

Approved by the Rye School Board at its July 2, 2008 meeting.

**RYE SCHOOL DISTRICT
RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

The monthly meeting of the School Board of the Rye School District was held at the Rye Junior High School on June 11, 2008 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

School Board Members:

Ian Grant, Betty Anderson, Peggy Balboni,
Michael Schwartz, Jeanne Moynahan.

Administrators:

Dr. George A. Cushing, Superintendent
Jim Katkin, Business Administrator
Chris Pollet, Principal, Rye Junior High
Patricia-Lane Richardson, Principal, Rye Elementary

Staff

Kathleen Cole, Katie Jarvis, Sheila Adams, Jeanne Brown, Tim Moynahan.

Residents/Visitors:

Chris Lingamfelter, Suzanne Vogt, Lucy Neiman, Steve White,
Mimi White.

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Grant called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

- A. Mrs. Moynahan proposed, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, a motion to approve the School Board public minutes of May 21, 2008, as revised. Unanimously approved.
- B. Communications - Dr. Cushing shared a letter of resignation from Catherine Murphy, world language teacher at Rye Junior High. Due to challenges of balancing family and work, Mrs. Murphy is resigning to find work closer to home. Upon a motion by Mrs. Moynahan, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, the Board accepted Mrs. Murphy's resignation. Mr. Grant extended his thanks to Mrs. Murphy for her involvement in establishing the Spanish program in Rye.

REPORTS:

Superintendent:

Communications:

- Dr. Cushing spoke of a second outbreak of chickenpox at RES. RES nurse, Mrs. Wilson sent a letter home to all RES parents and RJH nurse, Mrs. Smith sent a letter home to the middle school parents as well. Notice was posted to the website as well.

- Mr. Grant stated that he had received a call from a legislative liaison from Stratham asking for a Rye contact to help raise support for important educational issues. Mr. Grant will discuss this further at the July Board meeting.
- The special education report was distributed. Dr. Cushing spoke of a Rye pre-school student who came to the district in 2007-2008 and needed a one-to-one aide. This student came to the district after the budget process. The student requires 3 hrs/day for 3 days. Mr. Katkin estimated the cost to be around \$130-\$135/day.
- Mrs. Anderson asked about the 5th grade student that shows as being placed out of district; specifically Mrs. Anderson asked if that required additional money. Dr. Cushing offered to follow-up with Mrs. Lyons to get details on that cost. Mrs. Anderson again requested that special education reports be part of the Board packets distributed prior to the meeting.
- Dr. Cushing spoke of the Youth at Risk Survey forum held at Portsmouth High School on May 29th. There were about fifty people in attendance as well as Police Chief Kevin Walsh. Much of the focus was on underage drinking and driving. John Dye, father of former Rye student, Jhaimie Dye, spoke of the tragic alcohol-related accident that claimed the life of his son just last year. For Dr. Cushing's part he spoke of the vision for our districts to host evenings of relevant topics in an effort for all to remain current on such topics and supportive of our youth.
- Dr. Cushing mentioned the Celebration of Learning recently hosted at RJH. He said the projects were great, developmentally appropriate, and showed terrific creativity. Highlights of the evening included: a beautiful framed tile mural, a robot as part of Ms. Ellwood's upcoming Antarctica exploration, a digital frame from the PTA with pictures of Ms. Adam's students, and a musically charged old coffee house from Ms. Papoutsy's students. Dr. Cushing also acknowledged the quality of writing from Ms. Ridolfi's students noting that as Ms. Cote read some of the pieces of work. She acknowledged the progress of so many students and truly admired their work.
- Staffing update - Dr. Cushing stated that to-date we have received 39 resumes for the Curriculum Coordinator's position. Mr. Grant asked how many candidates would likely make it to the short list; Dr. Cushing said they were looking at five or six for the short list.

