



RMAE Board of Directors MEETING

Date: 4-10-14 6:30pm

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

RMAE Vision Statement: RMAE envisions a community of parents, teachers, students and educational and business leaders working together to create a learning environment that encourages growth in character, academic achievement and the love of learning, resulting in responsible, productive citizens.

RMAE Mission Statement: RMAE inspires each student to pursue personal and academic excellence through an intellectually challenging Core Knowledge™ curriculum within a nurturing environment.

Meeting Minutes

Document Revision: July 9, 2014

Document Approval: July 10, 2014

BOD Members in Attendance:

Ned Parker, President, Parent Representative
Thomas Seybold, Treasurer, Parent Representative
Dana Price, Secretary, Parent Representative
Dave Hadsell, Parent Representative
Margaret Hogan, Parent Representative
Dan Cohen, Director
Christine Riedlin, Teacher Representative (arrival 6:45 p.m.)
Kristen LaJoy, Community Representative (arrival 8:05 p.m.)

BOD Members on Conference Call:

Aaron Lessig, Vice President, Parent Representative
Jamie Price, Parent Representative
Kristen LaJoy, Community Representative (started on conference call but then came to the meeting late)

BOD Members Absent:

Others in Attendance: Cheryl Hadsell, Rosanne Jalbert, Alan Scheik, Brad Giles, Kim Egan, Julie Hushen, Dina Walton, Angie O'Keefe, Kelly Breuer, Lisa Rutenberg, Courtney Colledge, Gretchen Hock, Pam Rohal

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance 6:33 p.m.

Reading of Vision & Mission

Public Comment: None

Consideration of Consent Agenda

Motion: Ned made the motion to accept the March 13, 2014 Minutes with two corrections, Dave seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: 8-0 for approval, no abstentions

Committee Reports

AAA. Presented by Kim Egan

- RMAE Survey results
 - There have been criticisms/rumors about results. Kim could have better communicated timeline and limitations of results. Also needed stronger communication from the BOD earlier as to their expectations. Official statement regarding survey and its use: "Don't think the survey results should be used as the sole tool for evaluating any staff member."
 - BOD received four survey results this week: Staff, Parents, Elementary & MS Students
 - Summary of all surveys, all data, did not withhold; the original Survey Monkey responses are retained by AAA.
 - Percentages given as participated, weighted averages between questions; rank ordered.

- Jamie – Survey sent to every parent, most are in two-parent families. Can AAA comment on how many unique families responded? Need to assume that for some families, both parents took the survey. Generalization – good number and large percentage of families responded. In future, could try to identify families for record keeping; caution about tracking or biasing by family.
 - Ned – Questioned 3-4 results that looked like errors or repeated values. Weighted averages were calculated for each line item; no cut & paste error. Drugs/Alcohol numerical result was inverted because question was asked in a negative or reverse logic. Kim will review.
- Summary of survey – as a team, reviewed and provided a summary with strengths, needs improvement, etc. Looked at year-to-year change in results, were last year's items addressed.
- Exit survey results clarification (Exit survey data presented last month) – Dan noted that the text of the results states that families left between August 2013 to February 2014. Many of those surveyed families had already committed to leave in spring of 2013. Recommends changing text to better reflect the time span over which families left.
- Communications
 - AAA Communications Task Group (lead by Alan Sheik and Julie Hushen) looked at survey results and best practices to identify areas for improvement and suggested action items. Submitting a draft plan before official AAA approval.
 - Communications group also provided a draft Family Handbook, but stopped work to avoid conflict with current BOD edits. Available to work with the BOD as needed.
 - Proposed changes to Mission and Vision statements to make them more measurable.

