

Approved by the Rye School Board at its March 17, 2010 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 February 17, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

School Board Members: Ian Grant, Michael Schwartz, Jeanne Moynahan,
Peggy Balboni, Betty Anderson

Administrators: Dr. George A. Cushing, Superintendent
Chris Pollet, Principal, Rye Junior High
Patricia-Lane Richardson, Principal, Rye Elementary

Staff: Kathleen Cole, Jeanne Brown, Tom Southworth, Phoebe Guarnaccia,
Ron Fortier

Visitors: Peter Sawtell, Rye Recreation After School Program;
Maggie Duffy-Durkin, Janet Stevens, Jeannette Lindsay, Lee Arthur,
Jayson Paquette, Kirsti Marella, Christina Downs, Joe Cummins, Laura
Brown, Annie Cole, Rafi Landau, Shari Cohen, Bob Eaton, Margaret
Ponzer, Alison Dick, Jules Grant, and two students

CALL TO ORDER:

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

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Approval of minutes

Mrs. Moynahan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, to approve the public minutes of January 20, 2010. Vote: Unanimously approved.

The non-public minutes of January 20, 2010 were circulated among Board members for review.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, to approve the public minutes of February 3, 2010 with noted modification. Vote: In favor: Mr. Schwartz, Mrs. Moynahan, Mr. Grant, Mrs. Balboni; Abstained: Ms. Anderson as she did not attend the February 3, 2010 meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Dr. Cushing shared the following communications:

- Request of donation from Portsmouth High School's Celebration Graduation 2010 to provide an all-night chemical free party for graduation PHS seniors. PHS has sponsored such an evening for over twenty years and they are hoping the Class of 2010 has 100% participation. In the past each of the 4 SAU 50 districts has made an annual donation of \$250 to this program.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, to donate \$250 on behalf of the Rye School Board to Celebration Graduation 2010 at Portsmouth High School. Vote: Unanimously approved.

REPORTS:

Superintendent's Report

- Dr. Cushing wanted to recognize Rye resident Lester Stevens who recently passed away. Dr. Cushing had attended his funeral. Mr. Stevens served in the United States Army during World War II at Fort Constitution in the Battery A Harbor Defense of Portsmouth, donated time to the military after his service, and was always a fixture at Rye deliberative sessions until his health started to fail.
- Dr. Cushing attended a legislative workshop on February 8th. Senator Molly Kelly (Keene) spoke of the push for every child to be successful and stated there has been a 30% decline in the dropout rate over the past few years; SB18 which raised the compulsory school age to 18 (from 16) is partly to credit. Dr. Cushing also noted he is serving on his fourth term of the Governor's Dropout Recovery Prevention Council.
- Representative Emma Rous (Durham) spoke of 'Accountability'. There will be a pilot program in 2011 where teams (much like those in the accreditation process) review a school district's practices, check on types of instruction, and consider portfolios, exhibitions, etc. as part of this evaluation. This is a way for a school district to define itself as an innovator and allows an opportunity to speak of uniqueness of the school.
- Cyberbullying – there is a clear need for legislation here. Cyberbullying has been referred to as "bullying on steroids". It is technology working in the wrong way. Like bullying, cyberbullying is something that is taken seriously within SAU #50 and it has been on the administrator meeting agendas.

Dr. Cushing distributed Mrs. Lyons, Director of Pupil Services report; there were no questions from Board members.

Principal's Report

Rye Elementary School – Lane Richardson

Highlights of Ms. Richardson's report include:

- Ms. Richardson first recognized Ms. Ruth Ryan, a mother from Rye who along with 26 others is a recipient of the NH Children's Trust Fund's Unsung Hero award. Governor Lynch will present the award to Ms. Ryan at the Statehouse. Ms. Ryan had been nominated by staff members at Families First Health and Support Center in Portsmouth.
- Ms. Richardson said the recent Science Fair at RES was well-attended and a huge success
- There are several families with elementary age children moving to Rye in March and April. Ms. Richardson confirmed that one family that will be in a hotel in March until their rental is ready on April 1 will be able to declare residency and have their children attend RES in March.
- Ms. Detwiler's last day before her maternity leave is March 26th; Jacquie Reese will be the substitute for Ms. Detwiler for the rest of the school year.
- Two 4th graders will be selected from a lottery to read to Senators or the Governor as part of 'Read Across America'
- At a recent staff meeting Eric Ross lead a presentation to the staff on the Learning Compact and Susan Detwiler and Kathleen Kennedy lead a presentation on the 6+ Traits of Writing. The presentations were terrific, well-received, and started some great conversation among staff of best practices.

