ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCHOOL OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING
MINUTES OF BOCES MEETING
June 5, 2013
7:00 a.m.

In Attendance:  Sue Chandler, Ulcca Joshi Hansen, Kevin Larsen, Claudine McDonald, Anne Rowe, JulieMarie Shepherd, and David Willman

Staff:  Chad Burns, Julie Stelzer, and Cris Veteto

Guests:  Steve Steadman and Susan Street

Sue called the board meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda
Sue asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Claudine made a motion to approve, and Ulcca seconded. The agenda was unanimously approved. The Executive Session was moved to later in the agenda to allow for board members who were still on their way to the meeting.

Approval of Minutes
Sue asked if there were any corrections needed to the minutes of the May 8, 2013 meeting. Claudine made a motion to approve the minutes, and JulieMarie seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

Executive Director Report
Chad said that administrative staff is in the process of finalizing the 2012-2013 school year, while making the final revisions to the plans to begin next year. The month of May signifies the completion and documentation of learning through the annual portfolio process. Each student compiles his/her accomplished work products and artifacts from their learning, both in the classroom and field. The portfolio is then presented to an authentic audience. Each audience, composed of staff members, parents, and community members, reads each portfolio and provides feedback to each student. The student then has the opportunity to reflect and revise their portfolio and present to the audience in person. This process culminates with the audience providing each student with a letter highlighting various aspects from their portfolio and presentation. At RMSEL, students are working diligently up until the final hours of school preparing and presenting their learning. The month of May is filled with excitement, but is also exhausting for all parties involved in the portfolio process. Chad thanked the more than 120 volunteers who served on passage panels this year. He also voiced a special thank you to Marci Elder, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, who organizes and executes the portfolio reading, presentation, passage ceremonies, and graduation. Marci's impeccable eye for detail and organization allows for this process to take place each year.

Chad thanked the members of the BOCES who were able to attend graduation this year. The graduation program is always a culmination of student learning and success at RMSEL for each student. The individual crew leader speeches are inspiring as each student begins the next phase of their journey as learners as they enter college or the work force. This year, RMSEL celebrated the graduation of 23 students, who will be attending universities ranging from University of Denver to University of Washington. RMSEL is proud to celebrate and acknowledge our graduates once again today.

Chad said that RMSEL has celebrated the retirement of Roger Bonnet, 20-year veteran staff member, who has most recently served as Adventure Coordinator. Roger was part of the opening team of staff members at RMSEL and began teaching in the lower school. Roger transitioned to building one of the largest and safest Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound Adventure Programs in the network. RMSEL’s program is an exemplary model of the connection between the transference of learning in the field to success in the classroom. Chad would like to celebrate and thank Roger for his years of service to RMSEL.
Administration is in the process of finalizing new hires for the 2013-2014 school year. Chad said he is excited to announce the addition of Kate Wolff as RMSEL’s new K/1 Crew Leader in the lower school. Kate has worked at RMSEL for the past year as an intern staff member with Alisha Black-Mallon and the 4/5 teacher team. Also next year, John Stene, another intern from the University of Denver, will be teaching 7/8 Humanities. It is an exciting opportunity to continue working with these teachers as they begin their career at RMSEL. Chad stated that the opportunity to work alongside and provide teaching opportunities to intern staff members is a testament to the successful partnership RMSEL has established with the University of Denver. Along with these new hires, RMSEL also welcomes Scot Nobles, a veteran art teacher with 14 years of teaching experience to the specialist team for next year. Scot and his family are relocating to Denver from Los Angles. Scot has taught at every school level, including adjunct professor work at a local college.

Chad said that to support each new teacher, Marci, Katey Edson, and he will be hosting summer expedition planning workshops, as well as developing a RMSEL 101 course prior to Ground School in August. He looks forward to collaborating with new teachers and supporting them as they transition to the classroom. Each new staff member will also attend a two-day summer workshop with Expeditionary Learning, led by Jon Mann, EL Schools Mountain Region Director.

