

**Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union  
Board of School Directors  
Regular Meeting**

February 23, 2009

7:00PM - Middletown Springs Elementary School

**Official Minutes**

**Present:**

Board Members – Vice Chair Mary Jo Teetor (M), Tammy Holcomb(M), Karen Stomski(M), Pat Davenport(M), Mike Nagar(M), Steve Letendre(M), Clerk Kimberly Mathewson(M), Charity Downs(M), Helen Mango(M), Jodi Comeau(M), and Thomas Gallagher, Superintendent.

Administrators - Michelle Folger, Director of Curriculum; Bonnie Lenihan, Director of Student Support Services; and Darren McIntyre, Assistant Special Education Coordinator.

Guest Speakers - Ray Haynes, Cindy Senecal and Chris McCarthy (Voc. Rehab and VABIR Representatives).

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The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair, Mary Jo Teetor at 7:09 PM.

Presentation (Voc Rehab and VABIR)- Ray Haynes and Cindy Senecal gave an overview of what Voc Rehab is, what services it offers and how it is funded. One of the services offered is transition for youth from school to work. The program serves students transitioning from a school setting to work setting (serving individuals who qualify under Act 504 from age 16 to death, and covering every disability). The program assists in finding employment opportunities that are best suited for the individual's interests, talents, and abilities. Counseling and training is ongoing to ensure a successful transition. Voc Rehab works collaboratively with VABIR. Chris McCarthy informed the board that VABIR also assists in transition from school to work; they work primarily with employers to find placements and to ensure a positive employment situation for both employer and employee. Work begins with sophomores through seniors (with seniors receiving priority) at the high schools in the area to provide counseling and education to ready individuals for employment. The combined effort of these two organizations has been very successful. They are currently serving our school districts as well as many others. The board was provided with handouts from both organizations.

The board thanked the speakers for their informative presentation.

**Consent Agenda:**

Approval of Minutes: January 26 (regular and continuation) and February 2 (Special).

\*Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Karen Stomski to accept the minutes. Discussion followed.

January 26th (Regular) - no changes.

January 26<sup>th</sup> (Continuation) - change date (repeated February 3<sup>rd</sup>) to February 4<sup>th</sup>. No further

changes.

February 2<sup>nd</sup> (Special) - modify language to read “Mike Nagar moved the board into executive session for the purpose of ...”

\*Motion to approve the minutes, with amendments, carried.

Report of the Superintendent: Written report included in board packets. Superintendent Gallagher also reported the RSWSU Finance Committee had met and discussed the final assessment figures (from FY08) would be modified to reflect the positive fund balance. The board will need to determine the assessment method of calculation for this purpose.

Superintendent Gallagher asked that each local board consider, at individual board levels, and report back to the RSWSU at the March meeting.

Superintendent Gallagher is arranging for a Fast ForWord presentation for the board at the March meeting in Poultney.

There were no questions for Superintendent Gallagher.

Business Manager’s Report: Written report included in board packets. Mr. Milazzo was not present; Superintendent Gallagher provided the board with handouts from the Business Manager.

Report of the Director of Student Support Services: Written report included in board packets. Mrs. Lenihan also reported that Darren McIntyre had done a nice job presenting information to the Special Educators to enhance their knowledge of transition plans. Mrs. Lenihan reported that she had recently amended the IDEIA-B Grant (due to carryover funding); and has room to amend further if needed later in the year. The recent amendments were done upon receiving input from all Administrators. Mrs. Lenihan provided further explanation on #4 of her written report.

There were no questions for Mrs. Lenihan.

Report of Curriculum Director: Written report handed out prior to the meeting. A question was asked regarding the reading recovery training. Mrs. Folger explained that Reading Recovery training was expensive, and we don’t have the numbers to warrant continuation in the Southern Vermont area. The training is currently being done in Middlebury. Superintendent Gallagher added that the training is very labor intensive and that Vermont stopped putting money into the program in general. There were no further questions of Mrs. Folger.

\*Motion by Helen Mango, seconded by Kimberly Mathewson to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried.

**General Public Comments:** None.

**Old Business:**

Scanning and Shredding: No new information available for this meeting.

Approve the Substitute List: One board member raised concern that the motion made by a board member (at the January meeting) to approve the substitute list, may have been a conflict of interest (since the person is also a substitute named on the list). Discussion ensued.

\*Motion made by Tammy Holcomb, seconded by Charity Downs to rescind the action of the

board at the January meeting regarding approval of the substitute list. Motion carried.

\*Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Karen Stomski to approve the substitute list. Motion carried.

### **New Business:**

#### **Report of Committees:**

**Systems Management Committee:** Helen Mango explained the preferred was to have a policy brought before both the local boards and RSWSU board for 1<sup>st</sup> reading at the same time. If there are changes at any level, the policy will be returned to the Systems Management Committee for review. The Committee will present the proposed change(s) to the full RSWSU board to determine if the proposed change(s) are to be made to the RSWSU policy; as well as to inform all board members of the proposed change to allow them opportunity to take information back to local level for consideration. Some catch up needs to occur - local boards need to be researching their policies to determine those that have been adopted at the RSWSU level, which need to be adopted at the local level; as well as to ensure that all boards have the most recently approved policies across the entire SU. Helen further explained that each local board may make changes to SU policies. When that is done, the local policy will be a sub policy of the SU and will be noted as such. The goal is to have one master policy manual for the entire SU (which contains uniform policies for all, and contains sub policies and/or unique policies for individual boards). Central Office is currently working on a master list for local boards listing policies adopted by the SU board. This list may be used to guide local boards through their own policies to assist with updating as needed. Additionally, local boards should be reviewing their current policy manuals to identify policies which may have been replaced by newer policies, and note same for the record. Both Helen and the Superintendent stressed the importance for boards to cross reference other policies and to note whether a newer policy replaces or incorporates older policies, etc.

