

Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union
Board of School Directors (Regular) Board Meeting
November 23, 2009 7:00PM at Poultney High School

Official Minutes

Board Members Present: Kimberly Mathewson, Chair (M); Tammy Holcomb, Vice Chair (M); Mary Jo Teetor, Clerk (M); Russ North (M); Karen Stomski (M); Jim Gilmour (M); Mike Nagar (M); Helen Mango (M); Kimberly Stewart (M); Cindy Taylor-Patch (M); Pat Davenport (M); Tracee Oakman Rupe (A); Jodi Comeau (M).

Administrators Present: Joan Paustian, Superintendent; Louis Milazzo, Business Manager; Bonnie Lenihan, Director of Student Support Services; Darren McIntyre, Assistant Special Education Coordinator; Jean Oakman, Principal PHS.

Others Present: Kathryn Fredericks, Tracy Tinsley, Bob Bruttomesso.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Kimberly Mathewson at 7:00PM.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of minutes: October 26, 2009. **Motion made to approve the minutes of October 26, 2009 by Mary Jo Teetor, seconded by Karen Stomski.** Revise NAPE to NAEP. **Motion to approve minutes as amended carried.**

Report of the Superintendent: Written report included in board packet. Dr. Paustian reported that Mrs. Lenihan has submitted an extensive report in this board packet at her request. The report provides much data regarding the Service Plan. Much detail goes into this process. The report is provided for those board members who are interested in the process.

Dr. Paustian reported that she had opportunity to read the Governance Study (2006) as requested.

The Southwest Superintendent's Association met with state legislators recently. Local legislators were well represented and dialogue occurred regarding issues impacting schools and maximizing resources.

Much work continues at Central Office ranging from contractual issues, negotiations, legal issues etc.

November 30, 2009 will be the first meeting of the Curriculum Coordinating Council. Each school is represented, with Kristen Caliguiri taking lead.

Dr. Paustian was notified by Kelly Services that the current rate of pay for instructional assistants, when calculated at the half day rate, is not compliant with the minimum wage (\$8.06/hour) per the Vermont Department of Labor. The Superintendent recommends increasing the rate of pay for instructional assistants to \$65 per day in order to be compliant with the minimum wage regulations.

The Superintendent handed out a summary of the essential characteristics of schools that are closing the achievement gap as presented in *Roots of Success*.

Motion made by Mary Jo Teetor, seconded by Helen Mango to raise the substitute rate of pay to \$65 per day for instructional assistant substitutes (both Kelly Services substitutes and locally paid substitutes). Discussion ensued. **Motion carried.**

Report of the Business Manager: Mr. Milazzo reported that all local boards have now approved the renewal of fiscal auditing services (for the next three years) with Angolano & Company; and is seeking approval from the RSWSU Board under old business.

FY08 Surplus has been applied to the FY10 Assessments. Discussion regarding the FY09 Surplus allocation needs to occur under new business.

Report of Director of Student Support Services: Written report included in board packet. Mrs. Lenihan reported that the Service Plan has been submitted and approved by the state. Mrs. Lenihan offered to answer any questions from the board regarding her report. Mrs. Lenihan reported that the Medicaid reimbursement rates have been reduced and this will have a financial impact on local districts as they often plan to offset other budget items with these funding sources. The total known impact to the entire Supervisory Union could be as high as \$45,000. Districts should adjust their thinking with this knowledge during budget development. Mrs. Lenihan explained the difference between IQ testing and Achievement testing in response to a question posed.

Report of Director of Educational Advancement: Written report included in board packet. 21st Century annual report was discussed. Dr. Paustian provided details regarding the status of Technology Evaluation. There is approximately \$50,000 set aside to use for technology; of which, approximately \$15,000 is for technology consultation with the remainder set aside for technology equipment (hardware and software) and for professional development. Consultants are to evaluate and address needs across the supervisory union. Dr. Paustian and Tom Gallagher recently met with two consultants who have the ability to review the current plan and who can guide the RSWSU in terms of creating a coordinated strategic plan for technology which will address technology curriculum integration, as well as maximizing resources across the supervisory union. Dr. Paustian emphasized that the individuals/consultants would not create the plan, that process would be the RSWSU's responsibility. The consultants will provide guidance and advice. Discussion ensued. The Curriculum Coordinating Council will be working with the consultants and there may be need to establish a separate Technology Team as well.

