

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
OCTOBER 9, 2012**

School Board Members Present:

Peter Mello
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.
Wayne Cooke
Richard Courtelle
Douglas Gage
Peter Fagan
Robert Kurchena
Kate Thomas
Lena Cohen

Members Absent

Jamie Pemrick
Erin Shimp
Rob Towle

Also Present:

Superintendent Mary Moran
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
Wil Cunningham
Lyle Jepson
Peter Amons
Bill Olsen
Jay Slenker
Ellie McGarry
Glenn Olson
Jessica Henderson
Cathy Farman
Kristin Francoeur

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Mello noted the absence of Commissioners Pemrick, Shimp, and Towle.

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

Motion by Fagan / Cavacas to accept the minutes of the Sept. 25, 2012 regular school board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:
MINUTES
09/25/12
MEETING**

Written & Oral Communications - None

**WRITTEN &
ORAL
COMMUN-
ICATIONS**

Recognitions: Superintendent Moran recognized three teachers who have been honored by their peers.

**TEACHER
RECOGN-
ITIONS**

- 2012 VT Science Teacher of the Year - Ms. Moran acknowledged Bianca McKeen - Science Teacher, RMS, who has been named 2012 Vermont Science Teacher of the Year and she and Mr. Cunningham highlighted Ms. McKeen's academic career and spoke of highlights of her teaching style.
- UVM Teachers of the Year Recognition - Ms. Moran acknowledged John Beerworth, P.E. Teacher, RMS and Lisa Boerner, Special Educator, RIS. She highlighted their professional accomplishments. Mr. Slenker spoke of Ms. Boerner's attributes as a special educator and Mr. Cunningham praised Mr. Beerworth.

The teachers spoke about the honor of the recognition and new initiatives. They were all congratulated for their honor and leadership.

Action Plans: 7 - 12

RMS - Mr. Cunningham highlighted some of the middle school initiatives and spoke about goals and objectives. Many items from last year's plan have been updated but are still a part of the two year plan. RMS is participating in the Green Mountain Star program, which will provide indicators for improvement. He and Ms. Francoeur reviewed the significant parts of the plan. Mr. Cunningham said the Professional Learning Communities work regularly on curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

**EDUCATION
REPORT**

**ACTION
PLANS 7 - 12**

RMS

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- What are difficulties and rewards? Ms. Cunningham said one thought is that there are many students who might struggle while in the middle school and by grade 10 or so, they are much more polished. RMS teachers receive regular reports from the high school and can see where the students go.
- RMS works with a consultant on improving school culture. Mr. Cunningham said there has been a big shift from “nuts and bolts” toward working on curriculum, instruction and assessment. The consultant helps with discussions and keeping teachers on task. Teachers are varying instructional practices as they learn how a population learns in any class. The consultant has been very effective.
- Where is the curriculum continuity? Mr. Cunningham said there is curriculum coordination, 7 - 12. For example, science is building on itself. Each student is differentiated based on their own abilities. Mr. Cunningham said Common Core is a 6 - 12 initiative. Representatives from math, science, social and English worked together this summer to unpack the Common Core standards, which go into effect in the fall of 2014.
- Homework completion program? Ms. Francouer said there has been research on poverty and on the brain. There are a number of students who by traditional academic standards, were not finding full academic success. Much of it has to do with not having a living situation where they could do homework. Now, in the middle of the day, students who meet the criteria and who have parent permission and involvement, have supportive time with a member of the academic team to work on their academic work. How is participation? Is it required? Ms. Francouer said it has been well received. This is the second year. She said they see an increase in student engagement and completion of work.
- Commissioner Fagan thanked them for all the work and said we are seeing an adaptive school district. We are understanding of students' need and applying it.
- If 52% of families use the parent portal, do we know why the other 48% does not use it? Ms. Francouer said anecdotally, they believe that some families do not have consistent internet access at home and others are not interested.
- Mr. Mello said the focus shows positive results.

