

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS  
MAY 10, 2011**

**School Board Members Present:**

Peter Mello  
Christopher Book  
Wayne Cooke  
Richard Courtelle  
Peter Fagan  
Collin Fingon  
Jamie Pemrick  
Kate Thomas  
Rob Towle  
Blake Bohlig

**Members Absent**

Hurley Cavacas, Jr.  
Erin Shimp

**Also Present:**

Superintendent Mary Moran  
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss  
Wil Cunningham  
Ellie McGarry  
Bill Olsen  
Jay Slenker  
Kristen Hubert  
Cathy Farman  
Pam Reed  
Ted Guilmette

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The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Mello noted the absence of Commissioners Cavacas and Shimp.

Motion by Fagan / Cooke to convene to executive session at 6:31 pm for the purpose of discussing contractual matters, the premature release of information regarding those subjects which would place the Board at a substantial disadvantage. Unanimously passed by those in attendance.

The Board came out of executive session at 7:15 pm.

Motion by Towle / Fagan to accept the minutes of the April 26, 2011 regular school board meeting. It was noted that Blake Bohlig should have been marked as absent from the meeting. Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

Written & Oral Communications - None

GMTI / YRBS Presentation - Blake Bohlig introduced the students present and said they have been working on the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The students took the survey results and analyzed them. They found domestic violence a large problem. The students gave a presentation about the survey, the analysis of RHS results, and the students' approach to have a dialogue with members of the school community. The web of assets was described and how it shows the opportunities the school offers. The students came up with an action plan and developed a two week long YES plan to address the issue. Megan Upjohn, a special educator at RHS and the Green Mountain Teen Institute advisor, said this was a year long project and the students have put in a lot of time. It is a difficult issue to talk about and she appreciates the students maturity and seriousness. She said it is hard to discuss this with peers as well as teachers.

**CALL TO ORDER**

**ROLL CALL**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**PUBLIC SESSION**

**MOTION: MINUTES  
04/26/11  
MEETING**

**WRITTEN & ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

**EDUCATION REPORT**

**GMTI / YRBS PRESENTATION**

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- How can schools be sure of the validity of the YRBS results? Ms. Upjohn said this is a big issue and the State does a series of checks and balances. She explained some of their methods. They notice trends throughout the year. The Departments of Health and Education are involved. She said given the tone of RHS students in taking the survey and hearing their peers talk about the results, she thinks students do take it seriously.
- Are the results presented to the teachers and the students? Ms. Upjohn said a large flier goes out statewide with results. Each school gets their own results. The point of this initiative is to get the students involved and make changes within their peer group. Ms. Moran said typically, the data is presented to the Board as a final report. This is a chance for the students to present the methodology and the work and a full analysis will be presented to the Board.

K-8 School Improvement Report - Mr. Bliss said this report focuses on grades K-8 school improvement efforts. Each of these schools received a small School Improvement Grant (SIG) and funds were used to enhance efforts already in place. Ms. Hubert reviewed the SIG funds at Northwest School and the changes that were made. She said it is important that changes be made which will not require ongoing funds. She complimented the Northwest School staff who have done a great job implementing the efforts and said they will continue their efforts.

Mr. Slenker reviewed the four tiers of Response to Intervention (RTI)

Tier 1 - Differentiated instruction in the classroom.

Tier 2 - Students working with a teacher on a specific set of skills identified by Aimsweb.

Tier 3 - A higher level of intervention with a literacy or math coach or tutor.

Tier 4 - Special education; specialized plan.

Mr. Slenker explained how students move through the tiers, as needed.

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- What is the decision point to move a student to a new level? How long are they in a tier? Ms. Hubert said those decisions are data-based. Each intervention is approximately 6-8 weeks. The governing body then reviews the information to see if the intervention is successful. The student might stay, move up a tier, or drop down a tier.
- How long does it take to move a student? Mr. Slenker said the decision is done through the progress monitoring. It is ongoing and the team will look at the child. There needs to be some time to allow the intervention to work.
- What is the difference between tiers ones and two? Mr. Cunningham said it varies depending on the needs of the students and the different schools. The higher the tier, the more intensive the intervention. At RMS, the student is with a teacher to work on the specific skill. They might meet two or four times a week. They use data based information to make the decisions.
- How many students are in the tiers? Mr. Slenker said tier two is a small group, perhaps 8-10 students. Tier three might include 3-5 students. Mr. Cunningham said they might have the same number of students but tier three might meet more frequently.

Mr. Slenker said part of school improvement has seen a big shift in grades K-6 to co-teaching. That is a tier one intervention. He reviewed some of the other tools being used and consistencies between the schools. He said next year, RIS will be redoing their schedule and changing the beginning of the day. The change will allow students who might need intervention to also be able to participate in band or chorus. They were not able to do both this year. Mr. Cunningham said at RMS, there were scheduling and programmatic changes this year. He will be reporting about those in the future. The SIG funds were used to help implement changes and he reviewed some of those. Professional development and the ability to contract with a middle school consultant have really helped. He reviewed those initiatives and some of the new ones coming up next year.

