ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCHOOL OF EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING
MINUTES OF BOCES MEETING
April 22, 2014
7:00 a.m.

In Attendance: Kevin Larsen, Kelly Perez, Anne Rowe, Rosann Ward, David Willman, and Barbara Yamrick

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

Kevin called the board meeting to order. He asked the attendees to introduce themselves, and each did so.

Approval of Agenda
Kevin asked for a motion to approve the agenda. David made a motion to approve the agenda, and Kelly seconded. The agenda was unanimously approved.

Approval of Minutes
Kevin asked if there were any corrections needed to the minutes; there were none. Anne made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, and Barbara seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Executive Director Report
Chad said that he would like to take this opportunity to announce that Ulcca Joshi Hansen resigned her position at the Public Education and Business Coalition (PEBC). As such, Ulcca is no longer able to fill a seat on the RMSEL BOCES. He appreciates the time, energy, and contributions to RMSEL and the BOCES during her tenure on the board as President. As with each of RMSEL’s supporting districts, the PEBC and Ulcca took a vested interest in the longevity, growth, and success of RMSEL.

Chad met with Rosann Ward, President and CEO of the PEBC, to discuss the appointment of a new board member from her senior leadership team. He looks forward to this transition at our May BOCES meeting. RMSEL will continue to foster the relationship and partnership with the PEBC, as the professional development opportunities and wealth of knowledge provide RMSEL’s staff with additional resources that make a positive impact on student achievement. Next year, a classroom lab structure will be implemented in conjunction with the PEBC. This structure will provide RMSEL with the opportunity to utilize the wealth of knowledge within its internal network of professional staff, while developing consistent practice across school levels.

During the last weeks of March, the TCAP was administered for the final year. Chad thanked Marci Elder for serving as the District Assessment Coordinator and once again administering the assessment with fidelity at all school levels. Since returning from spring break, the CMAS assessment for 7th grade Social Studies and 8th grade Science has also been completed. Observations and anecdotal feedback from students have been positive, and the engagement of students during the assessment was focused and on task. There is no ability to read and or report on the quality of questions in each assessment as proctors are to facilitate and not analyze the assessment. In the weeks to come, the PARCC assessment and 4th/5th grade CMAS assessment will be administered. The quantity and frequency of assessment continues to be a concern at RMSEL, which has been articulated to the BOCES, and Chad looks forward to the forthcoming results of the West Ed study on student assessment by the Colorado Department of Education.

Kevin asked about the impact of the testing on RMSEL. Marci said that she appreciates that the CMAS tests are staggered between 4th, 5th, 7th, and 8th grades, and she does not find these assessments to be as intrusive as they were feared to be. PARCC seems to be the area of greatest concern. Since there are two time periods of testing, PBA earlier in the year, and EOY at the end of the year, the amount of time that will be spent in assessment does seem to be extensive.

Chad continued with his report and said that RMSEL is at capacity for next year in lower and middle school with 300 total students enrolled in grades K-8. High school enrollment continues to fluctuate based on the number of students electing to return to RMSEL, as well as the number of applicants for openings being significantly lower than other school levels. As
such, the budget for next year is being constructed with a projected enrollment of 390 students. Attempts will continue to be made to enroll to the capacity of 400 students.

Chad noted that spring crew trip season at RMSEL has arrived. From now through the end of the school year, RMSEL will have up to 100 students off campus every week, participating in engaging learning experiences with their crew. Most recently, 11th grade students returned from their ten-day capstone trip to Costa Rica. While in Costa Rica, students participated in scientific research as well as humanitarian work with Ascona. During their trip, the students volunteered and painted the library of a local school and connected with the teachers and students of the community. The cross-cultural connections of this experience have a significant impact on the overall experience while working and learning in an international setting.

Chad said that to culminate professional development this year, RMSEL staff has been working to document learning expeditions and school wide project plans. The documentation of learning is essential to understanding the vertical alignment of content and skills in each discipline. Through the documentation of learning, staff has been creating a dynamic curriculum map that ensures all content standards are addressed and assessed in each learning expedition. This has been a two-year process, which Chad wants to celebrate with the BOCES. A clear understanding of the curriculum taught allows RMSEL staff to focus on assessment and intervention for students who may need additional support or scaffolds to learn deeper. Chad commends the leadership team and staff members for making RMSEL’s goal and vision a reality. He looks forward to setting an EL Work Plan goal for next year and focusing on the quality of student work in each case study and expedition.

During the spring, RMSEL experiences transition of staff members that are looking to grow and develop as teachers and leaders. This year includes the departure of RMSEL’s Kindergarten, Fitness, and High School Mathematics teachers, and the Instructional Coach. Each of these staff members has shared their departure with RMSEL’s parent community through field notes and personal conversations in the community. The process of interviewing for each position is now in progress with the intention to fill each position in early May. As staffing changes are announced, Chad will continue to inform the RMSEL community.

