In Attendance: Krista Holtzmann (DCSD), Janice McDonald (CCSD), Kelly Perez (LPS), and Rosann Ward (PEBC)

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

Guests: Margaret Bierman, Mitzi Leaver, and Krista Zizzo

Kelly welcomed everyone to the meeting and called the board meeting to order. Kelly asked for a motion that the board enter into executive session, per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(b) for discussion regarding the buying or selling of property. Rosann made the motion, Janice seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

After a brief period of time in executive session, the board returned to the regularly scheduled BOCES meeting.

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

Approval of Minutes
Kelly asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Janice moved to approve the minutes, and Krista seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Executive Director Report
Chad gave a brief overview of his Executive Director Report, which was then accepted into the minutes as presented to the board electronically. The entire report is included below for the minutes.

Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning
BOCES Executive Director Report

Tuesday, April 24, 2018

Executive Director Report Summary
1. Spring Crew Trips
2. Portfolio and Passage Preparation
3. Hiring 2018-2019
4. 2018-2019 School Year Planning
5. Staff Community
6. Teaching and Learning Conditions in Colorado (TLCC)

Spring Crew Trips
It has been a wild and crazy spring this crew trip season, our 6th grade students were able to experience four out of five planned days in Moab, UT before returning home in advance of a spring mountain snow storm. Just last week, our 7th graders experienced 100 mph wind gusts in WY which destroyed twenty plus RMSEL tents before they returned to campus early from this trip. These type of adversities are unfortunate, but understood and expected by our team of Adventure Professionals. I appreciate and value the proactive response of our team in mitigating exposure to risk while in the field. Our team is dynamic in that when they return to campus, students are still afforded an adventure experience. The 7th grade classes were able to hike and rock climb at Castlewood Canyon State Park for the remainder of the week, and in advance of another spring storm, they worked as a crew to assist with repairing and organizing equipment for our 2nd and 3rd grade students to leave on their trip on Monday. Spring crew trip season is character building, to say the least.
Portfolio and Passage Preparation

Students are actively engaged in revising final products and reflections in service of completing their annual portfolio. The portfolio accurately describes each individual student’s “Story of a Learner.” I encourage our team to take a look at student archives or actively participate in part of the Portfolio and Passage process in future school years. Student portfolios provide the most intimate and in-depth look into all aspects of our amazing school and program. Portfolio and Passages will take place on the following dates this year:

May 11, 2018 – Senior Reading Day
May 18, 2018 – Senior Presentation Day
May 19, 2018 – 3rd / 5th / 8th / 10th Reading Day
May 29, 2018 – 8th / 10th Presentation Day
May 30, 2018 – 3rd / 5th Presentation Day
May 31, 2018 – Passage Ceremonies / Graduation

Hiring 2018-2019

We are in the process of hiring, reviewing applicants for open positions, and announcing new members of our team to our community. At this time we have the following open positions for next year:

Lower School Learning Specialist – Special Education
First Grade Crew Leader
Sixth Grade Crew Leader
Music Teacher and Internship Coordinator
Dean of Students
(.6) Instructional Coach – Lower School Experience Preferred (New Position for 2018-2019 to replace EL Education Consultant)

Hiring is always an exciting, and challenging, time at RMSEL; we are beyond supportive of our staff learning and pursuing new opportunities. I want to specifically acknowledge and thank Dr. Kelsey Haddock for her eight years of employment at RMSEL as a Learning Specialist, Dean of Students, Special Education Site Coordinator, and Athletic Director. In addition to Kelsey’s years of employment, she was also a parent in our community for thirteen years. I am excited for Kelsey to transition to Aurora Quest K-8 next year as their Principal! She is ready and prepared for this opportunity and will be an exceptional leader!

Staff Community

The current climate of education at the state house in Colorado is unsettled. Increased costs of living and minimal funding increases to PPR for all statewide districts is an important conversation at this time. We have shared with our school-wide community non-partisan resources to understand the current school finance formula as impacted by state constitutional constraints. We are encouraging our community to be informed and engaged citizens in this conversation and communicate with their representatives accordingly.

In the wake of what seems beyond the control of our day-to-day operation, it is imperative to support our school community and culture that makes RMSEL great. I have purchased Colorado Rockies Tickets for this evening and we are headed to the ballpark for a night of fun, laughter, and culture building as a team. RMSEL is a great place to work and in the face of adversity and challenge statewide we must support one another as we arrive every day to build and grow our students!
Teaching and Learning Conditions in Colorado

The BOCES has been provided an embargoed copy of the statewide TLCC survey. Over 50% of our staff responded, therefore our results were provided to our district. This is an amazing third party data source that helps celebrate and guide conversations for improvement. I want to publicly thank CDE for making this available to a district our size, as a full-scale survey and data analysis of this depth would exceed our ability to fund the expense. While we cannot share the results at this time, as they are embargoed for publication until April 27, 2018, I want to celebrate that 100% of our staff responded in agreement / strong agreement to the two overall final questions, “I recommend this school as a good place to work,” and “I would recommend this school as a good place for students to learn.” It is humbling to lead such an amazing group of people, and I appreciate that we are in agreement that we truly work at a great school.

