In Attendance: Krista Holtzmann (DCSD), Dan Jorgenson (APS), Carrie Olson (DPS), Kelly Perez (LPS), and Sue Sava (PEBC)

Staff: Chad Burns, Julie Stelzer, and Cris Veteto

Guests: Mark Elmshauser, CliftonLarsonAllen LLP (audit); Shawna Ballinger, Margaret Bierman, Megan Kane, Mitzi Leaver, and Tonja Pizzo (DAC members); and Coulter Bumper (legal counsel)

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. Krista made a motion to amend the agenda, and Dan seconded the motion. The agenda was unanimously approved as amended.

Approval of Minutes
Kelly asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Dan made a motion to approve the minutes, and Sue seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Executive Director Report
Chad read his Executive Director report which is included below in its entirety for the minutes.

Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning
We Are Crew!

Executive Director Report

Communication Summary
1. Colorado Department of Education Awards
2. BEST Building Update
3. Professional Development Showcase
4. Celebration of Student Learning
5. Equity Update

Colorado Department of Education Awards
Monday, November 18, 2019, BOCES Chair Kelly Perez and I were present at the Colorado Department of Education Award Ceremony. On behalf of our entire community, we accepted two awards this year in honor of our student body. We received the designation of Accreditation with Distinction, the highest accreditation rating possible, which is received by less than 10% of all Colorado school districts annually. In addition to the award for accreditation, RMSEL was also recognized for High Growth in high school; this is an incredible award that recognizes the dedication of our teaching staff and interventionist who work with students who are identified as needing to catch up to grade level in one or more subject areas. Our students are not only achieving, but when they are identified for additional support, they are growing at a rate that exceeds our statewide peers. I am humbled to accept these awards and take great pride in our students’ achievements.

BEST Building Update
Unfortunately, the original conceptual design submitted with the BEST grant application that was priced for the purposes of application was not feasible once the design team moved into schematic design for construction pricing. The conceptual design and intended scope of work priced at $2.5 million over our hard cost budget. Over the past three weeks, our school team, NV5, Treanor HL, and JHL Construction have worked to ensure that the educational program aspects of our addition and renovation remain in the full scope of work. The west addition located here in the
The community room will be smaller scale to include a warming kitchen with serving area and smaller performance stage. The Adventure Program elements of the schematic design will be relocated to a 20 x 40 adjacent Tuff Shed garage in the rear of the building. By making these revisions, 100% of the classrooms are renovated and retained in the scope of work. While this was not optimal, I appreciate the work of the team to ensure all health, safety, and educational program concerns are addressed.

**Professional Development Showcase**

Our team of teachers will be conducting a celebration of professional learning on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at 7:00 am. Any member of the board is welcome to join us during this time to observe and celebrate the amazing case studies created by our talented team of educators. Each case study created during the first cycle of professional development will be implemented for our students the second semester of this year. I want to commend our talented teachers and our instructional coaches for making this type of deep learning possible. Also, thank you to our Professional Development Leadership Team for guiding our weekly work sessions and providing valuable feedback and adjustments that support our teachers.

**Celebration of Student Learning**

Exhibition Night is the culmination of fall case studies and learning expeditions in which students are empowered to showcase their learning to an authentic audience of parents and community members. Exhibition Night represents our fall semester presentation of learning. Students have prepared a variety of artifacts that display their learning and are excited to share with our community. Each Exhibition Night is held at RMSEL beginning at 5:30 pm, if you would like to join our community for this event.

- **December 5, 2019 – Kindergarten – 6th Grade Exhibition Night**
- **December 12, 2019 – 7th/8th Grade Exhibition Night**
- **December 19, 2019 – High School Elective Showcase**

**Equity Audit Update**

On Tuesday, November 19, 2019, Sue Sava and I met with Dr. Toi Massey to continue the Equity Audit. At this time, Dr. Massey has reviewed our state reported student achievement, discipline, and attendance statistics over multiple years. We have also provided Dr. Massey with lottery information regarding annual applications and internal / external relinquishments. Dr. Massey will be meeting with me and our community at an upcoming Chat with Chad, and also interview parents regarding their RMSEL experience. Based on this review and conversation, a final report with questions for the annual survey will be provided and any recommendations based on our data. We look forward to this continued work.