Financial. Presented by Dina Walton / Tom Seybold

- Tom stated that we do not have a budget, lacking information around purchase services, he is not confident in those values.
- In March, the Financial Committee was tasked with producing a budget to be submitted to JeffCo on or before April 15. RMAE is already in a tenuous position because of other deadlines that have not been met previously. Not sure of the implication of not submitting a budget on time.
- Dina clarified that JeffCo is asking for a budget well in advance of the academic year, before enrollment is confirmed, before PPR is confirmed. It has to show our intentions of operating on a balanced budget, but can be revised as facts change. RMAE historically adopts revised budgets in late summer, early fall. This iteration of budget is simply what goes with the paperwork for April 15, 2014.
- This budget does impact potential staff pay raises. Staff has already accommodated by delaying contract offers by about two weeks to let us resolve the budget uncertainty. Staff expects offers very soon.
- Tom clarified that this does not point to financial impropriety or that the school finances are worse than we thought.
 - Walked through example of purchased services: budgeted \$1,000,000
 - Fixed amounts (debt service, Excel loan, preschool rent) = \$500k
 - Leaves \$500k to cover \$121K in actual expenses. Why are we \$379k conservative here? Unfair to portray the school as destitute and ask parents for donations until we can set a realistic budget.
- Discussion of budget resolution. Working session to resolve tonight? Dina and Tom resolve their issues by early next week and the BOD review and approve by April 15? Historically, conservative budgeting has allowed the school to build a reserve and now not burn through it. Tom stressed that a realistic budget should not need this pad and instead be used to know and hit our target overage/underage. New JeffCo Board willing to give charters additional money, but need to demonstrate we are good stewards of this money. JeffCo accepts revised budgets. Submit a working budget now and set internal deadline to revise?
- Dan will contact the JeffCo Charter Liaison to ask for an extension.
- Discussion of teacher salaries. Why are salaries held up by the JeffCo budget? Payroll can be set by PPR, based on a projected value from January. All budget elements can change, need to take our best guess and move forward. Fiduciary responsibility to our families. Tom and Dina agree there is limited risk with a teacher increase of 3%. Final budget resolution should reduce projected expenses. Compare year-end actuals to audits in April and May. Send out contracts with 3% increase, hope to find more money but use that money toward prioritized school needs, be that supplies, physical plant, or bonuses/merit pay.
- Jamie supports moving forward with the teacher contracts if we can do, does not approve a faux budget. Wants commitment from staff (Dina) to work with Tom. Discussion of what has been supplied and when, why this has dragged out so long.
- Discussion of software, requirement to use PeopleSoft, other options. Tempered by the need to have answers now.
- Target JeffCo budget by April 17.

Motion: Ned made the motion to authorize Dan and Dina to move forward with teacher contracts at a 3% increase, Margaret seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: 8-0 for approval, Christine abstained

Human Resources.

- No report

RMAE Foundation. Presented by Angie O'Keefe

- Bear Gram started strong, does not have numbers to share.
- Annual giving totals: \$85,306 pledged, \$70,931 collected to date.
- Offered RMAE Foundation help in budget and accounting. Foundation has had issues providing adequate detail during grant applications due to coarseness of current RMAE accounting/reporting.
- No productivity from Grant writer – claims a lack of clear and concise information from RMAE. Potentially been a problem for her getting things done. Audited and realistic budget does not seem available.
- Discussion of PeopleSoft and detail available from it. Can anyone assist Dina? JeffCo limits access to employees, Dan could have access.

Marketing. Presented by Dana Price

- Evergreen Festival delayed one year by Tom Hushen to better organize the event and its support.
 - RMAE Board request from 3-13-14 that the Marketing Committee and Foundation recommend how RMAE might support the Blue Grass Festival was not responded to. Marketing was waiting on the Foundation, the Foundation was waiting on Marketing.
- Draft social media parameters presented to Board, has not received feedback.
 - PTO and Staff did not receive or review.
 - Suggested edit: allow deletion of submission that contains offensive comments that target sexual orientation.

PTO. Presented by Kelly Breuer

- A successful auction allows PTO to contribute \$50k to the school, meeting its commitment.
- Auction is falling off as compare to past years, will consider how to rejuvenate or refocus this fundraising effort.
- May fundraising/budget meeting, schedule of fund raising events
- Bingo: PTO considered the volunteer investment vs return. Will end Bingo on May 17, 2014.
- Bingo account will be tallied and closed out through payments of expenditures on school needs. Expect \$30+k after two years of Bingo. Highly regulated by State, can be paid to vendors for valid school expenses. Can't pay to RMAE or PTO directly or reimburse for past expenses. One-time account disbursement, don't plan this money to cover recurring items. Possible: professional development, technology, debt payment (need to double check this). Collecting suggestions.
- PTO holding the two airline tickets until a resolution is found. A parent has a near term need, may be able to arrange payment to PTO in exchange for tickets.