District Accountability Committee (DAC) Report

Margaret said the auction raised approximately $72,000. The auction was held at the Space Gallery, and it was a wonderful evening. During the evening, a parent challenged Chad to do push-ups for $10 each, and he did 46 push-ups, which raised an extra $2,300. This year’s auction had the highest number of attendees ever. There were a total of 202 participants, as compared to 175 last year. The RMSEL Run for Kids is next week; this is an annual event where students gather pledges per lap of running at Ash Grove Park, and it has historically raised approximately $10,000. This year, high school students will be running with the lower school students, and that will be fun. Margaret said DAC is currently working on end of year gifts for staff. Kelly expressed appreciation to DAC for the work they do in supporting RMSEL staff and students.

Open Forum

Chad said that RMSEL has been monitoring the status of the planned teacher rally at the state capitol, and that all 5 partner districts are closed on Friday, April 27th. RMSEL has planned to close for only a half day, due to having a crew trip out on a trip; it would have meant that crew would have missed a full day of their trip. Staff was supportive of the 11:30 dismissal and will use PTO time for being out that day.

Consent Agenda

- Item #1 – Personnel Matters
- Item #2 – 2016 Form 990

Kelly asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. Janice moved to approve the consent agenda, and Rosann seconded the motion. The consent agenda was unanimously approved.

Action Items

- 2017-2018 Supplemental Budget – Julie said the board received the supplementary budget in their packets; there were no large adjustments. Kindergarten tuition needs adjusted due to the reassignment of a kindergarten student to first grade. There is an adjustment to school-based fundraising, such as grocery cards. Julie noted that the Student Leaders & Achievers breakfast had not previously been budgeted for, and has been added. There is an additional $700 adjustment to electrical for running power to the Adventure storage shed behind the school building. Janice asked if the vocal/instrumental budget marked new is due to that being something new or that has not previously been funded. Julie said that is an error; this is not a new budget, it will be for a new staff member. Rosann made a motion to approve the supplemental budget, Krista seconded the motion, and the motion was unanimously approved.

- SY 18-19 Salary Schedule – Julie said this needs to be approved at this meeting, so that staff contracts may be distributed. Chad said last year the board provided a 5% increase to adjust the salary schedule which was double what the partner districts were doing at the time. There is a 2½% increase between steps which will carry forward for next year as well, and this is in line with the partner districts. Kelly asked if the RMSEL salary schedule is comparable to the other districts. Chad said the first 10 years of the schedule are more comparable, but years beyond that become less comparable. RMSEL has program elements that differ from other schools including having Educational Assistants in all K-5 classrooms, smaller class sizes, etc. Adding more students adds more PPR, but these are elements that RMSEL wants to retain, so it does impact budgeting. Krista said she appreciates that RMSEL’s resources are being intentionally directed at teachers as much as possible. She believes the TLCC survey reflects that staff does feel valued at RMSEL. Janice made a motion to approve the 2018-19 salary schedule, and Krista seconded. The salary schedule was unanimously approved.
BEST Grant Owner Representative RFP – Chad said the BOCES has approved the purchase of an owner representative, and he will put out an RFP for the board to review. There is about a two week turnaround time from when Cheryl Honigsberg provides the choices available, and then the board will review those proposals and narrow it down to three; RMSEL will defer to Cheryl’s expertise in making a final selection.

Report Items
Report Items

Budget Update (Julie Stelzer)
The Management Summary was approved as presented. The Management Summary, as presented to the board, is included below for the minutes.

Revenue
The 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 2017, the second 25% was received in October 2017, and the third 25% was received in January 2018 as per the payment schedule. PPR was budgeted at $7,915.10/FTE X 382.08 FTE (10/1/17 count) and is the per pupil amount that was received. The January 2018 payment was adjusted to the official October 2017 count numbers and included any known CDE revisions to PPR.

In July, we received a federal grant award through CDE in the amount of $491.40 for Race To The Top School Readiness Assessment. These funds were used to acquire the Teaching Strategies Gold assessment system for kindergarten students.

In November, we received $1,082.30 for English Language Proficiency from DPS.

Kindergarten financial aid (#42500) has $10,500 remaining, and there remains $13,999.20 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, nine (9) families have opted to take advantage of this discount. Any unused funds in these line items will be used to offset future budget shortfalls.