Motion made by Tammy Holcomb, seconded by Helen Mango to approve reports as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of Warrants:

Motion made by Helen Mango to approve warrants #69 in the amount of \$37,387.54, dated 10/23/09 and #70 in the amount of \$41,962.79 dated 11/6/09, seconded by Mary Jo Teetor. Discussion regarding the cost of Sovernet contract ensued. The contract with Sovernet ends September 2010, which currently costs \$1,250 per month. Comcast will provide the service at a significantly decreased cost. **Motion carried.**

General Public Comments:

Bob Bruttomesso inquired regarding the position of Director of Educational Advancement and the process for hiring. Mr. Bruttomesso also made comments regarding the hiring process for the Superintendent and the elimination of two positions at Central Office. Tammy Holcomb responded by clarifying that the RSWSU board hired the Superintendent and the Director of Educational Advancement. The board hired Mr. Gallagher to stay on in FY10 as the Director of Educational Advancement, as well as to advise Dr. Paustian as needed. Currently this position is primarily overseeing grants across the supervisory union. The position of Director of Educational Advancement for FY11 has not yet been approved or advertised. The positions of Curriculum Director and 21st

Century Grant Coordinator were eliminated in FY10. It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to ensure curriculum is adequately addressed.

In answer to a question posed regarding grant writing, Superintendent Paustian explained that the Consolidated Federal Grants are not competitive grants; funding comes to all supervisory unions in the state of Vermont from federal dollars and is calculated dependent upon the poverty level. Principals provide input regarding spending of CFP monies for each of their schools. Proposal(s) are submitted to the state for approval; once the state approves the strategies for spending; funding is received on a pre-determined schedule. IDEA-B Grants are received for all schools at the supervisory union level, and funding is based on the Service Plan. It is comprised of federal dollars. ARRA funds are also being overseen by Mr. Gallagher at this time.

This is very different from competitive grants such as 21st Century Grant, Hills and Hollows, J. Bowse, etc. Currently Tom Gallagher and Susan McKelvie have been reviewing and researching the requirements of the 21st Century Grant. Research shows that the 21st Century Grant requires someone to work approximately 30 hours per week doing fundraising/grant writing and directly supervising all after school programs. This is a competitive grant. Competitive grants are not as available as in the past due to the economy. Since competitive grants are not as available, it was determined a grant writer was not needed at this time. Mr. Gallagher is currently overseeing the 21st Century Grant as well as all other grants which flow through the RSWSU.

Tracee Oakman Rupe inquired regarding curriculum and whether or not Tom Gallagher was working on curriculum as Director of Educational Advancement, who reports to the Superintendent. Dr. Paustian explained that Tom Gallagher was not currently working on curriculum. The Superintendent is working with the Curriculum Coordinating Council and is responsible for the curriculum. The Curriculum Coordinating Council and Administrators have been working on policies and procedures this year to date.

Bob Bruttomesso inquired regarding the new Evaluation Model (special education) where evaluations are being conducted independently and objectively. He questioned the plan for this model since the (special education) student count was going down. Evaluations are done on three year cycles; what happens when no evaluations are being conducted? Mrs. Lenihan explained that the current model was for the evaluator to complete the achievement testing/evaluations and provide input to the IEP Teams. Although evaluations are completed on a three year cycle, they are staggered so that not all special education students are requiring an evaluation in the same year; this is an on-going cycle. When no evaluations are being done, the evaluator provides building based mentoring and support to all special educators across the supervisory union. Mrs. Lenihan explained that the current position is funded through the ARRA Grant; and will likely eventually decrease due to the decrease in student count.

Old Business:

RSWSU Teacher Salary and Benefits: Currently the proposal has been review by Attorney Zawistoski and will be returned to the committee for further work (at the attorney's suggestion) before it will be presented to the board for consideration.

