

*Approved by the Rye School Board at its January 20, meeting.*

**RYE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

The monthly meeting of the School Board of the Rye School District was held at Rye Junior High School on December 16, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.

**MEETING MINUTES**

I. CALL TO ORDER: 6:24 p.m. (late start due to SAU meeting prior to this meeting) – Mr. Grant Grant, Chairperson

Recognition: Sheila Adams, recipient Susan Janosz Technology Impact Award for New Hampshire; sponsored by the International Society for Technology in Education

Mr. Grant recognized Sheila Adams for this honor. Dr. Cushing spoke about the contributions that Sheila has made to the Rye Schools over the years. Dr. Cushing stated that Sheila represents many fine teachers that we have in Rye who quietly do their job, making connections with kids and taking it to the next level. Dr. Cushing stated that Sheila is a teacher even when the kids go home. Dr. Cushing read from the Portsmouth Herald article about Sheila's love of teaching and educating students to be citizens of the world. He thanked Sheila for her many contributions to Rye.

Mr. Pollet spoke about the contributions that Sheila has made to RJH without any fan fair.

Sheila thanked everyone, and said that the honor for her was to be recognized by her peers.

II. SECRETARY'S REPORT

A. Approval of the public and non-public minutes of November 18, 2009

Mrs. Moynahan moved to accept the minutes and Mrs. Balboni seconded, voted unanimously with the following minor changes from Mrs. Balboni and Mr. Swartz. They are cited below:

"Mr. Schwartz clarified that it was the RES survey that raised the issue that parents perceive world language needs to be more challenging for students."

Mrs. Balboni's corrections: Mrs. Balboni suggested that Mr. Pollet could communicate with parents who ask for information. Mr. Pollet said it is important to note that when parents come to him with a concern/issue he first checks to see if they have spoken with the teacher/coach involved first.

Mrs. Balboni noted that the middle school philosophy provides less parent involvement in the daily classroom activities so there are fewer opportunities for parents to informally speak with middle school teachers about issues.

### **Communication**

Mrs. Balboni and Mrs. Moynahan met with staff at RES and two issues arose:

1. Staff stressed the importance of student attendance at school and identified an ongoing problem with students absent from school for extended and unscheduled vacations at RES.
2. The teachers are feeling somewhat overwhelmed with the Learning Compact, 6 traits of writing, PLC's and NEASC recommendations.

The teachers would appreciate the addition of two half-days (early release or late start) for professional development. Mrs. Balboni said she would follow up with the Professional Learning Advisory Committee. Mr. Grant said he understands the number of initiatives but feels they are unique. Mrs. Balboni added that the PLCs are really just ways to run effective meetings and need not be work-intensive; hopefully the teachers become more comfortable with PLC's after receiving more training and experience.

### **Budget Committee**

Mrs. Balboni echoed Mr. Grant's earlier thanks to Ms. Anderson for preparing the budget process documents. She said the budget committee appreciated the opportunity to provide input.

#### **B. Communications**

Dr. Cushing made reference to the article on Sheila Adams in the Portsmouth Herald, he complimented Rye Recreation for their new newsletter format, and made reference to the Portsmouth HS rating in U.S. News.

### **III. REPORTS**

#### **A. Superintendent**

- Christa McAuliffe Technology Conference
  - Dr. Cushing attended and brought back many ideas and initiatives. Dr. Cushing spoke about some of the new technologies for school.
- Virtual Learning Academy
  - Dr. Cushing talked about this and opportunities for the future from HS to elementary school.
  - Dr. C invited people from the Virtual Learning Academy to speak with the SAU 50 principals

#### **B. Principals**

### **Rye Elementary School Report**

Ms. Richardson reported on the December happenings at RES including the two holiday concerts, PE curriculum with bowling. She gave her enrollment report and reported that we will be getting two new children the first of January, including a first grader. She updated the Board on the Principal's Advisory Council agenda and the philanthropies including "The Power of the Penny". She stated that the visit by Governor John Lynch was very exciting for students and staff alike. He spend a good amount of time talking with the children about New Hampshire, how laws are passed, and getting input from the students on initiatives that he is working on such as cell phones while driving. Ms. Richardson stated that the holiday bazaar was great fun and will talk about possible plans for next year.

Mrs. Moynahan commended Andrea Papoutsy for the amazing job with the winter concerts. She was particularly impressed with the students playing their newly acquired instruments.

