

Regional Board of Superintendents' Meeting

Northern Rhode Island Collaborative

2352 Mendon Road

Cumberland, RI 02864

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, March 25, 2008

10:00 am

The Regional Board of Superintendents Meeting was held at 2352 Mendon Road, Cumberland, RI, on Tuesday, March 25, 2008. The meeting was called to order at 10:09 p.m. by Chairman, Robert O'Brien.

PRESENT:

Burrillville:	Steven Welford, Superintendent; Robin Kimatian, Business Manager
Central Falls:	---
Cumberland:	Dr. Donna Morelle, Joseph Rotella; School Committee Members Donald Costa, Karen MacBeth
Foster-Glocester:	Dr. Michael Barnes, Attorney Greg Piccirilli
Johnston:	Peg Iacovelli, Melissa Devine, Business Manager
Lincoln:	Georgia Fortunato, Lori Miller, Business Manager
No. Providence:	Dr. Donna Ottaviano
No. Smithfield:	Stephen Lindberg, Maureen Chevrette, Curriculum Director
Pawtucket:	Hans Dellith, Tom Conlon, Business Manager; Attorney Steve Robinson
Smithfield:	Robert O'Brien
Woonsocket:	Dr. Maureen Macera, Miriam Goodman, Business Manager; Attorney Richard Ackerman; School Committee Member Anita McGuire Forcier

Pat Boucher, Bacon & Company
Dina Dutremble
Walter Edge, B & E Consulting
Attorney Ben Scungio
Providence Journal Reporter, Phil Marcelo
Denise Webb, Allied Court Reporters

Julian E. MacDonnell, Executive Director
Robert E. Wall, Dir. Educational Services
Craig Enos, Director of Administration
Thomas Rambacher, Director of Technology
Sandi Beauregard, Controller
Debbie Jannetta, Executive Secretary

Routine Matters:

1.0 The Minutes of the Meeting of February 5, 2008 and Amended Special Board Meeting Executive Session Minutes of January 24, 2008

Mr. O'Brien, Chair, entertained a motion to approve the February 5, 2008 Meeting Minutes and the Amended January 24, 2008 Special Board Meeting Executive Session Minutes. The motion was moved by Dr. Ottaviano, and seconded by Ms. Iacovelli, carried by all.

Moved: Dr. Ottaviano

Seconded: Ms. Iacovelli

Approved: Dr. Barnes

Dr. Dellith

Ms. Fortunato

Ms. Iacovelli

Mr. Lindberg

Dr. Macera
Mr. O'Brien
Dr. Ottaviano
Mr. Welford

2.0 Bills for the month of February, 2008

Moved: Dr. Ottaviano
Seconded: Mr. Lindberg

Approved: Dr. Barnes
Dr. Dellith
Ms. Fortunato
Ms. Iacovelli
Mr. Lindberg
Dr. Macera
Mr. O'Brien
Dr. Ottaviano
Mr. Welford

Old Business:

3.0 Strategic Planning – Professional Development

In the absence of the Curriculum Team members, the Executive Director gave a PowerPoint presentation on the professional development plan, developed by the Curriculum Team regarding "Using Data to Improve Instruction". Mr. MacDonnell reviewed the highlights of the plan kicking off in Summer 2008, a professional development day on Election Day, November 2008, and a professional development day in March 2009. Mr. MacDonnell advised of the Curriculum Team's plan to utilize Michael Schmoker, a national speaker, at an approximate cost of \$25,000. Mr. MacDonnell requested the Board's support in the purchase of books and to engage the services of Michael Schmoker.

Mr. Lindberg motioned to approve the outline and proposal. Discussion followed. Concerns were expressed by Dr. Macera and Dr. Dellith regarding the cost of utilizing Michael Schmoker, what would we get for the money, and where would the money come from. Dr. Morelle suggested an RFP be developed to respond to the plan, and also felt there may be other people available to do this work at a reduced cost.

Chairman O'Brien advised that the Curriculum Team should be present for these discussions and suggested they attend the next meeting.

Discussion continued regarding an RFP. Mr. O'Brien entertained a motion to table until the next meeting to revisit the original professional development plan, and to invite the Curriculum Team. The motion was made by Steve Welford, seconded by Dr. Macera, and carried by all.