Preschool. Presented by Margaret Hogan from discussion with Debbie Caruso

- Registration going well
- Week of the Young Child
- Book Fair
- Art Show
- 7th grade Elective was there today, executing the teacher's lesson plans

Facilities / Tech. Presented by Ned Parker and Dina Walton

- Field has new gravel and a ball fence.
- EPRD currently charges a flat fee per head (\$30) for field usage. EPRD is looking to change their fee schedule, but not likely for 2014-2015.
- Dina needs guidelines from Board on fees. Dan and Dina have explored various fee structures and hybrids. Field was portrayed as a community field, need to be inclusive.
- Dave volunteered to review the RFP responses to maximize field usage. RFP responses allow us to define the value of our field, different for various groups. Balance finances with community usage.
- No Facilities Group meeting this month.

Director's Report. Presented by Dan Cohen

- Enrollment
 - Letter of intent sent to grades K-7, 240 families. Only 14 forms yet to be returned. Non-binding, but informative. Total of 12 not returning; reasons: (4) moving, (3) current teacher, (2) family tradition, (1) EMS GT, (1) not enough sports, (1) curriculum too difficult.
 - Messenger to be sent out, returning families must register 4/28-5/2.
- JeffCo BOD meeting
 - They voted to redistribute mil levy override, needs to be approved in June, target \$3.7M to Charters. Charter school solutions employee, based on FTE count in all JeffCo Charter Schools \$512/student for 2014-2015. Forgot one school, likely closer to \$480. True MLO should be \$7.4M, JeffCo BOD chose 50% as a salable number?
 - JCEA press release – Transfer \$3.7M of MLO to Charters; to be \$7.4M the next year.
 - Dan looking for direction on message to our parents. JeffCo marked \$3.7M as a placeholder to Charter school funding from the mil levy override. This is encouraging for RMAE, but needs to be approved by JeffCo Board as part of the formal budget in June.
- Staff – everyone coming back as far. Posted for a 5th grade teacher for the 2014-2015 academic year.

President's Report.

- No report

5 minute break – 8:40 to 8:48

Old Business

- A. Collect Completed Annual Director's Evaluations
 - Ned collected evaluations, will put together a statistical summary of the evaluations for our next meeting. Christine who is abstaining from the evaluation.
- B. BOD Election Committee Report, process on time per by-laws
 - Extended deadline to 4/10/14 to get enough applicants. Dave submitted a letter on 4/9/14. Todd Miller submitted on 4/10/14. Gives us 6 Parent Rep candidates.
 - Need Community Rep. Target alumni, business and fundraising experience. Courtney College will donate one of her email blasts at the Evergreen Chamber of Commerce. Gretchen Hock will also approach some people that she knows with fundraising experience. Jamie to prepare blast for Courtney to put forward.
- C. Annual Review of Staff Handbook and Parent Handbook
 - Margaret will submit a final redlined Staff Handbook at the May meeting for final approval.
 - Dan – personal time off. 30 days is the most you can hold at one time. Assumption is that you need these days and that days above 10 are not merely in the bank to be used at will. Can use extra days for family emergencies. Technically they have to be preapproved.
 - Dana and Alan to get together on Family Handbook and redline for May meeting for final approval.
 - Margaret working on a grievance policy that outlines successive steps and points of contact if a parent does not feel their concerns are being addressed.
 - “Lockers” in general. No expectation of privacy. Bldg 3 lockers have their own locks; Bldg 1 lockers do not. Personal locks can be used as long as RMAE maintains the ability to open the lock and that RMAE reserves the right to cut the lock if it can't be opened in a traditional manner.
 - “Denial of Enrollment” – Charters have to accept all regional students. Discussion of legality to exclude a child from another district that, in the last 12 months, exhibited behavior that was detrimental to other students. Criteria may need to be escalated to student previously expelled for such behavior. Margaret will contact the school's attorney.

