In Attendance: Mike Johnson, Kevin Larsen, Kelly Perez, Rosann Ward, and David Willman

Staff: Chad Burns, Julie Stelzer, and Cris Veteto

David called the board meeting to order. He welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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

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

Executive Director Report
Springtime is an amazing and exciting time of the year at RMSEL. Students are currently engaged in completing their final learning expedition, spring crew trip, and preparing their portfolio for review through the passage process. Most recently, 11th grade students traveled to Puerto Jimenez, Costa Rica, participating in a ten-day ecological study of the Osa Peninsula while also working with a local humanitarian organization completing service work in local schools. The 6th grade students completed their geology study traveling to Moab, Utah, and 7th grade students recently returned from Mesa Verde. These spring trips highlight the integration of experiences outside of the classroom that solidify learning for students.

One of RMSEL’s capstone learning experiences in 8th grade is the study of civil rights and the students’ trip to Birmingham, AL. This year students interacted with experts at the Civil Rights Institute, Birmingham Jail, 16th Street Baptist Church, and Little Rock Central High School. Students engage with complex learning targets. For example, students are required to think critically and respond to targets such as, “I can determine whether MLK’s dream has been realized at Little Rock Central High School today, or if it’s a dream deferred.” These types of learning experiences are an exemplary representation of the manner in which curriculum and instruction at RMSEL is organized and executed. Chad thanked RMSEL teachers, students, and volunteers that commit countless hours planning and accompanying students on the crew trips. This is an integral part of the work in fulfilling RMSEL’s school vision.

During the month of May, students are making final revisions to products they have been creating and documenting throughout the school year. These products and in-depth syntheses are included in their annual portfolio. Students in grades 3, 5, 8, 10, and 12 present their portfolio to a professional review committee composed of teachers, parents, and community members, through the annual passage process. Portfolio reading allows the RMSEL community to take a journey into the classroom and witness how RMSEL students learn and in turn communicate their learning. This is one of the most exciting events annually at RMSEL. Volunteers are still being accepted for this year’s Portfolio Reading and Presentations.

At this time hiring has taken place for the following positions and communicated to the RMSEL community in this week’s RMSEL News section of Field Notes.

I am excited to introduce three new staff members to the RMSEL community for the 2015-2016 school year. Jessica Fangman joins us from High Trails Science Center in Angelus Oaks, CA, as our Assistant Adventure Coordinator. Along with her experience in outdoor education, Jessica has served as an Adventure Guide at the Yellowstone High Adventure Post in Cody, WY, and as a Program Guide at Pacific Quest Wilderness Therapy in
Naalehu, HI. Jessica’s wealth of knowledge through her experience in diverse wilderness settings will be an amazing asset to our students, crew leaders, and adventure team.

Molly Kasper joins us from Green Valley Ranch Elementary School as our K/1 Crew Leader. While teaching at Green Valley Ranch, Molly has taught elementary special education as well as Kindergarten. Prior to joining the team at Green Valley Ranch as a full-time staff member, Molly served in the community as a Mathematics Fellow designing in-depth learning modules to engage the students in exploring Mathematics. Prior to her teaching experience, Molly gained experience as an outdoor educator while working at an Adventure Camp in Wenham, MA.

MacKenzie Gamble joins us from Hill Middle School as our 7th/8th grade Crew Leader and Mathematics Teacher. During the past year MacKenzie has taught Mathematics Intervention to 6th-8th grade students using the Connected Mathematics Curriculum and 360 Math. Prior to her experience at Hill Middle School, MacKenzie taught in English as a Second Language (ESL), Special Education, and Mathematics in Kansas City, KS. Along with her teaching experience, MacKenzie volunteered in New Zealand as a Math Tutor and at a Mercy Home Orphanage teaching English.

Jessica, Molly, and MacKenzie join our team with a wealth of experience directly tied to the mission of our school. They embody exploration in pursuit of academic excellence as they guide students in becoming lifelong learners. We are excited for each of them to join the RMSEL community.

Next week, I will complete the interviews of two finalists for our K-12 Art Teacher position. We have two strong finalists for the position and will announce our hire next Wednesday. We also have two additional recent resignations in the High School. Mike Kuhn will be leaving Colorado next year to return to his home state of Washington with his family. Mike has served as our 10th/12th grade Humanities Teacher and High School Crew Leader for the past four years. Also, Clay Elkin, High School Crew Leader and 9th-12th grade Mathematics teacher will be leaving Colorado next year as his family transitions to Idaho in support of his spouse’s continued graduate studies. We thank them for their service and will begin the hiring process for both positions immediately.