Elementary School

- Ms. Richardson stated she has two candidates to bring to the Board for nomination. Rosalind Robichaud is a candidate for the one-year 5th grade teaching position. Ms. Robichaud has five years of experience teaching this grade in Atlanta. Linda Perrott is a candidate for the school counselor/ psychologist position. Ms. Perrott is a retired Massachusetts school counselor/psychologist. Ms. Richardson stated she conducted 30-40 minute interviews and then spent much time checking references; a component Ms. Richardson feels is critical when looking for the right candidate.
- RES has been collecting lightly worn shoes for a PHS charitable program.
- First graders had a day of sharing reading and writing today.
- Using Mr. Pollet's 'student snapshot' as a basis, Ms. Richardson created a student snapshot for RES 5th graders.
- Fifth grade students wrote letters to the RJH staff about their move to the junior high; posing questions and letting the staff know what they are looking forward to.

- Over \$2,000.00 was raised via ‘mall in the hall’ last month.

Junior High

- Mr. Pollet stated that he has two candidates to bring to the Board for nomination. Mr. Pollet had an interview committee consisting of himself, Mrs. Balboni, Ms. Catalano - 8th grade math teacher, and Ms. Cote – 6th grade teacher. Mr. Pollet received over 50 applications for the 6th grade math position and interviewed six candidates. He considered the candidate’s level of math instruction, communication, and professional development. Mr. Pollet met with committee members individually and then checked references. Mr. Pollet feels Aaron Scoggin will bring great energy and enthusiasm and one quote from a reference was “... he is the type of teacher every school should have.”
- Laura Bond is the candidate for the one-year art teaching position for Ms. Vitali. (Ms. Vitali welcomed baby Hannah Marie earlier this month). Ms. Bond has met with Ms. Vitali and already discussed steps for a seamless transition. Ms. Bond brings a great technological component to the position and will do great things with the digital portfolios.
- Celebration of Learning – Mr. Pollet was very enthusiastic about the ICT standards put out by Ms. Coombs which really called attention to how much progress the students have made.
- 8th grade students left RJH for Merrowvista at 8:30 this morning. The students were busily talking about flexibility offered with the schedule as well as bus and rooming assignments. Mr. Pollet is going up to Merrowvista Friday for the ‘Australia Cup’ event.
- As is tradition, Mrs. Philbrick offered the 8th graders lunch of their choice on the last day of school and they chose Flat Bread Pizza!
- Mr. Pollet shared the winning Riptide logo design by a 7th grade boy.

Mrs. Moynahan noted that she attended the Celebration of Learning and how impressed she was with the 6th grade student who explained her project, how she completed the project, and the math skills she applied. Also the students that participated in the “Coffee House” talent show were great!

Mr. Schwartz also attended the evening celebration and said a number of parents came up to him to say what a terrific job Mr. Pollet is doing at the school.

FINANCIAL

Manifest –

Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, a motion to approve the manifest of May 20, 2008 through June 9, 2008 in the amount of \$343,152.88. Mrs. Moynahan asked if check #384 was for the track work; Mr. Katkin confirmed it was. Vote to approve: Unanimously approved.

Ms. Anderson asked Mr. Katkin if we will meet our year-end budget target. Mr. Katkin stated it will be close.

Mrs. Moynahan noted that the Rye budget committee is looking to fill the seat vacated when Mr. Eaton was elected as Town Moderator. There are currently four people set to be interviewed by the budget committee for consideration. Mrs. Moynahan will let Mr. Grant know when those interviews are scheduled.

OTHER:

One to One Laptop Initiative –Mr. Schwartz spoke of this initiative which has been in the works for the past 18 months. He thanked and acknowledged the efforts of committee members Ms. Sheila Adams, Mr. Chris Pollet, Mr. Chris Lingamfelter, Mr. Tim Moynahan, and Ms. Suzanne Vogt as part of this initiative. The committee then made a presentation to the Board of this initiative.

History of Laptop Initiative - Mr. Lingamfelter said he first saw an article about the One to One Laptop Initiative in the Portsmouth Herald and he noticed it offered affordable prices. He then conducted a lot of web research and spoke to at least thirty-six people involved in implementing such programs. Tonight's goal is to share with the Board what has been done and learned to-date.

