Sue Chandler called the meeting to order at 7:00 a.m.

Approval of Agenda
Sue requested a motion to approve the agenda. Rosann made a motion to approve the agenda, and Claudine seconded. The agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes
Sue asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Rosann made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2011 meeting. Second was made by Ann, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Executive Director Report
Chad noted that the Executive Director Report was emailed to the board members prior to the meeting and is being presented as a more formal document in order to get information to each district’s board in a timelier manner. He stated that the topic of discussion right now is the IGA. The IGA is in final form and has been sent to all 5 districts. We have approval from LPS, and the IGA was on the DCSD agenda last night, and is assumed to have been approved.

Appreciation was expressed to Kindra for her efforts in getting the IGA to the Douglas County board. Chad has been working with Brenna Copeland at DPS and Mandy Hesterman with CCSD. Ann stated that the IGA is on the agenda for the DPS meeting tomorrow. APS had the IGA on their meeting agenda last week, and Sue believes that it was approved. CCSD tabled it at the last board meeting so that all members could review the IGA, and the next meeting is February 13th. Sue asked board members to make sure it is on the agenda for their next meeting so that RMSEL can enroll students for 2012-2013.

On December 6th, we presented the 3 year strategic plan to RMSEL staff at our monthly meeting. Both Sue and Jennifer Churchfield were in attendance for the presentation. Chad then met with impacted staff members the next day regarding any changes that affect them personally. The strategic plan included one Reduction in Force for the 2012-2013 school year. Chad also met with students during their Community Meeting that same day, and then communicated the information to parents on December 8th. At this point, we have received very positive feedback from parents, requesting clarification, expressing not criticism but excitement about the plan moving forward. Students are asking clarifying questions regarding crew configuration for next year, due to the reduction of 2 high school crews. The staff had two weeks over winter break to process information and ask questions before the end of the year. Since returning from break, we had a full-day of professional development on January 3rd, focusing on long-term learning targets tied to standards, with a connection to a K-12 continuum. We have a 2 day staff retreat in February at Snow Mountain Ranch and will spend time together in the wilderness, cross country skiing then focusing on long-term instructional work. The staff has posed some of their questions regarding the “nuts and bolts” of the logistical pieces of our plan, and are ready to focus on the long-term instructional work.

At our last Open House in January, we had 140 families present. Families are trying to solidify decisions regarding school enrollment as we approach springtime. Normally, the attendance is about 80% lower school; however, this open house reflected 60% secondary school parents in attendance and 40% lower school parents in attendance. The change in the middle school structure with stand alone 6th grade and the decrease in high school class sizes has brought about a greater interest from the community. February 2nd will be our next Open House, with the application deadline being the next day, February 3rd. Chad expressed thanks to Cris for the assumption of responsibilities from the Operations Director position, including logging of all incoming applications. Chad and Julie plan to run lottery on February 6th. We are extremely optimistic that we will meet our enrollment goal of 400 students.

One of the big goals of the Unified Improvement Plan is to target writing instruction and growth. We’ve done a common writing assessment with a rubric scale. Feedback from instructional leadership is that we now know which students are...
struggling with writing and the targeted areas in which they need support. To help differentiate that in a K-12 setting, we are currently engaged in book studies at a differentiated text level. Lower school is focusing on Creative Writing, middle school is looking at the 6+1 Traits of Writing, and high school (including 7th and 8th grades) is working on Content-Area Writing. This book presents the premise that kids are writing more now than ever before, be it texting, email, blogging or social networking. The writing is being transported into various levels of writing in the classroom. The book studies have been powerful because one element is observing other teachers engaged in that practice and trying that strategy. Chad observed one high school class where a particular strategy was implemented, and the teacher noted that the activity didn’t work well because it had students working in two isolated groups. The next day he used one of the quick write strategies that was more effective at keeping all students engaged in the activity.

Next week, thanks to Rosann and the PEBC, we have six teachers going to the Thinking Strategies Institute (TSI) for four days, and we are very excited about that. TSI enhances our instructional framework. Chad had the opportunity to attend the TSI last year, and found it very powerful. We are looking forward to great success continuing this school year. High school teachers met with Chad last week and ironed out the complete high school schedule for next year, which in the past has not happened prior to June.

Sue expressed appreciation to Chad for proactively addressing issues with staff early instead of waiting until spring, so that there isn’t wondering what may happen at RMSEL, as has happened in the past. This seems to have put staff, parents, and students more at ease about the status of things at RMSEL. It will be beneficial to the board as they move forward in implementing an evaluation for Chad that he has already aligned his goals and put in place a strategic plan.

