

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS  
FEBRUARY 9, 2010**

**School Board Members Present:**

Peter Mello  
 Christopher Book  
 Hurley Cavacas, Jr.  
 Wayne Cooke  
 Richard Courcelle  
 Roberta Dress  
 Peter Fagan  
 Peter Forshay (6:45 pm)  
 Cindy Kilic-Murray  
 Rob Towle  
 Daniel Wigmore  
**Member Absent**  
 Colin Fingon

**Also Present:**

Superintendent Mary Moran  
 Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss  
 Peter Amons  
 Wil Cunningham  
 Lyle Jepson  
 Ellie McGarry  
 Bill Olsen  
 Bob Johnson  
 Jay Slenker  
 Christy Coloutti  
 Kristen Hubert  
 Susanne Engels  
 Jessica Henderson  
 Andrea McQuade  
 Larry Lattanzi  
 Glenn Olson  
 Ted Guilmette  
 Patricia Aigner  
 Cathy Farman  
 Kristin Francoeur

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Mello noted all Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioners Fingon and Forshay

**CALL TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

Motion by Towle / Kilic-Murray to accept the minutes of the Jan. 19, 2010 regular school board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously.

**MOTIONS:  
MINUTES  
1/19/10  
MEETING  
AND  
1/26/10  
RETREAT**

Motion by Cavacas / Fagan to accept the minutes of the board retreat meeting of January 26, 2010 as written. Motion passed unanimously.

**WRITTEN &  
ORAL  
COMMUN-  
ICATION**

Written Communication - None

Oral Communication - Mr. Mello said a commemorative proclamation received from the Vermont Senate and House of Representatives and which will hang in the RHS Guidance office, was received. Clerk Courcelle read the Resolution in Memory of Joseph Flory and Mr. Mello presented the commemoration to Principal Bill Olsen.

**PROCLA-  
MATION IN  
MEMORY  
OF JOSEPH  
FLORY**

Mr. Olsen congratulated Adam Rosenberg who received a Fulbright Award to study the German education system this summer. He said in addition, Mr. Rosenberg has been part of the leadership of the school transformation team at RHS which just received a \$100,000 Rowland Grant. It will allow a teacher to go on sabbatical for a semester and study school transformation. Mr. Rosenberg said the grant was the effort of the Vision

**ADAM  
ROSENBERG  
FULBRIGHT  
AND  
ROWLAND  
GRANT**

Quest team. He thanked the Board and administration for their support. He explained the Rowland Award saying it is financed privately and is available for Vermont teachers to support their efforts in improving public schools, working toward collaborative efforts and school climate.

Retreat Follow-Up - Mr. Mello summarized the outcomes and recommendations which resulted from the Board retreat. The goal was to create an environment where Board members could increase their meaningfulness. They looked at what they do well, their challenges, and action steps to take. Mr. Mello reviewed the action steps proposed:

- Twice a year the Board should develop its agenda for their meetings deciding upon the topics they would like to see discussed. Board members were asked to inform the leadership team of these topics.
- Mr. Mello said of the topics which are regularly placed on the agenda, only the audit report is required to be discussed. He asked for other input and said at the Feb. 23 meeting, the topic for discussion will be co-teaching. Other topics offered:
  - Action plan results starting with RHS. Where have we not been able to succeed? Should we look at redirecting resources? NECAP results.
  - Special education. Help Board members understand special education: requirements, diagnostics, intervention tools, and technology. How does special education impact the classroom and effect the other students?
  - Financial: How are contingency funds? Stimulus funds? Other types of discretionary funding?.
  - Student information system. What are we doing with our data as we move to a state information system?
  - Farm-to-school program; nutritious food; community garden; alternatives to consider as we go out to bid in March.
  - Adult education information.
  - Building reports; status of our buildings; non-student buildings and review of their cost-efficiency.
  - Principal reports; either to be discussed at a special retreat or round-robin. Principals to highlight what is going on in each of their buildings. Perhaps a combined retreat. "Leader feature" at the board meetings. What does a typical day for a teacher look like?

Ms. Moran asked if there were any topics already stated on the list which Board members wanted to skip. A Board member said he did not like the group book read. At the next meeting, there will be a discussion of co-teaching and the audit report. It was suggested that Job Description Reviews could be included just for information. Ms. Moran said they are coming as updates in batches and are part of the Policy Committee manual. It was requested that a report be given on Success School.

