



## **RMAE Board of Directors MINUTES**

**Date: 09-14-13 9:00 am**

**LOCATION: Rocky Mountain Academy of Evergreen, Admin Building, Evergreen, CO**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Document Revision:** October 9, 2013

**Document Approval:** October 10, 2013

**Call to Order at: 9:05 am**

#### **BOD Members in Attendance:**

Ned Parker, President  
Aaron Lessig, Vice President  
Thomas Seybold, Treasurer  
Dana Price, Secretary  
Bob Fiore, Parent Representative  
Jamie Price, Parent Representative  
Seth Anderson, Parent Representative  
Kristen LaJoy, Community Representative  
Dan Cohen, Director

#### **Others in Attendance:**

Barb Street, Dina Walton & Jon Tesseo. Gina Coco came in at about 10:00.

#### **Reading of Vision & Mission Statements**

##### **Public Comment:**

Barb Street stated that her son Bryce is in 8th grade. She is concerned about the underlying changing curriculum in Math. What she heard addressed mostly was the discussion of daily Math and leveling in Math. She wanted the BOD to be aware that parents have never heard about a change in curriculum. To her, leveling isn't a change in curriculum; it's putting kids in two different classes going at two different paces. She wants it brought to light that this is a third issue.

Ned stated there are multiple topics and he thinks that some of the parental letters brought up subjects such as school culture, discipline, curriculum, interaction between staff and parents, respect between staff and parents. We won't necessarily be discussing today, but it needs to be addressed by the BOD head on in a timely manner. We will be putting these on future agendas.

Jamie stated that we had a good turn out on Thursday night of staff and parents. What he wants Barb to hear is that we missed an opportunity to allow staff's response to the AAA comments that were brought up. It would have helped him understand the issues that were brought up, the technical, the positive and negative. It probably would have helped the parents understand better where we are and where we need to go. As a BOD member he would like to see better deliberations in the future.

Ned stated that we have heard staff/parent comments and we will get them on the agenda for upcoming meetings. The BOD encourages people to continue to come to the meetings. Jamie agreed and restated that we do have communication as a key element in our Strategic Plan.

Dina commented as a parent at RMAE that she is concerned about when a BOD member asked a presenter if the document she presented was approved by the subcommittee, the answer was no. She believes then that the document is not a valid document right now in terms of being presented to the BOD. The subcommittee as a whole did not approve the document whether the committee is functional or not functional. As a parent it was not clear to her if it was a report or not. She understands CSAP's are not opinion, but feels some people might have viewed the report as "valid" because it was brought together in a specific manner.

Jon stated the BOD needs to have better control over meetings and AAA.

Bob agrees. He also stated that the BOD needs to understand our current Math baseline and how we are acting and moving forward in regard to initiatives established by the BOD and where we are going and if we truly believe we have a Math issue in MS. How is the BOD addressing this issue? These are critical issues that we need to deal with because they lead to confrontation in many areas. It comes down to how this school is being managed.

Dana addressed Dina's earlier comment regarding the AAA report more so the TCAP scores, which we can access through the JeffCo or CDE websites. It clearly states in our Charter that not only is the annual survey supposed to be on our website for parents to view, but so are the answers yet neither of these are available on our website. She was told from AAA that they were given the directive from the Director not to put these items on the website. This issue needs to be addressed as well.

Bob would like to set up a working session regarding AAA and these issues.

Tom said he agreed with these views, but the one thing he couldn't figure out is that with 7 members voting for the Math in May, why was no one defending the choice. Was that the wrong forum? For the people who were in the room it never got implemented, but nobody on the BOD was saying this was important 5 months ago why not now?

Bob said that is his main concern. He reiterated we have to act as a Board and was that the right forum? We have to ask that question of ourselves within this forum before we go outside of it again.