Professional Development Summary – April 2015

On Monday, April 6, teachers met for a day of professional development after Spring Reflection prior to the return of students. The focus for the morning was carefully analyzing student work with the use of the “Quality Work Protocol.” Through this protocol, each school level was able to draw conclusions about the level of quality displayed in student work through the lenses of complexity, authenticity, and craftsmanship. The discussions also involved reflections about the tasks and scoring tools, which teachers designed and used with students to get them to accomplish products of high quality. Each team then determined an appropriate next step, again going back to their conclusions around complexity, authenticity, and craftsmanship.

In whole staff professional development, the focus has been on RMSEL’s Work Plan goal around becoming data literate professionals. To this end, teachers have given the RMSEL Spring Common Writing Assessment to their students, met to calibrate their scoring of student writing samples, and then entered the data into grade-level spreadsheets. This Wednesday in PD, teachers will be participating in data analysis of fall and spring writing scores in multiple focus areas. Regarding off-site professional development, two primary teachers had the opportunity to attend the EL Institute in Primary Literacy here in Denver earlier this month. Additionally, two teachers and an administrator will be attending an EL Site Seminar, “Ownership and Achievement,” at the Springfield Renaissance School in Massachusetts at the end of this week. This particular seminar ties directly to the Work Plan goal around responsibility.

There is approximately $130K remaining in our 2014-2015 SY budget for summer classroom renovations projects. At this time, plans are in place to:

1) Replace, repair, and/or paint all 9” x 9” ceiling tiles in all spaces building-wide.
2) Paint all common spaces and select classrooms.
3) Replace classroom storage closets and bookshelves.
4) Replace classroom cabinets and sinks.
5) Replace faculty workroom cabinets, counter tops, and sinks.

These improvements are much needed as many items predate the move-in date to this facility in 2000. Once bids have been obtained for each project, Chad will work closely with DPS project managers to complete the summer renovations.
The outdoor field, primarily funded by PACK and a previous fundraising campaign, is set to be completed prior to the end of May. The field is a much needed improvement to campus and will be utilized by RMSEL’s Physical Education program and Athletics program. Chad encouraged each board member to survey the progress to this improvement upon departing from campus today.

Expeditionary Learning has provided information that they will announce their new brand name and business model no later than June 15, 2015. Chad has no additional information at this time. RMSEL will work closely with EL to determine next steps in the continued partnership as they transition to their new brand. RMSEL will not enter into a Cooperative Agreement for the 2015-2016 school year until full disclosure regarding the transition is made available.

Open Forum
There was no discussion for open forum. David noted that with ACT and PARCC testing happening today, this is a busy time at RMSEL.

Consent Agenda
Item #1 – Personnel Matters
Item #2 – Release of Reserve for Field DPS Fence Requirement
David asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Kelly made a motion to approve the consent agenda, and Kevin seconded. The consent agenda was unanimously approved.

Action Items
There were no action items on the agenda.

Report Items
Budget Update – There were no questions from the board members regarding the financial statements. The Management Summary is included in its entirety for the minutes.

Finance Update
A brokerage account was opened at Wells Fargo in December 2014 for the purpose of accepting stock donations. We received a donation of 500 shares of Noodles & Company Class A common stock, and the fair market value as of the donation date is reflected on the balance sheet. This account, less minimum balance requirements, will be liquidated later this spring.

In January, $750,000 was moved from the CSAFE Investment account to the U.S. Bank operating account to work toward maintenance of a compensatory balance of $1,500,000 in the USB account. As noted in the December 2, 2014 Management Summary, it is the practice at RMSEL to invest school funds in a manner that provides the highest return consistent with the preservation of capital. Both CSAFE and USB are covered under the Public Deposit Protection Act (PDPA) which requires banks in Colorado that are eligible depositories of public funds to pledge collateral having a market value in excess of 102% of their aggregate uninsured deposits to secure uninsured public funds on deposit with the bank, (CRS §11-10.5-102). The PDPA provides protection of public deposits beyond FDIC insurance. In order to mitigate the service fees at USB, RMSEL must maintain a compensatory balance in the USB operating account of $1,500,000, $250,000 of which is insured by the FDIC and $1,250,000 is covered under the PDPA.

Revenue
PPR funding is paid from DPS according to the following schedule: 25% is funded in July, 25% in October and the remaining 50% is paid in January less any adjustments or rescissions from CDE. PPR was budgeted in June at $7,398.97/FTE X 379.5 FTE, and $7,399.46/FTE X 376.5 FTE (10/1/13 count) is the per pupil amount that was received. The first 25% of PPR funding or $696,396.99 was received in July, and the second 25% or $696,551.36 was received in October. The PPR in the January payment was reduced by $44.37/FTE or .5996%, due to a change in the estimated at-risk population in DPS. This adjustment, along with the 2 additional students from October count, is included in the revised budget.
Kindergarten financial aid (#42500) is over-budget by $50 due to full financial aid awards for 3 students. This shortfall will be resolved later in the spring due to a student withdrawal. There remains $13,174.50 in fieldwork financial aid (#67800). Under RMSEL’s fieldwork fee structure, families with three (3) or more children at RMSEL have the option to take a 10% discount on their fieldwork fees. To date, six (6) families have opted to take advantage of this discount.