Sue asked if we know which Chat with Chad Dr. Massey will be attending, and Chad said that she wants to attend the one being held this Friday (December 6th) if her schedule permits.

**Open Forum**

There were no comments for Open Forum.

**Consent Agenda**

Dan made a motion to approve the consent agenda, and Carrie seconded the motion. The consent agenda was unanimously approved.

**Action Items**

- Audit Presentation (Mark Elmshauser, CliftonLarsonAllen LLP) – Mark presented the annual audit. He said the board members have three documents: the governance letter, internal control letter, and financial statements. He has reviewed the audit work, and his firm has done a second review internally, but all of the documents are in draft form until the audit can be filed with CDE. As far as the auditors are concerned, this should be the final product. Referring to the governance letter, he noted that there were no required auditing policy changes that had to be implemented this year. The accounting estimates include estimations for capital asset related items, which covers depreciation and useful life, and pension and post-employment benefits through PERA. There were no difficulties encountered in performing the audit, and he expressed appreciation to Julie and office staff for providing everything that was needed for a very smooth audit process. He said there were only a few minor corrected statements to make, only minor
adjustments which are pretty ordinary. The auditor’s opinion is that this was a clean audit with accurately reported financial information using generally accepted accounting practices. Mark mentioned that RMSEL’s current assets are a little over two million dollars, the majority of which are cash and investments. The swings in Inflow and Outflow of Resources is all related to the PERA pension plan. Long term liabilities were cut in half related to the law that was passed regarding the PERA pension plan. The revenues stayed fairly consistent across the board. The expenses decreased, again related to the PERA pension fund changes. He said that the restricted funds are non-spendable funds, and include the inventory and prepaid expenses that have not been spent yet and are carried over, and assigned funds such as for buses. The largest change in expenditures is related to the purchase of two new buses. Regarding liabilities and fund balance, Mark said the non-spendable fund balance includes some prepaid expenditures that were paid before the end of the year but are applicable to the current year, and inventory of grocery cards. He noted that $350,000 has been set as a budget carryover related to the bond issuance debt service.

Regarding PERA, Mark highlighted the changes that were made with the new laws, including that the state now contributes $225 million to the PERA plans, and accounting standards require that RMSEL shows its share of that contribution, which is $48,234. In capital assets, there was an addition of $102,736 for construction related expenses in process and $103,194 for new buses that were purchased. Mark noted that the employer contribution rates for PERA were increased by .25 percent, and that the employee contribution rates were increased by 2 percent. This contributed to the reduction in liabilities. RMSEL was under budget in expenditures by about $280,000. Krista asked about the rollover fieldwork fees and whether those were funds that were collected but then not spent on trips. Julie explained that is actually prepaid fieldwork fees that parents pay during the current school year to hold their spot for the upcoming school year. The fees get rolled into the next year for use. There will always be this line item, based on the manner in which parents reserve their spots for the future school year. Also included are fieldwork fees that are rolled forward for use in the years that include landmark trips. Mark referenced the final letter regarding internal controls, and said that as happens each year due to RMSEL’s small size and limited staff, the auditors commented on the internal controls of financial procedures at RMSEL. There is a lack of segregation of duties because of the limited staff size. Mark noted that RMSEL has created internal reviews that help negate those concerns. Krista asked what types of reviews are in place. Mark allowed Chad to respond. Chad said that all cash receipts and transactions come in through Cris first for recording in the cash receipts log, then they are given to Julie for deposit. After deposits are made, there is another review done by Cris to verify those deposits. Chad reviews all credit card statements, bank statements, journal entry adjustments being made, as well as any checks issued in excess of $5,000 which require dual signature. The auditors prepare the financial statements that are presented with the audit. Kelly thanked Mark, and noted that he is retiring this year. She asked who his successor will be, and Mark stated that Allison Slife be the new principal on the audit. She had another meeting this morning and could not be at the BOCES meeting. Mark and Allison have already met with Julie. She also does auditing for several other school districts, and he believes RMSEL will be in good hands with her. Kelly asked for a motion to accept the audit as presented. Sue made a motion to accept the audit as presented, and Krista seconded. The audit was unanimously accepted.