### **Rye Junior High School Report**

- Mr. Pollet reported on the report card goal update. They are bringing in a consultant from the NE League of Middle Schools to work with RJH staff.
- Mr. Pollet handed out Post School Board Report Publication Updates
  - world language, drama, sports, concerts,
- Chis distributed and recommended an article in Time Magazine, "Can These Parents Be Saved?" which talked about overbooking our kids.
- Another article about the scuba gear and Robin's robot
- Project Safeguard – feedback is that it may have been one of the best years yet. Mr. Pollet thanked Tom Southworth, Joanne Costanza, Ann Rafferty and the community. It was a great message for students and parents. Mrs. Balboni said she was inspired for the third time and thanked Tom for bringing Ed Rafferty. Mrs. Moynahan also praised the work of the day.
- Mrs. Moynahan praised Michelle Wirth's concert as well.

### **C. Financial**

- Manifest
  - Mrs. Moynahan made a motion to approve the manifest dated 11-14-09 to 12-14-09 for \$358,156.68; seconded Ms. Anderson. Voted unanimously
  - Ms. Moynahan made a motion to approve the manifest from 12-3-09 to 12-10-09 for \$671,664.22. Seconded by Ms. Anderson for voted and approved unanimously.
  - Mr. Grant made a motion to approve continuation with Primex; seconded Mr. Schwartz, voted and approved unanimously.
  - Mr. Katkin has submitted a suggested tuition rate for New Castle students. A motion was made to accept it by Mrs. Balboni and seconded by Mrs. Moynahan. Mr. Schwartz asked if there was a precedent for this. Discussion about New Castle charges for the RJH

library addition. Dr. Cushing said we will need to sit with New Castle Board to discuss this. He suggested we follow Mr. Katkin's suggested tuition rate. Voted in favor: Ms. Moynahan, Mr. Grant, and Mrs. Balboni; opposed Mr. Schwartz and Ms. Anderson.

D. Other

- Budget process
  - At the December meeting the Budget Committee approved our school budget. One item discussed was the unreserved fund balance. There was discussion about putting money in a warrant article for building maintenance trust. This may need further discussion with budget committee. Discussion re: unreserved fund balance at SAU level. Need warrant article if money is put in building maintenance trust. Mr. Grant asked Mrs. Balboni to talk with Mr. Goldman about this. Looking for feedback. Ms. Anderson made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, to create a Warrant article to put the money in the building maintenance fund, voted unanimous: Clarification: how do we access the funds? Dr. Cushing stated that we would bring it forth at a School Board meeting. \$170,000 in SAU maintenance funds budget
  - It was voted to add \$30,000 for maintenance trust from SAU account to Rye Account.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Calendar of Policy Action – December – payment of School District treasurer.

B. Other - none

C. Goals update –

- working on standards based report cards
- preliminary states of putting existing report cards and data on line for parents
  - i. real time data for parents

Mr. Grant asked about Linda's brochures on curriculum at each grade level. Dr. Cushing will get back to the Board on this.

V. RECOGNITION OF GROUPS OR INDIVIDUAL VISITORS

- Mr. Southworth spoke about Sheila Adams' contributions to Rye.
- Mr. Southworth reported out on Project Safeguard and student input and enthusiasm. He was impressed by the depth of the student's comments.
- There will be a follow up for 8<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Mrs. Balboni asked about materials from Jack Agate.

## VI. STANDING COMMITTEES

### A. Policies

- a. Policies are related to high school and under review at PHS. The policies were tabled until feedback is received from PHS.

### B. Physical Plant

- Rye Elementary School – cabinet installation ongoing
- Rye Junior High School – none
- Energy – Mr. Grant suggested we give Mr. Katkin permission to start the new lighting process. Motion made, approved unanimously.

C. Special Issues – Ms. Anderson and Mrs. Moynahan gave Ms. Richardson OK to hold the Holiday Bazaar at RES this year. Going forward the request will need to be discussed.

