ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCHOOL OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING
MINUTES OF BOCES MEETING

December 21, 2005
5:30 p.m.

In Attendance: John Dunn, Emily Hansen, Bee Kirk and Suzanne Plaut

Staff: Leann Asgari, Melissa McComas and Jim McDermott

Guest: Susan Tabacheck

Introductions
Emily Hansen was introduced as the new representative from Douglas County School District. Susan Tabacheck is representing Aurora Public Schools.

Approval of Minutes
Minutes from the October 17, 2005 and November 16, 2005 board meetings were unanimously approved.

Open Forum
John Dunn spoke with the Littleton Public Schools Superintendent about the cost of MAPS testing. They estimated the cost of bringing MAPS testing to RMSEL to be approximately $8,000. LPS has offered to contribute $2,000 toward the MAPS testing if the other sponsoring districts are willing to do so.

Jim stated that he has been asked to extend his stay at RMSEL beyond the interim year. Since he is retired, he is looking into what he the legal ramifications are and will continue to work with PERA. He would not be able to work more than a 190 day contract, and even at that level, he would still have to pay about four (4) months worth of penalties. Jim expressed interest in staying at RMSEL and would agree to a two (2) year commitment if that is acceptable to the BOCES. Suzanne Plaut questioned what the process is for this and how the information is shared with the community. So far, this proposal has been presented to the staff, and they are supportive. The Leadership Team should give formal approval to the proposal, and then Bee Kirk and Emily Hansen will attend the next Community Council meeting to present the formal proposal to them. Ultimately, we would like to vote to remove the interim designation from Jim’s title. RMSEL will not be initiating a search process at this point.

Bee mentioned that DPS is still examining whether they can send a proxy to vote at the BOCES meetings. Jim stated that Cherry Creek’s in-house counsel has advised that any BOCES representative must be a board member of a participating district.

Bee asked Jim if he had any additional information on the state accreditation. Jim had a conversation with a CDE staff member who provided information on how to make a formal appeal. For background purposes, the BOCES is accredited by CDE through 2007, and this past fall, CDE stated that they wanted us to get accredited through one of the sponsoring districts. Jim will make a formal appeal to CDE and is optimistic that we will get this worked out.

Jim has followed up with Cherry Creek to see if we could piggyback on their contract for natural gas. The Cherry Creek contract is closed, so we would not be able to pursue that until next year. They warned that we should be careful not to lock in natural gas rates since prices are going up. Emily questioned whether all districts checked their natural gas contracts. John checked, and Littleton does not have a contract. Leann Asgari mentioned that the Leadership Team has discussed moving the enrollment deadline forward from the end of February to the end of January in order to align with the other districts. This does not require a BOCES vote.
Suzanne shared that Brooke O’Drobinak will be taking Suzanne’s place in February, March and maybe April while she is on maternity leave.

Executive Director Report
The high school elective showcase was last week. The high school showcases their learning at the end of each semester, and this time we had poetry, comedy, music and more. The presentations were really outstanding.

One of our middle school students, Rebecca Turner, ran a service project through Starlight and Starbucks to collect toys. She collected more that 1,000 toys and Starbucks stated they had never had such a response. We will put out a publicity notice on this through the districts.

The seniors are turning in their checklists for their senior expeditions. If they are not completely signed off, they must meet with Jim to determine what steps they must take in order to be approved. Jim will be following up on some of the deadlines with the seniors as we go. At this point, all of the seniors will be moving on with their senior expedition.

The ERB writing assessment has not been returned yet. We anticipate these results on the 3rd of January. We will also continue to pursue the MAPS testing. Jim is convinced that having this assessment will also help with the CDE accreditation.

We have not received the SAR (State Accountability Report) yet. The lower school and middle school will be rated average with the achievement as declined. The high school will be rated as high with achievement as stable. The achievement standard is rated by looking at the same student year to year. Based on the standard error of measurement, they calculate a range. If they fall within the range, it is considered stable. Jim intends to send an explanatory note home with the results.

John asked what we are doing with our curriculum to align with the CCHE graduation requirements. The RMSEL students receive four years of all subjects. We will make sure to consider the new requirements as we move forward.

Emily asked how our curriculum is set. Typically, the staff sets their own curriculum, but we usually present any changes to the board.

Jim would like approval on the proposed fieldwork fees for the next two years. He mentioned that the next newsletter will request our community to be part of our Belay Committee. The express purpose of this committee is to establish a group of willing donor families that will provide financial assistance to struggling families. Emily asked if Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound has ever taken issue with RMSEL charging a fieldwork fee. We have not heard that this was ever an issue. Jim did point out that no student is turned away because of fieldwork fees and that we do everything we can to support our families with this.


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Proposed Change to Fieldwork Fee Structure
Suzanne made a motion to approve proposed fieldwork fees for 2006-2007 and 2007-2008. Proposed fees were unanimously approved.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 18th at 5:30 p.m.

The board adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

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Bee Kirk, President

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John Dunn, Vice President