Mr. Schwartz said he attended the science fair and it was just terrific.

Highlights of Mr. Pollet's report include:

- February has been a month of charitable initiatives for students, staff, and families at RJH: RJH donated over \$1,200 to Red Cross for relief in Haiti; raised over \$600 for 'pennies for patients'; and one RJH student sold bracelets in support of 'Snowboarders for the Maine Children's Cancer Fund'. Mr. Pollet is very proud of the charitable and compassionate nature of the RJH student body as evidenced by these amazing fund raising events.
- RJH musical, "Alice in Wonderland with a Twist" is set for April 15, 16, and 17, 2010. Ms. Raymond is planning on involving a substantial number of students and staff by integrating the production into various areas of the curriculum.
- Nine RJH students are taking advantage of an after school program at the YMCA and learning how to use the exercise machines, using the climbing wall, playing hacky sac, etc. The YMCA transports the students from RJH to the Y.
- Math Counts – Regional meet, an RJH student finish 10th in the region; Mrs. Harte was very proud. Math Counts will continue through the rest of the school year.
- Mr. Fortier said there are three RJH students going to the NHSPCA to be interviewed/filmed by WMUR tomorrow.

Mr. Grant asked if there were any questions for Ms. Richardson or Mr. Pollet. There were none

NECAP report – Tom Southworth

Mr. Southworth reviewed his NECAP 2009 report with the Board. He said that 94% of Rye's eighth graders scored "Proficient" in reading, 86% in math. He said that statewide students struggle with math.

Page two of Mr. Southworth's report was the NECAP COHORT chart for Fall 2005 – Fall 2009. Mr. Schwartz noted the particularly low scores for the 11th graders. Mr. Southworth this is a statewide problem and part of the problem is that the 11th graders take the test cold with no instructional time dedicated to reviewing material or preparing for the exam. He said it is very difficult to track as each high school approaches math differently.

Page three of Mr. Southworth's report compares our subgroups with state subgroups to provide a point of reference. The last page of the report provided additional commentary on the data.

The Board thanked Mr. Southworth for his analysis and presentation.

FINANCIAL

Manifest:

Mrs. Moynahan proposed, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, a motion to approve the manifest of January 15, 2010 through January 25, 2010 in the amount of \$269,807.71. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Mrs. Moynahan proposed, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, a motion to approve the manifest of January 26, 2010 through February 10, 2010 in the amount of \$377,621.11. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Unreserved Fund Balance

Mr. Grant said he had a couple of meetings with Mr. Katkin regarding the unreserved fund balance. Mr. Grant asked Mr. Pollet, Ms. Richardson, and Mrs. Lyons to submit a list of expenditures for consideration. Mrs. Lyons submitted \$1,870 of expenditures for special education, Mr. Pollet's expenditures totaled \$54,304 and Ms. Richardson's expenditures totaled \$68,001. There was an additional \$10,000 of professional development funds requested for RES/RJH.

Ms. Anderson asked how comfortable Mr. Katkin is with the expenditure of these funds from the unreserved fund balance. Mr. Grant said he is very comfortable with the numbers.

Mr. Schwartz asked Mr. Pollet for an explanation of the purchase of an additional 20 Netbooks with software and cart. Mr. Pollet said he wants to purchase the same make/model of Netbook currently being used by the 7th graders for consistency with the incoming 90 students.

Mr. Schwartz confirmed that the Eno boards requested were in addition to what was budgeted.

Mr. Schwartz asked Mr. Pollet to get the cost of installing four more retractable basketball hoops at the RJH gym. Mr. Gordon is working on getting those costs and Mr. Pollet will follow up at the next meeting.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, to approve the expenditures from the unreserved fund balance as presented in the amount of \$134,175. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Mr. Grant then addressed three additional expenditures for consideration.

