ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCHOOL OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING
MINUTES OF BOCES MEETING
January 18, 2006
5:30 p.m.

In Attendance: Jill Conrad, John Dunn, Emily Hansen, Bee Kirk, Suzanne Plaut and Susan Tabacheck

Staff: Mike Barrett, Melissa McComas, Jim McDermott and Julie Stelzer

Guest: Michael Aitken and Dean Johnson (via telephone conference)

Introductions
All BOCES members were introduced. Jill Conrad was introduced as the new representative from Denver Public Schools.

Audit Presentation
Dean Johnson of Johnson, Holscher & Company, P.C. presented the 2004-2005 audit via conference call. Referencing the Basic Financial Statements, Dean stated that there were no major adjustments made during this audit period. The school has implemented GASB 34 and its related standards. In referencing the opinion page of the Independent Auditor’s Report, it is the auditor’s unqualified opinion that there are no exceptions.

Bee Kirk questioned Dean about not hearing the term findings in his presentation. Dean explained that is now worded as no reportable conditions or significant deficiencies. Bee opened the floor to any questions or concerns about the audit. Since there were no questions, we thanked Johnson, Holscher & Company and Dean for his efforts, and the conference call was terminated.

Julie Stelzer stated that the National Science Foundation grants will no longer appear on the financial statements, and this is the last audit in which they will be included. These grants were a significant amount of work for RMSEL’s limited staff. Julie also stated that Johnson, Holscher & Company will perform the audit for 2005-2006, and she then questioned if the BOCES wants to begin the request for proposal (RFP) process for the 2007-2008 audit. This discussion item will be moved to the April 2006 BOCES meeting agenda. Bee thanked Julie for her hard work resulting in a clean audit.

John Dunn made a motion to approve the 2004-2005 audit as presented by Dean Johnson, and the motion passed unanimously.

BOCES Secretary/Treasurer Position
Julie stated that Willie Jones from Aurora Public Schools was our Secretary/Treasurer and questioned if that position automatically transfers to Susan Tabacheck, the new APS representative, or if it requires a board vote. It was decided that this would require a vote, and that vote would move to the March 2006 BOCES agenda. Bee will work with Jim McDermott to send out an email with a description of this position.

Interim Executive Director
Bee stated he would like to see a motion to remove the Interim designation from Jim’s title. BOCES representatives have met with the Community Council and RMSEL staff and received positive feedback with regard to Jim continuing in his capacity as Executive Director. Susan questioned whether there is a change in compensation associated with removal of the Interim designation. There would not be a change in compensation for the current contract year. Mike Aitken mentioned that both Emily Hansen and Bee attended the last Community Council meeting, and all council members were unanimously in support of Jim remaining as Executive Director. Mike Aitken has been in communication with many parents who also are in support. Susan questioned if this was a full time position and how that works if Jim was already retired. Jim explained
that the contract is a 190 day contract. Emily motioned to remove the Interim designation from the Executive Director title. John asked if there were any outstanding commitments to Jon Mann. We do not have any commitments to Jon. Suzanne Plaut stated that while we knew we would get positive feedback, she appreciates that we followed protocol to come to this decision. The motion was unanimously approved.

2006-2007 Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA)
Jim stated that the IGA expires at the end of June 2006 and questioned if there are any changes or adjustments that need to be made. Jim mentioned that he will follow up with Ethan Hemming and Jill as he knows that DPS had some concerns about the IGA. Suzanne mentioned that she thought DPS’ concerns were about the BOCES governance structure and explained that we made a decision at a meeting held last spring to continue with the existing structure. Bee stated that none of the existing BOCES members have been involved in an IGA negotiation and that he has heard that it is quite a lengthy process. Since we have to have the attorney from each district review any changes to the IGA, Bee suggested that we get a copy to our BOCES members right away. We are asking if any of the districts have changes that need to be made. Susan asked if there was a timeframe for her to have the attorney review. We asked that any requested changes be submitted to the board at the March meeting. Julie mentioned that we will probably modify the IGA to reflect the pilot program with JFK changing to a permanent program. Jim mentioned that the program with JFK has been very successful.

