

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

**School Board Members Preset:**

Richard Courcelle  
Peter Fagan  
Cindy Kilic-Murray  
Wayne Cooke  
Roberta Dress  
Peter Forshay  
Colin Fingon  
Rob Towle  
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.  
Daniel Wigmore

**Members Absent:**

Peter Mello  
Christopher Book

**Also Present:**

Superintendent Mary Moran  
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss  
Peter Amons  
Bill Olsen  
Steve Sampson  
Hillary Poremski  
Ellie McGarry  
Christi Coloutti  
Jay Slenker  
Patricia Aigner  
Kristen Francoeur  
Lyle Jepson

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.  
Commissioner Courcell noted the absence of Commissioners Mello and Book.

CALL TO ORDER  
ROLL CALL

Motion by Dress/Fagan to accept the minutes of the Feb. 23, 2010 regular school  
Board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously by all those in  
attendance.

MOTION:  
MINUTES  
02/23/10  
MEETING

Written Communication – None

WRITTEN &  
ORAL  
COMMUN-  
ICATION

Oral Communication - None

Recognition - The School Board took this opportunity to recognize and thank  
Mrs. Cindy Kilic-Murray for her three years of service as a School Board  
Commissioner.

BOARD

Mr. Courcelle noted that this was the first meeting of the School Board since  
the school budget passed and thanked the voters of Rutland City for their  
support on the budget, as well as the support on the Stafford Renovation Project.

Education Report

EDUCATION  
REPORT

Early Essential Education Report – Ms. McGarry and Ms. Coloutti described  
essential education students in the school district as students ages three to  
five currently identified as having a disability.

EARLY  
ESSENTIAL  
EDUCATION  
REPORT

To determine student eligibility for EEE services a student must have a development delay in one or more of the following five developmental areas:

1. Receptive and/or expressive communication
2. Adaptive development
3. Social or emotional development
4. Physical development, including gross or fine motor skills
5. Cognitive skills

EARLY  
ESSENTIAL  
EDUCATION  
REPORT

The criteria for a developmental delay are:

1. Two standard deviations at or below the mean in one developmental area, or
2. 1.5 standard deviation at or below the mean in two or more Developmental areas, or
3. 40% delay in one or more areas
4. A recognizable disability – cerebral palsy, down syndrome or autism

Assessments are also conducted on students age birth to two years and 11 months through the Family Infant Toddler Program and if identified they are automatically eligible for the EEE Program. No different assessments are given at this time.

Each spring we continue to evaluate students who may then transition into Kindergarten. As of 12/1/09 the number of special education students has risen from 32 to 45 as we continue to identify students through referrals from public health programs, Pediatrician offices, as well as a variety of organizations serving families and children.

Out of the 45 students presently enrolled in the program who are disabled, 18 of the students have a receptive and/or expressive communication delay, while the rest of the students have a combination of two or more delays out of the five developmental areas.

Services currently being offered to students ages three to five both through the school system in collaboration with Head Start and other outreach programs include:

- Occupational, Speech, Language and Physical Therapy
- Specialized instruction with special educators
- Establishment of eight classrooms – four classrooms located at Meadow Street Head Start staffed with Rutland City paraeducators and operated by Head Start teachers. Within the city schools, there are three classrooms at Northwest staffed with one part-time Rutland City teacher and three Head Start teachers and Northeast has one Head Start teacher with Rutland City paraeducators integrated into the classrooms
- Ongoing student assessment between city schools and Head Start for student transition to Kindergarten.

- Special educators providing services to children in the city attending other Pre- Kindergarten programs, local daycare program or are in the home setting through early intervention in preparation for for entering school

EARLY  
ESSENTIAL  
EDUCATION

By bringing classes together at the Pierpoint Primary Learning Center, we have been able to focus support services more intently in a centralized location better serving the needs of the students.

While many of the programs being offered are center based programs, if a parent chooses not to have their child participate they would be offered outreach opportunities through their daycare provider, in the home setting or through a variety of different ways. District is mandated to provide services in a student's natural environment whatever that might be.