Mr. Mello restated the Board's position on student achievement being a top priority. He said there should be a variety of assessments including summative assessments and formative assessments. The Board would like the leadership team to report in a few months on how our students have done over the last three years. Over time, the standardized data should reflect the programs in the schools. Are the programs successful? The NECAPs do not track individual students although other data does. He said the Board is not suggesting high-stakes testing but should be asking if there are

things which could be improved. If we are tracking and not being successful over time, what should we stop doing? How can we re-allocate resources in looking at student achievement? Mr. Mello said the Board is interested in student achievement, progress, and evidence. The Board likes to support teachers. He asked for a report on data over the past three years to be discussed at an upcoming Board meeting. Mr. Mello read an article about the NECAP data results from Rhode Island. He said the Board would like to stay informed and share the accountability with teachers. Commissioner Cavacas asked if the Board can see statewide NECAP comparables and Ms. Moran said some of that data is being prepared although the scores are not designed to be compared. Mr. Cavacas said some schools have taken an innovative approach to testing which has increased scores. Ms. Moran said that discussion is tentatively scheduled for the March 9 meeting and will include that type of information.

NECAP Preliminary Report - Mr. Bliss said he included a very preliminary update on the NECAP results. The results are from the fall 2009 tests. He reviewed the data and said there are 11 measures presented, eight of which show improvement when considering all students. The data is not desegregated for subcategories at this time. That data will be presented to the Board in the future. Mr. Bliss and the Board discussed some of the numbers and reviewed one table in-depth. There was an error found in the report and Mr. Bliss will make corrections.

There was further discussion and questions on the test results and presentation of the data. How many students took the test? Is our math curriculum aligned so our students have the best preparation for the NECAPs and SATs? Ms. Moran said we are now studying the relationship between those test results. Mr. Olsen said the math department has been looking at that progression of state standards to make sure the students are getting the coursework they need as they take those tests in 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Mr. Mello said he would like to wait for more detailed information on the test results before the Board draws conclusions and looks at them more critically. Commissioner Courcelle suggested that Board members let Mr. Bliss know how they want the data presented. Commissioner Dress asked for information to be included about what Mr. Bliss hoped to see, but did not see, from the results.

Stafford Technical Center Adult Education - Mr. Jepson said Bill Lucci has worked hard to improve Stafford's adult education division, which is run like a business. There are more than 800 students being served each year, driven by the economy. Classes are non-credit but are convenient and affordable. Mr. Lucci has created a pathway that will bring adult students to new places professionally or personally.

Mr. Lucci reviewed some of the strong programs:

- Leadership training for local businesses to help train from within through an alliance between Action to Excellence and Stafford in the Leading from Within program.
- Free training for students to obtain their CDL-B license, fully funded by Casella Waste Systems.
- Partnerships with CCV and Vermont Technical College.
- The LNA program is now the largest in the state. This has grown significantly because of the economy.

Mr. Towle congratulated them for changing the programs according to economic needs in the community. Mr. Jepson said there are sources of funding for people looking for financial aid.

**2010-2011  
SCHOOL  
CALENDAR**

2010 - 2011 School Calendar - Mr. Moran presented the draft school calendar for 2010-2011. The host superintendent of the regional technical center is responsible for the calendar and she said she works with all the superintendents of the Stafford sending schools. The calendar is almost identical to the current year's calendar. Ms. Moran reviewed the discussion in the Legislature about the proposal that school not start until after Labor Day. Ms. Moran said educators feel a calendar like the one we use is best for children. They feel the teaching time at the beginning of the year is more productive than teaching time later in June. Mr. Fagan said he spoke to committee members regarding the AP exam schedule explaining a change to after Labor Day would cut eight teaching days out of AP preparation. Mr. Moran said there are a number of other good educational points. Ms. Moran said she will make the draft calendar permanent.

**MOTION:  
PERSONNEL  
MEMO #418**

Motion by Towle / Cavacas to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 418 dated Feb. 5, 2010, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

The retirements, appointments, and resignation were reviewed by Superintendent Moran. It is attached. Ms. Moran commented on the recommendation to appoint Susanne Engels for a second year as the Success Program Director. She also commented on the two ARRA funded positions which have been hired; the network administrator and a grade 1 elementary teacher.

