

*Approved by the Rye School Board at its July 12, 2007 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 20, 2007 at 6:00 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

School Board Members: Ian Grant, Michael Schwartz (via telephone), Gary Dodds, Betty Anderson and Peggy Balboni

Administrators: Dr. George A. Cushing, Superintendent  
Jan Yost, Principal of Rye Junior High  
Lane Richardson, Principal of Rye Elementary School

Staff: Tim Moynahan, Jeanne Brown, Tom Southworth, Katie Jarvis, Monica Young, Liz Barrett, Jeanne Moynahan and River Bissonnette.

Residents/Visitors: Chris Pollet, Joe Cummins, Brian Sullivan, Brenda McKenna, Beth Kendall, Maggie Duffy-Durkin, Debbie Hayden, Jim & Lina Bowers, Mike Lawton, and Robin Husslage.

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Mr. Grant called the meeting to order at 6:04p.m.

**OTHER:**

Presentation from RES 1<sup>st</sup> grade students: Monica Young thanked REF for the grant awarded to RES. This grant was used by all of the 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers to help their students integrate writing and art. Several students read and showed art work from books they had made about “discovering Rye”.

Mr. Grant welcomed Chris Pollet, incoming RJH principal, to this School Board meeting. Mr. Grant recognized Ms. Yost as this will be her last school board meeting in Rye. He thanked her for the hard work she has done over the past 7 years. The superintendent and the School Board presented her with an engraved chair. Mr. Dodds also thanked Ms. Yost and wished her well in her future endeavors.

**SECRETARY’S REPORT:**

Ms. Anderson proposed, and Mr. Dodds seconded, a motion to approve the public minutes of May 16, 2007, with changes proposed by Ms. Anderson. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Dr. Cushing stated that the minutes from the School Board meeting on May 7, 2007 needed to be clarified. Sharry Sparks, president for RESPA, stated that there is a statement regarding insurance that says RESPA was not willing to negotiate a change in health insurance. Ms. Sparks stated: “RESPA will be negotiating in September 2007 and will be open to discuss a new health insurance carrier that is comparable and less expensive to the district.”

## REPORTS:

### Communications:

- Dr. Cushing received a thank you letter from the Destination Imagination teams for the School Board's help in sending them to the global tournament.
- Dr. Cushing received a letter from Paula Rawding stating her intent to retire this year. Mr. Schwartz made a motion, seconded by Mr. Dodds, to accept her retirement. Vote: Unanimously approved. Dr. Cushing made the recommendation that we issue Ms. Rawding a position at 80%. Mr. Dodds made a motion, seconded by Ms. Balboni, to offer her a position at 80%. Vote: Unanimously approved.
- Dr. Cushing received a letter from Joe Hill stating his intent to resign as a special educational aide. Mr. Dodds made a motion, seconded by Ms. Balboni, to accept this resignation. Vote: Unanimously approved.
- Dr. Cushing received a letter from Molly Rothermel, 8th grade math teacher at RJH stating her intent to resign at the end of the 2006/2007 school year. Mr. Dodds made a motion, seconded by Ms. Balboni, to accept this resignation. Vote: Unanimously approved.
- Communication on behalf of the School Board of a donation made by the Board to the Diabetes Association in memory of Jim Katkin's mother.
- Communication from the New Hampshire Council of Teachers of English, congratulating Kerry Ridolfi on her nomination for their English language arts teacher of the year award.
- Letter from New Hampshire Theatre Project thanking Kim O'Connell for hosting their Shakespearean residency and for all the work she did to make it possible.

### Superintendent:

Both RES and RJH received an approval status of "Approved with Distinction" (the highest level of approval) as a result of this year's Commissioner's Public School Approval Report from the NHDOE. There were no items in need of correction.