Aaron addressed Dina's comments with the statement of whether or not the report was technically submitted and if we are going to go by the book on it then we have to go by the book on everything. The previous BOD voted 7-0 to implement the directive. There was no clarification in the minutes on what that BOD really meant yet the BOD approved minutes that said it was voted on and we, in a public forum, said that's not what we really meant so we are not holding ourselves accountable. He also said from a technical perspective, we are either by the book or not and doing that in a public forum was in very bad taste.

Bob agreed.

Dan said he tried to relieve the BOD of that, but he hopes we don't gloss over Dina's original point. How was one individual allowed to represent the committee? He also wanted to know if the rest of the BOD members looked through the document that was presented. Bob stated that the element of data, which was included in the document, should be presented, but it was surrounded by a bit of hyperbole. Dina agreed that Dana was accurate in stating the annual survey and questions should be made available, but not someone's interpretation of the answers. This isn't difficult to obtain. Dan believes the summary provided by the AAA committee to the BOD, in July, was misinterpreted by one individual from AAA. This all needs to come back to AAA. The BOD needs to see the Bylaws and Policies of AAA. Ned believes there is definite dysfunction within the committee. The BOD bylaws have subcommittee policies within them. Jon stated that every subcommittee member that we have needs to be held to the same standards as the BOD and should be signing the same documents as the BOD (conflict of interest, confidentiality, etc.). The function of AAA needs to stay cross-functional.

In answer to Barb's earlier statement Dan said AAA sent a letter out to all of the parents regarding the changes in Math. Barb agreed, but it did not say anything about curriculum. It did not state that if your child is leveled, they would be taught something completely different. Her interpretation was that there could be two different Algebra classes moving at two different paces, not that your child would not be taking Algebra at all. Dan said they just called it 8th grade Math. AAA, BOD, expectations and Math assessment needs to be realigned.

What subjects do we need to attack? There are open issues that definitely need to be addressed in a working session. Jamie asked that we meet more frequently for the rest of 2013 at least. We need more time to get to all of the issues that we are facing. Kristen stated we are not able to address every issue that comes up and we shouldn't be micromanaging. That isn't the issue. The issue is that a BOD directive was not followed and that is what the BOD needs to address. Tom stated that after listening to the teacher's defense in regard to daily Math and Math leveling, the impression was that they never believed it would be implemented. They were resistant from the beginning. Dan said the kid's are grouped by ability. Bob stated that none of us are on the same page to the incremental changes that were made. There are too many interpretations and we have to get it all straightened out. Are we falling short of expectations? Are we implementing what was voted on back in February?

**Committee Reports:**

**PTO:** Will give us fundraising events by the end of September. Ned has an outline.

**Facilities/Tech:** Paul Grubb completed his Eagle Scout project. There is a woodchip patio and he provided some benches for a much more usable space. Ned will send out a thank you in the Grizzly Growl regarding the project, which was completed by an alumni.

Dina added she received PTO's volunteer list and she will consult the snowplow people to put together some bids. There is also a group to beautify the campus. She will contact these individuals as well as issues arise.

**Marketing:** Dana reported. Discussed the goals distributed by the BOD's strategic plan. We will be making the SOS meeting a webinar. It will be posted on both the Foundation and PTO Facebook pages.

We need to make sure we do not use the word "Fee" when addressing our "ask". Dan informed the committee that less than 50% of the staff that have children attending RMAE pay their fees. Dina stated we are unclear of the staff's perception regarding fees. There are between 15-20 children. As was previously discussed this is not a perk for a staff member. Staff members who have children in preschool get half off and those who have Kindergartners get a discount. Staff members receive the same message as parents.

Dana stated that Tami and Kate are speaking to outside funders about banners. They are pursuing different levels of sponsorship.

The orientation letter has been looked over by BOD members. Ned emailed edits to the letter. Do we include the history portion? If it's on the web, there is no sense in overwhelming new parents.

On the website there is a parent quick link and a link to the Colorado League of Charter Schools and discussed putting a "New parent checklist" link on the site as well. Lisa Reutenberg, our new IT person, is doing a phenomenal job.

Also for new parent's, how can we make it easier for parents to pay?

