ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCHOOL OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING
MINUTES OF BOCES MEETING
November 16, 2011
7:00 a.m.

In Attendance: Sue Chandler, Jennifer Churchfield, Claudine McDonald, Ann Rowe, JulieMarie Shepherd, Mary Seawell and Rosann Ward

Staff: Leann Asgari, Chad Burns, Marci Elder, Julie Stelzer and Cris Veteto

Guests: Jennifer Barrow, Susan Street, Wendy Swanhorst and Kindra Whitmyre

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 Jennifer seconded. The agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes
Sue asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Jennifer moved to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2011 meeting. Second was made by Mary, and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Introductions
Chad suggested everyone introduce themselves since there were some new board members present.

Executive Director Report
Chad celebrated that RMSEL received a grant of $6,000 from the Schramm Foundation to fund middle school math textbooks to support the Connected Mathematics Program, which is more problem-solving and critical-thinking based. In the event that RMSEL has students that need differentiated instruction, these textbooks will be used to supplement instruction. RMSEL wants to look at creating a content and curriculum map from the framework of standards, 21st century skills, and problem-solving based integration that CMP provides, without missing out on the foundational number sense and computation pieces. The Schramm Foundation has awarded grants to RMSEL in the past, but never in this dollar amount.

The EXPLORE, PLAN, and Practice ACT tests were recently administered to the 8th through 11th grade students. RMSEL paid the cost of the EXPLORE and PLAN tests, while DPS, through the Kaplan Project, provided for the Practice ACT. The information has already come back with scores. The data is organized by the number of years that students have been at RMSEL and their results. RMSEL has 3 years of data for some student groups. Data analysis is in process, and it will be reported to the board in the future. In the past, these types of tests were viewed as "un-RMSEL" but, while the test results have created questions for administration, they are also providing answers. By beginning these tests at the 8th grade, it allows the ability for RMSEL to support students whose initial test scores are low in order to make the progress they need to attend college. Chad and Marci are hosting a Parent Night on November 30th to help parents and students understand the test results, and how these tests impact opportunities for students in regard to college options and scholarships. In the second half of this school year, RMSEL will be looking at interventions and improvements to the school based on the data. Chad expressed his appreciation to Marci for all the time and energy she invested in this process.

Following up on the teacher licensure resolution, Chad stated that he has sent out a formal letter to the teaching staff, including 3 resources for teachers to contact. Meeting times have been offered for teachers to discuss and/or ask questions with administration. Along with these communications, teachers were notified that documentation of current progress toward licensure, or intent of progress to come, needs to be signed and returned to Julie or Chad before March 1st, as that is the date for contract renewal decisions to be made. Staff received information regarding Brenda Munzert
with Douglas County School District, who has been a phenomenal support to the teachers involved in the licensure program. Also, Norma Lawanson at CDE has been collaborating with the teachers. Sue Sava, who runs the alternative licensure program for Stanley British Primary School, is another resource for the teachers. Sue Chandler asked how the staff has received this information regarding the need for licensure, and if they understand the need. Chad said this affects a total of 8 teachers, 2 of whom allowed their licensure to lapse, and they can apply for reinstatement with provision of professional development hours. Six teachers would be in the alternative licensure or unlicensed group, with 2 of those holding out of state licenses, leaving only 4 teachers who are unlicensed. This may create some attrition in the teaching staff, but the actual impact is not yet known. Chad expressed that the resolution regarding licensure was shared in the staff meeting on November 1st, and there was no outcry. Positive feedback came from teachers. Sue asked if all of RMSEL’s teachers are highly qualified. Chad responded that all teachers are highly qualified in their subject area. Jennifer expressed her appreciation for the manner in which Chad has addressed this with the staff.

Expeditionary Learning (EL) comes to the building for onsite professional development, and they also meet monthly with Marci, as well as attend the Instructional Leadership Team meetings. Professional development is moving forward, specifically with the writing assessment and collection of data, then reporting back to the staff and students on that data. This process is going very well, and gave RMSEL valuable feedback. At an EL Leadership Cohort Marci and Chad attended, other schools provided feedback about the exciting things happening at RMSEL, and asked to see the common writing assessment. The partnership with EL will be evaluated as RMSEL moves forward. PEBC’s role at RMSEL is also greatly appreciated. EL serves as the school’s instructional framework, and the PEBC supports the instructional practices within that framework. Staff feedback is that they are hungry for instructional practice. Therefore, RMSEL is going to conduct book studies as we move forward, with the intent of capturing the K-12 model by using differentiated books for K-3, 4-5, and 6-12 grades.

Chad expressed that the response to the Open Houses is impressive. The last Open House had approximately 125 people in attendance. The population of people present at Open House is diversifying across school levels. During the Open House, Chad discusses what expeditionary learning really means, and students talk about fieldwork, crew trips, character and academics. It is captivating to hear a 4th grade student that is able to address an adult audience and speak eloquently about their RMSEL experiences. Looking at the increased enrollment that was requested in the IGA, with the interest that is being displayed in Open Houses, RMSEL should be able to meet the enrollment quota.