ELL services (English language learners) are not currently provided to the three to five year age group and are not considered special education services so therefore not mandated. A student must be fluent in their English speaking abilities in order to evaluate them for special education. A student identified would be encouraged to integrate into an English speaking environment to promote their speech skills. A child who goes through an evaluation with a language barrier does not provide an accurate assessment or diagnosis.

The definition between adaptive and social/emotional development is that adaptive looks at a student's fine motor and gross motor skills (ability to run, walk, mechanical skills). Social and emotional skills identify where the student is at emotionally compared to their peers.

All mandated programs fall under federal guidelines which are mirrored by state regulations. However, the mandate starts at the federal level with no additional regulations by the state.

While the numbers were on the rise in the past, as well as the number of complexities the children were presenting with, we are now seeing a decline. There is no way to predict what the numbers will be and the effect on future programming and facilities, but we will continue to monitor closely in order to plan for the future.

It was noted that 2008, a PPLC (regular classroom teacher) and a special educator were added to the staff. The special educator provides outreach community services. These staff additions were due to the increase in special need students, the infant and toddler evaluations becoming the district's responsibility, as well as the rise in outreach numbers. While a decrease in staffing will not take place this year as the numbers may still rise between now and June, a decrease may take place in subsequent years if the numbers continue to decrease.. Plans for the next few years include centralizing services to the Pierpoint Primary Learning Center.

## Rutland High School Assistance Program -

RUTLAND  
HIGH  
SCHOOL  
ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM

Mr. Olson reported on the intervention system developed at the high school over the last three years, but this year was a new program and new design which was implemented successfully. Teachers and guidance counselors determine which students are in academic trouble, determine how the teacher will work within the established tutorial and how the student will work within the process.

It was determined two years ago, that some students were experiencing academic difficulties. Space was allocated for students to voluntarily go to in order to get assistance. It was determined not to be effective due to the voluntary aspect on the student's part. It was changed the next year with two daily blocks added with a Math and English teacher being available to help students in those classes. While more effective, it was still not the process we had hoped for. A program was then developed after looking at a series of steps to assist those students whose grades were starting to slip in the classroom. After conversations with the whole staff and the Vision Quest Team, a program was developed by which students would be required to get help in the core areas – Science, Math, Social Studies or English.

Steps put into place begin with limited involvement from a support perspective up to quite involved depending on the needs of the student. Throughout the first few steps, teachers are reviewing records, meeting with the student, discussions with the parents and the guidance counselors. Within the first few weeks of the marking period if it is determined that the student is continuing to struggle, teachers will refer the student to either a tutorial program or a study assistance program.

The referral process has the teacher complete a form which is submitted to the guidance counselor, a phone call home to parents and a conversation with the student. The guidance counselor ensures that the student is enrolled in the proper tutorial or study assistance program.

The tutorial program is a content based program for the core subjects with students referred due to difficulty grasping the material. This does not mean they are not doing their homework or not coming to school. The study assistance program is for those students capable of doing the work, but are not doing homework or attending school. Once the student attend the tutorial program, there is ongoing communication between the classroom teacher and the tutorial teacher. When students slip below the established threshold of Grade 70 the referral is made to the appropriate program. Additional steps are in place if the student continues to struggle that includes referral to the Educational Support Team or the Special Education Team.

To date the tutorial referral process has been positive. The tutorial teacher

RUTLAND

interacts with the student on their studies and determines where they are struggling. After this personal check in with the student, individual assistance is often provided. This one to one experience is invaluable by providing an opportunity for the tutorial to be individualized for the student so they may gain the skills they need. The relationship building piece between teachers, colleagues and students has also been positive. From a tutorial standpoint, challenges faced were with student preparation and students not always receptive to the help which can be detrimental to the process.

