

Approved by the Rye School Board at its November 18, 2009 meeting.

**RYE SCHOOL DISTRICT
RYE, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

The monthly meeting of the School Board of the Rye School District was held at Rye Elementary School on October 21, 2009 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
Jim Katkin, Business Administrator

Staff:

Kathleen Cole, Tom Southworth, Jeanne Brown, Sheila Adams, Phoebe
Guarnaccia, Maggie Hanna, Andrea Papoutsy

Residents/Visitors:

Laura Brown, Shari Turner, June Williamson several RJH Students

CALL TO ORDER:

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

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Mr. Schwartz had some changes to the public minutes of September 16, 2009, and asked if we could review later in the meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Dr. Cushing read a thank you note from Monica Young thanking the Board for their approval of an aide in her classroom. She stated it has been an enormous help.

Dr. Cushing passed out an invitation from RJH to their Harvest festival on October 29th.

Dr. Cushing passed around the Rye Rec November newsletter

Mr. Grant received a letter from Rye Safe Routes. They are getting ready to apply for another round of funding with the application due November 2nd, and are requesting a letter of support from the School Board.

Dr. Cushing has received a request from Vicky Scally asking for permission to allow her daughter to attend kindergarten at RES. This will be discussed under new business.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Dr. Cushing distributed Mrs. Lyons, Director of Pupil Services report.

Dr. Cushing followed up on information from a meeting to keep the community connected. Four towns are involved including the police departments. They are putting their resources together regarding issues like underage drinking and substance abuse. After compiling this information they will review and implement their ideas. They would like to have a coordinator from each town.

Seasonal Flu – vaccination last Saturday was a huge success, with 345 vaccinations administered. Health and Human Services is saying schools do not need to report on H1N1 cases as the virus is widespread and symptoms are the same as the regular flu. Flu-related absences are being tracked with a daily online form submitted by school nurses. Ms. Richardson reported that at present RES has 14 cases of strep throat. They sent home a notice to parents and included the latest information regarding H1N1.

Dr. Cushing reported the Professional Development day last Friday was a tremendous success. Dr. Cushing passed out results from a survey taken and the results were positive. Administrators will get training to help facilitate what was discussed after a follow up on November 3rd.

Science NECAP Results: Mr. Southworth reported that 47% of Rye students at the high school scored proficient, which is double the state average. He further reported that at the high school there are a wide range of choices for the student to make regarding classes and that some students will not be taking science courses until later in the school year. The middle school scored at 38% proficient for 8th grade which is also above the state average. Mr. Southworth reported that students had a difficult time with the inquiry task which counts for 1/3 of the total score. Mr. Southworth stated that he does not like sending home a letter to parents stating that their child is not proficient as he feels the test is unfair. The 4th grade class scored well with 70% proficient. Mrs. Richardson stated that they have been working very hard on improving the science program.

Mrs. Balboni reported that she asked some 8th grade students about the inquiry task portion of the test and they said that they found it confusing. She stated it skews the scores if it is not done well, and asked Mr. Southworth if we get the scores separately. Mr. Southworth replied that we do and that the inquiry portion scores are poor. Mrs. Balboni asked if this was true for the 11th grade. Mr. Southworth replied that they also had weak scores. Mrs. Balboni said it might be worth getting out explanations and then asked how we could do better. She feels the test is subjective. She asked how other states in New England scored. Mr. Southworth said that he does not get that information but does know that Vermont did not score well. Dr. Cushing said it would be interesting to see scores from other New England states. Mr. Southworth said he would see about getting that information. Mr. Schwartz said that he has heard that other states also had poor scores. He asked if any states outperformed like the 57 in 8th grade that did do well. Mr. Southworth said PHS has changed their curriculum to address this issue and feels it would be the same all over the state. Mr. Grant said he looked online at peer schools and that the general assessment was that scores were low all over the state. He stated that schools around the area like Amherst, North Hampton and Hampton Falls, scored between 63% and 72% in the “proficient” category for 8th grade compared to Rye 38% so there are students that did well in the state and that we should look at their curriculum to see what they do. In addition, he stated that it is probably unfair to blame this version of the NECAP test when we also have scored low in Science in the 8th grade for the past several years in the CAT tests which have a different style of questions than the NECAP. Science in the Middle School would appear to be an area we need to spend more time. It also ties into the parent surveys done last year where one of the lower levels of satisfaction was science.

PRINCIPAL’S REPORT

Rye Elementary School – Lane Richardson

Ms. Richardson reported that due to the recent medical issues at the school they are closing the water fountains and students are bringing their own water into school. She stated that the school nurse is on top of any medical issue.

