

Approved by the Rye School Board at its May 19, 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 April 21, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

School Board Members: Michael Schwartz, Peggy Balboni, Kirsti Marella,
Maggie Duffy-Durkin, 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, Jeanne Brown, Sheila Adams, Phoebe Guarnaccia,
Ron Fortier, Tom Southworth, Sharry Sparks, Maggie Hanna

Visitors: Joe Cummins, Lucretia Schafroth, Laura Brown, Peter Sawtell, Dean
Chase, Robin Husslage

Several RES and RJH Students

CALL TO ORDER:

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

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

On a motion by Mrs. Moynahan and seconded by Mrs. Marella, the public minutes of March 17, 2010 were approved as amended. Vote: Unanimously approved.

The non-public minutes of March 17, 2010 were circulated among board members for review.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Dr. Cushing recognized the following communications that were part of the board members' packets:

- Rye Recreation After School Program's April newsletter
- A thank you letter from PHS for the recent donation supporting Celebration Graduation
- A newspaper article on Rye's state champion DI team 'ImagiNation' who are now heading on to the competition in Knoxville, TN

Dr. Cushing circulated two notes from staff members thanking the board for the recent staff breakfast at the schools.

Destination Imagination Request

Mr. Schwartz suggested the board discuss the Destination Imagination request for funding at this point to accommodate the students who were in attendance.

Mrs. Balboni noted that as DI manager for the past six years, and manager of the team that is going to the Global Finals in Knoxville, she would not participate in the discussion.

Mr. Schwartz first congratulated the team for their accomplishment and then asked Dr. Cushing to speak. Dr. Cushing said he was involved with DI (formerly Odyssey of the Mind) when it first started in Portsmouth. He said DI fills a void in schools and allows students to further develop by means of problem-solving, trial and error, critical thinking, and creative thinking. Dr. Cushing said he was very impressed with the team's performance at states and found them to be poised, even-keeled, and systematic. Dr. Cushing acknowledged the additional components and expenses when a team competes at the national level.

Dr. Cushing and the board received a letter of requested funding from Rebecca Harrison, DI Coordinator and Sara Richard, Team Parent. The request was specifically for \$4,800 to cover the DI fees and lodging for the 7 team members and 1 manager at Nationals in Nashville. The school board has funded specific requests in the past. Dr. Cushing was advised by Mr. Katkin that the requested fund could come from \$1,600 in the DI budget, \$900 in a vendors account, and the remaining \$2,300 would come from the general budget.

Mrs. Duffy-Durkin asked if there was a further breakdown of the \$4,800. There was no further breakdown provided by DI officials other than \$600 per member for fees/lodging.

Mrs. Marella asked if it was known how much each family had to contribute for their child to participate. It was stated that family contribution is not yet known as there are outstanding requests for donations and several fundraising efforts planned for May.

Mrs. Marella said she is very supportive of DI and thinks it is a great program but asked that the Board have a future discussion and consider setting up a specific fund for DI and other activities/tournaments.

Mr. Schwartz opened the floor for discussion.

RJH student stated he was a member of DI for six years and that every year it brought new great experiences for him. His team competed at Globals three years ago and he described it as the greatest experience of his life.

RJH student commented that DI teaches you to think, not memorize.

Mr. Cummins asked how DI benefits students that do not participate in the program.

Mrs. Marella pointed out that DI is open to all students. She feels it is one of many extracurricular activities and feels it is an essential enrichment offering. Mr. Schwartz agreed stating we want to be able to offer programs to reach as many students as possible.

Mr. Southworth said students who participate in DI share their perspective, experience, approach, and thought processes in class daily. Their perspective and input is a valuable contribution to our students becoming well-rounded citizens. Ms. Richardson agreed adding the DI students often share their projects to their classmates and students benefit by seeing the process and being exposed to that critical thinking component.

Mr. Cummins thought it might be worthwhile to have DVDs of the students' presentation available for sale; not only as a fundraiser but to further expose other students to the program.

Mr. Chase spoke of his son's involvement on the team stating he was surprised when his son first expressed interest in the program. Mr. Chase's son was actually inspired but an older student who was on a DI team.

