ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCHOOL OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING
MINUTES OF BOCES MEETING
April 18, 2012
7:00 a.m.

In Attendance:  Sue Chandler, Kevin Larsen, Claudine McDonald, Anne Rowe and Rosann Ward

Staff:  Chad Burns, Marci Elder, Nancy Leins, Julie Stelzer and Cris Veteto

Introductions
Each board member introduced themselves and identified their district affiliation.  The RMSEL directors also introduced themselves and identified their position at RMSEL.

Approval of Agenda
Sue requested a motion to approve the agenda.  Anne Rowe moved to approve the agenda, Rosann Ward seconded.  The agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes
Sue requested a motion to approve the minutes.  Anne Rowe moved to approve the minutes, Claudine McDonald seconded.  The minutes were unanimously approved.

Executive Director Report
Chad welcomed the attendees to the meeting, and thanked all for attending.  He stated that we have an enrollment of 390 students for next year, which is 10 students short of the projected 400, specifically in the 7th and 8th grades.  Sixth grade is a natural transition year, while 7th and 8th grades are not.  One hundred percent of current 5th grade students are remaining at RMSEL for 6th grade next year.  We have a waiting list for 6th grade also.

The budget received by the board today reflects the implementation of the strategic plan with fidelity.  Everything that has been shared with the RMSEL community will still be in place, even with enrollment of 390 rather than 400.

Highlighting RMSEL high school students, the 9-11 grade students showcased their independent study to the teaching staff on March 6th.  K-12 teachers interacted with students and graded their work on a rubric.  The teachers commented that this experience was important to support RMSEL’s mission as a K-12 community.  One student Chad worked with did a study of entomology at a university in California with a research scientist, doing authentic research.  The other student studied oncology at a local hospital while also working the night shift in the emergency room.  The work done by RMSEL students shows the connection of character values and design principles in developing independent thinkers and complex problem solvers.

Regarding the TCAP assessment, Chad thanked Marci for her incredible work in organizing the testing and administration of the TCAP.  He commended Marci and the staff for their high level of test integrity.  At no point were we in jeopardy of mis-administration of any of the testing components.

Over the past months, RMSEL staff have been focused on a Common K-12 Writing Continuum in professional development (PD), developed by the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Instructional Leadership Team.  The K-12 writing assessment was created, analyzed, and revised during PD.  Results of this assessment will be shared with parents at conferences.  The data thus far shows growth in grades K-8.  In grades 9 and 10, a decline in growth was shown over the year.  It was determined that the authenticity of the prompt and timing of the test may have impacted this decline.  We will look at revision of the writing assessment in order to see the same growth in those grades as well.

Chad introduced new staff:  Lyn Williams is our new 9th and 10th grade Humanities teacher.  Lyn has worked with at-risk students in various schools and has an extensive background with Outward Bound.  He is also a Wilderness First
Responder and a Top Rope Certified wilderness leader. Prior to starting at RMSEL, Lyn and Mike Kuhn (11th and 12th Humanities teacher) worked collaboratively with EL school designer, Jen Wood, for one week to design his learning expedition for third trimester. Brian Reed is our long-term substitute for Spanish for grades 9-11. Brian has experience teaching in multiple international schools ranging from Argentina to South Korea. He has a degree in International Studies and a degree in Spanish, and is a phenomenal asset to RMSEL as we finish the year. He has expressed an interest in leading two mini expeditions in the metro area, visiting the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and other areas.

The Expeditionary Learning (EL) National Conference is May 3rd-5th. Chad is excited to announce that four staff members were selected to present at this conference. To present, you must demonstrate a mastery of implementation of EL Core Practices in your school and classroom, and assist other teachers and leaders with their development within the national EL network. Peter Thulson, Dawn Beckner, Brooke Craig and Marci Elder were all selected to present, and we have a total of 8 staff members going to the conference. Chad is proud of RMSEL’s commitment to work and collaborate with EL and looks forward to developing as a school of distinction within the network.

Chad expressed thanks to PACK and Amy Larchick, Auction Chairman, and the Auction Committee for this year’s auction. PACK has raised approximately $50,000 to date. Historically, funds have been used to backfill budget needs. That will not happen this year, all funds will go to classroom support. We purchased 20 iPads for student use, one new laptop cart, new literature text for secondary school, an additional $500 per teacher to support their classroom supply budget, and many other direct applications for classroom support. Chad thanked Sara Raghunath for hosting the Kids Run for RMSEL. Students obtained pledges for each lap they would run during fitness class. One group of middle school boys ran a 10K in 45 minutes. Two 6th graders ran 15 laps as well.