○ School/Community Relations Policy Review – 2nd Reading – Kelly asked if there were questions or comments about the policies. Kelly noted that once these policies are voted on, it puts RMSEL in a more strategic position for addressing certain issues in the future. Krista said policy KE and KE-R are policies that are to be read together by the community; KE sets out the board policy, and KE-R sets out procedure. KE-R does specify that an appeal could be heard by the board, but that is not spelled out in the KE policy itself. Chad commented that as in the district policies, the –R portion of the policies are listed subsequent to the main policy lettering, and are adopted simultaneously. Krista said she doesn’t think it is an issue; she just wants to be sure the community understands the connection between the two policies. Dan said he thought it would be helpful for parents to have a paper handbook to access. Chad said that legal counsel has advised that for a school the size of RMSEL, trying to condense and abbreviate the policies into a simple language, readable format creates the potential for unintentional omission of important terminology. Instead, it was suggested that the policies are the guiding handbook and should be posted as such, with communication to parents that the policies are the handbook for the school. It was discussed that every year during online registration, parents must sign electronically that they have accessed and reviewed the policies, and discussed them with their students. Registration includes a live link to the policies, and it cannot be completed without checking the box that they’ve read and reviewed them. Additionally, RMSEL administration also conducts a quarterly review of the code of conduct with students, and as behavior events become apparent, the dean may also review specific segments pertaining to those behaviors with entire classes of students. Kelly asked for a motion to approve the
School/Community Relations Policy. Sue made a motion to approve the policy, and Krista seconded. The policy was unanimously approved.

- **2020-2021 School Calendar** – Chad said the building review portion of his executive director report explains the rationale behind the proposed calendar. It is included here for the minutes:

  **BEST Building Update**
  Unfortunately, the original conceptual design submitted with the BEST grant application that was priced for the purposes of application was not feasible once the design team moved into schematic design for construction pricing. The conceptual design and intended scope of work priced at $2.5 million over our hard cost budget. Over the past three weeks, our school team, NV5, TreanorHL, and JHL Construction have worked to ensure that the educational program aspects of our addition and renovation remain in the full scope of work. The west addition located here in the community room will be smaller scale to include a warming kitchen with serving area and smaller performance stage. The outer wall parallel to Holly Street will go untouched; instead the current wall behind the stage will be expanded because it is non-structural, non-loadbearing. The expansion of the Holly Street wall was proving to be the most expensive portion of the project for the least used space, so that was determined not to be a priority. The Adventure Program elements of the schematic design will be relocated to a 20 x 40 adjacent Tuff Shed 4-car garage with heat and electrical in the rear of the building. By making these revisions, 100% of the classrooms are renovated and retained in the scope of work. While this was not optimal, I appreciate the work of the team to ensure all health, safety, and educational program concerns are addressed.

  Chad said the proposed calendar provides JHL Construction with two additional weeks of construction time in August. High school and ground school for staff will be hosted in the trailer classrooms, and high school students will begin school with the Colorado Trail backpacking trip, so they will be off campus. JHL plans to begin April 1st to stage temporary heating, and will begin the mechanical tear-out of the building overnight, on the weekends, and in the summer. They plan for asbestos abatement to be completed, and all mechanical systems to be up and running by August 31st. High school students will begin school two weeks earlier than grades K-8 and will therefore end two weeks earlier than grades K-8. There were adjustments made to other usual breaks and professional days in order to accommodate the construction needs. This includes the elimination of traditional fall break and adding two days to Thanksgiving week instead so that there is a whole week off there. Winter break has also been shortened. Chad said that RMSEL’s biggest constraint is the need to get student trips scheduled in a timely manner prior to winter weather. He acknowledged that this is less than preferred by both parents and RMSEL staff. He said that perseverance for one year is needed and appreciated in order to get the construction project accomplished as needed. Sue commented about the thought that has been put into considering the developmental level of students as well in the scheduling of the trips. Chad said that even with the adjustments made, RMSEL will always face the potential of early winter weather impacting a trip. The “jigsaw puzzle” effect of the calendar will be for one school year. Krista asked about the required dates for administering the PSAT and SAT, and if those dates were considered. Chad said it was strategic in the planning of the calendar because in order to accommodate those testing requirements, RMSEL needs for there to be groups of students who are out of the building on trips, as those classrooms are then used for testing locations.