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- How will RIS find the time to make the scheduling changes? Mr. Slenker said it is being done with streamlining transportation.
- What are the plans at Northwest after the SIG funds run out? Mr. Bliss said the tier two grants are for one year only. Ms. Moran said the schools are making changes with professional development and materials in order to carry forward.
- What about the coaches? Mr. Cunningham said they are in negotiations with the middle school consultant. Mr. Bliss said this is a justifiable use of funds for SIG money. We get the most impact.
- Is there a way at the end of the school year to determine what made an impact? Mr. Slenker said within Aimsweb, there are benchmark assessments three times during the year. That will be a quantifiable way to look at student progress.
- Will we see results? A statistical presentation showing where you started and where you got to? Mr. Slenker said yes, in the future. Aimsweb is constantly evaluating and looking at the data. Mr. Mello said the Department of Education looks at progress monitoring and said it would be good for the Board to get the data.
- Who is doing the intervention sessions? Mr. Cunningham said it is part of the daily schedule. Teachers lead them.
- Students learn in different ways. If a way is identified, how is that brought into the classroom? Mr. Cunningham said at RMS, they just finished the first year of tutorial. One thing they found was it would be good to allow crossing teams, if appropriate. Perhaps there is a student is not learning from a particular teacher, another teacher's approach might make a difference for the student to learn better. Mr. Bliss said the information can be looked at school wide or one student at a time. With co-teaching, one of the first steps is knowing the students. How do they learn? Their strengths and weaknesses, etc. He said it takes a lot of work and expertise but the teachers do it.
- Commissioner Pemrick congratulated Ms. Hubert and the team at Northwest School. She said this year is her first year as a parent with a student in the school and she thinks they are doing a phenomenal job.

Howe Center Campus Report - Jamie Holt is the team leader. She introduced other team members and a student. She gave a brief overview of the program, started in 1989. There are three full time teachers, one paraprofessional and 40 students. She said the program is an educational alternative for students who academically, behaviorally or socially need another way to experience school. Howe Center allows

students to combine learning with occupation and job skills. Each student's work is highly specialized. Ms. Holt and her team gave a presentation of how the program works for the students. Students do community service and have a school-to-work program. The successes of the program were reviewed. One of the students spoke about her success at Howe Center and said before coming to Howe, she did not think she would graduate from high school. She is now planning to go to college. Including this year, the Howe Center Campus has graduated 393 students graduates since 1989. Some Board members complimented the staff and said they have heard of many success stories. Mr. Mello thanked Ms. Holt for bringing the Howe Center campus to the forefront of the board's attention.

PERSONNEL

Motion by Thomas / Cooke to approve the Licensed and Non-licensed section of the Personnel Memorandum No. 445 dated May 6, 2011, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

MOTION:  
PERSONNEL  
MEMO #445

The appointments and transfers were reviewed by Superintendent Moran. They are attached.

Motion passed by all those in attendance.

BUSINESS  
REPORT

Business Report - None

SUPERIN-  
PENDENT'S  
REPORT

#### Announcements

ANNOUNCE-  
MENTS

- Raiders of the Arts was distributed. The book is published in-house. Ms. Moran congratulated the editor, Rachel Ray and the advisors.
- Congratulations to Erin Shimp for receiving her Masters in Education from College of St. Joseph's this past weekend.
- Northeast kindergarten classes visited Boardman Hill Farms today. May 14 is the annual Spring Spruce-up Day. Mrs. Stoutes class will present the musical "Bugz" on May 18 for parents. Second graders will have a visit from the "Pond Lady" from Hildene next week. They will use their recently refurbished pond to full advantage during this visit.
- On May 20, Northeast and Northwest second graders will have their third annual get-together at Giorgetti Park. A combination field day and picnic, it is the first occasion these students will have to meet their new classmates for the 2011-2012 school year.
- RIS celebrated Teacher Appreciation Week with a host of events. Last Tuesday students brought in yellow stars with statements of appreciation for staff members. This was coordinated by the PTC. Mrs. Ramey and Mr. Dechen's 5th grade classes presented autobiographies through a living "wax museum" presentation. Students dressed in costume and presented information about their subject.
- At RMS, Progress Reports for Term Four will be sent to parents no later than May 12. On May 12, there will be the 15th annual RMS Coffeehouse. At this evening event, students read original literary works in a coffeehouse atmosphere. On May 17 and 18, there will be a School Fair, which will highlight the terrific work students have completed throughout the year. At 7 p.m. the same evening, there will be the annual spring music concerts.
- The RHS Evening of the Arts is on May 11 throughout the building.