Per the Budget Appropriation resolution approved by the board in January 2015, $16,000 of beginning fund balance is reflected on the budget (#43503). This is in alignment with the provisions of GASB 54 and the categorization of fund balance assigned for budget carryover.

Per HB 12-1345, $213,850.04 was received in August to assist the BOCES with meeting state educational priorities determined by CDE. These funds are used to employ key personnel to implement a Response to Intervention (RtI) process for monitoring student achievement with 20% of our school population in grades K-12.

In September, we received $5,297.54 per the READ Act to support reading intervention for students in grades K-3 as identified from state assessment scores.

The amounts reflected in the Fieldwork Carryover-Landmark Trips line item include fieldwork fees carried over from 2013-2014 as well as 10% landmark trip allocation from the 2014-2015 fieldwork fees. These amounts are allocated toward funding the landmark 5th grade Sailing trip, 6th grade Yellowstone trip, 8th Civil Rights trip, and the 11th grade trip to Costa Rica.

The revenue derived from kindergarten tuition (state currently funds only .58 FTE for kindergarten) is on target, with 5 months (February-June 2015) remaining to be invoiced.

Classroom revenue (#46400, #46500, #46550 and #46600) represents the student contribution toward the 5th grade Sailing ($3,600), 6th grade Yellowstone ($5,000) and 8th grade Civil Rights ($7,650), and 11th grade Costa Rica ($17,469.19) landmark trips.

In September, the Parent Action Crew for Kids (PACK) began facilitating a Pizza Friday for our students. The popularity of this lunch program explains the variance for PACK Community Events (#45630). Additionally, PACK was instrumental in successfully collecting funds during registration for PACK Staff Appreciation (#45660) and exceeded their anticipated revenue budget by $1,220. PACK also facilitates the sales of RMSEL spirit wear.

Miscellaneous income is greater than anticipated due to write-off of fieldwork fee deposits for students that decided not to attend RMSEL. These funds will be used to offset other budget shortfalls.

Interest Income #80000 is $534 less than budgeted due to the continued low interest rates on the CSAFE investment. This shortfall in earnings will be reduced from the realignment of funds invested in USB and unspent budget line items.

**Expenses**

*Line items with notable variances or exceptions are explained below.*

- Water & Sewer #63120 – this expense account will be offset against billing to the Denver Urban Gardens for garden water usage.
- Minibuses-Other #64500 – this expense account is showing a credit balance of $3,500 from the sale of the 1997 gear van. These funds will be used to purchase and install a permanent roof/bike rack on the new gear van and/or offset current budget overages.
- Vocal/Instrumental Music #66210 – this expense account is offset against funds in account #46210 which were donated for the purchase of guitars for the 8th grade music program.
- MS Math/Science Supplies #66501 – this account is over-budget and offset against a parent donation of $900 in account #46501 toward the classroom math/science project to install planter boxes and benches at the main entrance to the school.
• HS Math/Science Supplies #66602 – this account is over-budget and offset against a PACK donation for a telescope to be used on fieldwork by K-12 crews.
• Elementary Fieldwork #67402 & #67403 – these expense accounts are offset against funds in the Fieldwork Carryover-Landmark Trips for the 2014-2015 Sailing trip.
• HS Fieldwork #67601, #67602, #67603 & #67605 – these expense accounts are offset against funds in the Fieldwork Carryover-Landmark Trips for the 2014-2015 Costa Rica trip.

David asked for a motion to approve the 2014-2015 supplemental budget as presented. Kelly moved to accept the 2014-2015 supplemental budget and management summary as presented, and Rosann seconded. The motion was unanimously approved