Administration is in the final phases of hiring for high school mathematics and the Educational Aide positions for the 2013-2014 school year. Chad will announce information to the RMSEL community through Field Notes. He expects to complete this process by June 14, 2013.

Chad said next year, RMSEL will again be partnering with the University of Denver to host graduate school interns in the classroom. Having additional educators in the classroom learning and honing their craft alongside our teachers provides additional resources to our students and enhances the learning environment. He expressed his appreciation of Jessica Learner and Betsey Leonard from the University of Denver in making this program a success.

Over the past two days, the Instructional Leadership Team has been working with other EL schools in the mountain region to solidify RMSEL’s EL Work Plan for next school year. This work plan outlines the student achievement and character goals for the school. RMSEL’s professional development plans as well as the EL Implementation Review are tied to this work plan annually. This plan guides RMSEL’s work as staff strives to continue deep implementation of EL school-wide in fulfilling RMSEL’s school vision.

Per the request of a member of the parent community, Chad will be creating and piloting a parent community survey to accompany the Colorado TELL survey and EL implementation review, to ensure that each stakeholder in RMSEL’s community is represented in the decision making process. This survey will be administered in March of 2014. The District Accountability Committee, as well as the BOCES, will participate in the creation and revision of the survey prior to implementation. Chad looks forward to continued communication and close alignment with RMSEL’s community stakeholders.

Sue thanked Chad for addressing several areas. She commented that several board members were able to attend graduation, and that it is always exciting to witness that ceremony. Sue asked Chad if he needs input from the BOCES on the content of the community survey. Chad said that he can contact the district Service Links. Sue offered the opportunity for District Accountability Committee members to attend an LPS district training for DAC.

Sue asked Chad to clarify RMSEL’s relationship with Outward Bound. Chad said that Outward Bound no longer exists as a national organization. They have satellite offices located in Colorado. RMSEL continues to work very closely with Expeditionary Learning (EL), while continuing to operate an independent adventure program aligned to the design principles and values of Outward Bound. Roger Bonnet, Adventure Coordinator at RMSEL, is retiring this year, but has worked extensively to establish the adventure program at RMSEL. Amy McCann has been working with Roger this year to transition and will now assume that position full-time. RMSEL’s adventure program ranges from multi-day trips on the Front Range, to canoeing, to 10 days in Costa Rica. This program has been extremely successful and has grown over the past two years. Ulccca asked if all grades participate in the adventure programming. Chad said that every grade participates in varying experiences ranging from camping to white water rafting to sailing and more. Very often, trips will tie in to the learning expedition, but not always. As the grade levels progress, the difficulty involved in their adventure trips increases. For example, the 9th grade students take a Border Links trip to Arizona centered on the study of immigration,
and the 10th grade students make a 10 day westward expansion trip to Canyon de Chelly. Every crew takes a trip two times per year. Sue commented that, from the parents’ perspectives previously voiced regarding doing away with Outward Bound, this is a misunderstanding on the part of the parents. Julie said that she thinks that confusion has arisen because ELOB no longer exists as an organization. EL and Outward Bound split, and RMSEL has strengthened the relationship with EL.

Open Forum
Steve Steadman, DAC member and grandparent of lower school student, spoke to the expedition that his first grade grandson went on this year, during which he lost his first tooth. Amy and Roger cared enough to save the tooth for him and to make sure that it made it safely back from the trip. Steve also was a 3rd grade passage panelist this year, and he was thunderstruck by what he observed from the students and their ability to present their learning experience to a group of people they don’t know.

Susan Street, DAC member and parent of a high school student, said she wanted to acknowledge that the work the students have done is still continuing. Her son built a surf board for his mini challenge, and will be traveling to California with his dad to use it. She expressed that Expeditionary Learning continues on in the home, not just at school. The continuation of community is evident in that school has only been out for one week, and the high school students have been getting together on a daily basis at one home or another. Susan expressed that the relationships that develop at RMSEL continue to grow and are lifelong relationships.

