

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS
SEPTEMBER 25, 2012**

School Board Members Present:

Peter Mello
Richard Courcelle
Douglas Gage
Peter Fagan
Robert Kurchena
Jamie Pemrick
Erin Shimp
Rob Towle
Lena Cohen

Member Absent

Hurley Cavacas, Jr.
Wayne Cooke
Kate Thomas

Also Present:

Superintendent Mary Moran
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
Peter Amons
Wil Cunningham
Lyle Jepson
Susanne Engels
Jay Slenker
Ellie McGarry
Patricia Aigner
Pam Reed
Nicole Carter
Bill Olsen

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

**CALL TO
ORDER**

ROLL CALL

Motion by Fagan / Shimp to accept the minutes of the Sept. 11, 2012 regular school board meeting as written. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:
MINUTES
09/11/12
MEETING**

Written & Oral Communications - None

**WRITTEN &
ORAL
COMMUN-
ICATIONS**

Action Plans K - 6

Assistant Superintendent Bliss said the Action Plans are largely aligned with last year's with some outcomes. Starting in the next 45 days, we will be looking at the Green Mountain Star analysis and improvement process. Ms. Engels said there are similarities in format and content between schools K-6 due to the district's "big six" initiatives. She talked about how we use standards to understand what we want students to know and how we get there. The plans involve a lot of data on performance, which shows us what our students know and what they do not know and helps us decide what to do with the information. Ms. Engels said the Plans also highlight our use of technology to get data, make it efficient and use it to provide the best instruction. She reviewed some of the specific primary schools' Action Plan Goals, Strategies, Measurable Objectives, and some of the Outcomes. Mr. Bliss said he has seen firsthand that initiatives at Northwest School are valuable. There were questions on a couple of the Outcomes and Mr. Bliss clarified.

**EDUCATION
REPORT**

**ACTION
PLANS K-6**

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- How is brain-based learning described in the Action Plans? Mr. Bliss said it is more about differentiated instruction. Actual brain-based learning professional development has been more at the high school and middle school levels. It is similarly aligned. Ms. Engels said it is embedded into the methods, not a specific goal. It is implied that in order to teach all learners, we need to know how all learners learn and then teach specifically to their strengths and weaknesses.
- What are the Fontas and Pinnell (F & P) benchmarks? Ms. Engels said we are

starting those assessments, which take one adult about 20 minutes with each student individually. They keep really good data and gather a huge amount of information. Aimsweb is given three times a year. F & P is not repeated once a student has met the benchmark. It is time consuming to administer.

- Please explain the Tiers 2 and 3 instruction support. Ms. Engels said there are different responses using Response to Intervention (RTI). We see the response and decide what to do next. Responses are organized in a pyramid and Ms. Engels explained the levels. What Northwest does at Tier 1 might be different than what RIS does at Tier 1.
- What are the primary schools doing to collaborate with Headstart? Ms. Engels said the two programs are working to understanding each others' values, philosophies and beliefs. They share regular communication, collaborate when students move from pre-school into kindergarten, and share regular resources.
- One particular group noted at Northeast did not do well, "Group 2009," and Mr. Bliss was asked how those students are doing now. Mr. Bliss said he needs to look into the group.
- What are Tumblebooks? Ms. Engels said it is digital reading program and brand new to us.
- If our goal is to achieve 5% over what we have done in the past, are we just continuing what we have been doing with reading strategies? Ms. Engels said it is ongoing. We are looking at more than just this data. Mr. Bliss said there are always new initiatives, such as Tumblebooks and E-Suites.
- The primary schools always have a 33% turnover rate in students each year. We need to look at the cohorts analysis. If we look at a snapshot of a school, there are always new students.
- There was data in the past which correlated with statistics such as free and reduced lunch students. Mr. Bliss said the information is in the Northeast School Action Plan. He can get this data from Northwest School.

