

RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
APRIL 7, 2015

School Board Members Present:

Dick Courcelle
Rob Kurchena
Peter Fagan
Alison Notte
Matthew Olewnik
Joanne Pencak
Erin Shimp
Kate Thomas
Christian Wideawake
Lydia Gulik
Brendan Wright

Members Absent:

Daniel Alcorn
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.

Also Present:

Superintendent Mary Moran
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
Patricia Aigner
Ellie McGarry
Steve Sampson
Susanne Engels
Bill Olsen
Pam Reed
Kristin Hubert
Glenn Olson
Peter Amons
Sharon Napolitano
Greg Schillinger

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Courcelle noted the absence of Commissioners Alcorn and Cavacas.

CALL TO
ORDER
ROLL CALL

Motion by Fagan/Shimp to accept the minutes of the March 24, 2015 regular school board meeting as written. Commissioner Fagan noted that he was in attendance on March 25, 2015, though his absence was noted in the minutes. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

MOTION:
MINUTES
3/24/15

Written Communications - None

COMMUNI-
CATIONS
WRITTEN &
ORAL

Oral Communications – None

Performance Excellence Initiative – Chair Courcelle distributed a hand out that explains what it is and the next steps. He explained that the initiative started a year ago and reviewed the project goals. The Board approved a new vision statement last February. The next step will involve components of Goal #1 in performance objectives and will involve participation from administration, faculty and others as well as the PEI Work Group. A meeting will be scheduled to talk about the time line for these next steps. Chair Courcelle noted that things took more time than anticipated. The Essential Work of School Boards hand out was reviewed. Chair Courcelle explained that this is not micromanaging but helping the Board to have more meaningful oversight to better advocate for schools. Indicators of success will develop over time. This is a great next step.

PEI
UPDATES
NEXT STEPS

School Climate and Related Programs – Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss and Northwest Principal and former Senior District Psychologist Susanne Engels presented per Commissioner Fagan's request.

SCHOOL
CLIMATE &
RELATED
PROGRAMS

Mrs. Engels reviewed PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) and how it is used in our schools. The goal of PBIS is to improve school climate to improve learning. Mrs. Engels addressed the positive issues involving social media as well as the challenges that it creates in regards to dealing with bullying and harassment. PBIS is a multi-tiered system of support (whole school, small group, individual.) Adults model and teach kids to model positive skills. The focus is on catching people doing the right things. It is a preventative, positive, effective approach. School emblems/symbols illustrating respect, safety and working hard were reviewed as well as RHS Student Groups and Organizations encouraging student voice and respecting differences. Responsive Classroom and Safe and Civil Schools are programs that support PBIS all over the district.

Assistant Superintendent Bliss spoke about the RHS You Matter Pledge (suicide prevention) and listed examples (Capstone, Global Issues Network Conference...) of students understanding learning and taking action. This is true K-12. Mr. Bliss stated that separate policies for bullying and harassment are mandated and reviewed **Policy 7400 Prevention of Harassment of Students** and **7401 Policy on the Prevention of Bullying of Students**. Definitions of bullying and harassment were reviewed. All negative behaviors are taken very seriously and it doesn't have to happen during the school day. The school is responsible when bullying or harassment interfere with a student's education. 16 V.S.A. & 1162 was referenced. Each school has a designated employee to report to - generally, the Principal or Guidance Counselor. Mr. Bliss reviewed the *Harassment or Bullying Complaint Intake/Investigation Form and Case Log* and the process. The data on bullying complaints was reviewed.

Mrs. Engels spoke about the influence of social media on school climate. She reviewed the statistic that fifty percent of students report using social media at least 10 times per day. Uses of social media range from the very positive (entertainment, celebrating, enhancing learning, fundraising) to the very negative (cyber bullying.) Thirty-three percent of students are targets of cyber bullying yet only 7% of parents report being worried about it. Cyber bullying is perceived as anonymous and easier to get away. It is fast and far reaching. It poses a real challenge when kids and adults both get involved. It is hard to gauge the emotional impact as opposed to live bullying.