One to One Vision: Enhance Student Learning - Mr. Pollet stated his question for the committee was "How does this enhance learning?" Mr. Pollet likes to highlight the fact that this initiative provides new teaching methods and really puts the teacher as the facilitator. Additionally, research shows students will write more in-depth, edit further, re-write and improve their work when technology is involved. He also noted the opportunity to improve mathematic, science, social studies, and technology skills.

Vignettes – Ms. Adams and Ms. Vogt walked everyone through a scenario as a student realized on Sunday night there was indeed homework assigned over the weekend. Ms. Adams showed how the student could check the agenda book online, access the homework and deposit the completed work in the web locker, connect with peers, and access tools and resources (Quizlet and online discussions). Ms. Adams noted the numerous opportunities for collaboration. She feels the computers offer tools that can be used for differentiated instruction and allows students to individually pursue areas of interest as well as those that require more time.

Lessons Learned – Mr. Pollet stated that this sort of initiative provides real-time learning and students are more engaged. It also brings greater attendance rates (though this is not a problem at RJH) and greater enthusiasm for learning. Mr. Pollet said the professional development piece is a large component as it requires colleagues working together on a whole new level. Mr. Lingamfelter added that it creates a collaborative environment creating lifelong learners. He is currently working to identify all costs involved in such an initiative.

Proposed Next Steps – Mr. Pollet said the committee could develop a budget proposal for 2009-2010 school year, refine the professional development approach and recommend a roll-out strategy if desired. He leaves it to the Board for direction.

Mr. Schwartz again extended his thanks to everyone involved in this initiative and acknowledged Mr. Moynahan for his work as well. Mr. Schwartz said the 22-page proposal and power point presentation can be viewed at: <http://rjhone.wikispaces.com>.

Mr. Grant also thanked all involved with this initiative and conceptually he supports the initiative. He then asked if it was known what percentage of Rye students already have a computer at home; his concern is that we are duplicating efforts. Mr. Pollet said, while many homes do have a family computer, problems arise when there is more than one child using that family computer. Mr. Grant asked if we have surveyed to see if there are multiple computers in each home. He stressed that there were many things in the presentation that could be done immediately even without purchasing laptops to the benefit of students and teachers. Mr. Schwartz added that part of the goal is seamless access

integrating activities of every day work with the programs Ms. Adams and Ms. Vogt spoke of and demonstrated.

Mrs. Balboni said she would like to see some transition movement with the program before a commitment is made. She feels there are still many 'traditional' teachers and we would need to provide the means and time for teachers to get up to speed.

Ms. Adams stated that at a team meeting at RJH today everyone wanted computer access at the same time. She said this creates challenges for the teachers and they have to have a back-up plan because of the computer access problem at RJH which means there aren't enough laptops for the demand.

Mr. Grant said there will definitely be a learning curve and some teachers are more responsive than others. He feels the risk is putting the cart before the horse by purchasing all of these computers. Mr. Grant agrees with Mr. Pollet that this initiative provides a quantum shift in teaching but he feels it will require teachers to be 100% on-board.

Mrs. Balboni added that there will also be a curriculum shift which will require professional development learning funds and resources.

Mr. Lingamfelter said he thought of looking at the school population by grade and then proposing a smaller pilot with the smallest populated grade.

Mr. Schwartz stated that the laptop computers-on-wheels (c.o.w.s) are checked out all day at the schools. He said it might be worth looking into c.o.w. sign-outs to determine if there is a user pattern.

Mr. Grant asked if the touch screens are still available for use; Ms. Adams said they are still available but involve a lower level of thinking skills. Mr. Grant acknowledged this but said it was at least something to work around again getting all the teacher and students working on large parts of this before the investment into the laptops.

Ms. Anderson said real progress takes vision and risk. She supports this initiative and acknowledges that professional development is a huge component and a significant fundraising campaign might be needed. She feels the professional development piece must be addressed first. Ms. Anderson noted this initiative is a huge leadership responsibility which falls to the principals; Mr. Pollet specifically so it will be up to him to lead the effort and make it successful.

Mr. Pollet acknowledged the responsibility and feels it goes to the core of a higher level of learning, and prepares students for the world beyond schools.

