

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS  
FEBRUARY 26, 2013**

**School Board Members Present:**

Peter Mello  
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.  
Wayne Cooke  
Richard Courcelle  
Rob Kurchena  
Jamie Pemrick  
Erin Shimp  
Kate Thomas  
Rob Towle

**Member Absent**

Peter Fagan  
Douglas Gage  
Lena Cohen

**Also Present:**

Superintendent Mary Moran  
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss  
Wil Cunningham  
Bill Olsen  
Peter Amons  
Susanne Engels  
Jay Slenker  
Steve Sampson  
Patricia Aigner  
Ted Guilmette  
Pam Reed  
Nicole Carter  
Jessica Henderson

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The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Mello noted the absence of Commissioners Fagan, Gage, and Student Representative Cohen.

**CALL TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

Motion by Thomas / Cavacas to accept the minutes of the Feb. 12, 2013 regular school board meeting with the following credit: Towle said the minutes give him credit for making a motion to convene to executive session but he was not in attendance. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

**MOTION:  
MINUTES  
02/12/13  
MEETING**

**WRITTEN &  
ORAL  
COMMUN-  
ICATIONS**

Written and Oral Communications - None

**EDUCATION  
REPORT**

Education Report - Mr. Olsen said both Global Studies Program and STEM Academy representatives will speak about those two initiatives. He said back in 2008 they looked at emphasizing: What students will learn? How will they learn it? Why will they learn it? This evolved into two programs: Global Studies and STEM.

**GLOBAL  
STUDIES  
PROGRAM**

Global Studies Program - Jen Kravitz, Chair of the Global Studies Advisory Committee has been working on the Global Studies concentration for three years. This year her work is supported by the Rowland Foundation. She introduced the committee members, students, a parent, and a teacher. Ms. Cassel highlighted what the Global Studies Concentration provides. Students fulfilling the requirements will receive a certificate with their diploma at graduation. She reviewed the program requirements. A RHS student talked about global-focused community service. Another student spoke about partnering with schools in Japan and Cuba. Ms. Kravitz explained the collaboration between RHS departments around global themes. Ms. Cassel said one of the important things with the program is the relevancy of the course work that is woven together. The students commented on what they find important with the course work and how it is engaging them and how they feel they can make a difference now. The parent committee member said the program is important for students to realize and see what is going on around them, both locally and around the world. Commissioner Cooke said he thinks it is an amazing piece of work. He sees a

potential connection with the development of Personal Learning Plans. Mr. Mello asked if Global Studies courses are in lieu of a set of courses. Ms. Cassel said a student can take the classes without the concentration but if a student does the combination of the classes, capstone, service work, etc., they could fulfill the concentration requirements. Ms. Kravitz said the courses are those that students would take anyway, but there is the additional work. Commissioner Thomas asked about the plan to guide students through the process. Ms. Kravitz said that is being flushed out but for now, she is doing it through the Rowland Grant. Mr. Mello said this is part of what is making our district attractive and is a tribute to the work that has been done over the past few years.

STEM Academy - Mr. Sampson said the STEM work has been following the Global Studies program and they are working toward a concentration in Math, Science, Engineering and Technology. Mr. Chan has been a math teacher at RHS and is now heading up the STEM work at STC as the STEM Academy Coach. He has been awarded a grant to support his work. He explained the work in three areas: STC working on a STEM Engineering Academy; revamping STC / RHS partnership with grades 9 - 10 pre-STEM curriculum; and working on a RHS STEM concentration similar to the Global Studies strand. Mr. Chan explained a number of STEM projects that have been ongoing at the middle and high schools over the past few years and some ideas for the near future, including a maple sugar project, and a 3D printing program. Many projects are locally based and are relevant.

Ms. Wallstrom, RHS Science teacher, said she and Ms. Wilson attended a two week training program last summer at Norwich about engineering. They had to design a project and decided to work on a water infiltration project. It was relevant to some of the work the students did after Tropical Storm Irene. They chose the questions, "How could we prevent another situation where the water pipe might be damaged?" "Can something be engineered to protect our infrastructure in the future?" The teachers met with the city engineer and looked into the dam which was once supposed to be built but never was. The students explored "If that dam had been designed, would that have been able to prevent the events that happened after Irene?" Ms. Wilson, RHS Information Technology teacher, reviewed the different skills set they brought to the project and she explained the methods they used to engage the students. Two RHS freshmen students shared their projects and results.

Commissioner Shimp complimented the students' work and asked for a link to the school website. Commissioner Towle asked if the students were thinking about hydroelectric. Ms. Wallstrom said there are many different places to branch out and especially for students who want to explore other areas. Ms. Mello asked the teachers to bring back the message to their colleagues that the Board knows what it takes to do work like this and what it means to the students. He said it takes a tremendous commitment and a lot of work. The Board appreciates those efforts that demonstrate that what we are all doing makes a difference. He said these are exciting projects that are meaningful and relevant.