D. Rye Education Foundation – no meeting

### E. Portsmouth High School

- Secondary School Advisory meeting
  - Chunk of meeting talked about the grading system (7 points vs. 10 points) – competencies, college requirements. Little movement with this. We did get a budget breakdown from Portsmouth which is not complete. It is broken down by categories. Step in right direction. Mr. Grant publically thanked Ed McDonough, Supt. of Portsmouth, for his help with this. Mr. Grant has concerns about the Portsmouth budget. Strongly urge them to have a better accounting system.
  - Dr. Cushing has scheduled a meeting with PHS and SAU School Board members about guidance and college placement for Jan 19<sup>th</sup> 2010 at 6:00 PM . When the date is firm Dr. Cushing will get back to all. Discussion about guidance personnel and coverage.

F. Parent Teacher Association – Mrs. Moynahan reported that we now have 175 members.

G. Rye Recreation - Ms. Richardson and Mr. Pollet both spoke positively about the program and new director. Ms. Richardson said the SB committee needs to meet to talk about next year and space. Mr. Grant suggested we should think about the summer program and Rye Rec. gym use.

H. Communications – Mrs. Balboni reported out on the RJH staff meeting. Questions about end of year survey and validity because of the number of the surveys returned.

Discussion about reworking the survey for next year. They suggested using as a bigger picture. Mr. Grant stated that one of our goals is to rework the survey. Staff would like to give input to the building principal. There was some misinterpretation about who would view the survey.

- a. Who gets to see the draft minutes of School Board meetings. It was stated that Ms. Richardson and Mr. Pollet should get the draft minutes prior to the meeting as School Board does.

It was suggested that we video tape School Board meetings.

RJH staff also asked for more Professional Development time. They stressed that they don't have enough time to do what they have to do.

Mr. Schwartz talked about metrics and suggested we dedicate some time to discuss metrics and bring them back to the teachers. Mrs. Balboni suggested that we get staff input. Mr. Grant stated that Principals got staff input. Ms. Richardson and Mr. Pollet said that they did get input and got input from the Principal's Advisory Councils. We need to work on this for next year. We need to state the real purpose and what do we hope to get out of it. Mr. Grant feels that it is important to look at trends and feels it is important that parents have a voice. Mr. Pollet suggested that we survey students as well. Mr. Schwartz stated that Russ Qualia be doing class climate surveys. SB members suggested that we relook at My Voice survey. Mrs. Balboni suggested that we research resuming My Voice surveys.

Ms. Anderson stated that she has confidence in the building principals. She wants feedback from constituents. She doesn't need to know about it. Mr. Schwartz said it was not appropriate that SB got the surveys. SB should just get the summary data.

Anonymous vs. not anonymous – Ms. Anderson feels that the surveys are not valid if not anonymous. Ms. Anderson encouraged us to get the help of professionals to get valid feedback. She felt the board would support paying for this.

Mr. Grant stated that it is a goal to relook at the surveys in January. It was acknowledged by all that we need to tweak the survey.

Dr. Cushing appreciated Ms. Anderson's comments that she supports the principals. Mr. Grant is looking for a general sense of what is going on. Need to look at trends. Mr. Schwartz suggested that he talk with staff about how the metrics can help. Board felt this was a good idea.

- I. Curriculum – Professional Development. reflection on Professional Development Learning Communities. What have we learned, where are we going? Seems to be going well. Dr. Cushing stated that he and principals have been working with PLC's. Discussion about the Learning Compact. How does it look at each school? At RJH Mr. Pollet talked about goal setting and supports the Learning Compact.

Mr. Pollet, Mrs. Balboni, and Mr. Schwartz went to visit Phillips Exeter and learned about the Harkness method. They saw some interesting things. Students are running the class and discussion with teachers facilitating. Discussion ensued. Mrs. Balboni suggested that teachers at RJH might like to visit Phillips to learn about the Harkness method. Mr. Schwartz said there is a week institute that staff may like to attend.

- J. Budget – Public Hearing on January 13. Snow date is January 19<sup>th</sup>. We should put the word out that this is an opportunity for parents and community members to express their thoughts.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

- New format there will be a second opportunity at 8:00 for public to contribute.

Motion to accept and seal non-public minutes from November 18, 2010. Motion made and accepted.

### **NON-PUBLIC SESSION:**

On a motion by Mrs. Moynahan, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, the School Board entered non-public session at 8:02 p.m. on a unanimous roll call vote and in accordance with RSA 91-A:4 to discuss negotiations.

### **RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION:**

The Board returned to public session on a roll call vote at 8:32 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion by Mrs. Moynahan, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, the School Board adjourned at 8:32 p.m. Vote: Unanimously approved.