Sue asked if anyone had any questions for Chad. Claudine asked if it is possible to set up a time to come and tour RMSEL, since all she’s observed is from the door to the meeting room, and board meetings happen when no students are present. Can board members see RMSEL in action? Chad responded that we would absolutely love for the board members to see our students engaged in the classrooms. We can plan a tour for after our next meeting, or set up individual dates depending on what works best with schedules.

Rosann asked about professional development is going with Expeditionary Learning. Chad replied that we have an EL MOU, with Jen Wood and Cyndi Gueswel coming in for full-day professional development. RMSEL did not have an MOU last year, but we have been able to bring that back this year. We modified the MOU so that they are here for half days meeting with teachers. We have a new humanities teacher in the middle school, Julia LeGrand. Coming in new to EL in the middle of the year is challenging. One example of how we integrate EL is that we allotted a half-day for Julia to meet with EL for planning with her teammate, MB, on their expedition for next year. Jen and Cyndi provide us with an onsite report after every session that they meet with staff members.

Sue thanked Chad for his report. She stated that Chad reports to the board, and addressed the roles of board members including training new board members. New board members are welcome to meet and talk with Sue or Chad. Perhaps it would be beneficial to ask staff to review what has been needed/done from board members in the past, and share that information over the next few meetings so that there wouldn’t be a need for a separate meeting focused on training. Sue also expressed a question regarding how information is communicated back and forth between RMSEL and the districts. What is whose responsibility – signatures, etc? Sometimes things unintentionally fall through the cracks. In terms of voting, board members have the authority to vote independently here, but the hope is that board members will share with their district board members and get input to involve them in their vote.

Open Forum
Sue thanked Doug in regard to the new DCSD board member, Kevin Larsen. If not available, Doug or Craig Richardson can attend the BOCES meetings. If a board member is unable to attend the board meeting, please find a replacement representative to attend in your absence. A quorum is needed for voting on the budget, audit, approving minutes, etc. Doug asked about teleconferencing abilities and if that is a possibility at RMSEL. Julie said that has been done in the past.

Consent Agenda
Chad reported that we have one teacher resignation and one teacher leave of absence, both for personal reasons. He welcomed our new middle school humanities teacher, Julia LeGrand, who is Colorado licensed and has her MA. Sue asked if there was a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Doug moved to approve the Consent Agenda, and the second was made by JulieMarie. The question was raised as to when the position lost by the RIF will be on a consent agenda. Chad responded that will not happen until we issue contracts, which will be in March. The motion and second had already been made, so vote was taken and the consent agenda was unanimously approved.
Action Items

2012-2013 Calendar: Sue asked if changes were made from the calendar previously seen by the board. Chad replied that this calendar is very similar to the previous one, and there was no change in the number of instructional days, but movement within the placement of the days. We moved winter break to make for a more cohesive flow of instruction. The break is still 2 weeks in duration; however, we just relocated some of the allocated days, including the professional development day. This calendar allows for larger chunks of instructional time, rather than some of the calendars in the past. We also added another portfolio presentation day due to additional middle school students presenting portfolios, with the increased enrollment at middle school. Doug asked what parent feedback has been received regarding the calendar. Chad stated that on January 6th, during the “Chat with Chad,” 25-30 people were present, which is representative of about 70% lower school and 30% secondary school. Doug asked if we put out a survey regarding the calendar, and Chad replied that we did not. Doug suggested more outreach to parents for input into the calendar, such as a survey to parents. Sue noted that start and end times have been pretty consistent over the years. Ann commented that DPS did a parent survey and received about 8,000 responses, with about that many opinions. While it is a great idea, it may not provide really helpful feedback. Sue replied that LPS takes feedback, but tries to make the calendar fit to instructional time, PD and student achievement. She voiced the need for a clean break instructionally at winter break, and the RMSEL draft calendar does provide a clean break. Chad noted that feedback is solicited from our PACK group. The RMSEL calendar does fit with most of our district calendars, with the exception of April dates.

Chad reported that the TCAP assessment window is out, we will be looking at the week of March 25th-29th; however, we could push dates later and still get tests to CDE because of our smaller student body.

Sue asked for motion to approve calendar. Rosann made a motion to approve the 2012-2013 calendar. The motion was seconded by Claudine, and the calendar was approved unanimously and adopted.