**BUSINESS  
REPORT**

Motion passed unanimously.

Business Report - None

**SUPERIN-  
TENDENT'S  
REPORT**

Announcements

- Ms. Moran said announcements will be forwarded
- Haiti Relief Initiative district wide has been extraordinary at every level.
- Northwest School has an exciting new event this year just after the vacation - multi cultural week.
- Congratulations to Rutland High seniors Ed Ingerman and Ellen Osowski, National Merit Scholarship finalists.
- Kristen Trevino was selected as the state winner for the DAR Good Citizens Program. She will be honored in May at a DAR ceremony.

**ANNOUNCE-  
MENTS**

Legislative Report - Ms. Moran referred board members to the electronic Legislative Joint Report. She briefly reviewed some of the proposals which effect education.

**LEGISLA-  
TIVE  
REPORT**

**COMM.  
REPORTS**

Budget Buddies Update - Ms. Kilic-Murray said there have been a number of informative sessions with community organizations, parent teacher conference meetings, and the faculty. We will try to get in touch with the unions. There will be letters to the editor and op/ed pieces in the Rutland Herald. There are signs being distributed paid for by the Friends of Rutland Public Schools. People manning the

**BUDGET  
BUDDIES**

phone bank will remind the public to vote. Ms. Kilic-Murray thanked Joan Ferris for organizing the phone bank and asked Board members to help with the phones and with distributing informational materials at sporting events. She said it is board members' legal obligation to make sure the budget is passed. The informational brochures on the budget and the Stafford bond will be sent in the mail to residents.

**PENSION  
COMM.  
UPDATE**

Pension Committee update - Mr. Mello said the school board was represented by five members at the meeting with the entire Pension Board. The actuary came to the meeting with a recommendation that the school district alter their contribution. She showed how over ten years, there have been significant changes to the fund and what would happen if they did not change the contribution. He said the recommendation was for the pension committee to pass a motion that says that beginning July 10, that the maximum retirement benefit for any school employee who has a pension with the teachers retirement system, to accrue benefits at a rate of 1% a year for all service, not 2%. Mr. Mello said that since the liability of this recommendation is exclusive to the school district and not the city, he was not comfortable voting on it until the full school board was able to discuss it. It will be addressed again at a meeting with the pension committee in March.

Mr. Amons reviewed the options and explained their impacts:

Option #1 - do nothing.

Option #2 - follow the actuary's recommendation and cut the benefit to 1%. The cut would effect only those employees who are eligible to participate in either VMERS or VSTRS.

Option #3 - soft freeze the pension for subject employees

Option #4 - hard freeze the pension for subject employees

Mr. Mello said the entire Pension Board votes on this. Mr. Fagan said the Vermont NEA just agreed to changes in the statewide pension fund which would increase the benefit for long term teachers. He asked Mr. Amons to provide examples using the information that there would be an increased contribution from the statewide pension. Mr. Fagan said he believes it will pass the Legislature but it has not yet. Board members asked Mr. Amons to prepare numbers using other examples. There was also discussion about the number of teachers nearing retirement and Mr. Amons said cutting the benefit from 2% to 1% has the least impact on those employees retiring soon. A change might make some teachers make the decision to work more years. Ms. Moran said it is hard to predict when teachers will retire because the decisions are based on personal circumstances. Mr. Mello asked for the Board to make a recommendation at their Feb. 23 meeting to be taken to the Pension Board.

**NEW  
BUSINESS**

New Business - Commissioner Book reported on the Athletic Committee meeting. One of the items they discussed was the question from a board member regarding not having enough teams to play against.

**ATHLETIC  
COMM.**

Student Report - Dan Wigmore said the Student Senate finished the Constitution, which had not been modified since 1992. They are now looking at revising policies. Mr. Mello said he would like to hear about the revisions.

**STUDENT  
REPORT**

Old Business - None

**OLD  
BUSINESS**

Motion by Cooke / Forshay to adjourn at 9:12 pm. Passed.

**ADJOURN**

Respectfully submitted

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Janet Mondlak  
Recording Secretary