Mr. Slenker said RIS's Action Plan is very similar to the primary schools although they do not do the F & P. They are looking at differentiated instruction and brain-based learning. They made a cognizant effort to move the intervention block to the middle of the day, which has been found to be the most productive time of the day for students. There are a few new initiatives at RIS and Mr. Slenker explained them.

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- When is Aimsweb being assessed? Mr. Slenker said the first assessment is done before Oct. 1, the second before Feb. 15 and third before May 15. The May data helps to inform the development of fall intervention groups. Ms. Moran said the data is used to develop plans for students during summer Tapestry.
- How do students get help at night? Mr. Slenker said the Academy program, through Tapestry. Information from Everyday Math goes home for parents. RIS will be doing a homework forum next month for parents to better help students.
- What is the development of SMART lessons. Mr. Slenker said they are taking a look at assessments. "This is where we want students to be; how are we going to get there?" Teachers in grades 3 - 6 are working on Common Core. We need to be purposeful in lessons.
- There was a lot of summer work listed in the Action Plan. Was it completed or scheduled for next summer? Mr. Slenker said with the exception of Common Core

work, everything on the list was completed. Teachers have been working on Common Core. The teachers are taking the work done in the summer and putting it to purposeful work. Mr. Bliss said professional development is shared in an e-format with everyone else.

- When is foreign language introduced? Ms. Moran said students take a full year of World Language starting in grade 8.
- Does What I Need (WIN) block happen in classrooms or do students move around. Mr. Slenker said everyone moves for WIN block. They are taught in small groups. For students who are not in need of intervention, they can take classes such as, school newspaper, ASL, etc. They are focused upon writing.
- It would be good to get updates on how the schools are progressing based on the Action Plans. Ms. Moran said the Board is talking about educational issues now. They will then switch to finance and then there will be educational reports again after the budget is done.
- Commissioner Fagan commented on the types of materials which should be “dashboard”, those things the Board should be looking at in-depth more often. He suggested i.e., Aimsweb results be shared with the Board three times a year. Ms. Moran said the Board will talk later about their goals.
- Should we be looking at a cohort? Mr. Bliss said i.e., the question was asked “If NECAP tests are not as useful as we would like, what would be more useful?” The leadership team looks at all the data regularly as leadership teams, who uses the data on a regular basis. Ms. Moran said we also develop common assessments ourselves so we are doing them at grade and department level.

Supervision and Evaluation System - Ms. Moran said Supervision and Evaluation is an important part of our work and all school leaders are trained in a common approach to evaluation. The handbook distributed is the current tool being used. She said it is important and time consuming work. The district has a high administrator-to-teacher ratio which means each administrator has a high number of teachers to evaluate.

Paraprofessionals are also evaluated and there are different handbooks for other professionals such as nurses and guidance counselors. She said there are reforms being initiated both locally and at the state and federal levels. We include assessments and metrics in the system. Mr. Bliss reviewed the Supervision and Evaluation (S & E) model and the process used with the teacher handbook, as there are more teachers than any other group of employees. There is a district-wide Evaluation Committee and they are working on updating the system. The State has asked for an update to the S & E process as a result of AYP. Mr. Bliss explained different aspects of the process and the types of things that are looked at. He said he and Ms. Moran look at every piece of evaluative material generated. Mr. Bliss said Teachpoint is a web-based walk-through tool. Supervisors can use it to do a quick walk-through evaluation that can be specific to one thing. Ms. Moran said it is a good electronic tool and at a future meeting, we can show how it is used. We can customize it to our methodology and language and make it specific to our work.

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- Could the Board see an actual teacher evaluation from each of the categories: an exemplary teacher, a teacher in need, a probationary teacher, etc. Ms. Moran suggested to do it in a retreat setting, perhaps a winter retreat.
- On each form, are some filled out at the beginning of the year? For example, showing what data will be used; So that there is a beginning and then showing

how it continued? Mr. Bliss said for each one, the professional development reflection is followed by a professional development report. Ms. Moran reviewed the ongoing nature of the report throughout the year.