This older student's involvement unknowingly sparked the interest for Mr. Chase's son. Mr. Chase said DI clearly gives students something to aspire to and benefits many.

Mr. Schwartz asked if there was any other discussion. Hearing none he called for a motion.

Mrs. Marella made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, to approve the \$4,800 requested funding for DI fees and lodging for the 7 team members and 1 team manager to compete at the Nationals in Knoxville. Vote: In favor: Mrs. Moynahan, Mr. Schwartz, Mrs. Marella, and Mrs. Duffy-Durkin. Abstained: Mrs. Balboni abstained as she is the DI team manager.

Mrs. Marella reiterated that she would like a Board discussion about future funding at a later meeting. There was full Board agreement and Mr. Schwartz suggested the Special Issues committee look at creative options to prepare for that discussion.

Mr. Schwartz called Board members' attention to the committee assignment list that was in their packet. He asked for any changes/corrections; there were none.

REPORTS:

Director of Pupil Services Report

Dr. Cushing distributed Mrs. Lyons, Director of Pupil Services report and asked for questions.

Mrs. Moynahan asked about the negative unencumbered fund balance. Mr. Katkin explained that was related to tuition.

Mr. Schwartz asked for clarification of the note on page three that showed under the column "Students Added" as well as the column "Students Discharged". Dr. Cushing said he would relay the question to Mrs. Lyons and ask her to respond directly to the Board via email.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Cushing commented on the many exciting happenings at our schools since the last Board meeting including:

- DI state champion team
- USO night at Rye Junior High
- Alice in Wonderland with a Twist
- World Language Week
- Wax Museum at RES
- Second grade puppet show

Dr. Cushing then asked Mr. Southworth to speak to his written AYP report. Mr. Southworth provided an overview of his report and the role of subgroups. Mr. Southworth said Rye's overall scores for RES, RJH, and the district are excellent in both Reading and Math. RES missed AYP Reading; the subgroup made the performance target by increasing the group's score from 74.5 to 84.1 in one year but it missed AYP due to a new participation formula.

Mrs. Duffy-Durkin asked if accommodation plans can be used for students when they take the NECAP tests. Mr. Southworth said accommodation plans can be used but the questions and scale do not change for those students.

The Board thanked Mr. Southworth for his report and for coming to the meeting.

Dr. Cushing then spoke to the Portsmouth School budget. Portsmouth superintendent, Ed McDonough, attended the March SAU #50 Board meeting and said he brought forward a 2.8% increase budget that would not impact services.

The Portsmouth school Board chair and Mr. McDonough both were unsure at the recent Secondary School Advisory meeting if the 2.8% budget would pass. It was decided a letter of support from the SAU #50 Board members would be sent to the Portsmouth City Council prior to the May 10th public hearing. Additionally Mrs. Brown, a Rye resident, Newington teacher, and president of PHS parent group, has been coordinating parent support of the proposed budget.

Portsmouth home and business owners were also encouraged to call their councilman to show their support of the budget.

Mr. Schwartz asked if Dr. Cushing wanted a liaison to work with Beth Brown regarding the Portsmouth School budget. Mrs. Moynahan offered to follow up with Beth Brown and serve as liaison on this important matter.

Principals' Reports

Rye Elementary School – Lane Richardson

Highlights of Ms. Richardson's report include:

- Grade 5 live wax museum
- PTA spaghetti supper raised over \$8,000
- Grade 2 music concert
- Kindergarten teacher Maggie Hanna completed the Boston Marathon this past Monday with a finish time of 3:36:16 (8:14 pace)
- Ms. Richardson and the interview team interviewed 26 candidates for the first grade position today and will interview another 10 on Friday.

Rye Recreation After School Program

Mr. Schwartz took a moment to speak to the draft memorandum of understanding regarding the space request from the after school program. Mr. Schwartz thanked Ms. Richardson and Mr. Sawtell for working together on a solution that worked for everyone. Ms. Richardson recognized the strong communication between Mr. Sawtell (Director, Rye Recreation After School Program) and Mrs. Berry (RES liaison to the after school program) and noted how smoothly the program has been operating.

There was full Board consensus of the memorandum of understanding as written. The Board thanked Mr. Schwartz, Ms. Richardson, Mrs. Berry, and Mr. Sawtell for their hard work on this matter.