Executive Session
Ulcca moved that, per C.R.S. §24-6-402(4)(f)(i) – Matters pertaining to personnel, the board move into Executive Session. Anne seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved. The board moved to another location for Executive Session and will return to continue the board meeting following that session.

After a brief period of time, the board members returned from Executive Session and Sue reconvened the meeting.

Consent Agenda
- Item #1 – Personnel Matters – Sue asked if there were any brief questions. Claudine asked how many positions are still open to be filled. Chad said that the high school math position is not yet filled, and there will be from 1-4 Education Aide positions to be filled. Final interviews for the high school math position are today at 10:00. Chad expressed that there are a number of staff members leaving RMSEL to go to the new Downtown Denver Expeditionary School (DDES), which is an exciting opportunity for those teachers, and will also allow the school to open with many of their teaching staff already highly qualified, effective Expeditionary Learning teachers from RMSEL. Anne expressed her appreciation of those comments, and voiced her excitement about DDES. Claudine asked how long the teachers who are leaving have been at RMSEL. Chad and Julie advised the board as to the length of employment of each one of those staff members, which ranges from 4-8 years.

Claudine moved to approve the consent agenda, and Kevin seconded. The consent agenda was unanimously approved.

Action Items
- 2013-2014 Budget Adoption – Julie said that one of the biggest changes since the board saw the proposed budget in May is in enrollment. The projected enrollment has decreased by a few students. RMSEL does not accept incoming students at the 12th grade level, and for the 2013-2014 school year, there are only 16 seniors. Another change is in grant revenue. Grant funds were received in 2012-2013 but cannot be guaranteed at this time. If the grants are funded again for 2013-2014, the budget will be revised to reflect that. Julie said that RMSEL has decided to not aggressively rent the gym to outside groups, due to the necessity of paying staff members to stay and supervise the building, and the YMCA greatly reducing the hours of rental. This caused a 2-3 hour gap between the end of the school day and the beginning of the rental time, which created a hardship in staffing the supervision of the building. After school enrichment programs shows a decrease due to the salary restructure, and teachers no longer needing to supplement their income by leading after school enrichment
courses. Regarding expenses, the cost for the audit is increasing, due to the board approved change in auditing firms. Julie said that much of the building maintenance equipment was outdated, and has been replaced, resulting in an increase in that expense. She said that PACK raised about $50,000 for the purchase of a new bus. It has been ordered, and should be delivered in July. Insurance cost will not increase because it is a fleet policy.

Sue asked what the change in health care was. Julie said it went up by 6.92%. Sue asked if RMSEL will be affected by any new healthcare changes. Julie said that it doesn’t appear that RMSEL will really be affected in that regard. Last year, RMSEL offered a traditional HMO plan. This year, health insurance was changed to a plan with a high deductible and a bridge plan to mitigate the cost of the high deductible for employees. Kevin asked if RMSEL is self insured. Julie said RMSEL is insured by Kaiser Permanente.

Julie noted that the BOCES additional funding is still being received. It is scheduled to be received for 2013-2014 also. This year, there is currently estimated to be a $40,000 rollover from the budget to carryover to next year. The GASB 54 Resolution specifies that budget rollover be assigned for a specific use the following year.

Sue made the observation that it appears the overall budget has remained stable. Anne said that Julie did a nice job on the budget presentation, and that it is exciting that for the first time in 5 years per pupil funding has increased.

Sue asked for a motion to adopt the 2013-2014 budget. Anne moved to approve the budget, and Kevin seconded. The budget was unanimously adopted.

- 2012-2013 Budget Carryover Resolution – Julie explained that since GASB 54 came into effect, the school now has the ability to take unused funds from the current school year and roll them to the next school year’s budget, with a specification as to the use of those funds.

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 BOCES acknowledges that a portion of the prior year ending fund balance is categorized as Assigned per the definition of GASB 54 for budget carryover for use in the subsequent budget year;
RESOLVED, the BOCES authorizes the use of a portion of the 2013-2014 beginning fund balance for the following:

| Implementation of Strategic Plan | $40,000 |

FURTHER RESOLVED, the use of this portion of the beginning fund balance for the purpose set forth above will not lead to an ongoing deficit.