Ms. Richardson reported that Peter Sawtell, Director of Rye Recreation’s After School Program communicates with the school daily and there have been no glitches.

Recent field trips include: 4th grade going to the State House, kindergarten to the Music Hall and the 5th grade will be going to the Freedom Trail in Boston soon.

The Principals Advisory Group recently met and had a good meeting.

Staci Prinz is working out well as an aide in Ms. Young's class.

Jim Gordon is now working one day a week at RES during the day.

Ms. Richardson handed out a budget comparison sheet and surplus equipment list to the Board. She asked the Board for permission to dispose of the surplus equipment. It was offered to the recycling center and they have taken what they can use.

After school enrichment program has begun and a lot of kids have signed up.

After looking at the excess item list, Ms. Anderson made a motion to allow RES to dispose of the antiquated equipment, seconded by Mr. Schwartz. Vote: unanimously approved.

Rye Junior High School – Chris Pollet

Mr. Pollet reported that the NECAP testing ended this week. The students were taking one test a day as opposed to two tests a day as they have in the past, which allowed them more focus. He feels the strategies training students were taking prior to the tests helped prepare them especially with the open response.

October 9th was Professional Development day for staff with a focus shift from teaching to learning. Mr. Pollet feels this will help us with our initiative.

He reported that they have talked with NELMS about standard based report cards.

6th grade reported a successful Merrowvista trip.

On October 22nd from 6:45 to 8:00pm the public is invited to see a presentation on Digital Technology and Safety. The PTA and RJH are sponsoring this program to help create awareness for both students and parents regarding internet safety. There will be a school wide assembly for RJH students during the day.

Upcoming events: October 29th Harvest festival, October 23rd RJH first school dance, and a Veterans Day assembly on November 10th.

Ms. Anderson asked if the Harvest festival conflicted with something at PHS. Mr. Pollet replied that PHS has an Open House that night for 8th graders; however 8th grade students and parents will be able to attend both. PHS will start at 6:30 and most of the Harvest festival events will not start until 7:30. He further stated that PHS will be holding a second Open House for 8th graders later in the year. .

FINANCIAL

Manifest:

Mrs. Moynahan proposed, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, a motion to approve the manifest of September 11, 2009 through September 25, 2009 in the amount of \$308,894.06. Vote: unanimously approved.

Mrs. Moynahan proposed, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, a motion to approve the manifest of September 26, 2009 through October 19, 2009 in the amount of \$589,975.47. Vote: unanimously approved.

Mrs. Balboni asked if procurement card use was for staff only and is it only budgeted items they are allowed to be purchased. Mr. Katkin stated that was correct. Mr. Grant said that as he looked through the manifest and receipts attached, he saw that a lot of items were purchased locally. He asked if the staff is looking for the least expensive purchase online as well as locally for the best price.

Other:

Budget review dates are set for November 19, 2009 from 8:00 to 2:00 and November 24th from 8:00 to 2:00.

Discussion of the 2009/2010 budget: Mr. Grant sent the Board request for an early peek at the budget priorities to Ms. Richardson and Mr. Pollet and feels the budget should be discussed in full detail at the November meeting. Ms. Anderson said that if we have questions she would like to give the administrators her questions so they can be prepared to answer them at the budget meetings. Mr. Grant explained that Mr. Katkin is in attendance for any questions. He continued that if a Board member has a general question for either the principal or Mr. Katkin they could ask them directly, unless they feel the Board would need to hear this information as well. Mrs. Balboni suggested a point person for all questions in case some of the questions are the same.

Mr. Schwartz stated that he would like to make sure we get to a 0%, 1% or 2% budget by not reducing staff or curriculum, but by reducing items such as fuel costs and insurance items to try and create a reserve fund so that we are still able to staff as needed and not end up with a surplus in these areas.

Mr. Katkin said he has not yet met with the administrators and needs a better handle on the end result of the budget. He should have information from PHS regarding tuition by November 1st. He said he is not sure how we can meet staffing needs, but it will be presented to the Board. Mr. Grant stated that at the last Budget Committee meeting, the seed was planted for a 1% or 2% budget, so it will not be a surprise to the committee. Mr. Grant said that we should focus on the academic piece and whatever the administrative priorities are and see if that fits into a 0% budget, and if not determine what is needed additionally. Mr. Katkin said that he has met with Mr. Pollet and Ms. Richardson and that there are 6 to 8 position changes at each building. He is not sure if he can incorporate that at a 0% budget. Mr. Katkin will present a 0% budget with pressing items, a 1% budget with priorities and a 2% budget with more priorities.