Rye Junior High School – Chris Pollet

- Alice in Wonderland with a Twist was a huge hit and Mr. Pollet said the kids stood strong and Ms. Raymond did a great job with the 50+ kids involved with the play.
- RJH 7th graders are hosting an Earth Day webcast 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
- 7th graders met with Rye recycling committee and sifted through cafeteria trash and determined further recycling and composting possibilities
- iPod registration – the information will become part of a database with the police
- Mr. Pollet is reviewing applications for the guidance counselor position

Land Report – This report was supposed to be given by an RJH student but he was out of school due to an illness today. Mr. Fortier provided an overview of the presentation in the student's absence.

The presentation was a vision of possible uses of the land next to RJH, on Lang Road, that is on the market. It is thought funding for the outdoor classroom can come from many available grants.

Highlights of the presentation for the outdoor classroom opportunity include:

- 1.5 acres for sale (\$275,000)
- Build chicken coops (students can then sell the eggs)
- 40' x 60' garden (students can then sell produce, use produce in cafeteria)
- Garden shed
- Apple and pear trees in designated orchard
- Folk art center – 2-story building, house looms/wools among
- Open amphitheater
- Building with several 100-gallon fish tanks
- Sugar shacks (students can sell maple syrup)

Mr. Fortier feels a lot of this vision can be supported by grants but purchase of land is a greater funding issue that needs to be addressed. He said there may be an opportunity for the historical society to purchase the land and let the school use the land. Mr. Fortier, Ms. Ellwood, and Mrs. Coombs have worked together on the possible development of this land for the students and the outdoor classroom opportunities.

Mr. Schwartz offered kudos to the RJH student for coming to Mr. Pollet with his ideas for the land. Mr. Schwartz thanked Mr. Fortier, Ms. Ellwood, and Mrs. Coombs for creating the vision. Mr. Schwartz suggested Mr. Fortier contact Jim Raynes about the land.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Duffy-Durkin, to establish a committee to pursue funding options for the purchase of the land on Lang Road. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Summer Institute on Picturing America

Mr. Pollet said Mr. Fortier and Mrs. Coombs met with Mr. Katkin about the possibility of offering a summer institute on “Picturing America”. The program will expand on the “Picturing America” group in NH. Mr. Katkin explained that the Rye School District would be the sponsoring agency for the summer institute as is done for enrichment program offerings at the school. There is no expense for the school district.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Marella, for the Rye School District to serve as sponsoring agency for the professional development summer institute “Picturing America” at RJH. There will be a cap of 30 participants in the institute. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Mr. Schwartz explained how he has been reviewing the manifest at the SAU office and suggested board members join him if they were interested.

Financial

Manifest:

Mrs. Balboni proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to approve the manifest of March 31, 2010 through March 24, 2010 in the amount of \$269,145.66. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Mrs. Balboni proposed, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, a motion to approve the manifest of March 25, 2010 through April 16, 2010 in the amount of \$615,569.44. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Budgetary Considerations

Dr. Cushing submitted a request from Ms. Richardson to transfer funds from her professional growth line. Ms. Richardson’s request was to transfer the remaining \$2,075 in her professional growth account to the principal directed professional development line. Ms. Richardson does not plan to attend a national conference this year and instead intends to use the money for teacher-to-teacher projects.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, to transfer \$2,075 from Rye Elementary School's Professional Growth Fund to the Principal Directed Fund for teacher-to-teacher activities. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Unreserved Fund Balance

Mr. Katkin handed out a sheet of analysis of Rye School District's unreserved fund balance as of April 21, 2010. Mr. Katkin provided an overview of the unreserved fund balance for new Board members stating that in its simplest form it is the amount of money left in the budget that is not expended or encumbered.

Mr. Schwartz stated we have \$3 million dollars budgeted for anticipated expenses for the next four months of the school year. Mr. Katkin feels he will need another \$140,000 beyond that amount to operate the schools for the remainder of the school year.