Discussion Items
Unified Improvement Plan – Chad said that the UIP documents data that has been measured and analyzed from 2008-2009 on. The only area that RMSEL falls below the state expectation is in high school math. All other areas meet or exceed expectations. The data narrative and root/cause identification is the most useful tool for explaining these scores for parents and the RMSEL community. RMSEL’s strategic plan was put in place in 2010-2011, and includes measurements that tie to student achievement that allows for recognizing students and teachers for achievements that have been made. Two primary focus areas are writing and math. Elementary writing has hit a plateau and continues to be a focal point and a strategic goal in the UIP. High school mathematics still has gains to be made, and the goal remains in the UIP. This is the first time in 4 years that RMSEL has met or exceeded expectations in academic growth in all content areas. This is due to the intervention programs in place at RMSEL. One growth point is in the Colorado ACT; previous score was 19.1, but has significantly grown to 23.1. Two strategic improvement goals that will continue are HS math and writing performance (which remains flat, with minimal growth). Focus will be given to K-8 academic achievement and growth in writing; identifying standards and vertical alignment in content and skills with ELA; curricular integration in humanities, science and mathematics for multiple writing styles; intervention identified for students who are unsatisfactory or partially proficient (in addition to the support they receive in the classroom); and targeted instructional strategies identified based on common writing assessments. RMSEL has seen almost 20% improvement in MS math, with differentiated mathematics. The hope is to continue that into 9 and 10 grades. The 10th grade express students took the Accuplacer test; some students passed into Pre-Calculus and Statistics courses and will be going off campus to continue their mathematics education. The concurrent enrollment agreement at RMSEL is with Arapahoe Community College. This year, two high school seniors have taken great advantage of concurrent enrollment courses. Both students will leave RMSEL with college algebra, trigonometry, and calculus credit, both with 4.0 credit for the courses. RMSEL pays for these courses up front; if students earn a 2.0 or lower, they have to reimburse RMSEL for the cost of the course. David commented that coming from where the ACT scores were a couple of years ago to where they are now shows phenomenal growth. He asked if RMSEL is looking at the new ACT Aspire product. Chad said yes, and that will be included in the budget for the next academic school year.

BOCES Funding Assistance HB 13-1245 – Chad said that funding for BOCES was increased last year with an impact on RMSEL of $213,850.04. The report tied to this funding is due to CDE on Friday. Three years ago when this funding began, RMSEL received about $77,000, and the funding is now almost triple that amount. The funds are being used for intervention support in literacy and mathematics, and the part time administrative assistant. Chad said in addition to that, he is interested in exploring the possibility of hiring a consultant to oversee the responsibilities of the state assessments. An analysis has been done of the cost of administrative and technology staff for administering the state assessments, and it is approximately $45,000 per year. Chad would like to explore the possibility of a consultant, and has allocated $30,000 in the 2015-2016 budget for this cost. This person would be responsible for all the responsibilities that have currently pulled two staff members from their regular responsibilities in order to handle the testing requirements. Mike asked if the testing burden has increased significantly this year, if the $30,000 is a one year increase or has been incrementally increasing. Chad said that testing begins in the fall, resumes in the spring and continues until after Memorial Day. While the number of tests themselves has not increased, the requirements with electronic testing have definitely increased the amount of time required for set up of the testing environment. Testing used to require two weeks of time; it now requires 11 total weeks of time. Kelly asked if the bills that are currently being considered in the political realm are passed, would the hiring of a consultant be re-evaluated based on the outcome of the bills? Chad said the hiring for this responsibility
would not be finalized until the final outcome of the bills has been determined. In the event of not needing a consultant, the allocation of the BOCES funds could be reallocated to be used for another purpose and resubmitted to CDE. Mike asked if Chad has communicated with CDE about the possibility of a waiver from the rules. Chad said no, a waiver to the rules has not been sought; his understanding was that CDE is not granting waivers, but he is open to asking the question. Chad said the unintended consequences were communicated to CDE last year, but he can make a revision to that and resubmit it. Mike will try to locate someone with CASB or CASE with whom Chad can communicate. David said he believes it would be a good use of resources, but to make sure a proper RFP is conducted. Kelly commented that in her district, they are requesting additional support for overseeing the requirements of state assessments. Rosann encouraged Chad to not wait until September to begin looking for a consultant. Chad asked each board member to take the last page of the document, get their district superintendent’s signature on it, and then return it back to RMSEL.

Chad commented that the most successful thing RMSEL leadership has implemented this year has been the pilot professional development lab structure, with 100% support and participation from RMSEL staff. Next year, the plan is to do vertical alignment through professional development labs.

Classroom Visits – due to ACT and PARCC testing today, the scheduled classroom visits are being rescheduled for a future date, perhaps May 26th.

Calendar Events – David asked the board members to let Chad know if they plan to attend any of the Passage Ceremonies or Graduation. Graduation will be held at Bethany Lutheran Church. Rosann requested the board meeting dates for next year to be shared with the board as soon as is convenient.

**Items for Future Agenda**

Kevin asked if RMSEL has a financial literacy class, plans, curriculum or identified needs. He belongs to a professional organization that has a foundation that will match donors with seekers. The foundation is the Actuarial Foundation, and this opportunity is open to all school districts.

**Adjournment**

David made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned.

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David Willman, President

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Rosann Ward, Secretary/Treasurer