Mr. Bliss and Mrs. Engels addressed questions from the Board:

Commissioner Fagan thanked Mr. Bliss and Mrs. Engels for the comprehensive presentation and asked about training responsibilities. What are we doing? Many professional staff members have attended extensive three day trainings. Information is reviewed at the beginning of every school year at faculty and staff in-service. Information is included in student handbooks and reviewed with students.

Commissioner Fagan asked the Student Representatives if they felt students have a baseline understanding of what bullying is and what to do? Brendon Wright answered that students may not be able to state the policy but have a good grasp on what bullying is and understand the concept.

How are PBIS and Responsive Classroom addressed in professional development? K-6 educators at RCPS take Responsive Classroom. Responsive Classroom ran last summer with 19 teachers from Christ the King, Rutland Area Christian School and RCPS attending. PBIS Teams are trained more extensively. Randy Sprick did a district wide training. Mike Booher, Safe and Civil Schools, evaluated and reported.

Commissioner Thomas asked: If informal resolution was unsuccessful must you conduct an investigation – does that mean that none were of informal means? Did not disaggregate informal resolutions. Some may have been informally resolved.

Are there times when there is an informal resolution but you still do an investigation? You look for sincerity in the resolution. If there is a clear imbalance of power it can happen.

Commissioner Olewnik asked: Are there incidents that go unreported? We are always trying to collect more information – the Youth Risk Behavior Survey is used to collect statewide data, we also use it to check how we are doing. Safety boxes are set up in schools for students who may not feel comfortable going to an adult. Students are taught to be up standers not bystanders. We recognize things are going on but are always thinking about anything we can do to close that gap.

Commissioner Wideawake asked about the 33% of student targets and 7% of parents worried about cyber bullying – are we helping parents to monitor? Ms. Moran stated that we have had several evening presentations, sent home literature and are working on other ways to engage parents. Brendan Wright spoke about the After School App break out in the fall. He said it came out of nowhere and by the end of the day was out of control. Several students spoke out and gave input and a potential disaster was resolved by student voice and positive posts.

Chair Courcelle asked: Do you find seasonality in the data? Is there a pattern in the data or is it random? Mr. Bliss answered that he didn't do that kind of analysis this time. It started out hot and died way down. It's just starting to pick up. Spring may bring some additional drama. This would be an interesting analysis.

Do you find common themes? Guess is it would be something spills out over social media/conflict outside of school – parent kids come in. big cluster around teen and preteen drama.

Chair Courcelle commented on the adult factor. Adults have a tendency to pile on, a major factor that may not have been present 5-10 years ago.

School Program Update:

Student Representatives reported that SBAC practice testing has been taking place during flex and is going well. Spring sports are underway. James Hamilton and Sam Ligon presented "How does Vermont's Climate Cater to Solar Energy?" at the 7th Annual VT EPSCoR Student Research Symposium. Representatives from Senators Leahy's and Sander's Offices spoke prior to the keynote speaker. In the evening there was a walk from the Park to the Paramount for a viewing

and question and answer session for the movie *Disruption*. The Chorus and the Jazz Ensemble performed throughout the day. It was a big event. Everyone was involved.

STUDENT
REPRESENT-
ATIVES
(CONT.)

Brendan and Lydia will present about K-8 Activities at the next meeting.

Superintendent – Ms. Moran distributed copies of the Howe Center Campus Newsletter and noted the article: *Walt Wade: One of the Best*. She noted a nice letter in the *Rutland Herald* from our student Lindsay Cassel on the GIN Conference service work done by our students and staff at the Howe Center Campus. Stafford Technical Center Students took many awards at Skills USA - 16 gold, 12 silver and 3 bronze – swept the podium in many categories. A schematic of the RHS library renovation is on display in the Board Room, including layouts and color pallets. This project is well underway. A handout on Project SEARCH was distributed and reviewed. One employee has been budgeted to coordinate this program. A recommendation for appointment will be at next meeting.