In analyzing behavior and attendance data, over the past year we have entered disciplinary events ranging from student tardies to suspension into Infinite Campus. During the past 8 months, we had 112 incidents, of which only 18 have resulted in suspension and no expulsions. Of those 18 students suspended, none have had a second suspension. Students were able to modify their behavior through the re-entry and mediation process and move forward focusing on academic success. Over Spring Reflection, Chad analyzed student attendance data. He contacted the parent community to enlist support in addressing the attendance trend and changing it. The data reflects that 47% of high school students, 18% of middle school students, and 9% of lower school students have 10 or more absences this year. The three year data shows this was not one year only, but an ongoing trend. We believe that the instruction received at RMSEL cannot be replicated in a remote environment. We choose to support the expeditions and fieldwork, and presence and participation are required. We will analyze the data as we transition and discuss the review of the attendance policy with our District Accountability Committee and Organizational Leadership Team. BOCES has the policy revision for a first reading today and will vote at the next meeting. Chad again asked parents for their collaboration in improving attendance over the last trimester. Claudine questioned if the attendance numbers reflect full days of absences? Chad replied yes, those are full days. Claudine expressed that 50% of students missing 10 or more days per year is a lot of students. She asked if these absences are both excused and unexcused, and Chad stated that the number reflects both excused and unexcused absences. The policy presented today is a revision to the policy that was adopted in 2009. This revision was developed with input from the work Venture Prep did at RMSEL last year, looking at other school of choice policies (such as DSST), and the attendance policies of our districts. The proposed procedure for monitoring attendance includes: at 3 absences, a care and concern contact will be made to the parent; at 5 absences, a letter will be sent to the parent; at 7 absences, an attendance contract will be put in place; and at 10 absences, we will work with our districts for the possible referral to the student’s home school.

Open Forum
Sue addressed the details of how Open Forum will be conducted. This is a time provided for members of the RMSEL community to speak to the board on items of interest or concern. It is the board’s policy in a public session to not hear personal complaints against district personnel, and it is a violation of federal law to discuss specific student issues due to FERPA. Sue requested that those speaking not continue to repeat the same remarks already made by a previous speaker. It is board practice not to respond to public comments during the meeting; however, the board will listen and, if desired, respond to the speaker at a later date. Each person has 3 minutes to present their ideas and views.
respectful, state your name and association to RMSEL. Please refrain from clapping out of respect for each other. We want to cover lower school, middle school, and high school in allowing each to speak. Nancy will keep track of time and at the end of the time limit, please wrap up your sentence and we will move on to the next speaker. If someone is not able to speak due to time constraints, email Sue and Chad, and it will be distributed to all board members.

**Steve Steadman, parent of lower school student and member of District Accountability Committee:** This is a great school. Chad is taking the school in a great direction, emphasizing excellence and accountability. We believe in it and support it. When our child got here, he was like an amoeba, with no clue, staring into space. Now he is able to share that he is working on portfolios; his growth is wonderful. Chad stands for the things that are the mission of RMSEL, accountability, partnership for the child. Thank you, Chad and staff, for all the work you have done for all of our students.

**Lucinda McGarvin, parent of lower school, middle school and high school students:** I love RMSEL, this is our 3rd year here. I support the academic changes at RMSEL. I am a mental health professional with 23 years of experience. I have had students approach me with concerns about fear of retribution and not feeling safe at RMSEL. These students are over 15 years old, allowing me to report without parent involvement. It is regarding incidences at school. I have met with Chad on several occasions. I met with a colleague and decided that I needed to report. When I reported, I was directed to the board. I contacted Chad, and wanted to meet with him. I received an email from Chad saying that since I designated myself as a mental health professional consulting for RMSEL, he would only meet with me with another administrator present. I have not designated myself as a consultant for RMSEL, I am in private practice. I have a letter with more detail to give to each board member and Chad after the meeting.