New Business

- A. BOD Elections, question & answer period with potential candidates
 - Brad Giles introduced himself.
- B. Proposed Changes to Composition of BOD

- Dana: JeffCo legal training for Board members recommends that Charters do not have teachers on the Board. CLCS also discourages teachers. Can create conflict of interest and/or the need to abstain from many votes. Alternatively, teacher rep could be a non-voting position.
 - Christine: RMAE teachers like the feeling of involvement and ability to participate in the governance of their school. Clarified with CLCS that one teacher is usually not a problem; avoid a majority. Nora Flood had good memories of teacher reps on the RMAE Board.
 - Teachers need to be effective and contribute in exchange for their time and effort.
 - We are a community; embrace the teacher/educator perspective.
 - Alternatively, we are a governing board and need to act without the conflict inherent in being an employee to the organization you are governing.
 - No motion to change Board, consider revisiting in the future.
- C. Annual Budget Submitted to BOD for Approval
- See discussion under Finance Committee.
- D. JeffCo Charter School Contract Renewal
- Dan will ask for an extension on submittal of Charter School Contract Renewal; submission of JeffCo budget is a part of that Charter Renewal submission.
 - Dan summarized the three elements of the submission:
 - Budget planning worksheet, PPR and purchased services (no signature required)
 - Calculation of revenue and district services (signature required), list of services accepted or denied
 - 25 page Contract Renewal document (signature required)
 - Additional submissions:
 - Flex dollars used to cover slight adjustment in insurance costs
 - Classic fee sheet – one example only
- Motion:** Ned made the motion to authorize Ned to sign the Charter School Contract Renewal as presented, Tom seconded.
- Discussion:** None
- Vote:** 9-0 for approval, no abstentions
- E. Review and Approval of RFP: Season Usage of Turf Field at RMAE
- See discussion under Facilities
- F. Annual Board Evaluations distributed, to be discussed in May
- Sent today, complete and send back to Ned by May 2. He will compile and have results at May 8, 2014 BOD meeting
- G. Director Contract Offer
- Dan is on an annual contract, we owe him action toward next year's contract at some point. Historically this has been done in April or early May. Director's contract requires written review by March 15.
 - Want to present confidence to the staff as they will receive offers before the Director. Two timing cycles have traditionally been separated, we were trying to align them better this year.
 - Evaluations have been submitted, results will be compiled for the April 17, 2014 BOD meeting
 - Kristen – not creating staff confidence.
 - Dan and Margaret agreed that order is important – review before contract offer.
 - Dan will handle questions, simply state that it is being addressed next week.
 - Discussion of AAA survey use and timing of results is different this year than traditional. AAA survey should not be used to directly evaluate staff for employment. Can be considered for goal setting and areas of improvement. Board reviewed the AAA results before completing their own Director's Evaluation.

Board Comment

- Margaret cautioned AAA to review their survey questions and specifically those questions presented to the staff. A Staff survey is good, but too many questions focused on Director performance – makes the survey HR focused instead of academic and environment. Same caution about Parent Survey. Could use a third-party survey firm.

Motion: Margaret made the motion to go into Executive Session pursuant to section 24-6-402(4)(f) for discussion of comments made on the staff survey that are of a personnel nature; Dana seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: 9-0 for approval, no abstentions

- Having achieved a 2/3 vote and seeing no objections, the Board entered Executive Session at 9:55 p.m.

Motion: Margaret made the motion to come out of Executive Session; Dave seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: 9-0 for approval, no abstentions

- Having achieved a 2/3 vote and seeing no objections, the Board exited Executive Session at 10:20 p.m.

Motion: Margaret made the motion to authorize Margaret Hogan to contact JeffCo Employee Relations tomorrow morning to address comments noted in the AAA staff survey, received by the Board on April 8th; Ned seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: 9-0 for approval, no abstentions

Action Items (to be completed at the next Board meeting):

- A. Summarize and Review Director's Evaluations
- B. Review, Discuss and Update Strategic Plan
- C. Board Training modules (#9, #17, #10, #23)
 - #9 Board Financial Oversight, #17 Sunshine Law
 - #10 Charter School Finance, # 23 Charter Schools Act

Next Meeting – April 17, 2014, 6:30 PM

Adjournment – 10:21 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Ned Parker
President, Acting Secretary