SUPERIN-
TENDENT

Legislative Report – Changes are being made hour by hour. Topics this week: governance, structure changes, and bargaining law. Ms. Moran will continue to forward legislative updates. Please check with her if you have questions. There is a great delegation in both chambers. They are receptive and attentive. Ms. Moran thanked Commissioner Fagan for his service.

LEGISLA-
TIVE
REPORT
FY14

Facilities and Finance– Mr. Amons reviewed the municipality rules for procurement. James McQueston is recommended as attorney to provide legal services to the Rutland City Pension Board.

FACILITIES
& FINANCE

Motion by Fagan/Notte That the Board of School Commissioners confirm the selection of James McQueston as attorney to provide legal services to the Rutland City Pension Board pursuant to section 17.6 of the Rutland City Charter.

MOTION:
PENSION
BOARD
ATTORNEY

Chair Courcelle called for questions. Clerk Kurchena said he researched Mr. McQueston’s work and people have had amazing things to say. Commissioner Fagan stated that Mr. McQueston had worked for Vermont National Life for more than 30 years and is an exceptionally perfect fit.

Motion passed unanimously.

FY14 Audited Financial Statements – are of clean opinion. The A-133 audit/Review of Federal Grants also received a clean opinion. There was one finding. Mr. Amons noted the unassigned fund balance. This goes up and down. It fell by \$150,000 – this is the action of returning surpluses to the State. Mr. Amons noted that our share of the city pension has moved up to 78.3% funded. We are doing just fine and it gets better every year. Mr. Amons thanked Accounting Manager Jeri Tyl for all this work.

AUDITED
FINANCIAL
STATE-
MENTS

Food Service Bid Process – School Food Service must go out to bid every 5 years. The School Board is the School Food Authority. Two Board Members are required to be on the committee. This would involve 3-4 evening meetings to go through the RFP, interview and selection process. Commissioners Thomas and Pencak volunteered to serve on this committee.

FOOD
SERVICE BID
PROCESS

Personnel Action:

PERSONNEL
ACTION

Motion by Thomas/Fagan to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 515 dated April 3, 2015, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

MOTION:
PERSONNEL
MEMO #515

The resignations, appointments and transfers were reviewed by Superintendent Moran. They are attached.

Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Moran recognized Northwest Primary School Principal, Kristin Hubert for being selected as the Vermont Elementary Principal of the Year. Mrs. Hubert is Vermont's nominee for the National Elementary School Principal of the Year and will Travel Washington, DC in the fall.

VT ELEMEN-
TARY PRIN-
CIPAL OF
THE YEAR

Director of Buildings, Grounds and Transportation Position Description Revision - Ms. Moran explained that there were minor revisions and language updates needed for filling the position and the changes require board affirmation.

POSITION
DESCRIPTION
REVISION

Motion Fagan/Shimp to affirm the revised Director of Buildings, Grounds and Transportation Position Description Revision.

MOTION:
REVISE
POSITION
DESCRIPTION

Motion passed unanimously.

Committee Reports:

COMMITTEE
REPORTS

Policy - Commissioner Shimp presented the recommendation/first reading that **Policy #7514 Participation by Non-Resident/Non-Tuition Student - Athletics** be removed from the Rutland City Public Schools District Policy Manual.

POLICY
COMMITTEE

Motion Kurchena/Fagan first reading - to remove **Policy #7514 Participation by Non-Resident/Non-Tuition Student - Athletics** from the Rutland City Public Schools District Policy Manual.

MOTION:
FIRST
READING
REMOVE
POLICY #7514

Discussion revolved around moving the responsibility into the decision makers' hands. Commissioner Notte brought up concerns regarding Administration time and liability. Commissioner Olewnick said that protections are built into the VPA rules and does not see Administration inconvenience as a compelling argument. Commissioner Fagan thanked the policy committee for a well thought out and rational recommendation. Removal of the policy is not a tacit approval of member to member agreements. The Board needs to fully support the Administration in its execution.