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.

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Sue Chandler, President

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Anne Rowe, Secretary/Treasurer

Kevin moved to adopt the resolution, and Anne seconded. The budget rollover resolution was unanimously adopted.

- Officer Positions – Sue said that according to the bylaws, the officer positions are President, Vice President, and Secretary/Treasurer. These positions are for a two year period, but may be one year if necessary. Sue is transitioning off the board. At this time, there are two board members willing to be considered for the office of president, Kevin and Ulcca. Sue read the responsibilities of the president as stated in the bylaws. Claudine noted that Sue has done a lot in her role as president, as this year has not always been one of smooth sailing. Claudine suggested that the office of president should be held by one of the school district representatives. The bylaws do not specify that the office must be a school district representative as opposed to the PEBC representative. In the past, the PEBC representative has been the president of the board at RMSEL. Sue interpreted terminology in the IGA as somewhat confusing regarding the role of the PEBC representation on the board. Susan Street interjected that historically, RMSEL has always had a PEBC representative on the board, but the representative was not always active in participating in the board meetings. She agreed that from a legal perspective, there may be some confusing language used between the Constitution and the Bylaws. However, this is a 6 member board, and the PEBC representative is one of those board members. Claudine said her comment was in regard to the value of having the president of the board being a school district representative. Anne said that she appreciates Claudine’s comments, but her opinion is that each of the 6 board members are equal members and should have equal opportunity to serve as an officer. Sue said that this discussion is nothing personal regarding Ulcca; it has more to do with the district board members receiving specific training in being on a school board. The bylaws do not preclude the PEBC representative from holding office on the board.

Kevin spoke regarding his desire to be board president. He said that since he joined the BOCES, he knows that his term will last at least 2½ more years. He is committed to RMSEL and is very willing to assume that role. He also said that at the time he voiced his interest in the office, he appeared to be the only board member able to assume the role. He is completely content with the Vice President role, as well, to provide some leadership stability on the board. He is currently the Vice President of the Douglas County School Board, and committed to additional outside board roles as well. He expressed that he does not need to be the president, but wanted to be sure that the role is strongly supported.

Ulcca voiced that she would echo Kevin’s comments. Although Ulcca doesn't have the same board experience as Kevin, she is personally committed to RMSEL, as is the PEBC. She appreciates Sue’s comments regarding the opportunity to
receive some of the same training that the board members have received, and looks forward to pursuing that option. Her desire is all about supporting RMSEL.

JulieMarie asked Anne if she is willing to continue in her role as Secretary/Treasurer for the coming year, and Anne replied yes. JulieMarie made a motion to install Ulcca as President, Kevin as Vice President, and Anne as Secretary/Treasurer. Kevin seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**Discussion Items**
Sue said that the Executive Session held today was in regard to Chad’s contract. She expressed that the board as a whole is very pleased with Chad’s leadership as Executive Director, and are each very committed to supporting Chad in that role. Claudine made a motion that the board extend a 3 year contract to Chad Burns in the position of Executive Director, the specific legal wording of which is still to be finalized. Ulcca seconded. The motion was unanimously approved. Ulcca made note that, in discussions with the board, Chad articulated his desire that his contract reflect the same values and accountability as the rest of RMSEL staff. However, the board members are in agreement that it is appropriate and necessary to deviate from that terminology. Ulcca is reviewing the contract language, and it will include terminology regarding Chad’s ability to end the contract as an at-will employee, or the ability of the board to end the contract prior to completion of the 3 year term; it will include a severance package in that case. Kevin noted that the symbolism of the board offering Chad a 3 year contract rather than an annual contract and Chad agreeing to that contract, is a very important message to send to the RMSEL community. The board will draft a communication to send to the community. It will be presented to the board in the September meeting for approval, and will then be sent to the community.

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

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Sue Chandler, President

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Anne Rowe, Secretary/Treasurer