Mr. Grant, Ms. Anderson, and Dr. Cushing all thanked the committee for the presentation this evening.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Calendar of Policy Action – June: Payment of school district treasurer. Mr. Katkin said the check is cut and put in the safe until the treasurer provides the end-of-year reports showing balanced books.

Retreat – the Rye School Board retreat is set for Wednesday, July 2nd in the board room of the Portsmouth Community Campus. Mr. Grant said the agenda will follow the format of previous retreats and he will send an email seeking agenda items. The retreat will begin with a very brief board meeting to address any necessary business.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS:

None

STANDING COMMITTEES:

- Physical Plant: Mr. Katkin said the Board voted on many physical plant issues and that all items should be complete. A problem with the irrigation pump (depth of the pump and rusting pipes) is being addressed. Additionally there was a problem with back-flow preventers which prevent water from going back to the street. Apparently both of ours are leaking so we are trying to do a patch-repair. If this does not work then they will both need to be replaced at a projected cost of \$3,700 each.

Mr. Grant complimented Mr. Katkin on his effort to complete the large number of year-end physical plant jobs.

Ms. Anderson asked if the issue with the irrigation pump is covered by insurance. Mr. Katkin said it is not covered as it is beyond the one-year warranty. Mr. Katkin will look into costs for extended warranty with the new pump. He is not sure why this pump failed but will take a close look at it once it is removed from the ground.

NEW BUSINESS *continued*:

Energy Study *continued* - Mr. Grant apologized for beginning this topic before the arrival of the energy commission committee. He thought we would not get to this point in the agenda until later and told them to arrive later. But in the interest of respecting Mr. Katkin's time, he asked him to move ahead with the presentation.

Mr. Katkin stated that the Town created the Rye Energy Committee which received a proposal from the Jordan Institute for developing energy-saving projects in the Rye schools. Founded in 1995, the Jordan Institute is a non-profit agency that, since 2007, has focused their efforts on carbon emissions reduction, primarily by improving energy efficiency of buildings statewide. Mr. Katkin stated he has seen the Jordan Institute presentation twice and it would behoove us to look for savings to oil consumption and electrical use. He supports their recommendation to reduce our usage. Mr. Katkin supports their study and said their recommendations could result in a 4-5 year payback. Dr. Cushing also supports this study and recommendation.

Mr. Grant asked what we get from Jordan Institute. Mr. Katkin explained they collect all of the data and create reports for the presentation making clear recommendations on where they think we can save and how to get there. They provide the solution and the cost. Mr. Grant asked if Mr. Katkin has spoken with anyone who has used them. Mr. Katkin said although this is not his undertaking it his understanding this is all being done with a grant and this is the first round of participants.

Ms. Anderson asked if there would be an issue with this job not going out to bid. Mr. Katkin said he initially thought the cost would be between \$5,000 and \$15,000; he said the Rye Energy Commission is comfortable with the Jordan Institute and the proposal they put on the table. Mr. Schwartz feels we can easily take this information and put it out to competitive bid. Mr. Grant asked Mr. Katkin what the timeline was. Mr. Katkin said it was his understanding that, upon approval, the audits would be conducted in June/July and there would be information ready for budget consideration in October.

Mr. Grant suggested the issue be tabled until the July meeting or the issue could be opened up again if the energy commission committee shows up. Mr. Grant thanked Mr. Katkin for his presentation and time.

