In Attendance: Mike Johnson, Anne-Marie Lemieux, Janice McDonald, Kelly Perez, Rosann Ward, and Barbara Yamrick

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

Guests: Clay Abla, Director of Secondary Education, Littleton Public Schools

Kelly welcomed everyone to the meeting and called the board meeting to order.

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

Approval of Minutes
Kelly asked if there were any corrections for the minutes; there were none. Rosann made a motion to approve the minutes and Anne-Marie seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Executive Director Report
Chad welcomed everyone to the return of another amazing school year at RMSEL. While a significant number of transitions have been experienced as the 2016-2017 school year began, it is also an opportunity for RMSEL’s leadership and staff to continue to develop and grow in the commitment to support students as they “strive for high academic achievement and character excellence.” To begin the school year, Chad specifically thanked RMSEL’s team of office staff members, Cris Veteto, Jocelyn Ervin, Julie Stelzer, Marci Elder, and Kelsey Haddock, in the planning and preparation for the successful start of the school year. In any school the beginning of the year is “busy” to say the least, but at RMSEL this takes on a more dynamic definition. Not only do all students have to be registered, every student’s medical records are reviewed, safety and health care plans are developed, student medications are prepared, trip excursion plans are communicated with students and families, class schedules, courses, and elective choices are all set up, all while ensuring that from day one the pursuit of excellence can be achieved through high quality instruction by each classroom teacher. Chad said that while it is certainly not easy, this team conducts this annually with precision, grace, and patience.

To this point every grade level except 4/5 and K/1 have ventured out in the wilderness for their respective fall crew trips. Students have scaled cliffs in Florissant, Colorado, at Sandborn Western Camps, canoed the Platte River in Nebraska, and studied the ecosystem of Yellowstone National Park. As always, the importance of Adventure is for students to build relationships and achieve character or academic outcomes as a community. Teachers and leaders create a transformative experience for students with the intent of increasing motivation and engagement as they return to the classroom. The intentional integration of the crew trip experience into RMSEL’s daily operations and values is one of the many aspects that students achieve during a trip. Chad thanked Nick Wilson and Jessica Fangman for their leadership in guiding RMSEL’s students on each excursion.

During the week of September 12th, Chad had the opportunity to review RMSEL’s Risk Management Policies and Procedures with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). At the training, he was able to connect with other schools and adventure education programs from around the mountain west. As the foremost leader in adventure programming, NOLS provides participants with a structure for review and planning to ensure that their program exposes students to transformative outdoor experience while minimizing risk. As a school and leader in school-based adventure programming, RMSEL has sound policies and standard operating procedures. Over the course of the next three months, Chad will be working to separate policy and standard operating procedure into two distinct, concise guides for RMSEL’s program. Currently all of this information is in one place, while a peer organization in Colorado, The High Mountain Institute (HMI), has broken their policies and standard operation procedure into two guides for staff and students. This
conference was an opportunity to ensure that, as an organization, RMSEL is providing challenges to students that are inherent in risk through practice that minimizes risk to participants.

This school year RMSEL’s calendar and structure have been shifted to support a late start each Wednesday morning to engage in professional development with teaching staff. The focus for the year is on Designing and Implementing Effective Lesson Plans through the Workshop 1.0/2.0 model of instruction. To conduct professional development on Wednesday mornings, school begins at 8:50 a.m. in lieu of the normal start time of 7:50 a.m. At this time, through Chat with Chad, PACK meetings, and informal conversation with parents in our community, Chad has received positive feedback to the late start. He will check in with parents through a formal quality survey at the conclusion of the first trimester, which will include the opportunity for families to provide comments and suggestions.

This year Ground School, the transition of the staff back to RMSEL, was focused on building community with new team members and on instructional best practices, balanced with time for teachers to work in their classrooms and plan for the arrival of students. The Staff Retreat kicked off the week with rock climbing at Staunton State Park. Staff then camped at the Meadows Group Campground in the Pine National Forest. Returning teachers and staff assumed the leadership of various adventure components, initiatives, safety talks, cook groups, etc. These practices were intentionally modeled for new team members throughout the entire retreat.