- New lights in the RES/RJH gyms \$20,000
- NHSBA membership (2010-2011) 3,600
- Merit pay increases for principals 7,000
- Total \$30,600

Mr. Grant said the NHSBA membership is something that is particularly important and meaningful for new board members. By paying for the 2010-2011 school year membership now the Rye Board will receive membership for the balance of 2009-2010 for free.

The proposed merit increase for the two principals is for each to receive \$3,500 with that amount to be added to their base salary.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, to approve the three additional expenditures, totaling \$30,600, from the unreserved fund balance. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Other

Ms. Anderson said she reviewed the draft musical instrument loan agreement form drafted by Ms. Papoutsy and in November, the Board was told there was enough money in the budget to cover instrument repairs. The proposed instrument agreement implies there is not. Grant agreed stating the proposed rental fee alters the spirit of the Board's intent at the April meeting. Ms. Balboni agreed as well that it was agreed that parents would not pay for these repairs and that anyone who had paid in the last year would be reimbursed.

It was agreed both principals would send an email to parents in an effort to compensate families who had paid for instrument repairs last year out of their own pocket.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Calendar of Policy Action

The policy committee is currently reviewing and updating the calendar of policy action.

Rye Recreation/After Care Program

Mr. Schwartz said the committee (Mr. Schwartz, Mrs. Moynahan, and Ms. Richardson) met with Rye Recreation to discuss the aftercare program. The Rye School Board is completely committed to this program.

Mr. Schwartz provided the following details of the program:

- This year there are two classrooms for the 60 students who participate in the aftercare program. There are 10-15 students in the program now that were not enrolled at the beginning of the year.
- A memorandum of understanding was created to clarify roles and process and asks Rye Recreation to present space needs for the next year at the January Board meeting.
- The Board and Lane brainstormed ways to accommodate needs next year's needs.
- RES will have four 2nd grade classrooms therefore there will not be a dedicated 'unused' classroom available to offer to the afterschool program.
- There are many possibilities: we have great resources, lots of needs, and we can work together and look to other resources/areas to serve our needs. An aftercare program for grades 6-8 is also something to consider going forward.

Mr. Schwartz reiterated that the School Board absolutely values the Rye Recreation Department and the After School Program as we as the PTA and REF and all the offerings from these groups for the children of Rye.

Ms. Richardson agreed saying how much she values the program and loves having the kids at school. She said this has been the best year yet with Rye Recreation After School Program under the leadership of Peter Sawtell.

Ms. Richardson presented the following solution to the space requests:

- Rye Recreation will occupy Room 100; still negotiating a second room but it will likely be the music room; homework room will remain upstairs.
- RES is actually adding two new classrooms next year (one for 1st grade, the other for 2nd grade)
- The art room can still be used for PTA enrichment classes
- Thanks to the generosity of the School Board and REF, there is thousands of dollars worth of musical instruments in the music room. Replacement of damaged instruments will be part of the memorandum of understanding. Mr. Sawtell said he is looking at the responsibility of this shared space as a teachable opportunity for the kids.

Mrs. Balboni said she recognizes how much has gone into finding workable solutions to keep the aftercare program at RES.

Mr. Grant said it is a process and long term solutions should be discussed at a future meeting with selectmen, particularly if enrollment in the program continues to increase. Mr. Schwartz said the selectmen are interested in meeting with the Rye School Board.

Mr. Schwartz is working on a memorandum of understanding and will send to the Board for review.

Other

None

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS:

Mr. Joe Cummins spoke to the following:

- He clarified with Mrs. Balboni that long division is not covered in Trailblazers, but it is indeed part of the 4th grade curriculum and covered by additional materials.
- He spoke of the need for an assessment exam to test computation with automaticity. He has been in contact with the NHDOE about this.
- Mr. Cummins said he had to recognize the large number of Rye students who succeed in the math program and testing.

Mr. Grant said he appreciates Mr. Cummins comments and that for the better part of the last year or two he has heard Mr. Cummins' passion for math. Mr. Grant said he wanted it on the record that Mr. Cummins' concerns have not fallen on deaf ears and the curriculum coordinator, Ms. Chagnon, Ms. Richardson, and others have evaluated and reported back to the Board. In addition, the schools have augmented aspects of the math program. He said the board, staff, and administration have done much with regards to how we can be better.