RHS

RHS - Ms. Moran presented the RHS Action Plan and said the What We Believe & What We Do document is extremely important and impressive. Mr. Olsen said RHS is in the school improvement process and the grant is really the Action Plan. It is reviewed every half-year. The practical Action Plan is the What We Believe document. He said they are trying to be clear the four essential questions concept: What we want students to know and do; Measure if they get there; Decide what we are going to do if they do not get there; and If they do get there, what will we do to push them further.

Mr. Olsen reviewed the What We Believe plan and highlighted the mission and vision of the plan. He said the Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are very important; teachers do not work alone anymore. Mr. Olson highlighted how we measure progress in many different ways. The software now being used can quickly gather the data and RHS has a schoolwide data team working on others ways to pull together data, not just NECAP results. Mr. Olsen said it has taken quite some time to learn the software and be able to use it effectively. Over a number of years, we will be able to see the growth. Mr. Olsen highlighted some of the professional development training the staff has been involved in. He said What We Believe is still a growing document.

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- Mr. Fagan said What We Believe is very exciting.
- Do we work with the RHS feeder schools? Mr. Olsen said administrators have met with colleagues at Barstow and Rutland Town to talk about changes and those discussions will continue.
- Are parents or guardians contacted if there is a need of intervention? Mr. Olson said teachers are expected to follow the pyramid of intervention.
- How is “mastery” defined? Mr. Olsen said mastery is defined at different levels. For example, the chemistry teachers will meet and determine an objective they want the students to meet and what that will look like. The teachers will agree to the objectives and how they are assessed. All teachers will grade the same way.
- What are student-centered learning opportunities? Mr. Olsen gave an example of what the science classes did after the flood last year. They started a water project and connected with math teachers and English teachers. Another example involves students who were studying rock formations. They were allowed to choose a final project which allowed them to express their knowledge based on their own learning style.
- Are we going to have the same number of classes dedicated to STEM at AP and Honors levels? Mr. Olsen said the science and math departments are discussing opportunities and there are also discussions with Stafford for integration with science and math and a focus in engineering. Ms. Moran said there will be more discussion about a potential partnership after budget discussions are complete.
- Mr. Mello asked Lena Cohen if she has noticed changes in coursework, curriculum, and how teachers teach. Lena said she has noticed gradual changes. The coursewide rubrics and the tutorial and study assistants are very helpful. Students at higher level classes are also using them and finding them helpful.
- Mr. Mello said about seven years ago he was involved in high school transformation meetings. Since that time, he has seen enormous change. The vision is huge and there is terrific leadership among the faculty. The tone is much improved.

NECAP Science Results - Assistant Superintendent Bliss gave an overview of NECAP Science results. He reviewed notable trends in the district, possible causes and action being taken. Mr. Olsen highlighted some of the RHS NECAP results. Mr. Bliss said when we stop using the NECAP tests in a year and a half for science and look at the Next Generation Science Standards, local assessments will be a part of it. He believes there will be some performance standards. Mr. Bliss said to help boost scores at RIS there has been action taken at the elementary schools. There are teacher leaders involved with the Next Generation and improvement plans. Ms. Moran said we are in a transition with the assessments. The teacher work on all the assessment work is extraordinary.

**NECAP
SCIENCE
RESULTS**

Motion by Fagan / Cooke to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 471 dated Oct. 5, 2012, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

PERSONNEL

**MOTION:
PERSONNEL
MEMO #471**

The appointments were reviewed by Superintendent Moran. They are attached.

Motion passed by all those in attendance.

Budget Planning Overview - Mr. Amons gave an overview of the budget planning process. Administrators are doing planning at this time. We will ask the state for the difference between the budgeted expenditures and all revenues which come from different sources. Many sources of revenue are not within our control. He reviewed some of the challenges he anticipates. Can we redo any bonds because of such low rates? Mr. Amons said we have refinanced the energy performance bond. We work with the Vermont Bond Bank and our bonds are part of a larger group. There is nothing out there we can refinance.