Upon returning from the staff retreat, RMSEL teachers engaged in two days of professional learning. This year, to kick off the focus on quality lesson design, teachers participated in a “slice” of a learning expedition. In a slice, teachers engage first as student participants in a literacy-rich study of a topic—the 16th Street Mall in Denver was chosen, a case study that would be embedded within a 4th and 5th grade learning expedition around Colorado History. Teachers looked at the challenges facing the Mall today through a building background workshop, participated in urban research at the Mall in a fieldwork experience, analyzed the data they collected through a tight protocol, and finally took a stand on a specific action to help the Mall thrive through a Socratic Seminar. During the second day of professional learning, the instructional practices from the slice were unpacked as teachers now had their “teacher hats” on. Teachers left energized, with concrete applications to their own classroom practice, and many reminders of foundational Expeditionary Learning practices.

Weekly professional development is now being held from 7:00-8:30 on Wednesday mornings, thanks to the restructuring that allows for a late start on that day. The energy and engagement of the teachers has been high, and the work plan goal for the year has been met with definite enthusiasm. This year, RMSEL’s work plan goal is, “All students will reach the identified learning targets as a result of teachers’ high quality lesson design.” This is allowing staff to dig in to quality lesson design, through a progression thus far of high quality learning targets and the instructional model of Workshop 2.0. Jen Wood, RMSEL’s EL Education School Designer, is helping to facilitate weekly professional development more frequently this year. Having her additional perspective and expertise is an asset to the PD program.

In the weeks to come, teachers will be planning and intentionally delivering a Workshop 2.0 model lesson. They will then bring student work from their “grapple” and “apply” sections of the workshop for a student work sort, allowing them to evaluate their students’ progress toward the intended learning.

In communicating the intentionality of professional development with families, Chad is including a section in his bi-weekly RMSEL news to families to generate conversation around teaching and learning with their child. The work that is conducted in the field and classroom has to transcend the hours of the school day to support learning. This year RMSEL is working closely with EL Education to support teachers during professional development. On September 21-23, 2016, Chad will be participating in an EL Education Leadership Cohort/Conference. EL Education author and staff member, Dr. Ron Berger, will be presenting to the group of Mountain Region principals the increased alignment and focus on the three dimensions of quality as defined by EL. He is excited to participate with this group of leaders and communicate excellence with the RMSEL staff in continued professional growth.
At this time, RMSEL has received 2016 PARCC Data to assist in providing comparison year to year and disaggregated data from the first two years of testing. While there are areas to celebrate growth and achievement, there are also areas that demonstrate room for continuous improvement.

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**PARCC: ELA/Literacy**

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<th>Met + Exceeded (State)</th>
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**PARCC: Math**

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Chad said this is the first year in 6 years that RMSEL has more areas that are not achieving at or above the state level, and he and Marci are building some conjectures around why that is happening. In 5th grade math, only 17% of students are meeting the state expectation. They are examining why that has dropped, and whether going from a paper test to an electronic test plays a role in that. In talking to other schools, they are expressing that they are experiencing the same type of results. Those students have been identified, and instructional mechanisms are being considered to support those students and help them succeed. A significant area of improvement is in the 9th grade ELA/Literacy category.