2011-2012 Revised Budget: Julie stated that there are two documents, a spreadsheet and the accompanying explanation. As mentioned in the audit presentation, budgeting for fundraising and after school enrichment are changes to this budget. There is some additional revenue and expenses as well as some savings due to hiring and resignation events. The auditors wanted to ensure that in January, if we know about budget revisions, we present a revised budget to board with those changes. For any subsequent changes, a supplemental budget will be presented. Some money that wasn’t in the original budget because we didn’t know about it includes DPS Technology Bond funds of $6,000, $6,000 from the Schramm Foundation for middle school math textbooks, and a grant of about $19,000 from the CO Health Foundation. Julie stated that she believes we will make some additional money from renting the facility to YMCA. A cost of goods sold section (costs associated with fundraising and after school enrichment) has been added as well. There are some additional revenues from salary savings. This budget allocates $15,000 for renovation of our two mobile classrooms, for use by either the 6th grades or high school students. This will be a furniture, fixtures and equipment expenditure – new carpet, bookcases, additional technology (we have Elmos and want Promethian boards), new tables and chairs – essentially gut and overhaul the mobiles. The construction amount is listed as $15,000 and there is another $15,000 provided for the purchase of furniture, but this is school-wide, not just for the mobiles. There is a slight increase in Special Education services with the additional student. There is $25,000 in instructional contingency to be used school-wide for classroom needs such as textbooks.

Chad noted that the responsibilities from the Operations Director position have been reallocated. He expressed his gratitude for Cris, our Office Manager, and Nancy, our Academic Secretary, who have taken on multiple extra responsibilities. Marci, Julie and Chad have absorbed additional responsibilities from this transition as well. Cris is processing and logging all enrollment applications. The next couple weeks will be very busy.

Sue noted that we are reporting fundraising differently. Julie responded that we are now budgeting fundraising and costs against fundraising. Our new auditor wants that information back in our financial reports. Sue voiced that in the past, the board was really concerned about budget and its usage, and she appreciates all of the work from Julie and Chad with budget changes and adjustments. If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Julie. Rosann expressed that she is troubled by some of the auditor’s concerns for Julie’s exposure. She appreciates that RMSEL has a small staff, but would like to identify ways to protect Julie from risk. Julie responded that we have numerous compensating controls. Julie only counter signs checks over $5,000 or Chad’s expense reimbursement checks. Chad reviews everything, including check requests, expense reimbursements, credit card statements, bank statements and reconciliations. Julie could be removed as a check signatory; however, that will require another person to absorb that responsibility, and they would need to be present over school breaks to sign checks. The auditor did not state any of the numerous internal controls that RMSEL has in place to mitigate exposure. The auditor pointed out that in the past we have held checks before depositing them, primarily the fieldwork fee deposit for new students. As in past years, payments are logged in a cash receipts log, and then recorded in the accounting system. Every effort is made to deposit
funds within 24 hours of receipt. This receiving procedure has been in place for many years, and is a compensating control. Parents receive monthly statements for student fees, and budget reports go to all cost centers (teachers and management), including Susan as DAC chair. Sue stated that it is a valid board concern to limit the liability of staff for protection of staff, not because of concern regarding staff integrity or misuse. Doug asked if the auditor made any finding regarding internal controls needing addressed. Sue replied that the auditor noted with the small size of our school, RMSEL has adequate controls in place. Julie stated that RMSEL has always received an unqualified opinion or clean audit. Nothing needs to be addressed with the auditor regarding audit concerns. Julie presented a written response addressing each concern that the auditor expressed, and the procedure or compensating control in place. This is the first year with this audit firm, which represents a substantial cost savings. Sue stated that the board may want to ensure that the auditor is meeting the needs of the board, rather than just a cost savings. Rosann inquired whether there is an audit committee to review the audit before it is presented to the board, and Sue responded that there is not. Chad stated that the purpose for presenting the revised budget today was in response to the audit recommendation. Sue followed up on Rosann’s question by stating that in sponsoring districts, DAC and Financial Accountability Committee review the budget – does RMSEL? Chad replied that DAC does review the budget and financial statements.

Sue asked for a motion to adopt the revised 2011-2012 budget. Ann made a motion to adopt the revised budget, which Doug seconded. The revised 2011-2012 budget was adopted with unanimous approval.

Discussion Items

2012-2017 IGA: Chad stated that LPS has approved and signed the 2012-2017 IGA; it was on the APS agenda and went to vote; CCSD will vote on February 13th; on DPS for January 19th; and it was on the DCSD agenda for vote last night. Sue expressed that Chad may come to boards to share. He presented to the LPS board and did a great job, which made their board much more comfortable and confident with signing the IGA. It was very beneficial for Chad to take the time to do this.