**Marlene Nuechterlein, parent of middle school and high school students:** We have been here for 10 years, very involved with auctions, PACK, crew parent, and going on trips. I am not concerned with strategic plan or academics that are presented. I feel parents don't have a voice right now. DAC allows 2 or 3 minutes to speak with no opportunity for conversation. High school parents and students feel unheard. Chad’s response is to refer back to the strategic plan. I feel like Chad has misrepresented the atmosphere of the high school to the board as being fine when it is not. He says that staff has been able to process everything, but parents have not had the chance to meet together and process everything. I want a school-wide meeting to work things out. The school is divided between upper school and lower school right now. There are emails circulating saying high school parents are doing things that they are not doing. Healing is needed, and we need to talk as a whole school, not in one-on-one meetings with Chad or DAC. I think we need a meeting with a mediator.

**Kelsey Haddock, Upper School Learning Specialist:** The faculty is behind the direction we are going. There are always things that can be aimed for in improving. The staff appreciates the accountability that has been brought by Chad. The processes that were in place and are now being followed allow faculty to hold students to a higher level and show them that we are all united in what the vision is for RMSEL. This isn’t just coming from Chad, it is coming from all of the faculty.

**Steve Jenkins, High School Math Teacher:** Change is the only thing that has been constant over the 13 years I’ve been here. Change creates tension and anxiety. As a mentor/teacher/leader at RMSEL, I see my role is to provide students opportunities to work through that change, and see that it is safe to feel uncomfortable, safe for students to work through and figure out how to move forward. Students control what RMSEL is, and they determine the culture at RMSEL. I encourage them to come talk and work through this. A great example of this is a group of 3 high school students who created a plan, met with Chad and presented their plan, and want to move forward with change. You don’t have complete control over change, but you have control over your reaction and how you deal with it. Students are here to learn who they are. There may be decisions that have been made that I haven’t always agreed with, but it is up to me how I move ahead.

**Eric Dinkel, High School Science Teacher:** At the beginning of the year, I said that when you have a leader, you are not always going to agree with them. The first week of school, I asked to go on an off campus trip. For various reasons, the answer was no. I talked to Chad about it, but even after talking, the answer was still no. That was fine, and made me

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realize we are not always going to agree, but the support is there from Chad. Looking at a leader and the balance of both sides, if the support side is heavy, you have to be willing to give the benefit of the doubt when you don’t always get your way. The support side is strong enough that even if I don’t agree, overwhelmingly I feel supported and agree with what is going on. I like to read Kurt Hahn’s research. Students at RMSEL are taking responsibility for their learning, but we don’t have accountability, especially in high school. Where is our credibility as a student body? To miss 10 days of school is absurd to me. I look at accountability, and it takes time to get there and look at the big picture. If we can get to 99% of our students have 4 or less absences, we will be able to do a lot more with students’ learning. Speaking as a representative of high school staff, we overwhelmingly agree with the direction we are going and feel supported. Parents need to know that requests for accountability have come from teachers to Chad asking for help.

**Keith Bierman, parent of 2nd grader:** Change is hard, and it requires vision, communication, and consistency. I have been very impressed with the vision, the articulation of that vision, and the quality of the communication. It is far improved over our first 2 years at RMSEL. Consistency is important; rules applied randomly or capriciously are useless. The improvement in consistency is very visible, and I commend Chad and Marci for that. As a parent of a special needs child, I would request DPS not change the specialist so often. My child’s needs are being met. Vision, consistency and communication have all improved. I would suggest creating a summer program for staff/students in RMSEL and those outside of expeditionary learning. It is a wonderful opportunity to expose them to expeditionary learning. Thank you, Chad and Marci, for the direction you are taking our school.

**Timothy Smith, 9th grade student:** I want to give credit to Chad. I believe he has done an amazing job with improving RMSEL, especially attendance. The improvements you’ve made in making a system that boosts the accountability for us as a community, I feel you have done really well there.

**Karl Liedtke, parent of lower school and middle school student and PACK Volunteer Coordinator:** (Karl put in a request for anyone interested in serving as a passage panelist.) I have been duly impressed with the structure of the school, accountability, and moving toward higher academic standards. If you set low standards, you get low standards. We want our kids to succeed. I want to see the high school move in a direction that will prepare kids so that they will be able to get into the college of their choice. I am happy with things that have gone on. In general, things have moved in a positive direction. Consistency is helpful, kids know what to expect.