STANDING COMMITTEES *continued:*

- Special issues - none
- REF - none
- PHS - graduation is set for Friday, June 13th
- PTA - Ms. Moynahan was unable to attend due to a schedule conflict. It was noted that the PTA funded Ms. Ellwood's robot project and contributed \$2,500 to the RES summer book program.
- Rye Recreation - Ms. Richardson said there have been 10-11 children on the waiting list for the Rye Recreation after care program; they are filled to capacity at 40 children. Rye Recreation asked for use of a third room to accommodate the additional students. Ms. Richardson coordinated with Ms. Cindy Bean and Ms. Ann Balz to make that possible. Ms. Richardson thanked Ms. Bean and Ms. Balz for their willingness to make adjustments to share their rooms after school with the after care program. Mr. Grant suggested that we review that the additional use of existing classrooms doesn't cause any issues and that setting precedent is a powerful thing and asked if there is flexibility to get out of this agreement with Rye Recreation after this year, if necessary. Ms. Anderson said it has been made abundantly clear to the Recreation Commission that their use of any school space is a year-to-year agreement. She commended Ms. Richardson and staff for their willingness to make accommodations in order to keep this program on site for the good of the children and parents in the program. Ms. Anderson further explained that the additional room will allow for continued dedicated space for homework separate from the crafts and game areas. Mr. Schwartz expressed his appreciation as a parent for the after school program noting it is a wonderful service for students.
- Communications - none
- Technology - nothing further
- Curriculum - None
- NEASC - Ms. Richardson said there is much work being done and she is participating on a visiting team this fall. Mr. Pollet said the 1st draft of reports is coming due and he will have goal pieces for the July retreat. Ms. Anderson asked what the timeline is for the My Voice Survey for kids. Mr. Pollet said October 2008. Grade 5 and 8 exit surveys have gone home.
- Peer Schools - None
- Bus Committee- Mr. Grant said there will be new PHS routes this summer. Centralized stops, more equitable routes should help reach the goal of saving 15-20 minutes. Ms. Richardson noted the results of the last bus survey resulted in buses leaving the school yard daily by 2:55 or 3:00. Dr. Cushing noted that a later PHS start time is under discussion
- Policies - Mr. Grant suggested holding off on policies to accommodate the Rye Energy Committee who had arrived by this time.

NEW BUSINESS *continued:*

Energy Study - Ms. Lucy Neiman, Mr. Steve White, and Ms. Mimi White were present representing the Rye Energy Committee. Mr. Grant explained that the administration recommended we move forward with the proposal but the Board had some remaining questions for the committee.

Ms. Anderson asked how the committee came to choose the Jordan Institute. Ms. Neiman explained they put together a grant for the Jordan Institute. Rye schools are not in bad shape but the Jordan Institute felt improvements could be made. They are a non-profit agency committed to improving performance of New Hampshire schools with regard to the environment.

Mr. Grant stated the general agreement is that this is a good thing to do but the Board's job is to be financially prudent and a standard question to ask is if the job went out for bid. Can we get the same job for less? Mr. Grant was a little surprised to see \$10,200 going back to a non-profit. Mr. White said the \$10,200 is for complete project management. Mr. Grant asked if we can approve the audit as 'phase 1' and then determine if we want to follow the recommendation as 'phase 2'. Mr. Schwartz noted that the audit is only about 25 hours of the proposal. Ms. White said if we do the audit without getting the proposal then we're only getting half of the plan and she is concerned we won't have the information necessary on how to reach the established goals.

Ms. Neiman said her reaction is that the prices look good and such a comprehensive project looks quite valuable. Mr. Grant stated it would be best to find out more information to make a well-informed decision.

Mr. Schwartz assumes the Rye Energy Commission would not have issues with us going with someone other than Jordan Institute and that the more important fact would be addressing energy cost issues.

Ms. White said she is not sure if there is a timeframe relevant to the proposed bid.

Ms. Anderson thanked the committee and said they have done a great job, it is a great initiative, and the Board just wants to make sure it's a fair price for the proposed services. Mr. Grant said there is no disagreement that this is a great idea and plan but a comparison is necessary. He said Mr. Katkin can do this for us.

Ms. White asked what further the committee could do. Mr. Grant said he will have Mr. Katkin do further cost research. Mr. Schwartz asked if the committee could find out what other schools are participating in the program.

OTHER:

Mrs. Moynahan spoke of the Safe Routes to School program. She showed the Safe Routes to School t-shirt being sold in town and said that 100% of t-shirt sales revenue goes into the safe routes account.

Mr. Grant said a discussion about emails, volume of email, etc. will be a topic for the retreat on July 2.

NOMINATIONS:

RES – Dr. Cushing had an opportunity to interview the two final school counselor/psychologist candidates and he feels Linda Perrot is going to be an outstanding, child-centered addition to RES.

Dr. Cushing nominated Linda Perrot for the 100% position of RES school counselor/psychologist. In this position Linda replaces Tom Southworth. Upon a motion duly made by Mrs. Moynahan and seconded by Mr. Schwartz, Linda Perrot's nomination was unanimously approved.

