

RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
September 22, 2015

School Board Members Present:

Dick Courcelle
Rob Kurchena (6:38 pm)
Daniel Alcorn
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.
Peter Fagan
Alison Notte
Matthew Olewnik
Joanne Pencak (6:35 pm)
Kate Thomas
Christian Wideawake
Lydia Gulick
Nova Wang

Members Absent:

Erin Shimp

Also Present:

Superintendent Mary Moran
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
Patricia Aigner
Peter Amons
Melissa Connor
Susanne Engels
Cathy Farman
Kristen Holsman-Francoeur
Ellie McGarry
Bill Olsen
Glenn Olson
Pam Reed
Dan Roswell
Steve Sampson
Greg Schillinger

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Courcelle noted the absence of the recording secretary (will be recording minutes from video), Commissioners Shimp, Pencak (6:35 pm) and Kurchena (expected shortly – 6:38 pm.)

CALL TO
ORDER
ROLL CALL

Motion by Fagan/Thomas to accept the minutes of the September 8, 2015 regular school board meeting as written. Minutes stand.

MOTION:
MINUTES
9/8/2015

Audience: None

AUDIENCE

Written Communications - None

COMMUNICA-
TIONS - ORAL
AND
WRITTEN

Oral Communications – None

Performance Excellence Initiative/Progress – Chair Courcelle presented the PEI update and proposal provided by consultant/Kathy Letendre. He stated/reminded that this is not an attempt at micromanagement. The Board retains respect for administrative oversight. It relates specifically to the Board’s development of goals and monitoring of those goals. He is pleased to report that there is a group of educators (teachers and paraeducators from all levels) who are working with the group. There is a work group session with the consultant scheduled for September 29, 2015 and there will be a significant amount of work on this project from now through the end of the year. He noted that he is confident in Kathy and that this not the type of work most Vermont school boards are doing. It is a great opportunity to advance. He opened the discussion for feedback.

PEI
PROGRESS

Commissioner Fagan noted that he has a previous commitment on October 29th but looks forward to attending the following meetings.

Commissioner Kurchena stated that he liked participating in the brainstorming session regarding the Board’s responsibilities and leadership. It was nice to see collaboration and he liked how it was brought together at the end. He looks forward to continued work with Kathy and thinks the result will be terrific.

Commissioner Nottle inquired regarding the selection of the consultant and anticipated budget utilization. The consultant is local and has been working with other school districts. Her career focus has been SPED and quality initiatives in health care, but the basis for quality initiatives is the same. Superintendent Moran knows her well. This type of work is very specialized. Peter Amons has been involved and it is not a budgetary issue/normal operations. Utilizing the maximum funds budgeted for this project is anticipated.

PEI
PROGRESS
(CONT)

Motion – Cavacas/Thomas to accept the proposal regarding the advancement of the Rutland City Public School System through a focus on performance excellence by the Board of Commissioners.

MOTION:
ACCEPT PEI
PROPOSAL

Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

School Program Update:

SCHOOL
PROGRAM
UPDATE

School Improvement Plan - Part I: Assistant Superintendent Bliss reviewed RCPS Improvement Plan and provided an overview of the school improvement plans you will be seeing over the next Board meetings. He noted that these are 2 year plans based on both long and short range thinking. These are required plans for the allocation of federal funds. We want these plans to be purposeful for ongoing improvements. Plans for all schools and Stafford Technical Center will be presented. The format will be the same for each plan. This plan ended at the end of the 2014-15 school year. Assistant Superintendent Bliss offered to answer questions or address on an individual basis if contacted.

SCHOOL
IMPROVE-
MENT PLAN
PART I

Chair Courcelle noted appreciation for this update.

Commissioner Pencak inquired about the federal funds tied the improvement plans. This includes the Consolidated Federal Program (Title I and Title II.)

Assistant Superintendent Bliss reviewed the 2015 – 2017 RCPS School Improvement Plan and pointed out that some of points were the same due to ongoing work from the previous plan that had not been completed. He noted that, from a parent’s perspective while at the RHS Open House, each teacher had a common message and provided a brief explanation of how proficiencies were being implemented in their class. This provided a good understanding and was helpful. Assistant Superintendent Bliss asked for questions. There were no questions.

Superintendent Moran noted that there would be more comprehensive presentations during the budget process and the Technology Plan will also be presented.