Open Forum
Bee mentioned that our next meeting is scheduled for February 15th which is Exhibition Night at RMSEL. We will not actually have a meeting that night. Instead, we would like the BOCES members to take part in Exhibition Night. There is an open house that night beginning at 5:30 pm, and then each classroom will have their students presenting what they have been working on this year.

Bee asked that all BOCES members visit the school to familiarize themselves with RMSEL.

Bee asked if the BOCES members knew what each district’s enrollment numbers were. Aurora stated that they have 28 enrollment slots. Douglas County has increased enrollment numbers in recent years while Littleton has decreased. The DPS enrollment is about half of RMSEL’s total enrollment.

Susan stated that she was researching on the internet for our BOCES and could not find our school. Susan questioned the relationship we have with the Colorado BOCES. Jill mentioned that we would be listed as the Expeditionary Learning School BOCES and asked if we receive funding from Colorado BOCES. She mentioned that part of CDE and the State Board’s agenda is to bring back that funding. This will be discussed during the next legislative session. Julie said we have received this funding in the past. Emily asked if we have a representative on the Colorado BOCES. Jim will follow up on these contacts.

Emily referenced the minutes from the last meeting that stated Jim would be sending an email to sponsoring districts to outline a request for funding to help implement MAPS testing. Emily understood that each district was to follow up and did not expect an email from Jim. Jim agreed that he did not have the understanding that he was to send an email. Julie asked if the minutes should be revised. Emily asked that we strike the last sentence “Jim McDermott will e-mail the other districts outlining this request.”

Emily presented the request for Douglas County to contribute $2,000 for implementation of MAPS testing to Annette Fante who is the Interim Learning Services Assistant Superintendent for Douglas County. Annette has additional questions and asked that Jim follow up with her by email or phone. Annette wanted to know why this is being asked for above and beyond the regular funding that Douglas County provides. Would this be beneficial to piggyback on another district? Jill asked if she should be requesting the same from DPS. Emily suggested that the new board members find a contact person to put Jim in contact with. Bee stated that the best contact for Cherry Creek would be the Cherry Creek Foundation because that is what they do. Jim stated that he would contact Ethan Hemming for DPS and Susan will get Jim a contact for Aurora.
Jill asked if the natural gas contract issue had been resolved. She mentioned that DPS has just been talking about this and that Andre Pettigrew would be a contact for us to follow up with.

Bee will be working with Elizabeth Spruill, RMSEL’s Technology/Media Coordinator, again to submit a grant proposal to IBM for another file server. Bee asked Jim to have Elizabeth contact him.

**Approval of Minutes**
John motioned to approve the minutes with the requested revision. Minutes from the December 21, 2005 board meeting were unanimously approved.

**Executive Director Report**
Jim shared that our existing 5th grade students will be shadowing in the middle school tomorrow. On January 24th, the middle school teachers will be hosting an evening for parents of our existing 5th grade students to help familiarize them with our middle school. Students that are applying to the school will be asked to shadow when their names come up on the lottery. Susan asked who monitors the lottery. Jim responded that Leann Asgari, Operations Director, manages the lottery. Positions are offered strictly by lottery with preference going to siblings, staff members and students who have previous experience with expeditionary learning. Mike Barrett stated that the process after their lottery number comes up is to have the student come in for a shadow day. Then, there is an interview process designed for the teachers to ask some pointed questions to the kids to assure that the student feels they could be successful at our school. Susan also asked about the ethnic breakdown of the school and of the teachers. Jim will get that information to her.