- Mr. Southworth stated that the Title I grant has been cut for next year. In order to continue this program, an additional \$19,000 is needed from the budget.
- Title IV grant should be in the range of \$2,000 to \$3,000. Mr., Southworth suggests we continue to use this money for Project Safeguard and crisis counseling.
- Mr. Southworth passed out a breakdown of the PHS honor roll. Rye had 68% of its students on the honor roll.
- Mr. Southworth has talked to teachers regarding students' CAT scores, and continues to track these students to see how they do each year. Ms. Anderson inquired how many students on Mr. Southworth's breakdown of 6<sup>th</sup> grade test scores were on 504 plans. Mr. Southworth responded that that information is not on the report because most 504s are allergy related and those students do average or better on the CAT. Mr. Grant stated that 4-6 new students had reading scores that were lower. Mr. Southworth replied that they came from different school systems that probably used a different approach or that it was a transitional period for those students. Mr. Grant asked if a student had an abnormal drop in scores, does the team identify this? Mr. Southworth responded that, in most cases, there aren't any surprises. The "Follow the Child" model will help as a 2 year guide. Mr. Grant thanked Mr. Southworth for the extra time and effort he put into providing follow-up information on the CATs.

**Special Education:**

- Dr. Cushing submitted the Special Education report from Mrs. Lyons. The numbers are down and there is a positive unencumbered fund balance.

**Legislation:**

- Dr. Cushing stated that the constitutional amendment bill for school funding was voted down. The bill for raising the compulsory attendance age to 18 passed for 2009, and the bill regarding bargaining has not yet been finalized. Ms. Anderson asked if raising the attendance age would have any affect on Rye's budget. Dr. Cushing said he did not think so, but that he would keep an eye on the situation. Mr. Schwartz added that the per student cost at PHS is likely to rise so tuition costs will rise based on that.

**Elementary School**

- Ms. Richardson stated the end of the year went very well. Move up day was Friday. Hockmeyer studios came out to take class photos, and summer reading lists were distributed.
- Ms. Richardson passed out the end of the year incident report compiled by RES nurse Barbara Wilson.
- Ms. Richardson wanted to thank everyone who worked on the Talents by the Sea publication with particular recognition of Doris Gianforte, Elisabeth Robinson and Annie Cole.
- Kindergarten enrollment is at 47, with 3 definite 1/2 day and 3 possible 1/2 day students. Mr. Grant asked what the numbers were for this school year. Ms. Richardson replied 41.
- RES continues to conduct exit interviews and they are positive.
- Ms. Anderson asked if Ms. Richardson had received any feedback on report cards. Ms. Richardson stated she has not compiled this information yet but will have it in July.

**Junior High**

- Ms. Yost stated that RJH had a good end of the year. The awards assembly, 8<sup>th</sup> grade class trip, and graduation all went smoothly.
- Ms. Yost passed out a copy of a newspaper article listing many former RJH students at PHS that were recognized for various accomplishments.
- Ms. Yost passed out the end of the year incident report compiled by RJH nurse Janet Smith.
- Ms. Yost handed out a report from Mary Coombs updating library items.
- Dr. Cushing asked Ms. Yost and Mr. Pollet to discuss the schedule for next year. Mr. Pollet stated that they have been discussing integrated curriculum, unified arts working closely with the core teachers, and how this would affect the schedule. They would like to do away with study halls whenever possible. Mr. Pollet stated his goal was to be able to attend at least 3-4 core team meetings a week. Ms. Yost said that a schedule like this would maximize the student teacher contact. Music classes are the biggest stumbling block as RJH shares a music teacher with RES. Mr. Pollet said he and Ms. Richardson will be meeting to discuss how best to handle the music classes for both schools. Ms. Anderson asked if band instruction would need to be given during the day at RES, rather than before school and the early morning to fit the proposed RJH schedule. Mr. Pollet replied yes, but that he and Ms. Richardson are still working on it. Ms. Anderson expressed her concern with a change like that and how it would affect core curriculum instruction at RES. Mr. Grant stated that the incoming number for 6<sup>th</sup> grade is at 48 to 50

which is a drop from 69 students this year. Ms. Yost stated that projected number is 55. She further stated that those 69 students will be in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and that we will have an additional 11 students joining 7<sup>th</sup> grade from New Castle.

#### **RECOGNITION OF GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL VISITORS:**

- Ms. Moynahan wished Ms. Yost well in her retirement and thanked her for all she has done for the school and the community for the past 7 years.
- Mr. Cummins asked if the Board had a view on home schooling, and if school district resources were used for home schooled kids. Mr. Grant stated the current Board has never discussed this issue. Ms. Anderson stated that, while they have no collective view, she believes that the Board would look at issues on a case by case basis and decide based on what is best for the individual student. Dr. Cushing stated that home schooled students do have the right to participate in athletic and extra curricular activities that the school provides. Mr. Schwartz suggested that the schools are required to do more than that.

