe Routes to School committee and data is being collected on the initiative.
- Parent conferences will be held next week.
- The Northwest/Pierpoint fall festival will be happening this Friday. Northeast's was held today. High school students are helping out.
- At RMS, NECAP testing for grades 7-8 ends this week. Students have been taking testing seriously and parents have been asked to support the children.

**ANNOUNCE-
MENTS**

Pension Committee - Commissioner Fingon said the committee met with the joint Alderboard Committee and completed an audit of the pension fund, something which has not been done for ten years. A maximum spending for upcoming negotiations was approved. At the end of the month, Prudential, the investment advisors, will give a review to the Committee of how the fund has performed.

**COMM.
REPORTS**

**PENSION
COMM.**

**POLICY
COMM.**

Policy Committee - 6000 Series - Personnel - Second Reading

**MOTION:
APPROVE
6000
POLICIES
FOR
SECOND
READING**

Motion by Gartner/Forshay to recommend approval for second reading the following Policies from the Personnel (6000) Section of the Policy Manual: 6110, 6120, 6131, 6140, 6150, 6170, 6200, 6351, 6410, 6420, 6440.

Mr. Bliss reviewed the 6000 series and the adjustments made from the Policy Committee recommendations as well as input from the last Board meeting.

Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

Ms. Moran thanked the committee and Mr. Bliss for his assistance.

New Business

Information Task Force - Mr. Mello said Board members have the advantage of receiving a lot of information about the budget and how it is developed. He proposed the formation of a task force of Board members to provide leadership in informing the public about the budget. The group will be designed to inform employees, parents, and community members with as much information as possible so they could make informed decisions. He asked the committee to keep the Board informed on a regular basis and to include other Board members as needed. He said the committee will utilize administrators as advisors. Mr. Mello said he has asked Commissioners Fucci, Kilic-Murray, and Dress to serve on the task force.

**NEW
BUSINESS

INFORMA-
TION TASK
FORCE**

Old Business

Mr. Mello reviewed upcoming board meetings.

**OLD
BUSINESS

MEETING
SCHEDULE**

Mr. Fingon announced that on Oct. 31, after the Halloween Parade, the Fieldhouse will be holding a teen night.

**FIELD-
HOUSE
HOSTING
TEEN
NIGHT**

Mr. Fingon said RHS Girls Varsity soccer team won today and it was Coach Lori McCallen's 100th career win.

**SPORTS
UPDATE**

Motion by Gartner/Kilic-Murray to adjourn at 8:35 pm.

ADJOURN

Respectfully submitted

Janet Mondlak
Recording Secretary