**Report Items**

- **Budget Update** – Julie said she wanted to draw attention to three things that will happen in the 19-20 revised budget that will be submitted to the board next month. One year of debt service, $484,500, was prepaid as a part of the bond process. The budget will reflect that payment coming from the school’s reserves. Reserve funds will also be required to be used for additional legal expenses and the equity audit costs. Part of the bond process required RMSEL to declare the expected budget rollover year-to-year, and the amount being set aside is $250,000. The first year of debt service will not reach its maximum amount for two years. Prepaying the debt service resulted in a decrease of approximately $30,000 debt service expense annually. Kelly asked how high school enrollment is, and Julie said that high school is substantially under-enrolled. Julie said that historically, the deposit that parents pay in January has been allowed to transfer to a sibling if the parent ultimately relinquishes the spot for a student. This has created a trend of parents paying the deposit of $150 to hold the spot for a student, even knowing that the student doesn’t plan to stay at RMSEL for the next year. This has especially impacted high school enrollment. Dan asked if there was any way to over-enroll students intentionally, with the expectation of some of those students ultimately not coming. Chad said the risk is in not having physical space if those students should all keep the spots that were over-enrolled. Julie said that the intention is to increase the deposit required for enrollment to $300, and to enforce the non-transferability...
of the deposit, in the hope that this trend is mitigated. Chad asked Cris to speak to her experience regarding the impact on her position. Cris said that it happens every year, but this school year, there was a significant impact due to students who paid to hold spots, even though they acknowledged their intent was not to return, and then waited until April or May to relinquish the spots. The later in the year that a prospective family is offered a spot, the higher the likelihood of the spot not being accepted. This creates a perpetual “rolling stone” effect that makes the process of relinquishment / offer a spot / wait for response / relinquishment / offer the spot to next wait listed student continue for months, even into the beginning of the next school year. This resulted in unfilled grade levels for the current school year. Cris said she experienced a high level of frustration for this current school year, and that she began the school year with still trying to fill unfilled seats. Julie commented that by summer, potential wait listed students have already moved on and made decisions. Cris said that especially in the higher grades, the wait list ends up being depleted with no applicants left to offer spots to. Chad added that this is the first year since this administrative team has worked together that 8th grade is still unfilled. Kelly asked if the practice could be established to have a hard deadline for current students to commit. Chad said that is already what is in place with the January re-enrollment commitment deadline. Based on data that Cris collected for the equity audit, over the course of a number of years, the number of enrollment offers being relinquished has increased significantly; she believes this is due to the rolling stone effect and the lateness of enrollment offers being made. Margaret asked if RMSEL can go above the agreed upon number from the five districts in the IGA. Chad said that there is a fluctuating number that would total 440, while our true capacity is 400. If a district reaches its target capacity but there are no applicants for another district available to offer spots to, then that district may be over-enrolled. Margaret commented that for students in transition years, such as 5th to 6th grade or 8th to 9th grade, many of those parents make the deposit to hold the spot at RMSEL until after they’ve heard back from other school choice options. She asked about delaying RMSEL’s lottery until later in the calendar. Chad noted that with assessment and trip season at RMSEL, this would present an extreme challenge in allowing lottery students the opportunity to shadow at RMSEL prior to making a commitment. Shawna asked if the internal shadow days for currently enrolled students will take place prior to the re-enrollment commitment date. Chad said the 8th graders are shadowing high school today and Thursday, and that on Wednesday, he and a group of high school students will be visiting the Odyssey School during lunch to talk to students about RMSEL high school. He commented that in participating in previous school fairs, it is a wide assortment of schools being presented, not just RMSEL. This is why they pursued the “lunch tour” at Odyssey instead. Due to limited resources and the under-enrollment of high school, efforts are being directed specifically at current 8th grade students who will be transitioning schools.