HIGH  
SCHOOL  
ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM

Program challenges included being able to do the daily communication between guidance counselors, teachers and tutorials. Daily communication is key to the success of the program. Establishment of a shared web site to assist with the communication piece has been somewhat successful. Face to face communication seemed to work best. Shifting of staff in order to make attendance numbers work in the different tutorial is being used. Staff has worked diligently to make the program successful.

Measurements for mid year to determine success indicates that there were 300 tutorial placements with 90% of the students referred passing their courses. Comments from surveys conducted with students and teachers involved were positive.

Mr. Fagan commented that he was pleased to see the establishment of this program, the number of students taking advantage of the program and the results to date. He questioned what the timeframe is for referring a student. The steps currently in place may identify a student three weeks into a class giving a student time to establish themselves. A student leaving the Middle School identified as needing assistant will be referred to one of the programs.

While the expectations of the classroom teacher and the tutorial may be different, it has not been experienced to date. Staff and departments work diligently on keeping expectations the same across the board.

Attendance number show the lowest number of student attendees in social studies and the largest in science followed by math.

While this is another assignment for teachers who are currently conducting the tutorials, tutorials are conducted every other day in accordance with their other teaching responsibilities.

Although tutorials are currently not available to those students working higher than a grade 70 level, future programs may be designed for those students looking to improve or maintain a grade. Currently, drop in services have been utilized by some of these students and tutorials are open to all students whether

or not they have been referred. The program is being looked at for implementation district wide. Students who attended the program and still didn't improve their grade are being addressed individually at a department level to see what can be done.

RUTLAND  
HIGH  
SCHOOL  
ASSISTANCE  
PROGRAM

The staff was commended on the establishment of the program. The program establishes a standard for the student, the standards has been communicated to them, it illustrates their value and gives them a method in which to improve. Well done!

Corrected NECAP Chart – the corrected chart was distributed for informational purposes. A more comprehensive report on all assessment data will be distributed at a later date. When the final report comes out in a few weeks, the Department of Education will be reporting on those schools in the highest need of improvement and this district will likely be one of those. The good news is that it will allow us to apply for additional funds to support school improvement for the next three year period. A concern is that it may have us undue some of the good work currently being done. We were assured by the DOE that will not be the case. The methodology for labeling is being questioned. Rankings are based on the 2008 NECAP scores, the results of English and Math, and the progress being done in those areas from 2007 to 2008. As noted, the 2009 results have significantly improved. Data is being compiled and reported on NECAP scores, course completion rates, tutorial success, SATs, graduation rates, drop out rates, etc. These are the multiple measures needed to assess both student and school performance.

CORRECTED  
NECAP  
CHART

March 19, 2010 Professional Development Report – Mr. Bliss and Mrs. Aigner presented information on the March 19<sup>th</sup> inservice “Transformation of Instruction Using Technolgy”. Staff will spend the Morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> on instructional, assessment and technological skills. The afternoon will be building based with sessions created and focused on data analysis and instructional delivery. NECAP data and school improvement plans are driving the work in the afternoon. Mr. Bliss reviewed an impressive array of technology in-services being offered that day. Courses were developed using a team approach with many collaborative efforts coming state wide.

PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT

Future plans include a board retreat dedicated solely to these new technologies.

Special thanks to Deb Etzler and Patricia Aigner for their superior efforts in organizing this event.

Motion was made and approved to accept the Licensed and Non-licensed Section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 420 dated March 5, 2010, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

MOTION:  
PERSONNEL  
MEMO #420

## Business Report –

FY 09 Financial Statement & Audit – Mr. Amons presented the June 30, 2009 annual audit. Any shortfalls that needed to be fixed would appear in the report. There are currently none to report. Current financial concerns outlined in the report are the costs of educating children who live in poverty, special education costs and funding mechanisms that may be changed by the state. Mr. Amons reviewed key areas of the report. Board members should review the report and follow up with Mr. Amons or Ms. Moran with any questions. Mr. Amons thanked Randy Roberts, Kristi Firliet and the members of the Accounting Department for their work.