**BUSINESS
REPORT**

**BUDGET
PLANNING
OVERVIEW**

**FUEL OIL
BID**

Fuel Oil Bid - Mr. Amons reviewed the fuel oil bid and recommends we accept the floating rate as rates are high now. He said our deliveries are about 50 / 50; tanker versus peddle deliveries. The difference is whether the larger truck can deliver to a particular place and the capacity of the tank.

Motion by Cooke / Thomas that the Rutland City Public Schools accept the floating rate above Platt's New York Harbor fuel bid proposal from Irving Energy Company of 18.9 cents for tanker deliveries and 27.1 cents for peddle deliveries. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:
ACCEPT
FUEL OIL
BID**

Announcements

**SUPERIN-
TENDENT'S
REPORT**

- Lena Cohen said that she attended the Rowland Foundation annual conference and learned about school transformation globally and nationally. She spoke of some of the other things she learned at the conference and has spoken with teachers about it and how to get more students involved. There has been discussions about involving students in PLCs. She believes teachers are excited to get student feedback. Lena said the Club Giving garage sale is this weekend. It is a good way for students to contribute to a good cause.
- Ms. Moran acknowledged everyone who worked hard in the aftermath of Carly Ferro's death. It is a tragedy for the family, friends and colleagues. The staff and leadership pulled together. She said we are so extraordinary proud of the students and how they conducted themselves. There are so many kind and caring people in the school and in the community. She said the family is proud of the students. They were role models.
- The Longfellow bulletin board is a display of the summer program MOVE camps. There have been many complements from students and parents on the programs, for students entering grades 7 - 9. The 14 camps offered all types of activities and more than 100 students took part.
- Northeast School has had a fun filled few weeks packed with learning. They participated in the National Walk to School day, enjoyed a Harvest Festival, enjoyed a special performance by the VT Symphony Orchestra and Slapstick Science, and will be culminating a two week unit on monarch butterflies with an assembly from the "the Butterfly Lady".
- Northwest School enjoyed the VSO Brass Trio called "Fanfare". The Foster Grandparent annual awards dinner is this Thursday. The first STAR student field trip was Friday with a hike/scavenger hunt at Bald Mountain led by Mr. Jensen and Mrs. Spaulding.
- RIS is hosting a used book fair this week which supports the PTC.
- A newsletter from the RIS / RMS Unified Sports was distributed.

**ANNOUNCE-
MENTS**

Building Committee Report - Mr. Cooke reported on the following:

- The Watkins sale is still a work in progress. They are looking to expand the plan for the property. They need more time to analyze and work on permitting.
- Dana School has had no activity. It is “buttoned up” for the winter. The committee has talked about alternate plans. The listing expires January 8.
- An informational piece explaining the ballot items is being prepared for taxpayers. It ties in with lease protocol. Ms. Moran and Mr. Amons are working with our lease-holders who are amenable to work with us on meeting guidelines.
- The telephone work is almost done. Compliments and thanks to Debbie Etzler for spearheading this. The technology team has been involved. Ms. Moran thanked everyone who has worked on this. There are a few glitches but it is close to being complete.
- Mr. Rice shared with the committee all the work his crew did over the summer and Mr. Cooke reviewed the projects.

**COMM.
REPORTS**
**BUILDING
COMM.**

New Business

Kate Thomas commented on Mr. Olsen’s statement that “we do not work as individuals anymore.” She said many teachers are being recognized as individuals and she would like to see outstanding PLCs recognized.

**NEW
BUSINESS**

**OUTSTAND-
ING PLC
RECOG-
NITION**

Old Business

School Board Goals - The draft School Board Goals were distributed for final review. They are attached.

**OLD
BUSINESS**

Motion by Fagan / Thomas that the Rutland City Board of School Commissioners adopt the 2012-2013 Board Goals as attached. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:
ADOPT
SCHOOL
BOARD
GOALS**

Motion by Cooke / Cavacas to adjourn at 8:26 pm. Passed.

ADJOURN

Respectfully submitted

Janet Mondlak
Recording Secretary