**Heidi Heissenbuttel, parent of high school students:** I am fully invested at RMSEL; we have been here 10 years, and I have seen the incredible gains my children have made. I appreciate Chad’s leadership, and his vision for accountability and academic success. I don’t want to view this as an all or nothing, bad or good, and that is how this feels. As a high school parent community, we do not feel safe to disagree, we feel shut down and unheard. We want to see Chad stay and be successful because it helps our kids, and we want to have a voice in the process.

**Claudia Mishell, parent of lower school students:** I support Chad Burns and RMSEL. I am a former elementary school teacher and have a career in non-profit management. RMSEL is a school of excellence. Excellence is created by a solid partnership between faculty and parents. My husband and I wanted to find a school that aligns with our values and parental expectations. In RMSEL, we hit the jackpot. Our children have thrived here. RMSEL needed change, and we are incredibly fortunate to have Chad Burns as our new Executive Director. Chad has collaborated with staff, students, and parents. Chad is one of the most fine, effective leaders I have known. Some qualities that make a great leader are worth mentioning, because Chad embodies these qualities: integrity and character, having a vision and mission, a sense of direction and clear set of goals; being grounded, having a vision of what the world around them ought to be; leaders understand things will not always go smoothly; persistence, commitment and dedication, a sense of responsibility and the ability to communicate effectively. I have seen incredibly positive changes under Chad’s leadership. His weekly emails and monthly chats in person are transparent, compassionate, and he has tremendous follow up when necessary. His quest for accountability is extremely important. His willingness to get to know students and parents sets a great example. I know when I am talking to Chad he is really listening and trying to figure out solutions. As we move forward, Chad will lead us in the right direction, as crew not passengers.
Jennifer Barrow, parent of lower school and middle school students: We have been here 6 years, and we are very pleased with the changes this year. We considered leaving for middle school because of academics, but now we are super happy to stay and are excited about what is to come. We are not considering high school at RMSEL presently, but as changes continue to happen, we will consider it. Middle school kids feel safe talking to Chad. My daughter and a friend decided to plan a spirit week, they went to Chad, got full support, and it went well. Thanks, Chad, for what you are doing for the school.

Erika Brainard, parent of lower school, middle school and high school students: Seven of my 8 kids have attended RMSEL, and we’ve been here for 11 years. I have seen the development of my kids because of RMSEL, and it has been a great experience that has helped me be a better parent. Teachers are advocates for my kids and this community. It is so important that this school continues on. I have seen several directors come and go through RMSEL, and have been pleased with some, not others. Because we are RMSEL, we adapt. I have heard the frustration of some unhappy high school parents, but my experience with my high school student is different. My son and two other students went to Chad with problems they saw and some ideas for solutions. Chad spent 1½ hrs with them and they were well received. I believe some of the changes the students suggested have been implemented. I would like to attend problems at RMSEL with that same attitude. Don’t just say we are unhappy and this is where we stand; look for solutions for success.

Marianne Thomason, High School Science teacher: I will not be back at RMSEL next year, so I want to speak very candidly. I implore people to think about why we are here, in regard to attendance. I came here because I wanted to do student-centered instruction about what scientists do. I can’t do that when students are not here. There are sometimes extenuating circumstances, but I am speaking in general circumstances. Students are scientists in the classroom, not regurgitating information that I have told them to believe. That is why I came to RMSEL. I feel supported, and students are lucky to have some accountability, even though it is a transition for them. When I came here 5 years ago, it felt like RMSEL was a start up school. This year feels like a really strong foundation is being laid. There have been times I’ve disagreed, but I have never felt unsafe to disagree. When policies are ambiguous, it is really hard for me to have the energy to support students every day.