Jim shared with the RMSEL staff on Tuesday that we will be moving forward on implementation of MAPS testing. Based on accreditation issues and CSAP results, it seems clear that we need an additional standardized assessment. Jim has decided that barring any red flags that people bring to his attention, we will be implementing MAPS testing. John stated that he had requested $2,000 from Littleton based on the fact that there was an estimated cost of $8,000 for implementation. Since we have only had representation from four districts recently, he figured that Littleton’s portion would be approximately $2,000. Jim stated that if each district contributed, we would not need a full $2,000 from each. This money is to cover a software conversion since RMSEL uses a Linux platform. The MAPS testing is windows based, and there is a WIN for LIN conversion that would make the testing available at RMSEL. Littleton felt that the MAPS testing would be beneficial and wanted to support this conversion. Jim mentioned that we might be able to work with the Colorado Small Schools Initiative to avoid the $3,000 start up fee, so the need for additional support from the districts really is focused on the software conversion.

Jim stated that he would be sending out a letter regarding the State Accountability Report (SAR) results to parents this week. He will also be setting up a parent meeting to discuss the SAR results and answer questions.

Jim distributed a copy of the letter that he sent to CDE appealing the accreditation decision. As background, CDE had authorized the BOCES to accredit RMSEL. CDE has decided that they want us to work under one of our sponsoring school districts. One of the arguments they stated is that RMSEL is the only one in the state set up like this, and it does not make sense for them to put that kind of energy into it. Based on more investigation, we have discovered that there is at least one other BOCES that is accredited in the same way. Jim has cited this in his appeal to CDE and is awaiting a response.

Jim is sending out a letter next week outlining the fieldwork fee changes approved at the last BOCES meeting. He will also introduce the Belay Committee concept and request families to participate. The nice thing about participation in this Belay Committee is that you do not have to attend any meetings.

**Budget Update**
Julie referenced the Management Summary and stated that she is not concerned about anything referenced there. Julie stated that there was a rescission that came through in December that reduced our funding by
$9,631.86. There was an audit adjustment from two years ago that increased it, so the net result is a $5,998.14 shortfall. It is not expected that this shortfall will significantly affect the budget.

Included in the funding were two different grant awards. One was Federal Title II funding of $21,199.00 that we are still trying to figure out what our restrictions are for use. And the other award was Federal Title V funding of $1,477.00. We also received Gifted and Talented funding of $2,266.88. None of this funding was included in the original budget. Bee questioned if the rescission was normal. Julie stated that we usually see this but are not notified until it is deducted from our funding check by DPS. Julie works with Velma Rose, DPS' Chief Financial Officer, to get the PPOR and capital reserve amounts in order to prepare the budget.

Bee asked why the federal grant awards were not included in the budget. Julie explained that we have never received them before. We have received the Gifted and Talented funding before, but we have no way of budgeting the number because we do not know the amount.

Bee asked how much of the Financial Aid we normally use each year. Julie stated that it varies from year to year and is often associated with the health of the economy. This year, we have had a lot of financial aid money left and even approved a family that did not quite qualify.

Bee asked for explanation of the Boettcher Fellows Program. Julie stated that we sponsored the Teacher Prep Program where students were attending DU, and we had two staff members that were doing instruction at RMSEL for that program. As part of this program, students would receive their alternative licensure through RMSEL. Boettcher budgeted to reimburse RMSEL for the alternative licensure cost, and the interns would be spending time in our classrooms. The $6,000 represents the Boettcher Fellows Program payment for alternative licensure and was deferred from 2004-2005 into 2005-2006. It is our hope that the Teacher Prep Program will restart, and the money will offset that cost. We will have to decide what to do with the money if the Teacher Prep Program does not start up again.

Bee questioned why the $11,311.93 was not budgeted for the rental of the gym. Julie stated that she always budgets $1,000.00 of miscellaneous income. This year and last year, the YMCA has been renting our gym but never to this level. We just have not been able to budget for this as the YMCA did not sign a facility use agreement before the budget was submitted.

Bee mentioned that it was nice to see that fundraising was on target. Julie pointed out that we are moving the Silent Auction away from Exhibition Night and that might have an impact on how much money is raised.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 15th at 5:30 p.m.

The board adjourned at 7:10 p.m.