Barbara asked about the 5th grade students taking the test; were the students tested the same students who had previously been tested at RMSEL or were there a large number of students who may have previously tested at other schools? Chad said that the majority of 5th grade students have been at RMSEL since kindergarten. Marci said that the opt out rate was unusually high in 2015, meaning that many of the students who tested for 2016 had not previously tested. RMSEL parents were more supportive of their students taking the tests this year, but it means that for many students, this would have been their first year to see this type of testing. Anne Marie asked if the teachers also saw the students struggling in the classroom with math. Chad said that for a series of years, 4th and 5th grade has shown struggles in math.
RMSEL is in the fourth year of implementing a new math curriculum beginning in kindergarten; it is encouraging to see that 60% of 3rd graders now exceed expectations in math. Chad commented that because 50% of 5th graders are in the “approaching” category, it means that those students are right at the verge and can be targeted for support. Because of the small size of RMSEL, it is easier to determine who the “bubble” students are and provide intervention quickly to those students. Barbara asked if there were other things going on within the 5th grade community that may have distracted those students from attention to the tests. Chad said he didn’t believe so. Kelly asked if Chad believes a big component of the scores is because of the electronic mechanism of testing. Chad said there is not a big discrepancy between the sub-standards of math, and staff is trying to figure out if there is a standard that instruction can be paired with to help students achieve. Rosann asked if, as formative assessments were being done last year, did it lead to the expectation of these results? Did teachers feel that the reports from last year were informative? Marci said that specific to 4th/5th grade, the math teacher does a great job of tracking formative assessment data on the students, and it shows a really large stretch of abilities and where students are. It allows an ability to see the areas that the teacher may need to slow down, re-teach, or provide extra emphasis.

Chad concluded his ED report with telling the board that RMSEL is in the process of revision of the 2017-2022 Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). At this time, Chad thanked our BOCES members who have been working diligently with representatives of their respective districts to ensure RMSEL is prepared to move forward with the continuation of the IGA. More detailed discussion will take place as a part of the agenda today.

**Open Forum**

Kelly recognized Clay Abla from Littleton Public Schools. Kelly thanked him for the work he does in supporting RMSEL.

**Consent Agenda**

- Item #1 – Personnel Matters – Kelly asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Rosann moved to approve the consent agenda, and Anne-Marie seconded. The consent agenda was unanimously approved.

**Action Items**

- Policy GBGE – Staff Family and Medical Leave (Modification) – Chad said the modification provides clarification of the definition of birth: it identifies that the leave time begins at the time of birth, not at any undisclosed period of time during the twelve month timeframe. Kelly asked for a motion to approve the policy modification. Rosann moved to approve the policy modification, and Barbara seconded. The policy modification was unanimously approved.

**Report Items**

- Budget Update (Julie Stelzer) – Julie presented the Management Summary to the board, which is included in its entirety below for the minutes.

**Audit Update**

The fieldwork portion of the 6/30/16 audit is scheduled to begin in two weeks on 10/10/16. The list of schedules and other documents required by the auditors was received 9/13/16. Work is currently underway to finish closing the prior fiscal year, prepare schedules, reconciliations, confirmations, and gather all of the information required by the auditors in order to meet the fieldwork deadline.

**Revenue**

DPS changed the funding payment schedule for 2016-2017. Beginning this school year, PPR funding is paid from DPS on a quarterly basis according to the following schedule: 25% is funded on July 15th, October 15th, January 15th and April 15th. The final quarterly payment will incorporate any changes in the State’s supplemental budget, if applicable, to reflect any adjustments or rescissions from CDE. The first 25% of PPR funding was received in July. PPR was budgeted at $7,626.05/FTE X 379.5 FTE, and $7,731.66/FTE X 386.5 FTE (10/1/15 count) is the per pupil amount that was received. The PPR and FTE difference funded at 25% explains the budget variance. This line item will be adjusted with the revised budget submitted in January.
Kindergarten financial aid (#42500) has $3,500 remaining, and there remains $11,077.50 in fieldwork financial aid (#67800). Under the 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, three (5) families have opted to take advantage of this discount.

Per the Budget Appropriation resolution approved by the board in June 2016, $100,000 of beginning fund balance is reflected on the budget for Prior Year Budget Carryover (#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, $214,616.50 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 August, we received $10,164.79 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 (#43600) line items include fieldwork fees carried over from 2015-2016 as well as 10% landmark trip allocation from the 2016-2017 fieldwork fees. These amounts are allocated toward funding the landmark 5th grade Sailing trip, 6th grade Yellowstone trip, 8th grade Civil Rights trip, and the 11th grade trip to Costa Rica.