In closing the Open Forum portion of the meeting, Sue stated that the board is very committed to RMSEL and moving forward. The board knows there have been a lot of changes at RMSEL this year, at the board level, administration, teachers, parents, and students. Sue has been on the board for a number of years and can see the improvements. She realizes the changes create a strain on people, and as voiced today, there are various views. Sue is committed to moving forward and working with administration to evaluate how we can improve. Sue sent out an email to the RMSEL community regarding protocol. She is concerned that people do have a vehicle for feeling heard. If community members still have concerns they want to pass on to the board, feel free to do so. The board does not get involved in administrative issues other than making sure Chad is addressing it. Please follow protocol, and if you feel needs aren’t met, you may then notify the board and they will make sure it is addressed. Anne Rowe thanked parents for being here and speaking. She is new to the RMSEL board, and believes what happened this morning is really important. She is impressed with the candor, thoughtfulness, and commitment of all of the attendees, as well as Chad and the administration and staff. The board is listening to what you have to say. Claudine McDonald thanked everyone for taking the time to come and allowing the board to hear the passion and commitment behind the statements being made. She captured the “asks” in notes, and the board will address those. She stated that she is glad attendance was one thing at the top of people’s minds, as this is something that needs to be addressed at RMSEL. Kevin Larsen, new to the DCSD board and RMSEL board, said this was his first chance to get acquainted with the RMSEL community, and this was a great opportunity for him. He is no stranger to dealing with issues of sensitivity or concerns in direction. He has seen the model of having discussion and dialogue, and has found that usually we have a common vision, and can resolve the smaller differences and build on the things we agree upon. He expressed appreciation for the comments that were brought and hopes we find solutions going forward. Rosann Ward, representing Public Education & Business Coalition, one of the founding partners of RMSEL, said history shows a great deal of commitment to this institution. The board is deeply committed to hearing these conversations, and she is thankful for the level of respect and candor demonstrated; the ability to be respectful and candid will help us move forward in a healthy way. Sue thanked everyone for being in
attendance, and invited those who did not have opportunity to speak today to communicate with the board in other ways or attend another meeting.

Consent Agenda
Sue requested a motion to approve the consent agenda. Anne moved to approve the consent agenda, Rosann seconded. The consent agenda was unanimously approved.

Action Items
GASB 54 Resolution – Julie stated that this resolution was based on a model from LPS and Boulder Valley that was provided by our auditor. The resolution looks very similar to Littleton’s, with the exception of the “whereas” page. GASB 54 was actually effective June 30, 2011, and we implemented it to the extent possible without a formal board resolution. RMSEL does not have any restricted amounts as referenced in GASB, because we are a BOCES and are not bound by TABOR. Our auditor suggested we adopt GASB 54 formally so that we can acknowledge funds that are committed, assigned, restricted, or non-spendable. We want funds for a specific purpose to be committed, specifically money raised during our capital campaign for the playing field. Fieldwork fees that are paid this year for use next year, we want to have considered as assigned, as well as any budget carryover that we have from this year into next year. Sue asked if there were any questions. Sue checked the effective “back dates” and they are correct. Anne stated that all of the districts are dealing with a Fund Balance policy, and this provides clarity on fund balances in regard to usage and non-usage. Kevin agreed that this allows for better accountability of resources in the district. Sue requested a motion to approve the resolution. Rosann moved to approve the GASB 54 Resolution, Kevin seconded. The resolution was unanimously approved. It was requested that the resolution be recorded in its entirety in the minutes.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCHOOL OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING
RESOLUTION
BY
BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

WHEREAS, the sponsoring districts are authorized to enter into this Agreement pursuant to the Boards of Cooperative Services Act of 1965, as amended, C.R.S. 22-5-101, et seq., and C.R.S. 29-1-203;

WHEREAS, the sponsoring districts previously have formed a board of cooperative educational services to establish and operate an expeditionary learning school for the benefit of students residing within the sponsoring districts;

WHEREAS, the sponsoring districts wish to continue the operation of said expeditionary learning school using a school-based governance structure;

WHEREAS, the parties wish to operate the expeditionary learning school within the boundaries of School District No. 1 in the City and County of Denver and to obtain certain facilities and services from said school district while working collaboratively with and providing educational opportunities for students of the other sponsoring districts;

WHEREAS, the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has adopted Statement 54 (GASB 54), a new standard for governmental fund balance reporting and governmental fund type definitions that became effective in governmental fiscal years starting June 30, 2011; and

WHEREAS, the BOCES elects to implement GASB 54 requirements, and to apply such requirements to its financial statements beginning with the 2010-2011 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, fund balance measures the net financial resources available to finance expenditures for future periods; and

WHEREAS, certain revenue sources have specific limitations on the purpose for which all or a portion of the revenue can be used by the school; and

WHEREAS, for financial statement reporting purposes, GASB 54 defines:
Nonspendable amounts as those that cannot be spent because amounts are either not in a spendable form, or legally or contractually required to be maintained intact; and

Restricted amounts as those that are constrained to specific purposes by providers through constitutional provisions or enabling legislation; and

Committed amount as those constrained to specific purposes by the board itself; and

Assigned amounts as those the board intends to use for a specific purpose; and

Unassigned amounts as those amounts that are available for any purposes reported only in the general fund; and

WHEREAS, the BOCES delegates to the Executive Director, authority to assign unrestricted fund balance amounts where the school’s intent is for those amounts to be used for specific purposes. This delegation of authority is for the sole purpose of reporting these amounts in the annual financial statements.

