

RUTLAND SOUTHWEST SUPERVISORY UNION

April 28, 2008

7:00 P.M.

Middletown Springs Elementary School

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Present: Clarence Hayes, Chair; Karen Stomski, Steve Letendre, Helen Mango, Russ North, Charity Downs, Tammy Holcomb, Kimberly Mathewson, Francene Cone, (arriving approximately 7:25 P.M. were): Mary Jo Teetor, Al Jackson, Tracee Oakman Rupe, Mike Nagar and Cheryl Chedester.

Others Present: Brian Hampl, Darren McIntyre, Jay Niles, Michelle Folger and Bonnie Lenihan. Colleen Nagar arrived at approximately 7:48 PM.

Chair Clarence Haynes called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM with nine members present.

Approval of Unofficial Minutes of March 24, 2008 (Regular), March 31, 2008 (Continuation of March 24), March 31, 2008 (Continuation- post executive session), March 4, 2008 (Continuation), and April 8, 2008 (Special): Hearing no objections, the Chair began with approval of the unofficial minutes (until the other members arrived), before starting the presentation.

Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Russ North to approve the minutes with amendments. Motion carried.

Report of the Business Manager: Business Manager, Brian Hampl gave a brief verbal report. Mr. Hampl reported that all 4th Quarter Assessments had been sent to the member schools; SDE 1.1, and EPSDT reports were completed and with the state for processing.

The Chair, hearing no objections; declared the Report of the Business Manager was accepted as given.

Presentation: At this time Mr. Jay Niles began his presentation on NECAP and VCAT by introducing himself and explaining his role in the district was to work with the Administrators and Teachers in analyzing the data that is obtained by local testing, state testing and New England Common Assessment Program. Mr. Niles gave a brief overview and summary and explained the information provided to the board in the board packets. The purpose of analyzing the data is to determine how we change instruction as a result of the data we have about students; it is not meant to evaluate students, nor is it meant to evaluate teachers or Principals or anyone else. What it is meant to do is to determine how we change instruction. Instruction does need to change based on the data we have. How do we use the data to improve what we are doing.

A brief overview of the K-6 assessment program was provided.

Mr. Niles focused on the following areas:

- A summary of the NECAP report (using one grade level).
- Mr. Niles will focus on how the SU compares to the state data. (On a local level, each board could compare data to the SU and to the state.)
- VCAT Assessment tool compares all data (local assessments, and state assessments) in a comprehensive report that is an extremely valuable tool.

Mr. Niles gave a detailed report, answering questions as he went along. He offered to present to each local board to discuss in detail the results of the individual schools' assessments.

The Board thanked Mr. Niles for his presentation.

Itinerant Salary and Benefits/Dental Eye Reimbursement: The Chair recognized Tracey Tinsley, Itinerant Physical Education Teacher, and Sheri Kinney, EEE Teacher. Each teacher addressed the Board regarding Salary and Benefits (Tracey Tinsley), and Dental/Eye Reimbursement (Sheri Kinney).

Ms. Tinsley expressed concern regarding the language which appears on her 06-07 employment contract regarding salary and benefits. According to Ms. Tinsley (and Ms. Kinney) she has always been afforded the same benefits as those of the Poultney Teachers (as a Grandfathered Itinerant) and she questioned why and when this changed.

(The benefits being questioned/discussed are: Dental/Eye of \$425.00 (prorated per FTE); No TSA Match, No Early Retirement, and No Sick Leave buy out upon retirement).

It was reported that the Business Office has made the distinction of benefits, as noted on the Itinerant contracts, for more than eighteen years. It was noted that the wording on Itinerant contract was changed to read "benefits are **comparable** to Poultney Teachers" during the tenure of Superintendent Lloyd Kelley (tenure ending 89-90); and had been interpreted at the Business Office from that point forward as "not equal to", unless approved by the RSWSU Board. It has been the understanding of the Business Office all along that the Itinerant Teachers did not automatically receive changed or new benefits (when they changed in the Poultney Master Agreement); and only received them when or if the RSWSU Board approved them. The "Grandfathered" Itinerants have their salaries calculated based on the average of the salary guides of all schools (including Poultney); whereas, all other Itinerant Teachers' salaries are calculated based on the percentage of time worked in the schools they serve (not including Poultney). It was explained that the information regarding the Itinerant's benefits had been relayed verbally from former Business Managers to Business Office staff. Upon the arrival of the current Business Manager, it was determined that the language should be spelled out on the employment contracts for clarity purposes. The language appeared on the contracts beginning with the 06-07 year.