Ms. Anderson stated any increase cost as a result of the new teachers' contract should be included in the 0% budget submission. Mr. Grant agreed and said the salary increase number is always in the budget, and should be included. Mr. Grant said any further questions can be directed to Mr. Katkin and then the Board will discuss.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Calendar of Policy Action

Done

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS:

Mrs. Cole stated she will be submitting the request for artwork for the Rye recycling center to RES and RJH to include with the Friday e-mail. The Board agreed and thanked Mrs. Cole.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

Policies

BEDH - Visitor participation at Board meetings, for 2nd reading:

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to accept this policy as a 2nd reading, allowing visitors to ask questions at the beginning and end of each school board meeting, and setting time parameters for speaking, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan. Ms. Anderson stated she does not feel such a formal policy is necessary. She feels it may send a

message that the Board is trying to be restrictive when the Board should continue to welcome comments and questions. Mr. Grant stated he thinks that some guidelines help set the expectation. Dr. Cushing said this exists in the other 3 schools in the SAU. Mrs. Balboni added that she thinks it sets a structure and lets the public know when during the meeting they can ask questions and make comments. Ms. Anderson said she also disagrees with the statement of how long a visitor can speak. Mr. Schwartz agreed with Ms. Anderson, feeling the language can be interpreted in two ways. Dr. Cushing said if the intent is to provide structure, it should be on the agenda. Mr. Grant suggested it could be posted on the website. Mrs. Moynahan said she agrees with the statement of when visitors can speak but not with the statement of how long. Ms. Anderson suggested we delete the words “for more than two minutes”. Mr. Grant disagreed saying that if there are instances where a person dominates too much time it sets the limit. He said he wasn’t tied to two (2) minutes. Mr. Schwartz made a motion to accept this policy as amended, taking out the words “more than two minutes”, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan. Vote: Approved: Mr. Grant, Mr. Schwartz, Mrs. Moynahan, and Mrs. Balboni. Opposed: Ms. Anderson, because the policy, even with the amendment, could have the affect of restricting public participation.

IL – Evaluation of Curriculum Programs, for adoption:

Mr. Schwartz said he was concerned with the staff not understanding how we evaluate programs as this comment was brought up in a staff meeting. Mrs. Balboni said she is working with Linda Walsh on a structure, but is not sure how it relates to this policy. She said that they are asking how we determine how we choose what we are going to be evaluating, not how we evaluate. She stated that the process is ongoing with Mrs. Walsh, and she believes this concern is no longer an issue. Mr. Grant said that the Board has this as a goal and that policy IL speaks of general reporting to the Board. Mrs. Balboni said it needs to be determined as a school and that it is not up to the Board to dictate what is to be done. Mr. Grant pointed to the parent survey that indicated that science and world language could be strengthened and it is the Board’s responsibility to at least start that conversation. Ms. Richardson added that it is up to the state what curriculum will be reviewed. Mr. Schwartz said, for example, there could be a policy that says every five years curriculum will be reviewed and another that says how and by whom. Mrs. Moynahan noted that it states there will be an annual review and it is up to Ms. Richardson and Mr. Pollet how they do it. Mr. Pollet stated that we will continue to use Title IIA money to cover the costs of professional learning or it goes back to the old model, adjust, implement and evaluate curriculum. He further stated curriculum review is ongoing and that Mrs. Walsh should take the lead to communicate progress. Mr. Grant suggested we should be cautious to restrict discussion of what might come up for evaluation, and that he feels it is the Board’s job to be able to discuss. Mrs. Balboni replied that this is not what the staff is saying. Mr. Schwartz said that the staff is saying when someone has an idea to look at a particular area we should go to Mrs. Walsh to start the process. He said he feels the staff is just looking for more structure. Mrs. Richardson added that she believes we have good leadership with Mrs. Walsh. Ms. Anderson stated that the Board has ultimate oversight and has the duty to be involved if there is a curricular concern that is not getting resolved by the administrators. Ms. Anderson made a motion to adopt, seconded by Mr. Schwartz. Vote: Unanimously approved.