In January, we received $4,000 from the Schramm Foundation and $1,500 from the Carson-Pfaflin Family Foundation to be used toward purchasing the EL Education literacy curriculum in kindergarten and 1st grade; support for publishing the immigration expedition interview anthologies in 6th grade; support for purchasing the four-stroke engine models used by the 7th and 8th grades in the energy, engines and oil expedition; support for purchasing the fetal pigs for dissection in 7th and 8th grade human body expedition; support for coding and robotics in kindergarten through 3rd grade; and the purchase of microscopes to be used in high school science.

Per the Budget Appropriation resolution approved by the board in June 2017, $150,000 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, $201,694.29 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 $5,697.89 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 2016-2017 as well as 10% landmark trip allocation from the 2017-2018 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 Outward Bound trip.

The revenue derived from kindergarten tuition (state only funds .58 FTE for kindergarten) remains on target, with 3 months (April-June 2018) remaining to be invoiced.
Classroom revenue (#46400, #46500 and #46550) represents the student contributions and chaperone airfare toward the 5th grade Sailing ($5,586.04), 6th grade Yellowstone ($5,000) and 8th grade Civil Rights ($7,200) landmark trips as well as other various classroom revenue including student reimbursement for airfare and medical costs.

In December, we received a donation of $3,000 to directly benefit Classroom Revenue #46600. Per the donor, these funds were allocated with $2,500 to HS Science and $500 to HS Humanities to be used for additional classroom resources.

Interest Income #8000 – this line item was adjusted on the supplemental budget.

**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.

Meals & Entertainment #62400 – this account is over-budget due to the RMSEL Leaders & Achievers breakfasts (3) held to honor students for academic achievements and perfect attendance. This line item was adjusted on the supplemental budget.

Elementary Fieldwork #67402 & #67403 – these expense accounts are offset against funds in the Fieldwork Carryover-Landmark Trips #43610 and Classroom Revenue #46400 for the 2017-2018 Sailing trip.

High School Fieldwork #67600 – these expense accounts are partially offset against funds in the Fieldwork Carryover-Landmark Trips #43670, and the remaining overage of $2,533.37 is due to increased expenses to launch a revised high school experience and will be offset against discretionary expense.