Ms. Tinsley and Ms. Kinney, who apparently had not been aware of the different benefits, interpreted the addition of the language on their employment contracts as a change, or that benefits had been taken away from them. The Business Office's standpoint is that they had never been afforded the benefits to begin with; it was only that the language was spelled out on the employment contracts for the first time in the 06-07 & 07-08 year.

Both Ms. Tinsley and Ms. Kinney confirmed that no language regarding benefits (with the exception of "comparable to") had been included on their employment contracts until the 06-07 & 07-08 school year.

Ms. Kinney had formally requested an increase of her Dental/Eye Benefits from \$425.00 per year to \$470.00. Discussion ensued.

Motion made by Charity Downs, seconded by Helen Mango to increase the Dental/Eye Reimbursement for Sheri Kinney and Tracey Tinsley to \$470.00 per year (prorated based upon FTE) beginning with the 08-09 school year. The Human Resource Committee will research the Itinerant benefit matter, and shall report their findings to the full board at the May 2008 meeting.

Motion carried.

The Chair called for a short break at 8:50 PM. The Meeting was called back to order by the Chair at 9:09 PM.

Report of Director of Student Support Services: Mrs. Lenihan reported (in written report) a requirement for licensing the EEE program (required since 1995). It was not completed previously as it had been determined by two former Superintendents to be unnecessary as the program was housed in an existing school, and the licensing process was lengthy. Now that we were moving into the STARS Accreditation Process, once we have the EEE Program properly licensed, we would be at a disadvantage; in order to maximize our points going into the STARS Accreditation Process we would really have to have been licensed for five years. The requirement for entering the STARS program is a minimum of three stars; the goal is to be a four star rating. Mrs. Lenihan is in the process of completing the licensing process. Licenses must be on file by July 1, 2008.

Mrs. Lenihan reported on the status of the Special Education Audit. The data that has been provided to the state, has only dropped the figure by \$52,000.00 (details in written report). Once the final report is received, we will be provided with one 30-day period to provide any additional documentation. There may still be an opportunity to recoup additional dollars, according to Lynn Carpenter (Auditor). More research will be completed by the Special Education Department. Mrs. Lenihan answered questions from the board regarding specifics of what documentation is missing/required.

Mrs. Lenihan reviewed her written report briefly. Mrs. Lenihan brought a concern regarding the language on the contracted service provider contracts (a.k.a. Vendor Contracts) to the Board. She indicated that some Contracted Vendors had been providing her and Mr. McIntyre verbal reports of student testing results (Eligibility meetings) which differed in some cases from the written reports received after the fact. Based on the verbal information received, decisions were made and incorporated into Eligibility decisions and subsequent IEP's. This could result in a financial impact on the local level. Mrs. Lenihan and Mr. McIntyre requested that language be incorporated into the "Vendor" contracts which called for written, final reports to be presented at the meetings.

The Human Resource Committee was charged with researching the matter and presenting appropriate language for the Vendor Contracts to the full board at the May meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding the importance of timeliness in issuing the Vendor Contracts to ensure continuation of services. Mrs. Lenihan indicated that she had meetings scheduled with each of the building Principals regarding Vendor services for 08-09.

The Report of the Director of Student Support Services was accepted by consensus, as declared by the Chair.

Report of The Curriculum Director: Mrs. Folger stated that the school report card had been completed and was available on the SU website. This report was required at the SU level by No Child Left Behind; it is now required at the local levels. If this reporting is not completed annually, we risk not receiving Federal funds.

Mrs. Folger reported that she is working with the building Principals on the LEA report.

The School Report Card (as presented to the Board and to the state) has been determined by the Title I Audit Team to meet the letter of the law for the requirements for reporting.

Mrs. Folger updated the board regarding the four Harassment complaints the equity team was working on. She reported that three of the four did not meet the criteria (legal definition) of Harassment. The Superintendent has notified the complainants. The fourth report was not yet completed; the team has until May 15th to complete the reporting requirements. Mr. Nagar inquired what if anything was being done regarding the false reports. He referenced the Harassment Policy regarding false reporting. Mrs. Folger stated that it was her responsibility (and that of the equity team) to investigate complaints and provide a report to the Superintendent. It was the Superintendent's responsibility to take action, if needed. Mr. Nagar then addressed Superintendent Chedester regarding same.