**SUPER-
VISION &
EVALUA-
TION
SYSTEM,
cont.**

- How are the reviews split? Mr. Bliss said groups are divided in three cycles so each year, only one-third of the teachers are on comprehensive evaluations at any given time.
- Suggestions were given for updated language to be added to the document to reflect changes, such as adding the “the six methodologies of continued improvement.”
- What is our retention rate for new teachers? Both brand-new graduates and those new to the district? Ms. Moran said our retention rate in both categories is exceedingly high. We have a two year curriculum called Pathwise Mentoring used for brand new teachers and experienced teachers who are new to us have a coach. She said our intentional approach results in our high retention rate.

**BOARD
GOALS**

Board Goals - Mr. Mello said he and Mr. Courcelle put this together from discussion from the Board’s August retreat. There are two focus areas each with a goal and objectives. These are board goals; not administration goals. The two focus areas are Relationships and Continuous Improvement. Mr. Courcelle said this was looked at from an approach as a board. This is an effort and opportunity to create a more engaged Board of School Commissioners and he finds this helpful for him to provide more meaningful service. There was Board discussion about the goals. Mr. Mello asked Commissioners to think of ways the Board could assess these goals.

PERSONNEL

Motion by Towle / Fagan to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 470 dated Sept. 21, 2012, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

**MOTION:
PERSONNEL
MEMO #470**

The family / medical leave, appointment, and resignation were reviewed by Superintendent Moran. They are attached.

Motion passed by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:
PERSONNEL
MEMO
ADDENDUM
#470**

Motion by Shimp / Towle to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 470 Addendum dated Sept. 24, 2012, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

The appointment was reviewed by Superintendent Moran. It is attached.

Motion passed by all those in attendance.

Motion by Towle / Kurchena to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 470 Addendum dated Sept. 24, 2012, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

**MOTION:
PERSONNEL
MEMO
ADDENDUM
#470**

The co-curricular advisor appointments were reviewed by Superintendent Moran. They are attached.

Motion passed by all those in attendance.

Business Report - None

**BUSINESS
REPORT**

Announcements

**SUPERIN-
TENDENT'S
REPORT**

- Lena Cohen said the high school's first full Senate meeting was held. There are new class Senators and student Executive Board members. They reviewed the Constitution. They talked about club and organization fundraisers. Students have trouble getting bake sales approved and Ms. Murray, a Family and Consumer Studies teacher and advisor, is going to work with the students on creating healthier food sale fundraisers based upon the FCS curriculum. This week there will be elections for freshman class officers. There has been a lot of interest. Juniors will take NECAPS next week. Freshmen and Sophomores go in and learn about improving test-taking skills. Seniors will work on college applications. The Tri-M Honor Society students are working on a way to become mentors to RIS and RMS music students to inspire them to continue in band, chorus and orchestra.
- Ms. Moran thanked the Jolley Company for their \$5000 donation. They are the new owners of the convenience store and service station across the street from school. The funds are being divided between RIS and RMS. A committee, including students, will meet to decide how best to use the money for special events, programs, guest speakers, etc. Ms. Moran thanked the Jolley Corp. for thinking of us and being a good neighbor.
- Mr. Slenker has developed a new publication called the Principal's Wall which is an artistic and concise information sheet from RIS.

**STUDENT
REPORT**

**ANNOUNCE-
MENTS**

City Report - Board members received a copy of the annual School Department Report for the City Report. It follows the same format used every year.

**CITY
REPORT**

**COMM.
REPORTS**

Committee Reports - None

New & Old Business - None

**NEW & OLD
BUSINESS**

Motion by Fagan / Towle at 8:18 pm, after a recess, for the board to convene to executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel and legal contractual matters, the premature release of information regarding those subjects which would place the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Unanimously passed by those in attendance.

**MOTION:
EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

The Board came out of executive session at 8:47 pm.

**PUBLIC
SESSION**

Motion by Gage / Kurchena to adjourn at 8:48 pm. Passed.

ADJOURN

Respectfully submitted

Janet Mondlak
Recording Secretary