David asked if the pool of candidates for open positions is providing a quality pool to hire from. Marci answered that there was a large number of applicants for both the kindergarten crew leader position and the physical education teacher position. However, the number of applicants for high school math is significantly smaller.

Chad finalized his report by telling the board that Julie will present a proposed draft budget for the 2014-2015 school year that reflects staffing changes, Affordable Care Act impacts, and professional development changes for next year. The projected Per Pupil Revenue (PPR) figure is positive at this point and the decision regarding the negative factor is anticipated later this legislative session. As PPR continues to adjust, Julie will adjust the proposed budget accordingly and re-p resent during our May meeting.

Kevin asked about the PPR, and Julie responded that RMSEL’s PPR is funded through DPS and based on DPS’ PPR allocation. David asked how many students will be taking the ACT at RMSEL. Marci said that there will be 15 students testing in this room tomorrow spread out at the 15 round tables. There are also 5 students with accommodations—4 testing in one room, and one testing in a different room. Chad added that students have time in their weekly schedule on Thursdays to take practice tests to prepare for the actual test. Marci said she believes RMSEL’s average score in the fall was 22-23. Chad added that there are 16 students graduating from RMSEL in May, and all 16 are on target for graduating, as well as all 16 have been accepted to college. Chad invited the board members to drop by and visit RMSEL at any time through the end of the year, as this is an exciting, busy time at RMSEL.

David asked Chad when revision and planning would take place with regard to the strategic plan. Chad said we are in the second year of implementation of our three-year strategic plan established in January 2012. We look forward to the revision of goals and tactics for the third year and will begin the planning process for revision with the BOCES during the August BOCES workshop. Chad spent a professional development day last week and visited Odyssey School meeting with Marcia Fulton to look at various aspects of quality work in other EL Schools. On April 7, 2014, RMSEL teachers participated in the EL Schools Quality Work Protocol. Teachers were asked to provide 3 pieces of quality work and then
discussion took place about what made those pieces of quality. During the discussion, teachers connected the standards for quality work and the importance of habits of scholarship. This past year RMSEL focused on two EL Work Plan Goals, one student achievement and one school condition goal. Feedback from teachers during the mid-year EL Implementation Review said that they felt like they did well in one area but failed in the other. Next year, one goal will be chosen as an area of focus.

Open Forum
There were no guests present for open forum.

Consent Agenda
There were no items for a consent agenda.

Action Items
There were no items for action.

Report Items
Budget Update – Julie said that since the last BOCES meeting, RMSEL’s annual fundraising auction was held, and $46,000 was raised. Bus number 8 has been purchased since then. Kevin asked if there were large ticket items that generated such a large income. Chad responded that there are multiple donations available for silent auction, as well as about ten larger ticket items offered up during a live auction. Those donations included a variety of vacation opportunities, in Hawaii, Cancun, and various mountain resorts. Julie asked if there were questions on the Management Summary. David asked, looking forward to the 2014-2015 budget, when funds from the Colorado Health Foundation grant funds will be completed, what plans do we have to continue the work begun with this grant. Chad commented that those funds were used to purchase a significant quantity of equipment, and RMSEL will assume the cost of maintaining the equipment. The teachers received professional development as a key part of the Colorado Health Foundation grant. The implementation of professional development and practice will continue, as 3 or 4 of the teachers who received that training are remaining at RMSEL. Julie noted that she reviewed RMSEL’s budget with Kelly in great detail, and Kelly thanked her for taking the time to do so; it was very helpful to Kelly for understanding.

Discussion Items
Officer Election – Chad noted that with Ulcca’s departure from the board, and the remaining board members’ length of tenure on this board, the offices of president, vice-president, and secretary will all need to be filled next year. Anne is in her third year on the BOCES board, and expects to transition off the board in November. David is completing his first year, and will be on the board for one more year. Kevin will be on the board through the 2014-2015 school year. Kelly is new to the board this year. Kelly asked about the BOCES workshop in August, and when it will be held. Chad said the date has not been set yet, but at the next meeting, potential dates will be offered for the board to discuss and select the most convenient date for all. The first official board meeting for the new year will be held in September. Officer elections will be discussed at the June meeting. Kevin said that he will be in North Carolina on the day of the June meeting, so he will be participating in the meeting electronically.