The removal of "tuition-free" from all school items has been accomplished. There was discussion of putting "A Core Knowledge Public School" on the information instead.

Anita, PTO President, is putting together a calendar of fundraising activities. There will be one calendar for Events/Fundraising.

Tami wanted the BOD to be aware that the Foundation will put out the Annual Giving letter immediately after the SOS meeting. We need to designate the "giving/ask". It needs to be clarified before the SOS meeting. Parents will receive the letter before the end of the month.

We asked Dina if we should do a marketing campaign around the new school finance act. She doesn't have enough information, but will in October. Since this is an issue we can give parents direction.

Tami and Lisa have been working on a school database.

The volunteer link is almost complete.

Dina has implemented a mentor family program. It worked for some families, but not others. This needs to be cleaned up a little, but should be a good program.

*[Gina Coco arrived at this time]*

Gina Coco explained she didn't want to interrupt the meeting, but that the Sheriff would be coming to school on Monday and she needed to explain to the BOD why. She read a prepared statement to the BOD *[Letter is on file in the Administration Office]*. She reported a threat to her children, Niccolo and Sergio, which occurred on 9/13/2013, approximately 2pm. The boys had gone to the front office to be picked up early. *[This was a bad weather day, many parents called, several students left early]* Gina had not called to make this request and was convinced that this was a direct threat against her family for speaking out on several subjects at RMAE. The office staff apologized that this was a simple name mix up. Gina stated that she had been threatened before, including her children being bullied and offensive comments posted on-line about a YouTube video, and had to involve the sheriff to protect her family.

Ned apologized that this incident had happened. He wanted to address the main concern and not the extra information added on. Gina stated the overall problem at the school is intimidation. Seth asked to see all of the information that Gina was discussing. What was put out there? He would like to hear from the kids. Gina said there was absolutely no way she would bring her children in.

Dan addressed the YouTube video stating he had never seen anything like it and the appropriate discipline was leveled on the responsible student.

Dana asked Ned to take control of the situation. Gina is definitely fearful for her children and that needs to be addressed. We need to gather the information from Gina and let her go home to her family. Ned said we hear and acknowledge the complaint. The letter needs to be officially transferred to administration. Gina sees ongoing bullying. Sending her children to the office is a message to the Coco family that whoever this person was can get to the children. A staff member also warned Gina that she was worried for the Coco family.

Having the Sheriff come on Monday is the right thing to do. The BOD made it clear that the safety of the children is our priority. Some members questioned the inherent threat to which Aaron responded there was distinct hostility at the meeting on Thursday night directed at Gina and the BOD needs to address it. We need to come up with a plan to make our campus safer for all of our kids and families. An ethics reporting system is a possibility. There needs to be further discussion regarding this topic. Dan will make sure the boys will be escorted between the buildings.

The issue of respect between parents and staff was discussed at length. The BOD needs to show and have the expectation of themselves and parents to behave toward one another in a respectful manner even when personalities interfere. As the BOD and Director of RMAE we set an example. In reference to Thursday's meeting for the most part comments were positive yet there was a parent who stated the Director was disrespectful in answering her question in regards to a safety issue. Jamie stated that most of the public comment came from staff members. He has not seen this format before while present at a public hearing or meeting. Staff should not be part of the public process, but are usually present to answer questions to provide a response to the applicant. The staff were just as emotional and the public process was taken advantage of in a way that was difficult for us to do what we were supposed to do. It also allowed the discussion to be diverted. We need to discuss how the Board will conduct this type of forum in the future.

**State of the School Preparation:** Do we need work on the PowerPoint? A five-minute break will be taken before moving into the Working Session.

**AAA:** Will be moved to the next meeting Agenda

**Financial:** Dina presented the final 2012-2013 budget for approval.

**Motion:** Ned made the motion to approve the budget as presented by Dina for the end of the year summary, Tom seconded.

**Approval:** 8-0

**Abstentions:** None

**Next Meeting – September 26, 2013**

**Adjournment:** 11:15 AM