RESOLVED, the BOCES, in accordance with the provisions of GASB 54, adopt the following authorization beginning with the 2011-2012 fiscal year to comply with the categorization of fund balance as prescribed by GASB Statement 54 as recommended by the Executive Director:

- The following assets are acknowledged as Nonspendable:
  - Inventories
  - Prepaid Expenses

- The following fund balances are acknowledged as Committed:
  - Capital Campaign
  - PACK Fundraising

- The following fund balances are acknowledged as Assigned:
  - Fieldwork Fees
  - Budget carryovers

This resolution may be executed in one or more counterparts, all of which taken together shall constitute the same resolution, and when signed by the President of the BOCES may be certified by any proper director of the RMSEL organization.

By their signatures, the undersigned member(s) evidence their approval of the above proceedings as of the date last above written.

_________________________________________________________________
Sue Chandler, President

_________________________________________________________________
Anne Rowe, Secretary/Treasurer

Discussion Items
Attendance Policy – Chad stated that this is a first reading of the proposed revision to the Attendance Policy for the board to review and provide comments and suggestions. It will be presented to RMSEL’s District Accountability Committee and Organizational Leadership Team, as well. The policy has been revised by analyzing the policies of our 5 districts, the input from Venture Prep from last year, and information submitted by a DAC member from the Denver School of Science and Technology. Being a school of choice, families travel from all over the metro Denver area to be here. As a district, we have to act in a district capacity to review attendance effectively. Our districts have truancy review boards and truancy officers. JulieMarie Shepherd, Aurora Public Schools, is not here today, but Chad commends her and superintendent John Barry of APS. They have hired 10 attendance officers who are going door to door to make sure students are in school. They want students to attend school in their district, and they want RMSEL students to attend school to receive the education provided here. The RMSEL model of education cannot be replicated remotely by Skype or other means, students need to be in attendance. Additions and/or changes to this policy include a provision regarding closed campus
for lunch which was not included in the previous policy; clarification of the policy for students making up work; clarifying tardiness by state statute; and the addition of Procedures for Monitoring and Compliance of Compulsory Attendance. These items may all be revised by board members. We have proposed the addition of a RMSEL Attendance Review Board, consisting of the Executive Director, the Office Manager, a Crew Leader, a Specialist, and a representative from the District Accountability Committee. This Review Board will meet 3 times annually, at the end of each trimester, and address students who have 15 or more absences during one school year. The Review Board will determine if the student may return to RMSEL and be retained to obtain credit; if the student will be required to return to his/her school district of residence; or if the student may remain on an attendance contract and be reviewed during the subsequent trimester. During the time of being on an attendance contract, the Executive Director must approve any absence, and any unapproved absence will result in the student’s withdrawal from RMSEL and referral to his/her school district of residence. We ask the board, the District Accountability Committee and the RMSEL Organizational Leadership Team to weigh in on this policy. The policy will be brought to the board at the May meeting for a second reading and approval. Sue asked for any questions or comments. Rosann expressed thanks to Chad for the data on the current state of absences; 50% of high school students having excessive absences is more than significant. She suggested even more stringent guidelines for the procedures for monitoring attendance, by decreasing the numbers for a contact regarding absences in order to raise the accountability and set the standard for students. Sue voiced that we need feedback from all districts, what is the common standard? This policy was adopted in 2009. Sue asked Chad to again highlight the proposed revisions to this policy. Chad responded with the addition of the closed campus provision, the amendment to the make-up work policy, definition of tardies, clarification of course credit, procedures for monitoring and compliance, and the procedures regarding the RMSEL Review Board. Sue said that she believes we are moving in the right direction. Change is hard, but in the best interest of students. Anne stated that this discussion is timely with very intentional interventions taking place in DPS, starting with attendance. Claudine will see what her district policy is regarding attendance. Some of their schools have an “Attend to Attend” policy, that students must be in attendance at school in order to attend other activities. From the perspective of a parent with a special needs child, her daughter may be out for extensive medical appointments or other needs, and those circumstances need to be taken into consideration in conversations with parents. Sue asked that Chad look into excused vs. unexcused absences, as there may be new law changes to the Colorado Revised Statutes, and we need to be current. Parents voiced today that they have heard of changes but don’t really grasp the “why” behind the change. We need to be mindful of how things are being communicated. We “get it” because we have been involved in the conversations leading to that, but it may be new to parents. A lot of these are legal law policies that we are required to follow with no choice. Sue expressed appreciation for Chad reviewing and updating these policies.