Patricia Aigner, Director of Instructional Technology reviewed the September 2015 Technology Update. In the last 12 months RCPS has added greater access to technology, customized by grade level, classroom and individual. A wider range of Google products have been available. She told how two students were benefiting from greater access to technology. One student is using technology to expand and enjoy her love for writing, another student who is struggling with reading, is utilizing *Read and Write for Google* to help with research and documenting his research. *Google* is changing our professional community by allowing staff to share documents, calendars and proficiency scales. Mrs. Aigner thanked the Board for their support in providing additional resources and regular access.

INSTRUCT-
IONAL
TECHNOLOGY
UPDATE

Dan Roswell, Network Administrator, reviewed the technology work done over the summer. About 90% of the district now has internet access via wireless points. It is a gigabit ethernet and

internet system/a fast and massive system. It includes a separate guest network so that instruction is not affected. The new learning spaces at RHS include: 2 new desktop labs, laptops, an updated print station, charging stations, a video production studio and learning studios.

Questions/Comments:

Commissioner Kruchena asked: Do you find that intervention occurs more quickly with data intervention? Assistant Superintendent Bliss replied: Yes, based on real time information. This is how and why we use Flex Block.

Commissioner Olewnik asked: Are you seeing students staying after school to utilize technology they might not have at home? Are structures in place for access after hours? Mrs. Aigner responded: There are opportunities built into the school day and many of the products can be accessed from a cell phone. It's important question. Tapestry and EPIC are providing some access and RMS has added a homework club. Do we need funding for supervision? Will this be a budget crusher? Superintendent Moran noted that this is included in the Technology Plan and budget preparation. It will have more of an impact in some ways and in some ways, less of an impact.

Commissioner Wideawake asked: Is *Google* being used at levels other than at RHS? Mrs. Aigner advised that it is being utilized in Grades 1 – RHS and STC. Uses include providing resources for students and parents, creating spelling list and use of *Google Read and Write*. Several educators are already using it and more will be adopting it.

Chair Courcelle asked for a student's perspective. How has it helped?

Student Representative Gulik noted it is helpful if you miss a day because you can see what was assigned. She said she has 2 classes that are completely paperless because they use *Google Docs*. Her Spanish class utilizes another type of on-line classroom.

Student Representative Wang said it's made a big difference. He is able to grab notes on-line for all of his classes with very easy access.

Commissioner Pencak asked: Is there a plan to issue Chromebooks to students? Mrs. Aigner referred this question to Superintendent Moran and Assistant Superintendent Bliss. Coming up with a plan is still in process. One issue is access. This needs to be done effectively and efficiently with the least amount of loss.

Chair Courcelle acknowledged the challenge of staffing and advancing in the 21st Century Learning System and allowing us to be a school district at the cutting edge. We've made the commitment and the investment.

Superintendent Moran recognized the talent of the IT Department which only includes 5 people. We have been frugal and extraordinarily successful. It is typical for a district of our size to have at least 12 people in their IT Department.

Central Office Report:

Student Representative Gulik advised that sports are up and running and teams are doing well. There has been a great turn out at football games. Spirit Week is coming up the first week of October. The new climbing wall in the gym looks amazing!

Student Representative Wang noted that the library is closer to being done and should be complete in the next few weeks. It provides a lot of new opportunities – a learning studio that allows students to work together on presentations and sharing.

CENTRAL
OFFICE
REPORT
(CONT)

Superintendent Moran thanked the administration, faculty, staff and parents for attending the open houses. She congratulated Bill Olsen for receiving the *Sanctae Crucis Award* from the College of the Holy Cross. This the highest non-degree cognition bestowed by the College on a graduate.

Facilities and Finance: NONE

FACILITIES &
FINANCE

Personnel: NONE

PERSONNEL

Committee Reports:

COMMITTEE
REPORTS

Policy Committee – The Policy Committee met last week and reviewed 4 policies (Nutrition and Wellness, Hazing, Harrassment and Bullying.) A prior law called for separate policies. The Committee is working with counsel and others to find the best and legal way to approach.

POLICY
COMMITTEE

New Business - None

NEW
BUSINESS

Old Business – None

OLD
BUSINESS

Motion by Fagan/Pencak at 8:27 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. Passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE
SESSION

The Board came out of executive session at 8:27 pm.

Motion by Notte/Pencack to deny the REA grievance based on the Board’s deliberations on same. Passed: 7: Yes – 1: No (Thomas) – 1: Abstension (Kurchena)

MOTION:
REA
GRIEVANCE

Motion by Thomas/Fagan to adjourn at 8:30 pm. Passed.

ADJOURN

Respectfully submitted
Betty Kapitan, Recording Secretary