The management summary is included below for the minutes.

Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning
Management Summary
November 26, 2019

Revenue
Per pupil revenue (PPR) is typically paid from DPS on a monthly basis after the first 25% is paid for the first quarter of the fiscal year. The first 25% of PPR funding ($827,653.57) was received in July, and the first monthly payment of $253,085.38 was received 10/18/19. It is assumed that one of the monthly payments in the first quarter of 2020 will incorporate any changes in the State’s supplemental budget, if applicable, to reflect any adjustments or rescissions from CDE. PPR was originally budgeted at $8,735.13/FTE X 385 FTE, and $8,735.13/FTE X 379 FTE (10/1/18 count) is the PPR amount that was received. The PPR and FTE difference funded at 25% explain the budget variance. This line item will be adjusted with the revised budget submitted in January 2020 to reflect the under-enrollment in the high school.

Per the State Board of Education, English Language Proficiency Act (ELPA) allocations were approved for the 2018-2019 school year. RMSEL received $1,342.22 of ELPA funding in October 2019 to support the requirement to provide an evidence-based English language proficiency program for all English learners. The ELPA program provides funding intended to offset the cost of educating English learners with the goal being to increase the English language proficiency and academic performance of English learners. This line item will be adjusted with the revised budget submitted in January 2020.
Per the Budget Appropriation resolution approved by the board in June 2019, $350,000 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, $201,186.16 was received in August 2019 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 $3,196.03 per the READ Act to support reading intervention for students in grades K-3 as identified from state assessment scores. This line item will be adjusted with the revised budget in January.

The amounts reflected in the Fieldwork Carryover-Landmark Trips (#43600) line items include fieldwork fees carried over from 2018-2019 as well as 10% landmark trip allocation from the 2019-2020 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 high school Colorado Trail trip.

As of October 31, 2019, budgeted enrollment was 385 FTE and actual enrollment was at 367 FTE on 10/1/19, count day. The variance in the fieldwork fee grouping (#44200), transportation fee (#44500), instructional support supply fee (#44600) and technology fee (#44700) line items represent under-enrollment in the high school. These line items will be adjusted with the revised budget in January.

Classroom revenue (#46200, #46400, #46500, #46550 and #46602) represents funds deferred from 2018-2019 DAC fundraising for purchase of an Osprey Kiva ($150) and backpacks ($1,795) for the adventure program as well as the student contribution toward the 5th grade Sailing ($5,000), 6th grade Yellowstone ($4,900) and 8th grade Civil Rights ($7,200) landmark trips. The high school science classroom received a parent donation ($655.64) to cover the cost of the large Shutterfly photos displayed throughout the school.

School-based fundraising revenue (#47000) is significantly higher than budgeted due to the deferral of DAC fundraising revenue from 2018-2019. This line item will be adjusted with the revised budget in January.

Miscellaneous income (#49000) is greater than anticipated due to the number of student enrollment relinquishments and the non-refundable fieldwork fee deposit. Due to the number of families opting to pay the required $150 fieldwork fee deposit and then not attend RMSEL for the 2019-2020 school year, the non-refundable fieldwork fee deposit required to secure a student’s enrollment spot for the 2020-2021 school year will be increased to $300. To clarify, the fieldwork fee deposit received during re-enrollment is applied to a student’s fieldwork fees for the upcoming school year and does not represent a fee increase for families that remain at RMSEL. This line item will be adjusted with the revised budget in January to true up miscellaneous income.

Interest Income (#80000) – this line item is greater than budget and will be adjusted on the revised 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.

Construction (General) #60032 – this variance is due to the construction of a wall in the old Spanish classroom in order to create two pull-out classrooms for Learning Specialists. This wall construction was not anticipated when the budget was created last May. This expense line item will be adjusted with the revised budget in January 2020.