NECAP Results - Mr. Bliss said the students took the NECAPs in the fall of 2012. We are tracking how cohorts are doing over a period of time as they go through our entire system. He explained some of the details of the data and how it is evaluated. He said the teams from different schools look at the data and the numbers. He explained the scoring and the cohort comparisons. Commissioner Pemrick said she thinks this is

concerning and asked what we are putting in place to let the public know about our progress. Mr. Bliss reviewed the many strategies being used at different levels. Commissioner Kurchena commented on the trends, both locally and at the state level. Commissioner Cavacas said this is a high stakes test which does not have a bearing on the child’s diploma. Students know that. He hopes that will change with the Common Core. Right now, we are evaluated on one test given on one day. It does not look at the complete curriculum. Mr. Bliss said Vermont has very high standards compared to many states across the country. We are doing NAEP testing this week which is a national assessment and compares with students around the country. Vermont always does well.

Mr. Bliss discussed steps taken after they receive results. They look at different sub-groups of students and make decisions on where to focus efforts. Mr. Mello reminded the Board of their second goal, “Support and monitor district efforts to promote continuous learning growth for students and staff.” He said there are more observational questions regarding what we do with the data, looking at methods and practice. He said we need to focus on teachers being reflective and then providing the professional development. The teacher in the classroom is the most important resource. Mr. Kurchena said the improvement in reading is astonishing. He asked if they are transferable skills to other curriculum. Mr. Bliss said they are looking at some of the observations. The integrated program between disciplines is great.

Motion by Pemrick / Towle to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 477 dated Feb. 22, 2013, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

MOTION:  
PERSONNEL  
MEMO #477

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

Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

Mr. Cavacas asked about anticipated openings for next year. Ms. Moran said there are fewer retirements and people leaving than we have had in recent years.

BUSINESS  
REPORT

Business Report - Mr. Amons provided the updated, and probably final, tax information from the state. They have announced a tax rate of \$1.48.

TAX RATE

Announcements

SUPERIN-  
TENDENT’S  
REPORT

- Northeast School will be hosting the Proctor High School band for a Positive Paws Celebration concert this Thursday morning. On Friday they will be hosting guest readers from around the community as a part of the school’s celebrate Dr. Seuss’s birthday. At night they will hold a Dr. Seuss movie night.
- This week is Dr. Seuss week at Northwest with each day serving as a spirit day (including mixed up Monday, Top hat Tuesday, etc.) to honor the beloved author and his birthday! On Friday there will be special guest readers in each classroom. March 1st is the skating club awards/celebration. Special congratulations to Cathy O’Rourke, first grade teacher for being honored this year as one of the 30 Project IGNITE educators! Awards celebration to be held in Montpelier on March 25th.
- The RIS PTC will be hosting a Mardi Gras Dance this Friday. Requesting a can-good donation for the Community Cupboard. Congratulations to the RAHA U12 Team for their win at the State Championships over St. Albans on Sunday. RIS students on the team are Ella Baraldi, Brianna Beauchamp and Lauren Giancola.

ANNOUNCE-  
MENTS

- Congratulations to RMS 7th graders, Kelsey Barker and Elizabeth Wideawake, members of the RAHA Jr. Spartans hockey team that defeated the St. Albans on Sunday to win the Girls U-12 Vermont State Hockey Championship. Congratulations to the RMS Cheerleading squad who won the state-wide cheerleading competition in Barre last weekend. Mr. Towle said every team from Rutland won in their category. Assessment updates - On Feb. 25, RMS 8th graders completed the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) exams. On Tuesday, all middle schoolers completed the bi-annual Youth Risk Behavior Survey. RMS parents should receive Term 3 Progress Reports in the mail by the middle of next week.
- At Stafford Technical Center there will be an open house on March 7 for students and their parents who are interested in apply for the 2013-2014 school year. On March 1 Mrs. Wetzler's fifth grade class will be traveling to Stafford Technical Center's Digital Arts class to create short animations about their personal family history. Mrs. Wetzler's class has been working on a project titled "All about Me" exploring ancestry and American History. Each fifth grader will write a short statement about their family to be used in their animation. Students will have a snack made by the Culinary Arts program.

Legislative Report - Ms. Moran updated Board members on some of the education legislation being discussed in Montpelier.

LEGISLA-  
TIVE  
REPORT

Budget information - Budget Buddies flier has been prepared and is being mailed. It replicates the Frequency Asked Questions. They have been meeting and phone calls will be made. Ms. Moran said the school pre-town meeting to explain the budget will be held on Monday, March 4 at 6:30 pm at Longfellow.

BUDGET  
INFORMA-  
TION

COMM.  
REPORTS

Status of Dana Sale - Commissioner Cooke said we have received an offer on Dana School for \$50,000 from Giancola Properties. It is the first and only offer we have received. The contract with the listing agent had been extended until the end of April. The offer has no contingencies and the building will be sold "as is." Mr. Cooke said it is estimated that it would cost approximately \$250,000 to remove the building down and we might get \$85,000 - 100,000 for the lot. Ms. Moran said there will be another neighborhood meeting scheduled with the Building Committee and they will then bring a recommendation to the full Board in April.

STATUS OF  
DANA SALE

New & Old Business - None

NEW & OLD  
BUSINESS

Motion by Towle / Thomas at 8:00 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. Unanimously passed by those in attendance.

MOTION:  
EXECUTIVE  
SESSION

The Board came out of executive session at 8:30 pm.

PUBLIC  
SESSION

Motion by Towle / Kurchena to adjourn at 8:30 pm. Passed.

ADJOURN

Respectfully submitted

Janet Mondlak, Recording Secretary