#### **Financial**

##### Manifest –

Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Ms. Balboni, a motion to approve the manifest of May 10, 2007 through June 5, 2007 in the amount of \$479,589.31. Vote: Unanimously approved. Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Ms. Balboni, a motion to approve the manifest of June 6, 2007 through June 20, 2007 in the amount of \$1,909,100.66. Vote: Unanimously approved. Ms. Anderson asked why 29% of a line item budgeted for music and 17% of a line item budgeted for co-curricular activities were not spent. Dr. Cushing stated he would look into this. Ms. Yost stated that the money remaining in the co-curricular line may be money budgeted for an Artist in Residence project that was scaled down by the New Hampshire Theater Group.

##### Unreserved fund balance –

- Dr. Cushing stated that Mr., Katkin has a report prepared for the Board regarding the unreserved fund balance. Mr. Grant stated he will be meeting with Mr. Katkin and will report back the results. Ms. Anderson stated she would like to attend this meeting so that she will be able to report back at the next budget committee meeting. Mr. Grant agreed.

#### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

##### Progress on Goals:

Dr. Cushing recommended a workshop to discuss the upcoming NEASC accreditation process at the summer retreat on July 12, 2007. He contacted David Flynn, Executive Director of the Elementary and Middle Schools Commission to see if he would be available to speak to the Board at the retreat. Mr. Flynn has saved the date. Mr. Grant stated that they would need time to prioritize goal setting. He would like everyone to think about the goals for next year before the retreat. Mr. Schwartz asked for clarification of the NEASC process. Dr. Cushing stated that it is a 1½ year study. There will be a report done by our school in November of 2007. In March of 2009, teams will come into the school and then submit a report to the Commission. The Commission will issue its recommendations by June, 2009. Mr. Grant commended all of the School Board members and Administrators for their hard work this past year. Ms. Anderson concurred. Mr. Grant stated that a lot of goals were set and he appreciates the extra work. Ms. Richardson, Ms. Yost, and Mr. Pollet will be meeting next week to finalize the 60% General Music position for next school year to determine the skill set needed.

## Calendar of Policy Action – June

- Payment of School District Treasurer – completed
- Superintendent evaluation – completed
- Policy KF- Use of Buildings: Dr. Cushing provided everyone with the current policy. He asked attorney Barbara Loughman to provide samples of policies of building use that he also provided. Mr. Grant stated we have learned that our current policy is not legal or enforceable and suggested having 2 separate policies; one during school hours and one for after school hours. Dr. Cushing stated the SAU 50 policy committee should be the starting point for creating revised policy(ies). Mr. Grant said he would like to have a short meeting regarding this issue, perhaps in August. He asked that everyone read the sample policies passed out by Dr. Cushing before that meeting.
- Ms. Anderson stated that, at the last PTA meeting she attended, a question was asked about whether or not we use the “My Voice” survey for 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade only. Mr. Pollet responded that there are two forms of “My Voice” one for grades 3 to 5 and one for grades 6 to 8. He stated that, at his present school, they administer to all 4 grades, and that he would like to administer to 6 through 8 at RJH. Dr. Cushing said that administering the survey to grades 3 through 5 is funded by the state.

## **STANDING COMMITTEES:**

Physical Plant: Ms. Richardson stated that RES is preparing for maintenance work that will be completed over the summer. The roof contractor is to start work this week. Dr. Cushing stated he is discussing quotes from Pike Industries for paving at RJH. The town will be paving in the area and can add the school’s driveway to this process for \$18,619.55. He also asked for a quote to pave the basketball court, drainage area, and curbing. Mr. Grant asked if the cost could come out of the 2006/2007 budget. Dr. Cushing stated he would need to speak to Mr. Katkin about that tomorrow. Mr. Grant requested a motion, pending the conversation with Mr. Katkin, to fund this from the 2006/2007 budget. Mr. Dodds made a motion, seconded by Ms. Balboni. Vote: Unanimously approved. Mr. Grant stated they needed to be clear on the funding.