Budgeted enrollment is 390 FTE and actual enrollment is currently at 393 FTE. This is the reason for the variance showing in the fieldwork fee grouping (#44200), and this line item as well as will be adjusted in the revised budget submitted in January.

The revenue derived from kindergarten tuition (state only funds .58 FTE for kindergarten) remains on target, with 10 months (September 2016-June 2017) remaining to be invoiced.

Classroom revenue (#46400, #46500, #46550 and #46600) represents the student contribution toward the 5th grade Sailing ($4,800), 6th grade Yellowstone ($5,000), 8th grade Civil Rights ($7,350) and 11th grade Costa Rica ($17,250) landmark trips.

School-Based fundraising (#47000) is over-budget due to a parent donation of $5,000. The accounts in this sub-category will be adjusted on the revised budget in January.

Miscellaneous income (#49000) is greater than anticipated due to the write-off of fieldwork fee deposits for students that decided not to attend RMSEL. These funds will be used to offset other budget shortfalls.

**Expenses**

Line items with notable variances or exceptions are explained below.

Lease #60020 – this variance is due to a timing difference related to the lease payments of $75,000 to DPS which are due 11/1 and 5/1.

Classroom Renovation #60031 – this account does not have a budget associated with the expense but will be adjusted in the revised budget submitted in January. The expenses in this account are for work performed over the summer in the common areas, carpet and painting of the High School Science, Humanities classrooms and mobile classrooms as well as toilet partitions.

Construction General #60032 – this account does not have a budget associated with the expense but will be adjusted in the revised budget submitted in January. The expenses in this account are for the installation of the plumbing and sink in the Community Room for the DPS school lunch program ($15,483) and the refinishing of the gym floor ($1,733).
Furniture #60035 – this account is over-budget due to the purchase of replacement desks for new staff. The line item will be adjusted in the revised budget submitted in January.

AVID/Movement #66211 – this account does not have a budget associated with the expense but will be adjusted in the revised budget submitted in January.

There were no questions or comments regarding the Management Summary. Kelly thanked Julie for her preparation of the report.