FY 09  
FINANCIAL  
STATEMENT  
& AUDIT

## Superintendent's Report

Announcements -

SUPERIN-  
TENDENT'S  
REPORT

### **State Championship Teams**

Ms. Moran congratulated all the varsity and sub varsity teams for their outstanding performances this winter season -

Cheerleading

Varsity Boys Alpine Ski Team

Varsity Girls Alpine Ski Team

Varsity Girls Snowboarding were the Slopestyle Championship Team

Mary Kate Cirelli was the individual State Champion in both Classical and Freestyle Nordic skiing which is an enormous accomplishment.

Both the Varsity Girls' Basketball and the Varsity Girls' Hockey were the State Runners-Up.

Congratulations to all these wonderful young men and women, the great coaches along with terrific parent and booster support who represented the school district proudly.

This week and next, RHS Green Mountain Teen Institute students are helping to organize and host 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from RMS as they learn about the high school and get ready to make the transition.

GMTI is holding their annual Helping Hands Carnival this Saturday March 13<sup>th</sup> from 10-2 in the RHS gym.

The total amount of the Rutland City Public Schools' efforts by the children and staff in raising donations for *Hearts with Haiti* was \$3,527.82.

Last Wednesday evening Key Club met at the Bardwell House where they hosted a bingo game and brought refreshments for the residents. The Key Club is now

getting ready to conduct the “Pennies for Patients” campaign to benefit the Leukemia And Lymphoma Society.

SUPERIN-  
TENDENT’S  
REPORT

The RHS Symphonic Band will have the honor of giving the **world premiere** Performance of “Four Vermont Prints” on Thursday evening (March 11). The piece was written specifically for the RHS Symphonic Band by Dr. Gene Milford, professor of music education at The University of Akron (OH). Dr. Milford will be in Rutland working with our students on Wednesday and Thursday and will be on hand to conduct the premiere at Thursday evening’s Music In Our Schools Month Band Concert at 7:00 p.m. in Keefe Gymnasium.

Encore Theatre's production of Tracks won the regional festival and will compete at the state one act festival on March 26 and 27. Devon Irish and Nick McKelvie were recognized for their acting. Connor Ritter was recognized for his set design and Hannah Mace was recognized for her lighting design. The production was recognized for its ensemble work.

### **N.E.**

On Friday, March 5<sup>th</sup>, Northeast concluded their weeklong celebration of Dr. Seuss’ Birthday with an array of Guest Readers during the school day and in the evening, a Family Film Fun Night. During the school day we had over a dozen guest readers join students and at night “Up” was the featured presentation. Refreshments (popcorn and fruit drink) were provided and over 150 family members were in attendance.

Earlier in the week, we celebrated our annual spring concerts with original songs and lyrics, suitably illustrated, and performed by our students. Underwritten through a grant from the Southern Vermont Arts Center, Jen Hart, music teacher and Brad Bender, art teacher, worked with classroom teachers to develop these pieces incorporating original prose, illustrations and music. All of this was put into a book form, a copy of which was given to each student. Later in the school year students will visit the center and share their efforts with Art Center staff.

On March 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> we look forward to our Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences. In addition, our annual spring Book Fair has been scheduled to coincide with parent-teacher conferences.

### **N.W.**

NW School Grocery Bingo is this Thursday at 6pm. Doors open at 5:30.

Thank you to all who helped make the first multicultural celebration a huge success!

Thank you to Jennifer Hart for her work with our K-2 students in learning many different songs from different cultures and languages!

### **RIS**

RIS had their monthly PTC Movie night last Friday. Over 50 people came to the free movie, Space Buddies. Any parent interested in helping with Grade 6 Promotion, please call Mrs. Henderson in the Grade 5/6 Office. The Student Council Penny Drive is this week in front of the Auditorium, proceeds are going to the St. Judes Children’s Hospital.