Storm Damage

Mr. Katkin provided follow up on water damage at RJH from the recent rain storm. Water leaked from the roof and subsequently puckered the mdf. Whitcher Builders is coming in to take care of the repairs. The cost is \$6,500 for the repair with a \$1,000 deductible. There is a \$500 discrepancy between the estimate and the insurance company to be resolved. Mr. Katkin is working to determine where and how the rain came in. There will be external repair done removing mortar, repointing, and fixing the window. The work will be completed by May 1.

Softball field

Mr. Katkin spoke to the softball field repair costs. He said the Board had approved up to \$10,000 for field repairs but the actual cost is \$11,106.50 to install the field mix, bases, home plate, pitching rubber and associated labor. Mr. Katkin also said large delivery tractor trucks may cause rutting in the soft ground and we need to allow for possible repair.

Mrs. Moynahan made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Duffy-Durkin, to approve up to an additional \$2,000 for the upgrade of the softball field at RES. Vote: Approved by Mrs. Moynahan, Mrs. Duffy-Durkin, Mr. Schwartz, and Mrs. Balboni. Abstained: Mrs. Marella abstained from the vote because of her husband's association with the girls' softball league.

Energy Grant

Mr. Katkin spoke to the recent application for an energy grant. He noted Rye received the most funding of any NH town/city. The Office of Energy and Planning received over 270 grant applications.

Mr. Katkin distributed a proposal from anix to provide design, contract administration and consulting support for the CHP system at the Rye Elementary School. Mr. Katkin asked for Board approval to enter into an agreement with anix.

Mrs. Moynahan made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Marella, for the Rye School District to enter a contract with anix for the cost range of \$4,100 - \$8,000 for the purpose of design, contract administration and consulting support of the CHP system at RES. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Mr. Katkin will meet with Special Issues reps to determine how to proceed with the Jordan Institute report.

Mr. Katkin provided a Request for Proposal for Electrical System Enhancements to the Board for informational purposes.

Additional Unreserved Fund Requests

Mr. Pollet submitted a written list of an additional \$52,300 of purchases/enhancements for Board consideration if there is additional funding available. Ms. Richardson has an additional \$21,000 of purchases/enhancements on behalf of RES. The board decided to wait on funding additional requests until the May meeting.

Mr. Schwartz suggested that Mrs. Moynahan be the primary contact for Mr. Katkin for future questions about facility related issues. He suggested this role does not need to be that of the Chair only.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Calendar of Policy Action

Done

Upcoming meeting with Selectmen

The Rye School Board is set to attend the June 14th Rye Selectmen meeting. The meeting will be at Rye Town Hall at 6:30 p.m. The Rye Selectmen will distribute an agenda prior to the meeting.

Collective Bargaining Agreement

Five originals of the 2010-2015 Collective Bargaining Agreement were distributed for Board signature.

Survey Update

Mr. Pollet and Ms. Richardson worked together to create a more user-friendly and shorter parent survey. The Board reviewed the survey and made a few suggested changes.

Board discussion followed regarding how the principals will provide information to the Board. Further discussion will continue at the retreat.

Technology Plan

Mr. Schwartz would like to have an updated technology plan for the retreat. He mentioned that last year during the budgeting cycle, the board discussed the possibility of a technology warrant article for the 2011/12 school budget. Mr. Pollet suggested leasing options be considered given the dynamic nature of software and hardware.

Other

Mr. Magnant, Rye Town Administrator, asked Dr. Cushing to serve on the interview committee for the new Director of Department of Public Works.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS:

Laura Brown, Rye PTA Treasurer, said the PTA had recently donated \$250 to Picturing America and \$1,500 to the play. She asked that Ms. Raymond provide a breakdown of play costs so that the PTA can make good decisions regarding donations going forward.

Rye Pink Sox request

Dr. Cushing presented a request from the Rye Pink Sox (a non-profit organization) to hang a temporary banner listing their supporters on the fence of the field during practices and games. Dr. Cushing cited policy KHB Advertising in Schools and said the request falls under exception #1: “the schools may cooperate in furthering the work of any non-profit, community-wide social service agency, provided that such cooperation does not restrict or impair the educational program of the schools”

He stated three conditions that he based his recommendation on:

Pink Sox is a non-profit organization

The organization provides an important service for our students

It is not direct advertising of a business or services. It will be a recognition in the form of a list of contributors.