Debt Service-Construction Bond #60032 – the $484,500 showing in this line item represents the Maximum Annual Debt Service (MADS) on the 2019 CECFA Education Revenue Bonds that was authorized by the board on 10/3/19 and paid at closing on 10/8/19 and will show on the Capital Construction Fund financial statements in the Bond Reserve Fund once completed. As stated in the board resolution, a portion of the school’s beginning fund balance for 2019-2020 was authorized to fund the initial year of MADS on the bonds, and the revised budget submitted in January 2020 will reflect this payment from the beginning fund balance.
Insurance #62350 – the $12,787 budget variance in this line item relates to an increase in property coverage required by DPS to add the building value ($5,818,141) and content value ($724,426) to the RMSEL policy. DPS had previously maintained the insurance for the building replacement. In addition to this change, RMSEL’s per occurrence property deductible was increased to $100,000. These changes reflect an increase in RMSEL’s total insured value to $8,064,764. The annual premium contribution for this increase is $17,279 and was pro-rated to the effective date of 10/3/19.

Legal Expense #62720 – as stated in last month’s report, we have been advised by Coulter Bump of Caplan & Earnest LLC that the estimated legal fees to navigate the ongoing parent concerns from the four families with grievances will be in the range of $10,000-$15,000 depending on the time needed to bring the issue to resolution. In addition, there are legal fees related to the bond issuance and subsequent architect and general contractor contracts which were not included in the original budget. This represents a substantial increase to this budgeted line item, and the legal expense budget will be increased to $40,000 on the January 2020 revised budget. Additionally, the school will need to access the reserve (beginning fund balance) to increase the legal expense line item due to the bond issuance and budget rollover figures used in forecasting for the school’s debt service obligation.

Special Education Fees #65020 – this budget line item will be adjusted on the revised budget submitted in January to reflect actual enrollment as of October 2019 count.

Classroom Supplies-Fitness #66207 – this budget line item is offset against Classroom Revenue #46207 and relates to the purchase of fitness t-shirts for all students K-12.

Classroom Supplies #66300, #66400, #66500 & #66600 – these budget line items will be adjusted on the revised budget submitted in January to reflect actual enrollment as of October 2019 count as well as the staffing decrease in high school.

Fieldwork #67000 – these budget line items will be adjusted on the revised budget submitted in January to reflect actual enrollment as of October 2019 count as well as the staffing decrease in high school.

Financial Aid – there remains $23,836.12 in fieldwork fee financial aid (#67800), $2,640.00 in transportation financial aid (#67830), $10,260.00 in instructional support financial aid (#67860) and $3,420.00 in technology financial aid (#67870). These line items will be adjusted in January to reflect actual enrollment as of October 2019 count day. Any unused funds in these line items will be used to offset future budget shortfalls.

Fee Discounts Taken #67810 - 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 fees (fieldwork, transportation, supply and technology). To date, eight (8) families have opted to take advantage of this discount. Any unused funds in these line items will be used to offset future budget shortfalls.

Consulting-Educational Management #68346 – this variance relates to the limited contract for the Equity Audit Consultant, Antoinette Massey. Additionally, the school will need to access the reserve (beginning fund balance) to establish a budget line item due to the reason stated above.