- Mr. Cummins said he is disappointed that, despite his encouragement, the townspeople he speaks with who are not pleased with the Trailblazers math program do not come to the Board meetings to voice their concerns.

Mr. Schwartz said he had spoken with Mr. Cummins about having supplemental material or a parent's night supporting the math program.

Ms. Richardson mentioned "Math Facts" software which will hopefully be funded by the PTA to supplement what the students are learning.

Ms. Kirsten Marella mentioned there is an informative website for Trailblazers math program that parents might find helpful as well.

Ms. Shari Cohen

Ms. Cohen recognized and thanked Ms. Anderson for her six years as School Board member dedicated to the students of Rye. Ms. Cohen presented Ms. Anderson with flowers.

Mike Schwartz

As follow up to Ms. Cohen's recognition Mr. Schwartz thanked both Ms. Anderson and Mr. Grant for their six years on the board. He appreciated their guidance, method of thinking, and noted that they both have done much for the schools. Mr. Schwartz said that while all board members may not have seen eye-to-eye on all matters it was always clear that bettering education for the students of Rye was the ultimate goal.

Mrs. Balboni and Mrs. Moynahan echoed Mr. Schwartz's comments and recognized the amount of time both Ms. Anderson and Mr. Grant have dedicated to serving on the Board stating it has been a pleasure to serve with them.

Lane Richardson

Ms. Richardson said as RES principal she thanks both Ms. Anderson and Mr. Grant. She said they were part of the Board that hired her and she has greatly appreciated their support and there are many times when things could not have been accomplished without that support. She is very thankful for their service.

Ms. Anderson and Mr. Grant both spoke and offered their words of reflection after six years on the Rye School Board. Please see attached Addendum A and Addendum B.

The meeting recessed at 7:40 p.m. for refreshments.

The meeting reconvened at 7:51 p.m.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

Policies

KB** – Title I Parent Involvement

Mrs. Moynahan presented the policy for 2nd reading/adoption stating it would be worthwhile to have the policy on record in the event we go back to accepting Title I funding.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, to adopt policy KB. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Physical Plant

Mr. Grant has been in discussion with Lucy Neiman and the town in regards to an application for a \$400,000 grant as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program. Mr. Grant explained that the town and school had to submit a combined proposal and that a portion of the grant could be used to help with the energy systems and boilers in the schools.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, to move up to \$15,000 from the buildings/ground expendable trust to pay for additional needs contingent upon the approval of the grant. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, to approve the submission of the grant application. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Mr. Grant thanked Ms. Lucy Neiman for bringing the grant to us and her help in pulling the application together.

Special Issues

Nothing new to report

REF

REF is getting ready for their annual gala; proceeds will go to be used at RES for something like a new computer on wheels cart (C.O.W.), or professional development, etc.

PHS

Nothing new to report.

PTA

Membership is up to 201. The annual spaghetti supper is scheduled for April 8, 2010.

Rye Recreation

Done.

Communication

February Newsletter – Ms. Anderson reports the newsletter is done and ready to go. Ms. Anderson thanked everyone for their input. The Board and all the administrators reviewed the newsletter and said it was fine to be sent out to Rye residents.

Annual School District Report – Mrs. Balboni said the annual report is at the printer and thanked everyone for their timely input.

Curriculum

Mrs. Balboni said the PLAC met last week. They talked about the plan for the May professional development day dedicated to the transfer of information related to the Learning Compact. It was also discussed how the Learning Compact may look different at each school and that it is not a one-size-fits all document.

Mr. Schwartz said he attended a Women's Giving Circle presentation on adolescence at Community Campus. They talked about protective factors and the value of every child feeling good about 1 thing in their life. It made him think about the Learning Compact and how important this will be for our students.

Mrs. Balboni said at the PLAC meetings the focus has moved on to communicating about the Learning Compact. They are drafting a newsletter to send to parents next year as the Learning Compact will apply to all students.

Budget Committee

Budget committee met this week but there was nothing pertinent to the school committee.

Emergency Management

Mrs. Moynahan said the schools will have three drills this year and FEMA will be present to grade the school on the last drill.