2014-2015 Budget (DRAFT) – Julie said the budget is built on a projection of 390 students, with an estimated PPR of $7,398.97. This year’s budget carryover going to next year is conservative at $20,000. RMSEL’s parent organization, Parent Action Crew for Kids (PACK), provides their budget to Julie. Plans are hopeful for completing the field at RMSEL into a fully developed field for sports. She commented that the software that was purchased for the online application and registration program will pay out in 2014-2015, and future years will not reflect any expense for that. Funding for additional programs, including Spanish and Music, shows an increase in the Instructional Support Resources. Anne asked about the Concurrent Enrollment budget and how many students participate in that. Chad said that two years ago, only one student participated. This year, five students are participating. The interest shown for next year is already at 15 students, and of those, probably 10-12 will be eligible to participate. Julie then noted that a portion of fieldwork fees are allocated to student catastrophic insurance, financial aid, transportation, technology for documentation purposes and teacher release time for fieldwork planning. Since the new Spanish and Music programs are now off the ground, funds designated for elective program support will no longer be needed. Rather, the plan is to allocate that 10% to future
landmark trips. Julie said she is still waiting on several pieces of information related to insurance expenses. When she receives the renewal, the numbers will be adjusted. The expense for the EL MOU will decrease by $7,000, but those funds will be reallocated to teacher release time for labs and offsite professional development. Any budget shortfalls will come from discretionary expense. There is a shift in positions with the Instructional Coach leaving. Marci will take on the instructional coaching responsibilities. She will no longer carry some of the administrative responsibilities, which are being transferred to Kelsey Haddock. Kelsey will become a full-time administrator, which necessitates the hiring of a new full-time learning specialist. This will provide additional intervention and support for students. RMSEL has 387 students currently, which is a population of 65 students on IEPs. The additional support is necessary. The target salary for incoming new teachers is 5 years plus MA. Kevin asked if RMSEL’s pay scale is similar to a specific district. Chad said that when he came to RMSEL, staff was on a salary freeze, with inconsistency in the pay scale. In creating the existing pay scale, the goal was to motivate teachers to stay at RMSEL. Chad commented that administration is open to and interested in exploring the possibility of performance incentives. Julie said that the cost of insurance benefits is changing to a sliding scale based on the insured person’s age. Currently, RMSEL offers 3 different options. The school pays for a $2,000 deductible coinsurance plan, and staff may elect to buy up to a $1,000 deductible coinsurance plan or a classic HMO plan. Next year, the plans that RMSEL will offer will be changed to a $500 deductible coinsurance plan and an HMO plan, and RMSEL will eliminate the bridge/gap policy. Staff may elect to buy up to the HMO plan. Due to the age-banded premiums being tied to the age of the insured, the health insurance line item will be an estimate until after new staff are hired. Stipends were budgeted in the current year for counseling intern supervision. There are no counseling interns for 2014-2015, so that expense is eliminated.

Rosann asked about the READ Act funds, and Chad responded that we anticipate receiving these funds for K-3 literacy support, but will not include in the budget until received. Julie said that as of right now, enrollment projection is at 394 FTE, but the budget is based on 390 FTE due to expected fluctuations between now and October 1st. Next month, the board will receive the 2013-2014 Supplemental Budget which will need to be voted on. The proposed 2014-2015 budget will also be presented which will require a board vote at the June meeting.

David asked about the EL MOU and if the amount is stabilized for next year and the following year. Chad said there will continue to be some fluctuation. The typical expense to a school is about $80,000. The type of services required for a new school to EL will be significantly different than a school that is already a high performing EL school, resulting in a variety of costs. RMSEL is moving from 14 school designer days at a cost of $1,300 per day, to 16 days at offsite professional development institutes for teachers at a cost of $800 per day.

Bylaws & Constitution Revision – August 2014 Workshop Session – The bylaws and constitution have not been revised since 2006. Chad and Ulcca worked on proposed amendments to the Bylaws and Constitution, which can be addressed prior to the start of the 2014-2015 school year during the August BOCES Workshop. The content of the revisions will focus on the alignment of language between the current IGA effective through 2017 and the proposal for electronic meeting participation. The new phone system is up and running, and Chad is working on getting a new conference capable phone for board meetings in this room. A feature that is also being worked on is having one collective mailbox for board members that can receive messages and then distribute them to all 6 board members. Each board member will then be responsible for their own personal mailbox. These extensions are not yet live.

Chad said that passage ceremonies are held at RMSEL, and this year’s graduation ceremony will be held at Bethany Lutheran Church, which is a change in venue from previous years. Kelly asked if board members are expected to attend graduation. Anne responded that she would highly encourage the board members to attend, as it is truly an inspiring experience. Kevin added that RMSEL’s graduation is much more personalized than a typical district school graduation, and is impressive to witness.

**Items for Future Agenda**

2013-2014 Budget (SUPPLEMENTAL)
Adjournment
Kevin asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Anne moved to adjourn, and Kevin seconded. The meeting was unanimously adjourned.

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Kevin Larsen, President

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Anne Rowe, Secretary/Treasurer