Superintendent Chedester responded that she would like to look into the matter further.

The Chair stated that the Board was hearing the Report of the Curriculum Director at this time, and that Mrs. Folger should be allowed to complete her report. The Board may need to have further discussion on the Harassment complaints later in the meeting or in executive session. The Chair commented that due to the confidential nature of the issues, discussion may need to take place in executive session.

Mrs. Folger reported that she had been meeting with Administrators regarding the transition from Title I Targeted Assistance to Title I School-wide Assistance (supported by the SU Administrative Team and the Title I Department at the State level). A waiver had been applied for one of our schools (as they did not meet the 40% poverty level criteria). The waiver is anticipated to be approved without incident. If the waiver is not approved, the school will still be eligible for the Title I Targeted Assistance; with all other SU member schools being eligible for the Title I School-wide Assistance.

Mrs. Folger reported that she had been assisting with screening applications and interviewing for the Wells Reading Teacher opening.

Vermont Lead-It Grant will be winding down this summer, and part of the requirement is to evaluate the professional development that has occurred this year.

This May is the first time that this SU will have an official NECAP Science Assessment. Principals or Test Coordinators will be joining Mrs. Folger in attending assessment training this month.

The report of the Director of Curriculum was accepted by consensus, as declared by the Chair.

General Public Comments: None

Report of the Superintendent: Handouts/report provided by Superintendent.

The Superintendent thanked all the community supporters who voted on all of the local budgets for next year. They are to be applauded for their commitment to our schools and education. She wanted to be sure that the community members know that the Superintendent and Boards take their job as stewards of the public and grant funds entrusted to them to ensure quality education for our students seriously. Thanks to the voters who came out.

The Superintendent reported that the Rutland County Sheriff's Department is offering the SU \$5,000.00 for drug awareness education. All of the Administrators are aware of this and are working with the Sheriff independently regarding individual school's needs. It is anticipated that more funding may be available as well. School Resource Officer and other needs were discussed with the Sheriff, Steven Bernard.

The Superintendent reported that the Title I monitoring (fiscal monitoring) preliminary report had been received. The preliminary report indicated the team was very pleased with the status of the financial auditing. Both the fiscal and program auditors expressed nothing but good comments regarding the work that has gone on in the business office and the program side. Both Brian and Michelle are to be thanked for all their hard work. The Superintendent reported to the board on how we were selected for the Title I Audit. The Title I auditing process is for the current year. A four-year rotational cycle, as well as, the amount of funding received are determining factors in being chosen for the audit.

A Legislative Session update was included in the board packets.

The Superintendent recently attended a VSBIT Conference.

FY09 Calendars are in the process of being completed and will be presented to the board at the May meeting.

Recent technology issues (spam) has required the purchase of a new filtering program. This will be implemented in the next few weeks and is anticipated to decrease or eliminate the amount of spam. The new program will also comply with the new federal requirement for three year archived e-mails.

Automatic External Defibrillators have been installed in each school. Training has been completed to selected employees; a mock demonstration was also completed at the Wells Village School for students in an effort to introduce them to the new piece of equipment to alleviate curiosity. The Superintendent complimented Ms. O'Leary on the implementation of the A.E.D.s and training provided.

AYP reports were included in the board packets.

The Arts Festival (SU-wide) was recently held at the Wells Village School. The Superintendent praised all the art work displayed. She thanked those who put the work into the exhibit. We have many talented artists among us!

Hearing no objections, the Report of the Superintendent was approved by consensus as declared by the Chair.

The Chair called for the board to move into executive session at the request of the Superintendent to discuss personnel issues. The remainder of the agenda was to be tabled to a continuation meeting (date, time and location to be determined at the conclusion of the executive session).

Michelle Folger inquired whether or not the board wished her to remain until after the executive session to discuss the Technology Coordinator job description. The Chair' expectation is that this will not be discussed at this meeting, and will be brought up at the continuation meeting.

Motion made by Francene Cone, seconded by Karen Stomski for the board to move into executive session at the Superintendent's request for personnel issues.

Motion carried.

The board went into executive session at 9:55 PM.

The Recording Secretary was excused.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Dente
Recording Secretary