Special Issues: Ms. Anderson asked the Board’s opinion of posting the minutes of the Special Issues meeting on the web now that the meeting is hosted by the Principals’ Advisory Committees. When the meetings were hosted by the Board’s special issues committee, there was concern about posting minutes of those sessions on the web. Mr. Grant stated that, in the past the minutes were not verbatim, but reported the questions that came up in the meetings. He further stated that they need to be sensitive to any personnel issues. Ms. Balboni suggested taking out any names but just put the questions and the answers. The rest of the Board agreed.

REF: Mr. Schwartz spoke regarding the PTA asking REF for money to fund the installation of a running track at Lang Field. Mr. Grant stated that the Board had asked the PTA for written information regarding the track proposal but had not yet received it. Mr. Schwartz stated that they had originally wanted to install the track this spring, but are now looking at a later date.

Portsmouth High School: Ms. Balboni attended the Secondary School Advisory meeting on May 31, 2007. She stated the school has voted to increase the number of early release days as they are a district in need of improvement. They will be adding four ½ days to the schedule for 2007/2008. Ms. Balboni stated that SAU 50 expressed its displeasure at this change. Dr. Cushing stated Ann Mayer said they will go with this schedule for one year and re-evaluate next year. Ms. Balboni stated Jeff Collins has been meeting with the honors class teachers and parents to come up with recommendations on how to proceed. One point raised was that the honors teachers need more communication with the middle

schools. The high school teachers have a difficult time assessing the students based on the information they receive from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers and are thinking about dropping honors classes in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Ms. Anderson inquired whether the committee was aware of SAU 50's point of view that they did not want to see the elimination of 9<sup>th</sup> grade honors classes. Dr. Cushing responded that they were aware. They are also thinking about dropping the appeals process. The committee consists of a chair person and the honors program teachers.

PTA: Ms. Anderson stated the PTA was aware of requirements for presenting information regarding the installation of a track at Lang Field. She stated that the PTA has decided to push back their proposal of a running track at Lang field until next spring. She complimented the PTA on a wonderful job this school year. The Board all concurred. One of the PTA's goals was to increase communication between the PTA and schools and they have done a great job increasing communication through newsletters and their website. Their membership is up to 160 and they are currently focusing on inclusion. Their next meeting is scheduled for 9/4/2007 at 6:00 p.m.

Rye Rec.: Ms. Anderson asked when Lang field would be available for use. Dr. Cushing replied it was available now. Ms. Anderson stated that Rye Rec. was surveying the town for what townspeople want regarding field usage. She gave them our athletic handbook and said they would like a copy of the coaches' guidelines. She suggested these guidelines be posted on the web along with the athletic handbook. Dr. Cushing asked Mr. Moynahan to please post this information on the RJH and RES websites.

Technology: Dr. Cushing passed out a report from Mr. Moynahan. Mr. Moynahan is getting acclimated to both buildings. He recently wrote and received a Title IID grant. Mr. Grant asked about the ability to send broadcast e-mails to parents/guardians. Dr. Cushing stated we are looking for a new host site and hope to have one by the beginning of the school year. Ms. Yost and Ms. Richardson both complimented Mr. Moynahan on how he has stepped up to this position and really become an asset to both buildings in the past few months. Mr. Schwartz further acknowledged that Mr. Moynahan will be leading the negotiations next week with Comcast. Ms. Anderson inquired whether or not there is an issue between Rye and the SAU when the SAU does not have a Director of IT. Dr. Cushing stated the SAU is not using Tim at this point, but they will need to discuss for the future. Ms. Anderson also expressed her concern that Rye and Mr. Moynahan not be held back because the rest of the SAU isn't prepared to do something that we are with regard to technology.

Curriculum/Professional Development: Ms. Balboni reported that the Professional Development Master Plan is up for renewal and is being rewritten to be more focused on student data.

Peer Schools: Mr. Grant stated Dr. Driscoll attended the last site visit for peer schools at Mount Vernon Elementary on 5/29/2007. He would like to meet as a committee in the Fall when Mr. Pollet is on board to discuss what to do with the information obtained.