IJOC – Volunteers, for adoption:

Ms. Anderson noted a period needed to be added to the second paragraph, first sentence, and that in the last paragraph, first sentence “utilization” should be changed to “use”. Mrs. Moynahan will add the following sentence from appendix “A” to appendix “B”: “The undersigned also agrees to update this form, if any status noted herein should change during the school year”. Mr. Schwartz made a motion to adopt as amended, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Physical Plant

RJH Library – Mr. Katkin reported that the library is 98% complete. He did a walk through today with a punch list and there are a few minor items to be completed. There are some finishes to the paint trim and bead board on the 1st floor and some ceiling tiles that need to be replaced on the 2nd floor. The plan is to move back into the library next Monday. He reported that the lighting system is working well and that we

changed the heating system from steam to hot water. The ceiling is 8' on both floors and that the tiles are more sound and mold resistant. The information regarding cost will be filed with the state on how we will maintain the space and that we will get back 30% of the budget \$250,000 to \$275,000 over a 5 year period. Mr. Schwartz asked about the elevator lift. Mr. Katkin reported it is a hydraulic system and that it is working well.

Special Issues

Mrs. Moynahan reported that the Special Issues/PAC meeting is scheduled for November 5, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. at RJH.

Ms. Anderson stated she and Mrs. Moynahan met with Mr. Pollet and Mr. Fortier to discuss a non-school sponsored trip to Iceland over April vacation. It was agreed that the availability of the trip would be advertised like any other non-school sponsored event, through Friday e-mail and/or during lunches as has been done for other programs. It will not be discussed during class time. There will be 20 kids and 4 chaperones.

REF

Mr. Schwartz attended this meeting last month. He reported the fall cycle grants are due November 1st.

PHS

Mr. Grant and Dr. Cushing attended this meeting. They discussed, centers for excellence, job imbedded development, delayed opening, college counselors and profile data for colleges. They talked about class capacity and how they are now looking at demand for classes and staffing to fill that demand. Any student that wants to enroll in honors classes and qualifies will be able to attend honors classes. Mrs. Balboni asked about the mentor program. Dr. Cushing replied that has not been discussed yet.

CHARTER SCHOOL

Dr. Cushing, Mr. Pollet, and Mr. Schwartz toured Great Bay Learning Charter School (GBLC) in Exeter, an activity-based charter school for grades 8-12 with open enrollment. The school was renovated with 28 million dollars from grants. There are various departments such as the seacoast school of technology, culinary arts, plant and animal science, and special education. All of the resources are in the building and students have access to all departments. Mr. Pollet stated it reaches the needs of the non-traditional student, and the tone of the school was a unique climate with an eclectic group of students that were respectful and very welcoming. Mr. Schwartz agreed that they have created different environments for students who cannot find an alternative in the state. Dr. Cushing said they will be looking at funding and he agrees that we need to have options for students. Mr. Schwartz asked if we could pay the difference of approximately \$3,000.00, but asked how doing that would affect our AREA agreement. He also wondered how we would determine who goes. Dr. Cushing stated that there is a process called "manifest hardship" which is an agreement between 2 superintendents that may give us the framework for sending students to the charter school. He further stated that we still need more information and that we will continue to gather information. He did state the cost does not include transportation. Ms. Anderson asked if the AREA agreement prohibits us from sending students to the charter school rather than PHS. Mr. Katkin replied that the agreement does prohibit us except for special education and parentally placed students. Dr. Cushing will investigate whether the manifest hardship will work.

PTA

Mrs. Moynahan reported there are currently 163 members. At last month's meeting there were a number of grants funded: a flagpole at RES, games for French and Spanish, One book one school, sounds of nature and the digital technology assembly. Mrs. Richardson said she and Mr. Pollet are meeting with the PTA officers once a month and that is working out well.

Rye Recreation

Mr. Schwartz stated the memo of understanding defining the role of the school and stipend for coordinating has been signed.

Mr. Grant thanked the Rye travel soccer league for the donation of new soccer nets for the school.

Communication

Mrs. Balboni has meetings scheduled with RES and RJH to attend staff meetings. She will attend the October 22nd meeting at RJH with Mrs. Moynahan and the November 2nd meeting at RES with Ms. Anderson.

Mrs. Richardson stated Holly Warden is working with a team on health wellness with committee members consisting of a student, family member and a staff representative. They are currently looking for a Board member to join the committee. Mrs. Moynahan stated she would join the group.

Curriculum

Mrs. Balboni stated the professional development day was successful, and that the staff was engaged and presenter was effective, making the day worthwhile.