Motion passed with one opposed (Notte)

Second reading will be 4/28/2015.

Committee Assignments - Chair Courcelle read the Board Assignments into record:

**COMMITTEE
ASSIGN-
MENTS**

Liaison to:

Activities/Athletic Council - Cavacas, Fagan, Olewnik, Shimp
Board of Alderman - Courcelle, Kurchena
Stafford Technical Center Advisory - Wideawake

Board Committees

Building - Cavacas (Chair), Alcorn, Notte, Shimp
Pension - Fagan, Cavacas, Olewnik, Pencak, Wideawake
Performance Excellence Workgroup - Courcelle, Cavacas, Fagan, Kurchena, Olewnik, Pencak
Policy - Shimp (Chair), Alcorn, Thomas
Staff Relations - Kurchena (Chair), Notte, Shimp

Please let Chair Courcelle know if you would like changes.

Chair Courcelle noted the School Board Contact Listing and asked Board Members to let Ms. Moran know if they would like changes for public dissemination.

New Business – none

**NEW
BUSINESS**

Old Business – none

**OLD
BUSINESS**

Motion by Thomas/Fagan at 8:05 pm, after a recess, for the board to convene to executive session for the purpose of discussing contractual matters, the premature release of information regarding those subjects which would place the Board at a substantial disadvantage.

**MOTION:
EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

Unanimously passed by those in attendance.

The Board came out of executive session at 9:03 pm.

**PUBLIC
SESSION**

Motion by Thomas/Notte to deny grievance. Passed unanimously.

**MOTION:
GRIEVANCE**

Motion by Fagan/Shimp at 9:06 pm for the board to convene to executive session for the purpose of discussing contractual matters, the premature release of information regarding those subjects which would place the Board at a substantial disadvantage.

**MOTION:
EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

The Board came out of executive session at 9:12 pm.

**PUBLIC
SESSION**

Motion by Fagan/Notte to adjourn at 9:13. Passed

ADJOURN

Respectfully submitted

Betty Kapitan
Recording Secretary

TO: Board of Education
 FROM: Mary E. Moran, Superintendent
 DATE: April 3, 2015
 RE: Personnel Memorandum – Licensed and Non-Licensed

RESOLVE: That the LICENSED and NON-LICENSED SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 515 dated April 3, 2015, be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

A. LICENSED SECTION

1. Resignation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Location</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
David Garland	Special Educator/RHS	6/30/15
Jennifer Kravitz	Social Studies/RHS	6/30/15
Randy Stewart	Special Educator/RMS	6/30/15

2. Appointments

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Location</u>	<u>Salary</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Megan Coloutti	Elementary (recalled)/NW	\$41,455.00	8/21/15
Melissa Connor	Assistant Director/STC	\$101,466.00	7/1/15
Sarah Coon	Science/RMS	\$39,797.00	8/21/15
Christopher C. Gray	STEM Academy Instructor/STC	\$66,328.00	8/21/15
Megan Head	Mathematics/RMS	\$39,797.00	8/21/15
Holly Itzo	Special Educator/RHS	\$38,139.00	8/21/15
Joshua McConnell	Special Educator/RMS	\$33,164.00	8/21/15

3. Transfer

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Location From/To</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Ashleigh McDonough	From: Special Educator/NE To: Special Educator/RIS	8/21/15
Joshua Bunker	From: Mathematics/RMS To: Mathematics/RHS	8/21/15

B. NON-LICENSED SECTION

1. Resignation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Location</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Elizabeth Quincy	Paraeducator/RIS	3/25/15

2. Appointment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Location</u>	<u>Pro-Rated Salary</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Ryan Connell	Paraeducator/RIS	\$5,137.02	3/26/15

3. Coaching Appointment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Stipend</u>	<u>Effective Date</u>
Tyler Yakunovitch	8 th Grade Baseball Coach	\$1,267.92	Spring Season