Bus Committee: Mr. Grant stated a memo was circulated to parents notifying them of potential bus changes. The bus committee is viewing sample routes but has not yet reported back. The 2 main issues are if the routes are equitable and how many stops are on a route. Mr. Grant asked for the principals' help in identifying routes where changes may be needed. Ms. Anderson asked for information on how much time will be saved by reducing stops in order for the Board to determine if it is "worth it" to make those changes. Ms. Balboni agreed and expressed her concern about safety on busier streets.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Mr. Schwartz stated that the selectman are interested in a grant supporting walk/ride to school, focusing on RJH. The funding would help to provide a safe route for students by building a sidewalk the entire way to the library. They are looking for school district support. Mr. Grant applauded their efforts and would like to encourage safer travel. Ms. Anderson, Ms. Balboni and Mr. Dodds agreed.

**NOMINATIONS:**

Dr. Cushing placed into nomination River Bissonnette for the 6<sup>th</sup> grade science teaching position. Mr. Bissonnette recently finished his certification process. Mr. Dodds made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Balboni. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Dr. Cushing also put into nomination Tim Moynahan who finished his 3 month probationary period. Mr. Dodds made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Balboni. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Dr. Cushing placed Sally Welch into nomination from a ½ time to full time position for kindergarten along with the increase of the kindergarten aide from ½ time to full time. Mr. Dodds made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Balboni. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Dr. Cushing proposed that Kate Murphy's position be decreased from .7 to .6 and that Katie Jarvis's position be increased from .3 to .4 at RES. Ms. Richardson stated that the district would bear the cost of Ms. Jarvis' retirement benefits where it did not have that obligation before. Ms. Anderson made a motion to approve, seconded by Ms. Balboni. Vote: Unanimously approved.

**NON-PUBLIC SESSION:**

Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, a motion to go into non-public session to discuss personnel matters at 8:41 p.m. Unanimously approved on a roll call vote.

**PUBLIC SESSION:**

The Board returned to public session at 9:30 p.m.

Dr. Cushing nominated Giselle Chagnon for a .6 Title I math specialist position with the district paying for the amount of that position not funded through the Title I program. Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr. Dodds, a motion to approve the nomination of Ms. Chagnon. Mr. Grant stated that Ms. Chagnon has done a phenomenal job. Ms. Anderson agreed. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Dr. Cushing proposed that the Board accept Tom Southworth's retirement and issue him an 80% position plus six extra days he works in the summer. Mr. Dodds proposed, seconded by Ms. Balboni, a motion to accept Mr. Southworth's retirement and issue him an 80% position. Ms. Anderson asked Dr. Cushing to confirm that the school's attorney stated that this is not in conflict with NH law with regard to the NH retirement system. He reiterated that the school attorney did write an opinion letter to that effect. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Dr. Cushing made a proposal, submitted by Ms. Yost and Mr. Pollet, to increase Suzanna Petti's art position from .6 to .8 at RJH. Vote: In favor: Mr. Dodds, Ms. Balboni, and Mr. Grant. Abstained: Ms. Anderson and Mr. Schwartz.

Dr. Cushing proposed that the Board accept an arrangement between the NH Department of Education and the Rye School District to have Ms. Yost conduct a study for them using Rye data that will be used by the NH Department of Education in its efforts. The Rye School District will pay Ms. Yost's fee but

will be reimbursed by the NH Department of Education. Mr. Schwartz proposed, seconded by Mr. Dodds, a motion to approve this proposal with the caveat that the money cannot come out of excess tuition. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Ms. Anderson proposed, seconded by Mr. Dodds, a motion to approve the non-public minutes of May 16<sup>th</sup>. Vote: In favor: Ms. Anderson, Mr. Dodds, Ms. Balboni, and Mr. Grant. Mr. Schwartz abstained.

Mr. Dodds proposed, seconded by Ms. Balboni, a motion to approve paving of the RJH driveway for \$18,619.55 even if the funds need to come from the 2007-08 budget. Vote: In favor: Mr. Dodds, Ms. Balboni, Mr. Schwartz, and Mr. Grant. Opposed: Ms. Anderson.

**ADJOURN:**

Mr. Dodds proposed, seconded by Ms. Balboni, a motion to adjourn at 9:36 p.m. Vote: Unanimously approved.

---

School Board Secretary