Budget Committee

Mrs. Balboni stated that the meeting went well and that it was a continuation of their August meeting to go over, in more detail the over - and - under budgeted items. She stated that Mr. Grant presented to the Budget Committee and pointed to the fact that the smaller itemized items were clumped together and made it confusing. To clarify, the cost for the library renovation is \$275,000. Some on the Budget Committee believe the library reconstruction should have been placed as a warrant article, but did agree that it was our right to spend the money. Mr. Grant noted that the Board came before the Budget Committee in April and they voted unanimously to support the library construction. She further stated that she appreciated Mr. Grant's write up explaining where the money was being spent. If we know of any future budgeted projects the committee would like to be given a heads up. She sent them a link to the minutes on the Rye School Board website.

The following town and school meetings are scheduled as follows:

Town session next Thursday 8:30 to 4:00 with the backup session scheduled for November 18th.

Rye's session is scheduled for December 9th at 6:00 at RJH, with a back up work session scheduled on December 16th.

School budget hearing scheduled for Saturday January 13th at 6:30.

Town budget hearing scheduled for January 14th at 6:30.

Town Deliberative session scheduled for Saturday January 30th.

Rye Deliberative session scheduled for February 3rd at 7:00 with snow date of February 4th.

Mrs. Balboni suggested as it was not clear what was expected of her when joining a new committee, that when Board members switch the committees they are sitting on, that they give the incoming member a brief write up on their role and meeting dates.

Mr. Grant thanked Mr. Katkin for the information and thoughts that he brought to the budget committee meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Change in Integrated Arts Report Cards - Mrs. Richardson sent an overview to all Board Members. This proposal is being brought about because the unified arts teachers do not always have enough time to see their students before the first term ends. This proposal would have the unified arts teachers reporting in January and June with more room for comments. World language is not included in the proposed change. Mrs. Richardson stated all UA teachers are on board with the change. Mr. Grant said that Mrs. Walsh is currently working on summaries of what each class is focusing on for each grade and subject area and that this would

work well in conjunction with the new report card. Ms. Anderson suggested that there needs to be a summary of the curriculum during the marking period. Mrs. Balboni agrees with adding what they are working on so that everyone understands what they are being graded on. Mrs. Papoutsy stated she will meet with the team to coordinate this with the UA teachers. Mr. Schwartz asked if the modification of eliminating some of the questions being reported was intentional. Mrs. Papoutsy replied that some of the questions were redundant and that now it is more concise. Mr. Grant said that the old reporting method focused more on behavior and that the subject matter and content is more important in his eyes to understand how a student is doing. In language arts the discussion on the report card is not about behavior, but about the child's progress in that area.

Upon Dr. Cushing's recommendation, Mrs. Balboni made a motion, seconded by Mr. Schwartz, to approve changing the teacher workday originally scheduled for March 19, 2010 to May 28, 2010. Vote: Unanimously approved.

Dr. Cushing requested that, in response to the speech language pathologist's request for maternity leave that the Board consider overruling the policy on how the long-term substitute is paid. For the first 10 days the long term sub is paid a daily rate, then from day 11 to 20 she/he is paid at a daily rate comparable to Step 1 Bachelors and from day 21 on, the person will earn commensurate to his/her rate in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement. Due to the fact that the speech pathologist will be working 1.5 days per week, Dr. Cushing is requesting the Board allow the substitute speech pathologist to be paid starting day 1 at a daily rate at the appropriate step in accordance with the CBA, which would be a daily rate of \$322.37 plus benefits equaling approximately \$350-\$375.00 per day. Mrs. Moynahan made a motion to waive the policy and pay at the appropriate step in accordance with the CBA, seconded by Mrs. Balboni. Vote: Approved: Mrs. Balboni, Mrs. Moynahan, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Schwartz. Opposed: Ms. Anderson. Ms. Anderson stated she would have needed more time to review this before making a decision.

It was agreed to table Vicky Scally's request until next month's meeting.

SECRETARY'S REPORT *continued*:

On a motion by Mrs. Moynahan, and seconded by Mr. Schwartz, the public minutes of September 16, 2009 were unanimously approved as amended.

On a motion by Mr. Schwartz, and seconded by Mrs. Moynahan, the non-public minutes of September 16, 2009 were unanimously approved as amended.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION:

On a motion by Mrs. Moynahan, seconded by Mrs. Balboni, the School Board entered non-public session at 8:21 p.m. on a unanimous roll call vote and in accordance with RSA 91-A:4 to discuss negotiations.

PUBLIC SESSION:

The Board returned to public session on a unanimous vote at 9:45 p.m.

ADJOURN:

Mrs. Balboni proposed a motion, seconded by Mrs. Moynahan to adjourn at 9:45 p.m.

School Board Secretary