2012-2013 Budget – Julie stated that the PPR we are currently projecting is based on an estimate we received from DPS in March of $6,733 per FTE, which is about a 1.66% decrease from what we received in January. This budget is based on this conservative PPR estimate. All calculations in this budget are based on an FTE of 390 students, an increase over last year of 28 students. There is movement in the fundraising section of the budget, moving specific events to the PACK budget. We are looking at how we spend fundraising differently. Funds raised in the past were spent the following year to backfill operational budget needs. We are moving to spending money in the same year it is raised. None of the money will be spent until it is raised. PACK will meet with Chad about allocation of fundraising monies. There is some change in administrative and facilities expense, due to rising costs. There is a 3% increase in fieldwork fees, approved by the District Accountability Committee; increased enrollment in the middle school; restructure in the high school; expanded specials/elective options for students in K-12. There is the addition of an annual junior trip to Costa Rica. For salary and benefits, a new salary schedule will be implemented for 2012-2013 that will more closely align salaries with other districts. Teachers will see a salary increase, anywhere from a 2.68% to a 28.71% increase, based on the new scale and their experience. Regarding aides and interns, we will be collaborating with the Stanley British Primary (SBP) program to bring in 6 interns to work with teachers. We will also add a high school aide. Chad clarified that an intern in the classroom will be a person who has invested in undergraduate or graduate study in another field, now feels a calling to teach and has entered SBP to become a certified teacher. We will essentially have two teachers in a classroom of 25 when the intern is in the classroom. This will be an asset to the classroom. Julie stated that administrative salaries have decreased by over $17,000, and the specialists/elective program has increased by about $157,000, which reflects the expanded choice options we have for students. We have not yet received new figures for health and dental insurance rates. We know there will be an increase based on the increased staffing. Those new rates will be reflected in the budget in May. The
PERA statutory percentage for employers is increasing by almost 1%. There is a graph presented with this budget that represents compensation: $1.6 million in salaries, of that, 79% is in classroom instruction, 19% is administrative, and 2% is budgeted to facilities.

Sue asked, in the EL model, how do student trips get paid for in the budget? Julie responded that there is a line item in the budget for fieldwork fees. Parents support those trips by paying fieldwork fees. That money goes to fund fieldwork for all students. Fieldwork fees range from $230-$760 for next year. We pay catastrophic insurance out of those fees due to the nature of RMSEL learning expeditions; a portion is set aside for financial aid; some goes for media library expense related to student portfolios; and a fieldwork planning day (1 day of release time per crew leader per year); maintenance of buses and bus insurance; all of that is covered by fieldwork fees. The District Accountability Committee approved using a portion of fieldwork fees to help get the elective program off the ground next year, meaning equipment, supplies, and resources, not salaries. Sue asked for questions regarding the budget, and advised the new board members to contact Julie if there are areas needing explanation. The budget will be presented in May for board adoption at the June meeting.