**Discussion Items**

- Intergovernmental Agreement Renewal 2017-2022 (including Discipline Policy and Procedures Revision – Caplan and Earnest Recommendations IGA/J Policy) – Chad said that each time he gets input on the IGA from any district, he uses the “Track Changes” feature and makes comments in side margins so that the integrity of the document remains unchanged, while allowing all five districts to see the commentary from all of the districts simultaneously. Chad said this is the first reading, the October meeting will serve as the second reading, which will then be forwarded to Coulter Bump at Caplan and Earnest who will provide a final draft to submit to the BOCES. Barbara asked if there is a way to compile the comments in an aged manner so that when she takes information back to her board, she will be sure to have the most recent and updated version. Chad said he will make a note to send it to her prior to her district’s board meeting. Janice would like the same thing for Cherry Creek School District. Michael commented that each student needs to be treated the same regardless of what district they come from. Chad said that due to RMSEL’s uniqueness of operating in the state as a school district in and of itself, it means that the students from the five districts are all open-enrolling at RMSEL and being serviced by RMSEL as a school district, not just a program of one district (such as a magnet or charter school). He then referred to section 19 – Student Suspension and Removal Procedures, and conversation continued with the IGA and the Discipline Policy and Procedures Revision as a combined discussion. Chad said that since RMSEL is functioning as a district, it needs to function as its own expulsion authority rather than students being referred back to home districts for their decision regarding expulsion. This allows for equitable treatment of all students at RMSEL, and prevents any potential inequity because one district might elect to treat a situation differently than another might. After an expulsion from RMSEL, a student would return to their home district for expulsion services; in that case, RMSEL would pay for the cost of those services, up to the PPR for that student. Mike asked if a student is expelled from RMSEL as the open-enrollment school, would they return to their school of residence. Chad said yes, and that the full PPR would be given to the district. The question as to whether a student who is expelled from RMSEL may then return to RMSEL after the period of expulsion is one that needs to be discussed in this revision process. Anne-Marie asked for clarification of the PPR, and whether it would be the full PPR regardless of date of expulsion, or if it would be pro-rated. Chad said that the discussion at this time has been with Littleton and Aurora. The expectation at this time is that it is referring to such a small number of students, and due to the expensive cost of expulsion services, the discussion has been to give the full PPR without pro-rating. Janice asked if a district can deny services by law. Barbara said her experience with that is no, the district is liable to provide education services. Kelly asked if a student can appeal the expulsion, and if that would happen at RMSEL or at the district level. Chad said it would take place at RMSEL. Chad referred to Clay for the answer to districts denying expulsion services. Clay said that the type of services provided varies from district to district, whether online or on site, but all districts remain in some kind of connection with the student because ultimately, they will eventually be returning to the district. The focus should be on recoverability vs. removal completely. Mike asked if a student wants to return to RMSEL after expulsion, would that be a decision that RMSEL would make or the home district? Clay said that would be a RMSEL decision. Rosann asked about the student’s enrollment classification for funding purposes. Chad said that student funding is funneled through Denver Public Schools, but that the student is enrolled at RMSEL. Chad said he contacted the CO Online Digital BOCES and asked about their funding, and asked if the student is enrolled in the district or the BOCES. Their students are absolutely enrolled in the BOCES. If a student leaves RMSEL prior to count day, their school of residence must take them because of where they live. Mike asked if there are any BOCES that receive funding directly from the state, or if all BOCES are funded through a district. Chad said at this time, BOCES are funded through a district. He has had some conversation with LeAnn Emm, Associate Commissioner School Finance and Operations, at CDE to pose the question of whether direct funding is something
that should be considered or pursued. Chad mentioned the comments made by DPS regarding special education services. He said that if a special education student needs a specific course of study or a specific program that is not available through RMSEL, they would have access to that programming through their local school district. It is not incumbent upon RMSEL to add additional specific programming to meet the need of a particular student’s IEP. Janice asked for clarification regarding changes being made and discussion followed with a consensus that each district’s legal counsel will also be included on further emails with dialogue and commentary on the IGA. Chad expressed his gratitude that every district is actively involved in this discussion, and said that he hopes to have a final compilation by Friday of this week to send to legal counsel, with the goal of being able to vote on the IGA at the November 2016 board meeting. Barbara asked if there will be a document presented in October for the BOCES members to take to their boards for weighing in, prior to the BOCES board meeting. She asked for a date that the district boards need to have reviewed the document. Chad said he will check the five districts’ board meeting dates and consolidate that information to the board for the purpose of having a plan for presenting the IGA to their individual boards. Kelly suggested that the board members be sharing the document with their board in the meantime, and to keep them informed of what is coming up with regard to RMSEL and the IGA. Anne-Marie asked for clarification of whether each board has to take an official vote on the RMSEL IGA at their meeting. Chad said yes, and Kelly noted that it will also require signatures from each board. Kelly made note of the reality that the boards will need to see the finalized version of the IGA before approving it. Clay said that boards may choose to have their first meeting to be for discussion, and then opt to put as a consent or action item at their next meeting. Chad said the hope is that after the October 18th BOCES meeting, Coulter will get the final version back to Chad so that it can be distributed to the five districts for votes prior to the RMSEL November meeting. Anne-Marie commented that she expects by that point in time, the districts will be ready to approve based on the good work being done at RMSEL.

- Student Policy “J” Timeline of Revision – Chad said that the first review of the first ten J policies would be available at the October 18th meeting.

Items for Future Agenda

Adjournment
Kelly asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Janice made a motion to adjourn the regular meeting, and Rosann seconded. The motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.

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Kelly Perez, President

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Rosann Ward, Secretary/Treasurer