District Accountability Committee (DAC) Report
- 2020-2021 Fee Proposal – Margaret said that due to a processing issue, the 1% fieldwork and transportation fee increase that the board approved for the 2019-2020 school year was not actually implemented. At a minimum, DAC would like to recoup the previously approved 1% increase. Julie said that of the fieldwork fees, a portion is used to pay for catastrophic insurance, bus maintenance, insurance (insurance cost increased 32% this year), teacher fieldwork planning day substitutes, 10% of the total is set aside for landmark trips, and a portion for financial aid. The fieldwork fee is increasing at a rate of 1% while the costs are increasing at a higher percentage. K/1 fieldwork fees are exhausted every year; this is due to the K/1 trips previously being in tents, but now being in rented cabins. The cost difference between tents and cabins is astronomical. This results in less funds available for any other daily fieldwork for K/1 outside of their camping trips. Margaret said that last year, DAC funded for them to be able to go to the zoo, but DAC doesn’t have the funding available to do that for all grades. In high school, with the 3 week backpacking trip, there aren’t a lot of funds left for daily fieldwork experiences. One option is to increase just K/1 and
high school fieldwork fees, while leaving the others the same. Julie said that fieldwork fees are restricted to use for fieldwork only, while the other student fees (technology, instructional support, etc.) roll into the general budget if they are ever not completely expended. DAC is requesting at a minimum a 4% increase in K/1 and high school. Julie commented that the fieldwork oversight committee that originally established fieldwork fees put into place an increase of 1-4% annually. She said that with neglecting to implement the 1% increase and the minimum annual cost of living increase of 1%, it would need to be at least a 2% increase for the upcoming year. Kelly asked what the total fees for students are, and what a 4% increase in fieldwork would be. Current fee totals are $1,373 for high school, $1,199 for middle school, and $1,013 for lower school; $475 of each of those are tied to the specific fees for technology, instructional support, and transportation. Chad said the maximum increase at 4% would be $38.90 in the high school. It was also noted that families with multiple students are eligible for a discount on fieldwork fees. Julie said that about 8% of the student body has already prepaid for the whole year, and there are still financial aid funds available. Cris contacts families with three or more students each year to notify them of the available discount, but some elect not to take it. Margaret said she did a comparison of PPR for the partner districts’ charter schools, on average ranges from $10,000 to $12,500 including the mill levy funds, which RMSEL does not have access to; RMSEL gets $8,735 per FTE in per pupil revenue which creates an automatic approximate $2,000 deficit per student. The only way to adjust for that is with the fee structure. The board asked Margaret to send the comparison data to them, as it is helpful data for them to have as well. She noted that the comparison does not include “fees” for any schools which are added. Dan commented that RMSEL also gets BOCES funds that the other districts do not get. He asked what decision DAC is looking for today. Margaret said that student fees for next year need to be publicized prior to the lottery at the end of January, so this is the meeting for the decision to be made. She also said there are several families who have elected to make smaller monthly payments each month so that they do not have a larger payment to make at one time. Kelly suggested that for future meetings, the DAC fee proposal be presented sooner so that the board has more time for discussion. Sue asked Julie if she thinks there are sufficient funds available for financial aid if the fees are increased. Julie pointed out on the financial statements that the amount that is budgeted for financial aid is significantly higher than what has been appropriated. Kelly asked if parents are informed that financial aid is available. Julie said that she processes all applications for financial aid and they are confidential; the financial aid information is provided for anyone who expresses an interest. It is also posted on the website. Chad said prior to registration, Julie also sets up individual appointments for anyone who is in a position of financial hardship. Krista said that she is still concerned about potential new families who may see the fees as a financial hardship and base their decision on that. Julie said that RMSEL also has costs associated with the adventure program and special education services that other schools do not have. RMSEL pays DPS for special education support, but still has to hire its own learning specialists. Chad said that increased enrollment is not the solution because increased enrollment also comes with increased budget costs for the adventure program at RMSEL. Kelly expressed concern that the fee increase is being presented as a discussion item in a report, with a desire for action to take place today, and wants to make sure the board is comfortable with proceeding to action rather than just discussion. Margaret said that in previous years, the DAC recommendation was presented to the board in January for a vote in time for the lottery. At the board’s request, it was backed up to November. The problem with moving it back even further is that accurate cost estimates would not be feasible at the beginning of the school year. Krista asked if