- On April 21, as part of the YRBS student analysis project by GMTI and the RHS Student Senate, sophomores saw a play focused on dating violence prevention called The Yellow Dress. The play was developed and produced by a non-profit organization that uses theater and interactive trainings to teach audiences of all ages about dating violence, harassment and respect. The play helped students recognize the different types of dating violence, how to identify the early warning signs, and where to seek help if they or a friend are involved in a violent relationship.
- Current National Honor Society members (seniors) presented checks in the amount of \$1,000 each from money that they raised this year to the Rutland Boys' and Girls' Club and to the Rutland County Humane Society. At the NHS induction, held May 1, the main speaker was Tim Gilbert who gave an excellent speech on scholarship, leadership, service and character.
- The RHS Tri-M Music Honor Society held an Open Mic Night and Silent Auction on April 23. The event raised over \$300 for the United Way of Rutland County. RHS Choir enjoyed an ice cream party on April 22 as a reward for being the school's top fundraisers for "Pennies for Patients." The Encore Theatre's Spring Talent Show was in April and was great.
- At the Special Olympics Unified Sports Basketball tournament held at Castleton State College on May 6, the Rutland High teams placed first and second in Division 1. The teams enjoyed the "March of the Champions" through the halls of the high school. These groups have been training under the direction of Jason Cassarino, Alison Remy, Carolyn Ravenna, Sara Gregory, Sherry Greeno, Cherie Smith, MeriBeth Stratton, and Steve Marro.
- The following RHS students were among the 432 musicians who performed in the Vermont All State Music Festival in St. Albans on May 7: Orchestra – Garrit Anderson, Katie McCormack. Band – Nick Coccia, Dylan Conboy, Samantha Hart. Chorus – Taylor Ampatiellos, Julia Stacom. Conductors for the Festival included St. Albans native Col. Michael Colburn, Director of the "President's Own" Marine Corps Band in Washington, D.C. Col. Colburn began study on his instrument under the direction of former Rutland Music Teacher Vicki Matteson.
- The RHS Band recently participated in the annual Rutland Loyalty Day Parade and received the "best marching band" award.
- There will be an open house of the new site for Buildings and Grounds and Transportation on May 19 from 10 am - noon.
- Ms. Moran read a letter read from a recently retired teacher, Bizit Stevens, from Northwest School directed to Ms. Hubert. The letter complimented the staff.

Legislative Report - Ms. Moran said the summary of the session will be available later in the week. S. 35 was sent to a summer study. Our legislative delegation is attentive to the unintended consequences. Ms. Moran said the Superintendent's Association is actively following it and she and Mr. Amons will follow up and take action as necessary. Mr. Fagan said the legislature lifted the votes on caps of pre-K. This will place more pressure on the education fund.

Policy Committee - Mr. Bliss reviewed policies for second reading.

Motion by Towle / Fingon to approve the following policies for second reading:

- #6420 - Leaves of Absence

LEGISLA-  
TIVE  
REPORT

COMM.  
REPORTS

POLICY  
COMM.

MOTION:  
APPROVE  
POLICIES  
FOR  
SECOND  
READING

- #7211 - Truancy
  - #7231 - Payment of Tuition
  - #7233 - Non Resident Students
- Motion passed by all those in attendance.

**POLICIES  
FOR  
SECOND  
READING,  
cont.**

**New Business**

Blake Bohlig said Caroline Corsones has been elected to be the next student representative to the Board.

**NEW  
BUSINESS**

**Old Business**

Watkins Building Plans - Mr. Mello summarized the results of the meeting with the Board of Alderman regarding Watkins. He said the consensus among most of the Aldermen who spoke up was that they trust the School Board members' judgments and thought the School Board was doing diligence with the investigation. The Aldermen want to remain informed. The liaison is David Wallstrom and he is very intent on being connected to what the School Board is doing and reporting back to the Aldermen. Mr. Mello referred the issue back to the building committee for a final research of all alternatives. They should work with John Rice and other resources and report back to the School Board with a specific recommendation.

**NEW  
STUDENT  
REP TO  
BOARD**

**OLD  
BUSINESS**

**WATKINS  
BUILDING  
PLANS**

There were questions and discussion from Board members:

- Should we speak with a commercial property realtor and actually list it? Mr. Mello said that is something the building committee will consider.
- Legislator Herb Font-Russell has expressed concern about the building possibly being destroyed. Both Dana and Watkins are on the Historic Registry. Ms. Moran said he will be invited in to the discussion and to the building committee meeting. There will be a community meeting held at the Watkins building. Neighbors will be invited.
- Mr. Towle commended the building committee for all their work on this issue. He said there might be some people who think the decision was arrived at quickly and without thought but that is not the case.
- Mr. Fagan asked fir a complete financial analysis -- what it would cost to take down, what it could sell for on the open market, etc. If it sells, how would that impact education funding.

Ms. Moran said the school department controls school buildings. If we sell or transfer an asset, the school board needs to approve it. Per our charter, the Alderboard needs to approve it. The proceeds go into the school fund. Ms. Moran said there is a financial analysis and it will be sent to Board members who would like it.

Mr. Mello said he spoke with the president of the REA and there will be a level three hearing after the next Board meeting. It will be scheduled for 7:30 in executive session on May 24.

**REA  
HEARING  
NEXT  
MEETING**

**ADJOURN**

Motion by Towle / Cooke to adjourn at 8:25 pm. Passed.

Respectfully submitted

Janet Mondlak  
Recording Secretary