**Discussion Items**

- **DAC Adventure Fee Recommendation** – Chad said that RMSEL funds programs that are not funded in traditional school environments. Included in the packet provided to the board is a cost break-down, which includes educational aides and a teacher supply budget of approximately $2,000 per teacher. RMSEL also provides salaries and benefits to adventure staff which are not covered by the fieldwork fees collected. Fieldwork fees cover a percentage of transportation, maintenance, licensing, insurance costs, hardware for students to be in the field, as well as the cost of contracted professionals that RMSEL may need to provide. DAC put forth a survey, to which about 1/3 of the RMSEL parent community responded, considering the addition of a fee to fund adventure salaries, and a supply fee to fund the teacher supply budgets. The results to the survey were favorable, but there was a wide range of what acceptable fees would be. DAC reviewed the parent responses to the survey, and also compared fees of comparable expeditionary learning schools with an adventure program, including Polaris in Fort Collins, Odyssey and DDES in DPS, Renaissance in Douglas County, and North Routt in Steamboat Springs. Margaret said it is always challenging to ask parents to come up with more money; but the adventure program was ranked in the top three reasons why parents send their students to RMSEL, and is part of the core of what RMSEL does. Averaging out the responses from parents, including those parents who said they supported zero dollars for a fee, brought the average to $114 adventure fee per student plus a supply fee of $86 per student. This meant parents would support a fee of $200 per student total. DAC prefers to assess the $200 fee in support of the adventure program, and then pursue grants and other means to help fully fund the supply budgets for teachers. While some of the fees at other schools may look comparable on the chart provided to the BOCES, the adventure program is not comparable; nobody does adventure like RMSEL does. Chad expressed appreciation to DAC and the parent community for the engagement in this conversation and recommendation. He stated that RMSEL has always valued being a non-exclusionary program, with the only limitation to participating at RMSEL being the transportation to and from school. Margaret interjected that RMSEL offers financial aid, and also offers a multi-child discount, and DAC is recommending that the proposed adventure fee be included in those options. Julie also noted that for students in 5th, 6th, and 8th grades, there is a landmark trip fee of an additional $100-$200. Kelly wondered if this conversation will need to be repeated in the next couple of years, or if this fee will suffice for a few years. Mitzi commented that with the fee structure as it exists, it is
not expected that another request would be made in the near future. Krista asked how the financial aid program works at RMSEL, what percentage of students currently qualify, is there an expectation of that number increasing? Julie said that financial aid is all based on the income eligibility guidelines provided by the federal government for free and reduced lunch. RMSEL has many families that do not qualify for financial aid, but still struggle to pay their fees. Julie expressed her concern about continually “feeing” parents. Krista asked what percentage of students is struggling with fees being paid at this time. Julie said there is probably between 12-17%; some of those families are good at managing their finances and make small payments all year round, while others are not. Janice suggested that strong communication with parents take place that this increase is not for just one school year with anticipated increases the following year as well; it is expected that the fee covers multiple years. Kelly asked what happens if a family simply cannot pay. Julie gave an example of a family who has had a large number of children attend RMSEL that has been making monthly payments over a number of years; the youngest child is now the only one left, but fees will need to continue being paid for an extended period of time even after that student graduates. Chad said there is still time to bring this request back for final discussion and a vote; but the nice thing is that parents who responded to the survey have been supportive, and the second highest degree of satisfaction as to why parents send their students to RMSEL. He is also aware of the challenge that fee increases bring, and wonders if there are modifications that may be made to the recommendation; including the possibility of a tiered increase that is spread over a few years, or a per family vs. per child fee. He stated that in traditional schools, fees are assessed for various programs (arts, supplies, books and materials, etc.), while at RMSEL, those costs are all covered without asking parents for additional fees specifically for those things. Mitzi added that in the past, there existed at RMSEL a “Belay Club.” This was a group of parents who anonymously participated in helping cover costs for families who may struggle with fees. It was handled by the Executive Director and Finance Director anonymously both ways; both the donor and the recipient remained anonymous. Margaret said she believes there are currently a number of families who would support this endeavor. Kelly asked what the $200 per student would be used for. Chad said that it would fund the current adventure staff salaries and benefits which currently have to be funded from the PPR dollars; this would allow those dollars to be returned to supporting students and teachers. Margaret expressed that parents care about whether RMSEL may lose good teachers due to salary constraints. Julie said that fieldwork fees do not cover any salary costs. Rosann said “digging the hole deeper” always makes her nervous, so she wonders if there are parents who are already struggling to pay fees even though diligently trying to, how much deeper will the “hole” get by increasing the fees? Julie said that there are established due dates for fees throughout the year, and at this point in time, all fees should have been fully paid. As of right now, there are 12 students who have existing fees still remaining outstanding. She believes that due to the upturn in the current economy, RMSEL is in the best place it’s ever been in regard to unpaid accounts; usually that number would be closer to 30-40 students at this point in the year. Julie said that she is more supportive of a tiered step to the increase. The economy is outside of RMSEL’s control and because of that, there isn’t really a good way to predict the future. Kelly asked how many parents participated in the survey. Margaret said it was about one-third of RMSEL families; Chad said it was slightly less than 100 families. Krista asked what the difference in the 12-17% that Julie mentioned previously and the 12 students is; Julie said the 12-17% are families who do qualify for financial aid, while the 12 students are the 3% who are currently behind in paying. Kelly said this discussion will definitely continue in the next BOCES meeting. Julie stated that she needs to know how the board wants to see the proposed 18-19 budget in the next meeting; should it include the proposed fee or not? Kelly asked if it could be presented three ways; with no increase, with only a partial increase, or with the full increase.

**Items for Future Agenda**

- **Executive Director Evaluation 18-19 SY** – Chad said the board will see the first reading of his evaluation at the next meeting, in executive session. Then in June, the final approval will take place, with contract renewal offer. He intends to provide school achievement data, BEST grant work, HB 12-1345 funding with the state, community surveys, TLCC data will be available, and digitizing student progress and achievement. If there are other areas the board would like to address, please let him know.

- **RMSEL Graduation** – Chad said that RMSEL graduation is a very heartfelt ceremony, with teachers giving personal speeches of 3-5 minutes per student, so it is a longer ceremony than many other graduations.

- **Chad added that the last staff meeting of the year will be held Tuesday, May 1st, at 3:30 pm at Ester’s; the staff will be watching a documentary film, titled The Motivation Factor, and receive the book for all-staff reading, titled Spark, regarding the effects of physical education on student achievement. This will kick off professional development work for next year. Ester’s has donated the use of a space for this meeting. Chad offered the board members each a copy**
of Spark. Kelly commented that she would love to read the book. Rosann asked for the address and duration of the meeting. Chad said that RMSEL is sending two teachers to Prescott Middle School in Modesto, CA, which is the school that is the case study featured in the documentary. He reached out to the athletic director of the school and they have provided all of their documents of their program and invited our staff to come visit and observe. Margaret added that DAC has set aside ten $600 grants for teachers each year, and those funds are being used for travel for the two teachers. There is an application and approval process that must take place in order to access the grants.

**Adjournment**

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

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Kelly Perez, President

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Rosann Ward, Secretary/Treasurer