Discussion ensued.

The next Systems Management Committee meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2009 at 4:00 PM at Central Office.

There may be new committee members at that time. Anyone having a Systems Management Committee binder please turn it back into CO. Binders are to be updated, and then kept at CO for Committee Members' use.

**Finance Committee Meeting:** The Finance Committee met Thursday of last week. Superintendent Gallagher reported the committee worked on a contract issue (Even Start Instructor); further research is needed. The Committee also reviewed the Superintendent's Evaluation of the Business Manager.

**Human Resources Committee:** No meeting held.

Board Members were reminded that as part of their re-organization (March meetings), they should include appointment of committee representatives.

### **Approve Warrants:**

Warrant #47, in the amount of \$112,948.62, dated 1/16/09 - TALX penalty expense, board requests details.

Warrant #48, in the amount of \$17,073.16, dated 1/30/09

Warrant #49 Voided

Warrant #50, in the amount of \$12,403.28, dated 2/13/09

**Policies:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: None.

1<sup>st</sup> Reading: None (pending 1<sup>st</sup> reading at several local board levels)

Other policies:

Substitute Teacher Policy - The Superintendent asked the board to consider authorizing the Superintendent to approve new substitutes in between board meetings. He explained that substitutes are added to the list sometimes daily, and in order to expedite substitutes working in our schools, and to ensure adequate coverage, he suggests that the board authorize the Superintendent to approve new substitutes who are added to the list in between board meetings. The board would still officially approve at each regular board meeting. Discussion ensued.

\*Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Kimberly Mathewson to authorize the Superintendent to approve substitutes in between board meetings. Motion carried.

Policy on Policy: The Superintendent had revised the policy based on local board recommendations. The revised policy was included in the board packet for review. It will come to each local board and to the SU board for approval at the next meeting.

Public Participation at Board Meetings: The Superintendent reiterated that each board should review and consider this policy carefully before approving. Consideration should be given to individual board and community cultures. Each board and community has distinct qualities; each board should consider the language of this policy and determine whether or not to modify it to best suit their individual community. The Superintendent referenced the General Public Comments section of the agendas as an example; the intent of this section is to take information provided under consideration, and to take action at a future meeting if needed. The intent of reserving action to a future meeting is to allow the boards adequate time to research and gather data to assist them in reaching a decision. One board member stated that as representatives of their community, they owed the community answers to their questions. She felt that if an answer could be given immediately, it should be, in order to best serve the community. If, however, the board required further time or information in order to answer a question, or make a decision, they should state such. Answers and decisions should be done in a manner which allows ample time for consideration/deliberation by the board, while providing as timely an answer to the community as possible.

The Superintendent stressed the importance of planning the meetings in advance. The Superintendent and/or Board Chair/Vice Chair meet in advance of the meetings to review the agenda. This preparation allows for a smoother meeting. Some boards may wish to include two sections for General Public Comments, one early in the meeting, and one near the end.

**Action on Employment Contracts:**

**New Hires:**

Catherine Oliverio- Reading Evaluator (PHS) funded by Title I  
David Capman- Before School Staff (PHS) funded by 21<sup>st</sup> C  
Michele Harmon – Before School Staff (PHS) funded by 21<sup>st</sup> C  
Jean Ross – Before School Staff (PHS) funded by 21<sup>st</sup> C  
Karie Hawthorne – Before School Staff (PHS) funded by 21<sup>st</sup> C  
Sharon Teer- Before School Supervisor (PHS) funded by 21<sup>st</sup> C  
Maureen Capman- Before School Coordinator (PHS) funded by 21<sup>st</sup> C  
Brittany Petty – EEE Instructional (1:1) Assistant  
Karen Powers- Before School Coordinator (PHS) funded by 21<sup>st</sup> C  
Kendra Grenier- Before School Coordinator (PHS) funded by 21<sup>st</sup> C

Discussion regarding how to handle Volunteers is still under consideration. One board member questioned whether the Before School Program employees (noted above) were employed by RSWSU or PHS. It was explained that since the funding source was 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant, and the Grant flowed through the RSWSU, they were considered RSWSU employees. This is the reason these employees are presented to the RSWSU Board for approval. Discussion ensued regarding one After School Program Volunteer. It was agreed by consensus that since the position was a volunteer position, it should be presented to the Poultney School Board even though it is facilitated by 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant.

Resignations: None  
Terminations: None  
Leave of Absences: None

\*Motion made by Karen Stomski, seconded by Helen Mango to approve the new hires as listed. Motion carried.

**Other Lawful Business:**

Discussion regarding which board member's terms were up and who was running or re-running for a position.

Superintendent Gallagher asked the board members to consider how they wished to elect a new board chair. He reminded them of the difficulties they faced over the past year. He suggested that they give consideration to which they (as a whole board) could get behind and support.

**Next meeting:** March 23, 2009 7:00 PM at Poultney High School (regular and re-organizational). Fast ForWord demonstration to be provided.

**Adjourn:**

\*Motion by Helen Mango, seconded by Karen Stomski to adjourn at 8:40 PM. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Dente  
RSWSU Board Recording Secretary