Mr. Schwartz thanked Ms. Richardson for her broad search to fill this position.

Mrs. Mary Lyons interviewed the 5th grade teaching candidate, Rosalind Robichaud, in Dr. Cushing's absence and she believes Ms. Robichaud will be a great addition to RES.

Dr. Cushing nominated Rosalind Robichaud to the one-year grade five teacher position during David Glidden's leave of absence. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Schwartz and seconded by Mrs. Balboni, Rosalind Robichaud's nomination was unanimously approved.

RJH – Dr. Cushing nominated Aaron Scoggin to the 6th grade math teacher position at RJH. Upon a motion duly made by Mrs. Moynahan, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, Aaron Scoggin's nomination was unanimously approved.

Mr. Grant asked Mr. Pollet to include candidate resumes for board members with future recommendations for employment forms. He also asked why Mr. Scoggin was leaving his position at Henry Wilson Memorial School. Mr. Pollet stated Mr. Scoggin feels he has reached his limit of opportunity at the school and he wants to continue to grow as an educator.

Mr. Schwartz asked if Mr. Scoggin was committed to teaching for a period of time. Mr. Pollet stated he directly asked that question of Mr. Scoggin and, while he eventually would like to get into administration, Mr. Scoggin is absolutely committed to the classroom.

Ms. Anderson asked if Mr. Scoggin was the unanimous choice of the committee. Mr. Pollet explained that Mr. Scoggin was one of two finalists for the math position and became the unanimous choice after reference checks.

Dr. Cushing nominated Laura Bond to the 80% one-year art teacher position replacing Ms. Susanna Vitali during her leave of absence. Upon a motion duly made by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, Laura Bond's nomination was unanimously approved.

Mr. Pollet noted that Ms. Bond brings not only great talent to the art position but she also coaches soccer and track and will run the art club.

NEW BUSINESS:

Dr. Cushing requested a 10% increase to the existing 60% Spanish teacher position.

Mr. Pollet said the dilemma is from the shared staff mode. A handout was distributed explaining rationale for the request from Ms. Richardson and Mr. Pollet. Adding 10% to the existing 60% Spanish position would meet the needs of the seventh grade Spanish classes. The new position would be 50% at RES and 20% at RJH.

Upon a motion duly made by Ms. Anderson, and seconded by Mrs. Balboni, the Board unanimously approved the 10% increase to the Spanish teaching position.

MINUTES:

Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to approve the public School Board minutes of April 14, 2008 with edits. Unanimously approved.

Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to approve the public School Board minutes of May 12, 2008 with edits. Unanimously approved.

Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, a motion to approve and seal the non-public School Board minutes of April 14, 2008. Unanimously approved.

Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, a motion to approve and seal the non-public School Board minutes of April 16, 2008. Unanimously approved.

Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, a motion to approve and seal the non-public School Board minutes of May 12, 2008. Unanimously approved.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

Mr. Grant proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to go into non-public session at 8:55 p.m. to discuss personnel. Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

PUBLIC SESSION:

The Board returned to public session at 9:53 p.m.

Policies

Policy IHAA (World Language Program) was approved with minor changes.

Mr. Grant tabled further policy review and asked that we move to quarterly review cycle for policies.

Mr. Grant will email a date for a future formal policy meeting to take up the remaining policies.

OTHER:

Mr. Grant discussed a performance bonus for the two principals. Ms. Anderson made a motion to give each principal a bonus equal to 5% of their salary. Mr. Grant will work with Mr. Katkin to determine the funding for the bonuses. Any additional 2007-08 money will be used and then, if that is not enough, 2008-09 funding will be used.

Mr. Grant noted that there have been many instances where the two principals have identified many areas where the school district has realized financial savings in addition to excellent leadership, and that, in looking at comparable salaries, we are not as competitive as we need to be. He hopes the principals understand that the Board supports and appreciates their leadership.

ADJOURN: Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded Ms. Balboni, a motion to adjourn at 10:07 p.m. Vote: Unanimously approved.

School Board Secretary