Open Forum
Jennifer Barrow, treasurer of the RMSEL PACK and parent of a 3rd grader and 6th grader at RMSEL introduced herself, and shared that her children have been at RMSEL for all of their schooling. Susan Street, parent of a high school student and two RMSEL graduates, also chairperson of the District Accountability Committee (DAC), introduced herself. Wendy Swanhorst of Swanhorst & Company LLC, introduced herself and will address the audit later in this meeting.

*See note at end of minutes

Approval of the Consent Agenda

Personnel Matters:  Leann shared with the board her decision to resign effective December 31, 2011. The board members and Chad thanked Leann for her many years of service to RMSEL. The responsibilities of the Operations Director position are being reallocated to other administrative staff, as this position was scheduled to be eliminated for the 2012-2013 school year.

2012-2013 Fieldwork Fee Recommendation: The DAC recommended an 3% increase in annual fieldwork fees at RMSEL. Chad stated that this was discussed in the last DAC meeting, and information was made available to the DAC members as to the allocation of fieldwork fee funds. The DAC members suggested that rather than itemizing that information to the school, he should just state the new amount for fieldwork fees. Jennifer made a motion to approve the increase in fieldwork fees; Mary seconded, and it was approved unanimously.

BOCES Minutes
November 16, 2011
Page 2 of 4
**Action Items**

**Audit Presentation:** Wendy Swanhorst of Swanhorst & Company stated they are an audit firm that specializes in governmental non-profit organizations, including several school districts and charter schools. Wendy noted the following from the audit:

- Funds remaining in fieldwork and fundraising accounts are being deferred at year-end, and GAAP requires that any unspent funds roll to revenue at the end of the year. Wendy conceded that the practice RMSEL is currently using to track deferred revenue is acceptable and can be continued.
- Internal control weaknesses were noted, such as all invoices not being approved, having a second person review the bank statement and reconciliation, and a recommendation that Julie not be an authorized signer on RMSEL’s bank account.
- When total budgeted expenditures exceed the board approved budget, it is technically a violation of state statute. One reason this occurs is because RMSEL does not budget fundraising or afterschool enrichment. Julie noted that PACK is taking over fundraising, and those funds will no longer funnel through the RMSEL financial statements.
- State statute requires the use of the CDE chart of accounts. RMSEL uses a simplified chart of accounts for daily accounting purposes, and annually converts the RMSEL account numbers to those required for reporting to CDE.
- The capital campaign funds need to be committed to a specified purpose.

For clarification, Chad reiterated the following:

- The Executive Director reviews credit card statements and bank reconciliations and statements. Conversation may take place regarding who reviews which invoices.
- The Finance Director is a check signer; however, Chad is primary and Julie is secondary, only on those checks exceeding $5,000. If necessary, the school can remove Julie completely and select an alternative check signer.
- With regard to the Fund Balance Policy, Sue offered that Littleton has a policy that RMSEL can review.
- Chad noted that deferred revenues are being tracked by Julie, and that funds referred to as "committed" mean that the board designated the expenditure of those funds, funds referred to as "assigned" mean that the board gave RMSEL administration the authority for the expenditures.

Rosann made a motion to approve the audited financial statements. Mary seconded, and the board unanimously approved the motion.

**Discussion Items**

**2012-2017 Intergovernmental Agreement - DPS revisions:** Chad expressed his appreciation to the sponsoring districts and their legal departments for their work on the IGA. DPS’ legal department requested revisions regarding the funding article language and itinerant Special Education language clarification, updating the IGA document to current language and terminology. In the interim, DPS has signed a resolution to commit to the IGA, with the intention of signing the IGA once this language and terminology are finalized. Mary stated that DPS is excited to be able to offer RMSEL as a choice to an increased number of their students. She also expressed that the DPS bond will include RMSEL as a priority when it comes to allocating use of the bond funds. It was stated that perhaps when DPS comes to review the physical building, a member of the board could be present to interact in that process. There was discussion about the timeliness of the final IGA. The consensus was that it is fine for the final IGA to not be presented until the January board meeting, since there is not a board meeting scheduled for December, and there is at least a verbal commitment from all five sponsoring districts. The IGA will then be taken to each individual district board for approval and signing in February.

**2012-2013 Calendar:** Chad stated that he prepared a draft of the 2012-2013 calendar, and it is in review by the Organizational Leadership Team. The draft calendar allows for larger instructional blocks of time, with the removal of many of the fragmented weeks that previous calendars included. It gives an additional 13 days of instructional time before CSAP testing begins. Appreciation was expressed by the board members for the work on the calendar, and the improvements made.
Report Items
Julie presented the financial statements for review, and highlighted the comparative balance sheet and profit and loss statement as requested by the board.

Future Agenda Items
There were no future agenda items to discuss.

The meeting was adjourned.

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Sue Chandler, President

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Jennifer Churchfield, Vice President

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Mary Seawell, Secretary/Treasurer

** The voice recorder used for recording the board meetings malfunctioned during Open Forum. The minutes after that point in the meeting were reconstructed from notes taken during the board meeting.