On Saturday, two teams from RIS competed in the state Odyssey of the Mind tournament. We'd like to recognize Jacob Henderson, Ian Louras, Logan Moore, Cameron Clark, Logan Guyette, Riley Rheaume, Keegan Stelato, Nova Wang, Ali Peyton, Aleya Valente, Sharla Cimbak, and Alison Arnado for their hard work and commitment. They started meeting weekly after school last fall and even gave up some of their weekend time as the tournament grew closer. The Food Court Team placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in their division the Gift of Flight team placed 5th, both teams should be congratulated for efforts on Saturday.

SUPERIN-  
TENDENT'S  
REPORT

Congratulations to the Northwest Tapestry Program on their Five STAR renewal in the state's Step Ahead Recognition System.

Ms. Moran noted that Jonathan Ames was present in the audience. He is a boy scout currently working on his citizen badge.

Ms. Moran welcomed home Dan Wigmore from his Vancouver Trip. He was present to hand out the final copy of the school's constitution, which the students have been working on since last fall to rewrite. This is the first update since 1992.

Legislative Report – The results from Town Meeting Day were previously sent out. The most recent updates on the Legislative report are in the packets.

LEGISLATIVE  
REPORT

Mr. Fagan reported that there will be an open house forum on the evening of March 10<sup>th</sup> at the State House which will provide an opportunity for school Board members and the public to discuss the consolidation efforts currently ongoing and the two bills being considered.

Ms. Moran commented on the consolidation recommendation which is covered in the report, as well her concerns pertaining to the Challenges for Change bill mandating significant reductions. We will continue to monitor this one size fits all solution being proposed. Any action that comes from the legislature for an across the board percentage cut will unfairly impact this district as we are currently very low. It is hoped that the legislature will look at it as an equity issue as well as an economic issue.

Mr. Fagan indicated that Challenges for Change bill should be goal oriented and school districts should be encouraged to spend 70% of their budgets in the classroom as this district currently does.

Committee Reports -

COMMITTEE  
REPORTS

Pension Committee – The City Pension Committee met on March 4<sup>th</sup> and agreed/passed an amendment to the pension document that all the city school employees that are part of the state pension or some portion of the state pension from here moving forward will have their years of service

PENSION  
COMMITTEE

count as 1% and not 2%. This was the first step moving forward in hopes of saving future costs to the taxpayers and the school district.

Policy Committee – Mr. Bliss reported that on March 16<sup>th</sup> the committee will address the task of reviewing job descriptions and any new policy mandates coming from the legislature this session. He thanked Mrs. Kilic-Murray for her board representation on the committee.

POLICY  
COMMITTEE

New Business -

NEW  
BUSINESS

Mr. Fagan commented that over the next two months there will be many opportunities to enjoy many fine musical performances in the school district, especially in March during Music in our School month. Also, in May will be the Loyalty Day Parade as well as the All State Music Festival which will feature many concerts in a four day stretch featuring musicians from all over the state. Community housing will be needed for the students and Ms. Moran asked anyone interested in housing these students should go to the RPS website or contact Peter Miller.

Also a reminder that we continue the discussion regarding using contingency funds for door replacement during the next round of contingency fund spending.

Mr. Towle thanked Ms. Kilic-Murray for her work on the Board.

Mrs. Dress reported on a meeting that she attended with the Board of Alderman and the Police Commission. She was concerned about the position of School Resource Officers in the schools and who they report to. Ms. Moran reported that there is currently only one SRO who is a City Policy Officer. The SRO is interviewed by the school district and we have final say as to whether or not to place this individual.

It was noted that currently all necessary computer firewalls are in place and are Professionally monitored by district staff. Security measures will be discussed at a future meeting.

Mrs. Cavacas requested that as we continue to look at the local economic climate in our area, we look at developing more interactions with the Board of Alderman and the Rutland Redevelopment Authority. We could consider a joint meeting to look at ways to rebuild the city from where we currently are.

Old Business – none

OLD  
BUSINESS  
ADJOURN

Motion by Kilic-Murray to adjourn the meeting. Passed.

Respectfully submitted

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Margaret O’Neill, Recorded from Tape