On a motion by Mrs. Duffy-Durkin, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, the Rye Pink Sox request to hang a temporary banner on the fence during practices and games only was granted.

Vote: In favor: Mrs. Duffy-Durkin, Mrs. Moynahan, Mr. Schwartz, and Mrs. Balboni. Abstained: Mrs. Marella abstained from the vote because of her husband's association with the girls' softball league.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

Policies

The policy committee is currently revising the Rye's calendar of policy action and beginning a re-review of all policies.

Secretary's Report

Special Issues meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2010. Mrs. Moynahan and Mrs. Duffy-Durkin will both attend.

Board members will be attending staff meetings and will get ideas from the teachers to discuss at the summer retreat. Mrs. Balboni and Mrs. Duffy-Durkin will attend the staff meeting at RES on May 17th and Mrs. Marella and Mr. Schwartz will attend the RJH staff meeting on May 20th.

REF

Annual gala is planned for May 22, 2010. (Funds to be raised for the purchase of a C.O.W. (computers on wheels) for RES and an ENO board for RJH.

PHS

Done.

PTA

Currently there are 209 PTA members. PTA approved recent donations to Picturing America (\$250) and Destination Imagination (\$1,600).

Rye Recreation

Done

Curriculum

Mrs. Balboni said the PLAC did not meet this month as many of the committee members attended the recent Dufour Conference. Mrs. Balboni said the conference was inspiring and extremely energizing to the teachers.

NEW BUSINESS:

Summer Schedule

The Board's July and August schedule is as follows:

Tuesday, July 6, 2010, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Regular Board meeting and retreat

Mrs. Balboni's house (40 Red Mill Lane)

Monday, August 9, 2010, 4:00 p.m. Regular Board meeting, Rye Junior High School

Dates for upcoming SAU #50 Board meetings are as follows:

Wednesday, May 26, 2010, 6:30 p.m. – Maude H. Trefethen School, New Castle

Wednesday, September 29, 2010, 6:30 p.m. – Newington Public School

November 2010 – This meeting gets set at our September meeting and usually falls in first week of month to avoid conflict with Thanksgiving. November meeting is held at 6:30 p.m. – Rye Junior High School

Wednesday, December 15, 2010, 5:00 p.m. – Public Hearing on SAU 50 budget, Rye Junior High (*before Rye's regular monthly board meeting*).

Wednesday, March 30, 2011, 6:30 p.m. – Greenland Central School

Tuition request

Portsmouth School District is requesting permission to tuition a student to Rye Junior High School. The student has severe allergies and is on a 504 plan. Portsmouth paid tuition for the student to attend MHT and is now requesting the child remain with his class and transition to RJH. Although no additional expenditures are anticipated, any costs would be the responsibility of the Portsmouth School District, as was the arrangement with MHT. RJH staff has met with the child's parents as well as Portsmouth School District officials and feels confident they can meet the child's needs and that this will continue to be a positive experience for all.

Mrs. Balboni made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, to allow Portsmouth School District to tuition a 7th grade student from Portsmouth to attend RJH for the 2010-2011 school year at cost to Portsmouth School District, including expenditures directly related to the student's needs. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Tuition request

Dr. Cushing presented a request from a Rye family that was moving to Newmarket. The family asked to keep their student at RJH for the remainder of the school year.

Mrs. Marella made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, to allow the student to finish the school year at RJH as requested and waiving tuition per policy JFAB. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Mrs. Marella made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, to extend the meeting beyond 10:00 p.m. Vote: Unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

On a motion by Mrs. Balboni, seconded by Mrs. Marella, the School Board entered non-public session at 10:05 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 10:50 p.m.

On a motion by Mrs. Balboni, seconded by Mrs. Duffy-Durkin, the Board authorized Mrs. Marella and Mrs. Moynahan to work with Dr. Cushing and Mr. Katkin in May on early retirement incentives for teachers. Vote: Unanimously approved.

SECRETARY'S REPORT *continued*:

On a motion by Mrs. Moynahan, and seconded by Mrs. Marella, the non-public minutes of March 17, 2010 were approved and sealed. Vote: Unanimously approved

ADJOURN:

Mrs. Balboni proposed a motion, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, to adjourn at 10:56 p.m.

School Board Secretary