Approve renewal (3year) of fiscal audit contract: Motion made by Tammy Holcomb, seconded by Mary Jo Teetor to approve the renewal of the fiscal auditing contract with Angolano & Company for a three year term for the Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union and each member district. Motion carried.

New Business:

Human Resource Committee Report: Mike Nagar reported that the evaluation forms have been sent out and are due back to him by November 28, 2009. The Committee will review and meet with the

Superintendent. Discussion ensued. The next meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2009 at 6:30PM at Middletown Springs Elementary School (or Wells Village School if MSES is unavailable).

Systems Management Committee Report: Helen Mango reported that a policy book containing all recently adopted RSWSU policies will be available to all schools and on-line very soon. The next step for the committee is to set goals. Individual boards should review any "old" policies to determine if they are in need of updating or if they can be put to rest. Board action to put an outdated policy to rest is highly recommended. The next committee meeting is scheduled for December 10, 2009 at 3:00PM at Central Office.

Finance Committee Report: Tammy Holcomb reported that the committee has been working on FY11 budget preparation. They may meet November 30, 2009 if the RSWSU budget does not pass this evening. They will be meeting in January to set goals, and discuss the assessment model. Date for the January meeting is to be determined.

Approval of Substitute List: **Motion made by Karen Stomski, seconded by Helen Mango to approve the Substitute List as presented. Motion carried.**

Snow Shoveling at Central Office: Several options are being researched. The board was informed of the need to hire someone who is insured. No action needed at this time.

EEE Rent Increase: The Poultney School District has been charging the RSWSU \$350.00 per month for rent of classroom space for a long period of time with no increase. Due to the recent relocation to the larger space at Poultney Elementary School, and associated maintenance and support costs, it is suggested that the rate be increased to \$7,500 per year. The increased amount has not been placed in the proposed FY11 budget. Discussion ensued. **It was agreed by consensus of the board to increase the rate to \$7,500 per year beginning FY11.**

FY09 Surplus Allocation: **Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Tammy Holcomb to apply the FY09 Surplus toward the FY10 4th quarter Assessment.** Discussion ensued. **Motion carried.**

The Chair called for a short break at 8:25PM; meeting resumed at 8:35PM.

Presentation – Current Realities: Dr. Paustian provided the board with an A/V presentation from the Department of Education for consideration. Brief discussion followed.

FY11 Budget Approval: Mr. Milazzo presented the proposed FY11 budget to the board, reviewing it section by section. Mr. Milazzo answered several questions from the board and audience. Discussion ensued. Some amendments were made which included the increase to the EEE rent. **Motion made by Jim Gilmour, seconded by Jodi Comeau to approve the FY11 budget as amended in the amount of \$946,865.51 (less than 1/4 of one percent increase over FY10).** Discussion regarding the Ira assessment ensued. **Motion carried.**

The board discussed the assessment model; and possible revision to account for services not being consumed by some local school districts. The Finance Committee will review/research the matter in January 2010. Changes, if any, will not be made to the assessment model until FY12 in order that the approved FY11 RSWSU budget may stand and local boards may continue with the FY11 budget approval process.

Policies:

Helen Mango reported that policies b, d, e, and f need to return to the Systems Management Committee and a, c, g, h, i, j and k are ready for SU board approval this evening. **Motion made by Kimberly**

Mathewson, seconded by Tammy Holcomb to adopt policies: Driver Education, School-Community Relations, Substitute Teachers, Volunteer and Work Study Students, Alcohol and Drug Free Work Place, AIDS or HIV, and Student Records. Motion carried.

Dr. Paustian notified the board of a slight change requested by the Middletown Springs Board to Policy G-1B. The change does not affect the policy's intent, and is not substantial. **The board agreed by consensus to make the change unless there were strong objections by administrators.**

Personnel Contract action: None

Set Next Meeting: By consensus, the board agreed no December meeting was needed, unless something unexpected came up. The next meeting will be held January 25, 2010 at Middletown Springs Elementary School.

Executive Session: Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Tammy Holcomb to move the board into executive session at 10:22PM for personnel/contractual issues. Motion carried.

The recording secretary was excused.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Dente
RSWSU Recording Secretary.