Mr. Pollet said RJH had a lock down and has had 2 subsequent meetings about securing the library space during such a procedure. Shades need to be installed in the windows, a 'red dot' area needs to be identified and designated, a magnetic entry door is needed and there needs to be a panic button in the library. Mr. Pollet said he may need to come back for funding.

Mr. Pollet also had a quick discussion with Chief Sullivan about the front entrance especially in light of inclement weather when the wind/rain/snow can whip out front while the person is awaiting entrance through the secure door. Chief Sullivan said the school could consider moving the secure entrance to the 2nd interior door. Mr. Pollet will keep exploring this option.

NEW BUSINESS:

Open Gym

Mrs. Moynahan provided an update on the open gym in response to Mr. Gormley's request at the January Board meeting.

It was determined RJH was the more secure location. The first open gym was offered February 14th from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. and there were 16 kids from grades 5-8 there. Some kids played knock-out and others played a pick-up game of basketball at the other end of the court.

Mrs. Moynahan presented guidelines for the open gym. She said Mrs. Gormley has offered to coordinate the volunteer list.

It was thought the program could be offered on Saturdays through the end of March.

The board reviewed the guidelines presented. Mr. Schwartz said he was not clear why a custodian had to be on duty. Dr. Cushing said it has to do with the insurance policy and the need to have a staff member in the building. Mrs. Balboni asked if we offered to pay a stipend to the parent coordinator if a custodian would still be needed. Mr. Grant said Mr. Katkin indicated we needed the custodian present. Mr. Grant asked Mr. Pollet to follow up with Mr. Katkin on requirement for having custodian in the building during open gym.

Mr. Schwartz said he did not like the idea of charging for open gym as proposed in the guidelines.

The proposed guidelines also call for guests (non-Rye residents) to get a guest pass similar to the procedure followed for school dances. Mr. Grant thought this would be problematic and defeat the purpose of the simple, open gym. Mr. Schwartz suggested we instead give the open gym coordinator the right to ask anyone to leave as they see fit.

Mrs. Moynahan and Mr. Pollet will follow up on open gym for the rest of the 'season'.

Other

Speech and Language Pathologist substitute

Mrs. Lyons submitted a request to the Board to approve the appropriate daily rate (\$371.95 plus benefits) retroactive to January 5, 2010 for Susan Cloutier who was hired as the long term substitute for Carrie Trimarco. The Board had approved a daily rate of \$322.37 plus benefits at the October meeting. The total increase is \$1,685.79.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, to approve Susan Cloutier's daily rate of \$371.95 plus benefits retroactive to January 5, 2010. Vote: In Favor: Mr. Grant, Mrs. Balboni, Mr. Schwartz, and Mrs. Moynahan. Opposed: Ms. Anderson because this increase should have been brought to the board as soon as it was known, not months later.

Candidate Flyers

Ms. Anderson said that in the past when there has been a contested election we have posted flyers for the candidates on the website. She asked the candidates if they would be interested in doing this; all candidates agreed to send their flyer to Ms. Anderson to be posted to the website. The Board stated the flyers would only be posted if all candidates made a submission.

Professional Development Request

Mr. Pollet submitted a request from Piper Cronin for expense reimbursement when she attends the National AAHPERD conference in Indianapolis, IN March 16th – 20th. Mr. Pollet asked if he could take \$550 out of the approved \$10,000 professional development fund for this.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, to use \$550 of the approved \$10,000 professional development funds to reimburse Ms. Cronin as requested for her attendance at the National AAHPERD conference in Indianapolis, IN March 16th – 20th.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

On a motion by Mr. Schwartz, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, the School Board entered non-public session at 8:35 p.m. on a unanimous roll call vote and in accordance with RSA 91-A:4 to discuss personnel.

PUBLIC SESSION:

The Board returned to public session on a roll call vote at 8:40 p.m.

SECRETARY'S REPORT *continued:*

Mrs. Moynahan made a motion, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, to approve and seal the non-public minutes of January 20, 2010. Vote: Unanimously approved.

ADJOURN:

Mr. Grant proposed a motion, seconded by Ms. Anderson, to adjourn at 8:42 p.m. Vote: Unanimously approved.

School Board Secretary