Sue stated that one of the changes she has seen with Chad’s leadership is in truly aligning the budget to a strategic plan, and aligning staff and programs to meet that plan. Sue commended Chad for his hard work in this area. Claudine asked about funds that were raised in the past being spent the following year, why the change for this year? Julie responded that funds were used in the past to backfill the budget, and we are not doing that moving forward. We will not spend money we do not have. Rosann asked if the interns will be on a one year or two year cycle. Chad responded that SBP is a one year cycle. Conversations are still taking place with staff as to the allocation of the interns. Interns will be at RMSEL 4 days per week, a minimum of 32 hours, with release on Thursdays for all day professional development at SBP. Rosann asked if interns receive their alternative license at the end of that year, and if we are considering transitioning any of those interns into teaching positions at RMSEL. Chad replied that if we have openings, yes, they will be considered to move into a position, but it is not a guaranteed transition position. Our teaching staff supports “growing our own.” Sue asked how the staff feels about the plans for using interns. Chad said that we are finalizing within the lower school the utilization of interns/aides, and how they best fit. We’ve met with middle school teachers, and they have finalized their request to have 2 interns, 1 for humanities, 1 for math/science. As far as educational aides and interns, this is not a one for the other trade, but how to use both to best support students. Sue stated that a lot of work was done in the past with Venture Prep, and suggested getting copies of the past recommendations to the new board members. This was valuable input and Sue sees the improvement. Sue asked if this budget meets the needs regarding professional development. Chad responded that the professional development budget remains the same as last year. EL MOU, line item #68000, refers to our collaboration with the Expeditionary Learning national network. It provides access to EL resources and documents, allows for attendance at EL conferences, and provides onsite support from EL school designers with RMSEL staff. Sue stated that in past discussions regarding the MOU, it was debated whether to have this budget due to cost, and it had been dropped from the budget. However, survey responses showed a desire to reinstate it. Chad thanked PEBC for donating $10,000 for professional development. Rosann has acknowledged that the donation will be provided again.

Projected Rollover – Chad stated that we have had transition in the school this year resulting in salary savings and by using the discretionary fund to support classrooms/teachers. This has resulted in money left that can be rolled forward to next year in order to continue implementing the strategic plan with fidelity, supporting new elective and interventionist positions, and continuing with PD. Julie said that the current projected 2011-2012 budget rollover is estimated between $50,000 and $80,000. This includes supplemental PPR, enrichment, salaries, discretionary, instructional supplies, contingency, and savings from salary and benefits. This is an extremely busy time of year with lots of fieldwork, crew trips and passages, so there will undoubtedly be changes to the estimated budget rollover in the next month; however, there will be a specific number to roll forward July 1st. Kevin stated that this is good practice to use, to change the “use it or lose it” mentality regarding funds. It is an effective tool to use with uncertain state funding fluctuations.

**Budget Update**

Regarding this year’s budget, when the budget was revised in January, the PPR was budgeted at $6,847. If funding remains flat, that will be the number for next year. Kindergarten financial aid has been fully expended. Anyone with 3 or more students at RMSEL is eligible for a 10% discount on fieldwork fees. Grant funding from the Colorado Health Foundation is in the budget to support fitness, and from the Schramm Foundation which was used to purchase middle
school math textbooks. Kindergarten tuition for the second half of the day is $3,335, spread over 10 months. The auditor wanted to see fundraising and after school enrichments budgeted for, and those line items are in this budget. The RMSEL auction on March 17th was a huge success, raising over $34,000. There has been $18,726 raised with the RMSEL First Giving campaign. Kevin asked for clarification regarding the current budgeted PPR: is this a decrease of about $100 per student? Julie said yes, a 1.66% decrease. The final number from the state may not be available until May. Sue asked if we are building in a way to sustain grant funding. Julie replied that we have about $90,000 of grant money for high school fitness to go over the next 2-3 years, which will result in a net of zero. Sue asked who pursues grants. Chad stated that the Colorado Health Foundation grant was pursued by our fitness teacher and previous administration, and the grant from the Schramm Foundation was pursued by this administration. Marci and Chad will work collaboratively with staff to pursue future grants. Sue informed the board that PACK has obtained the 501(c)(3) status now, moving into purposeful, transparent goals. Julie stated that she is available to meet with board members individually as needed regarding the budget.

Future Agenda
Regarding the May board meeting, Sue and JulieMarie will not be available, so Claudine will have to run the meeting. Kevin would like to know the schedule moving forward to coordinate his schedule. Sue stated that the board needs to meet in Executive Session to go over Chad’s contract, which requires a special meeting for that. Sue will work with Chad to get the May meeting rescheduled. The Executive Session is scheduled for April 25th at 7:00 a.m.

Diplomas for this year’s graduates need to be signed by the board members of the respective districts, and they were distributed to the board to sign. Board members were asked to attend the RMSEL graduation, if possible.

Adjournment
Sue asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Anne moved to adjourn, Kevin seconded. The board meeting was adjourned.

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Sue Chandler, President

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Anne Rowe, Secretary/Treasurer