Graduation Requirements: Chad searched for graduation requirements and found that basically, the previous directors have defaulted to the sponsoring district’s requirements (e.g. DPS students have to meet DPS requirements). Our draft requirements have streamlined this. Our draft graduation requirements do not break down by overall course and provide some allowance during grades 9-10. This allows students who may have missed a few credit hours in their previous school to enter RMSEL and hit the ground running. We require students in grades 3, 5, 8, 10, and 12 to complete and submit a passage portfolio, which is two years’ documentation of classroom work and expeditions. A passage panel of outside experts facilitated by a staff member reviews the portfolio to verify the student has met passage requirements. We want to make sure every 10th grade student has met the learning standards. We are requiring that all 11th and 12th grade students meet all course credit requirements for those grades in order to graduate. In 9th and 10th grades, the Mini Challenge refers to a 2 week off-site internship experience for students, at a place of the student’s choice (law firm, medical office, etc.) Students are in the field 80 hours, plus 80 more hours of writing documentation prior to and after their mini challenge. We have allocated credit to that course work because it is extremely intensive. Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound Crew is 2-3 weeks in the field per year spent in a wilderness adventure setting, and students must document their learning. This results in a total of 120 hours spent in the field. Senior Learning Experience allots credit based on the amount of time spent off-site (6 weeks) with a professional in the field of their choice. One student is going to be working with a non-profit organization in Washington, DC. We have students that have gone to Guatemala. Students submit documentation from a professional which has to be approved in advance, then write-ups and extensive analysis of their experience. Foreign Language requirement of two hours is being requested. This brings our graduation requirements to a total of 28 hours, which is slightly higher than our sponsoring districts (but within 2 hours). We are asking to solidify graduation requirements as an independent district, Expeditionary BOCES 9130 and requesting board input. Regarding grade level passage, Ann asked what happens if a student doesn’t meet requirements for passage? Chad responded that the student may prepare over the summer months and present in order to regain credit. If not successful, no credit is given and credit is required for graduation. Sue asked if we make them retake the course if the portfolio is not up to expectation. The preparation for passage portfolio includes multiple opportunities for revision throughout the year as the student prepares. RMSEL is rigorous, and we want students to be prepared for higher education before they leave RMSEL. Our IGA does refer to prerequisites, specifically we require 10th grade passage for a student to move to 11th grade (pg 3, Section 9e3). Students have the opportunity to obtain additional credit hours. Sue asked if we have always had Spanish at RMSEL. Chad responded that 9th, 10th and 11th grades have always taken Spanish, but it was not required for graduation. The intent is to have K-12 Spanish for next year: 1A-1B level at middle school, 2 level and higher in high school. Students could nearly become a bi-lingual student if at RMSEL for K-12. Sue expressed that the drafted graduation requirements are a great starting point, and it gets RMSEL closer to state requirements for graduation. The graduation requirements draft will be presented at the next board meeting as an item for action. The draft will be modified if needed by state requirements. Chad noted that Humanities provides dual credit – English and Social Studies. Sue asked what the community response has been. Chad has met with our high school
teachers and had discussions. Staff identified clear-cut graduation requirements for incoming students. We are not an alternative school, but do take alternative kids; we are not a “second-chance” school. Kids who were not successful in traditional environment may be missing some previous credit requirements. Rosann asked how we fit everything into the school year for seniors (class courses + SLE). Chad expressed that SLE has always been a part of RMSEL. There are a lot of moving components at RMSEL, specifically in the spring – seniors are out for SLE, juniors out for two week ELOB crew trip at same time, and 9-10 graders are at school doing CSAP. We have figured out a balance in the calendar to minimize loss of instructional time. Sue asked if a student is behind, do they do summer school credit recovery? Summer school programs are available for students who need credit recovery, but they are not available at RMSEL as a part of regular school day. Sue stated that in the past, the board wondered if RMSEL students really earned their diploma; it feels much better with very clearly stated goals and requirements for graduation.

**Budget Update**

Julie stated that we are on budget for the year. The statements are as of December 31st. We have received funding for 2nd half of year. Sue thanked Julie for making the percent change that Mary Seawell requested as it is helpful. Year to year comparisons are now included. In the past, some board members have taken our financials to their CFO for input. Julie has taken phone calls from them and can sit down with any board member. Sue mentioned that Scott Myers at LPS is available for reviewing a Fund Balance Policy, which is something the auditors have requested from RMSEL.

**Future Agenda Items**

Regarding meeting times, Claudine has executive staff meeting every Wednesday at 9:00 a.m.. The meetings will remain at 7:00 a.m. on Wednesdays, with the intention of a 1-1 ½ hour meeting duration. With regard to meeting dates, Sue has a conflict with the May meeting. Sue requested that board members check their calendars and see if others have a conflict and a need to move the meeting. The board needs to elect a Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer, and the election of these officers will take place at the next meeting. Jennifer Churchfield and Mary Seawell will receive the minutes from the last meeting and sign as those roles.

**Adjournment**

Sue asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made, seconded, and the meeting adjourned.

A motion was made that the Board of Education convene into executive session per C.R.S. 24-6-402, Meetings-Open to Public Section (4)(f) relating to personnel matters, specifically superintendent’s evaluation. The board convened into executive session.

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Sue Chandler, President

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Rosann Ward, BOCES Representative