this proposal has been presented to the RMSEL community, and how feedback is gathered. Margaret said the feedback is gathered in the end of the year community survey in the questions about the fee structure. Sue asked if there has been discussion regarding the additional fees last year. Chad said the expectation was for a significant amount of feedback due to the survey data of 25% wanting no fee increase, but after sending out a lengthy letter explaining the rationale, there were only two families that expressed concern. Shawna said that as a parent who is at the lower end of the financial spectrum at RMSEL, their initial reaction to the fee increase last year was surprise, but after analyzing it, they realize the expense is the equivalent to a one week Avid Adventure Camp, and they choose to pay the fees. Krista commented that under-enrollment has a negative impact on the budget, and that parents needed to have opportunity for feedback. Margaret and Mitzi noted that there was discussion at the DAC meeting among the parents who attended. Mitzi said that at one point, her family had three students at RMSEL on a very limited income, and they set up a payment plan because they believe in the program RMSEL offers. Shawna added that the way the fees were presented to parents is not in a negative way. When her son was offered a spot at RMSEL, they had to make a decision in 24 hours due to the lateness of the opening, and it was presented to them in a manner that the fees were not a deterrent to accepting the spot. Dan noted that the fee structure doesn’t just apply to retention of current students, but also recruitment of new students. He noted that the percentage of free and reduced students at RMSEL
is lower than the partner districts. Margaret reiterated that there are still unused financial aid funds available. Dan commented that if RMSEL functioned as a charter school, there would be access to the mill levy funds. Kelly reminded him that RMSEL is not a charter school. Margaret said that the reason she chose charter schools for the fee comparison is because charter schools also specialize in something, similar to RMSEL. Kelly said that the bond is tied to the IGA and a 30 year commitment as the Expeditionary BOCES. Sue said DAC’s presentation was very thoughtful; she expressed concern about implementing a higher increase to specific grades, and would prefer to implement an equal increase to all grades. Kelly suggested a straight 3% increase. Krista said she is more comfortable with a lower increase. Carrie said she is comfortable with a 3-4% increase but does request having the fee recommendation sooner next year, and making sure that new families are comfortable with applying for financial aid. Sue said that with her experience in starting Joe Shoemaker School and her husband working at RMSEL for 13 years, she thinks it is somewhat of a miracle that RMSEL is able to provide what is being provided for the fees incurred, and she is therefore okay with a 3-4% increase. She said RMSEL is providing so much more than any of the schools she has worked in over 30 years have given students. Dan said the money to pay for the program at RMSEL has to come from somewhere, and he is comfortable with the higher end of the increase. Chad said that RMSEL has made a decision to offer a program that is significantly more expensive than what parents pay for. These amazing experiences are being offered at the cost of daily instruction; he offered the example of the 5th grade sailing trip, which would cost parents $3,500 per child to participate in independently. But the adventure program at RMSEL is offered equitably to all students at RMSEL. This impacts the funds available for all staff. Margaret asked Julie to estimate what she thought parents would pay if the adventure program was fully funded by fees parents pay. Julie said her estimate is $200-$250 additional per student. After discussion, Kelly made a motion to increase the fees for all grades by 3% for the 2020-2021 school year. Sue seconded the motion. By roll call, each board member voted affirmatively. Krista did add that although she voted yes, she feels strongly about not continuing to increase fees year after year, because RMSEL is a public school, and she is concerned about decreasing accessibility to all students. The 3% fee increase for all students was unanimously approved.

**Discussion Items**
- BOCES Manual – In the interest of time, Carrie made a motion to table this discussion until the next meeting in January. Krista seconded the motion, and the motion to table the discussion of the BOCES manual was tabled until January. Dan is going to send some of his thoughts and notes to the board. The motion to table the BOCES manual discussion until January was unanimously approved.

**Items for Future Agenda**
- BOCES 2019-2020 Officer Assignments – Kelly said this will be discussed in January.
- BOCES 2019-2020 Membership Transition

Dan expressed his thanks to everyone for allowing him to be part of the BOCES board, and said it has been a great experience. He told Chad that he is doing great work at RMSEL, and he believes the intent of servant leadership at RMSEL is right. Dan made a motion that the board enter executive session per C.R.S. § 24-6-402(4)(b) – meeting with the BOCES’ attorney to receive legal advice on specific legal questions concerning compliance with RMSEL’s complaint procedures as related to a complaint dated September 28, 2019. At this time, the board entered executive session.

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Kelly Perez, President

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Janice McDonald, Secretary/Treasurer