Moved: Dr. Ottaviano
Seconded: Mr. Lindberg

Approved: Dr. Barnes
Dr. Dellith
Ms. Fortunato
Ms. Iacovelli
Mr. Lindberg

Dr. Macera
Mr. O'Brien
Dr. Ottaviano
Mr. Welford

Chairman O'Brien distributed information on a Telepresence and Education Workshop on April 7 & 8 in Mystic, Connecticut. Mr. O'Brien requested district support for NRIC to host a future session.

Chairman O'Brien welcomed Dr. Michael Barnes, Interim Superintendent, in Foster-Glocester to the meeting.

4.0 Healthcare Update

The Executive Director reported that the Collaborative has been notified that we have been accepted into the Governmental Healthcare Group. North Smithfield and Burrillville have also been accepted; Smithfield has signed a letter of intent; Woonsocket is already a member.

Move into Closed Executive Session pursuant to Chapter 42-46-5(a) (2) of the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island to discuss the acquisition and sale of real estate and legal advise related thereto.

Chairman O'Brien entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session at 10:50 am. The motion was made by Dr. Morelle, seconded by Dr. Macera. A roll call vote was taken and carried by all. The closed session ended at 11:20 a.m.

Chairman O'Brien entertained a motion to report the following vote which was taken during Executive Session. The motion was made by Dr. Macera, seconded by Ms. Fortunato, carried by all to obtain a comprehensive commercial appraisal as stated below.

Executive Session Agenda Item – Richard Conti, Daewoo Property Purchase & Sales Agreement

Dr. Macera motioned that a comprehensive full scale commercial appraisal be obtained on the property soliciting three quotes from three licensed appraisers to include wetlands and topography, authorizing the Executive Director to spend no more than \$5,000 indicating that timeliness is a factor. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lindberg and carried by all.

Moved: Dr. Macera
Seconded: Mr. Lindberg

Approved: Dr. Barnes
Dr. Dellith
Ms. Fortunato
Ms. Iacovelli
Mr. Lindberg
Dr. Macera
Mr. O'Brien
Dr. Ottaviano
Mr. Welford

Chairman O'Brien suggested that the meeting recess for 10 minutes. The meeting resumed at 11:40 p.m.

New Business:

5.0 Walter Edge, B & E Consulting, Report

Mr. Walter Edge reported that the scope of his engagement by the Pawtucket School Committee was to review the financial statements, budgets and other pertinent information of the Northern Rhode Island Collaborative as of June 30, 2006 in order to answer the following questions:

1. Was the surplus real, liquid and available?
-- Yes
2. How did the surplus accumulate?
3. Who paid for the surplus?
-- miscellaneous revenue, tuitions by the districts
4. Who is entitled to the value of the surplus?
-- Because NRIC is non-profit, the people who put the money in should get the money back.
5. What are the options for getting the money back?
-- Identify who paid & give the money back
-- Reduce tuitions for the next year
-- Give back to just member districts

Each of above options has its positives and negatives; any combination of the options are possible. The easiest one is to reduce tuitions.

6. What can be done to avoid excess surplus in the future?
-- Tighten up the budgets; reduce conservative budgeting

Mr. Edge went back to Question #2 – How did the surplus accumulate?

-- The surplus began in 1997 and continued every year.

The Collaborative tried to give the money back through the Board's vote to reduce tuitions.

Mr. Edge suggested: revenues be reflected in the budgets; earn as much interest as you can; eliminate conservative budgeting.

Mr. Edge entertained questions from the Board and discussion took place regarding assets & liquidity, including revenue as part of the budget, maintaining working capital.

Attorney Ackerman questioned if there is a decision to refund the surplus, can you give an estimate on how much it would cost to do an in-depth study so that the cost be assessed. Are there other methods of resolving this issue?

Walter Edge advised that the problem is going back further than 1997 to obtain the info of identifying what students are in what program and in what district. Not sure if this can be done. It would probably cost between \$50,000 to \$400,000 if it could be done at all.

Discussion followed on the term “overcharging” the districts.

Mr. Lindberg would like a second opinion.

Due to the time of the meeting and other commitments, Attorney Robinson and Dr. Dellith suggested that the meeting be postponed until April 8 and ask that Mr. Edge return. Copies of Pawtucket’s School Committee Resolution were distributed to the Board.

Mr. Welford suggested that the meeting continue due to the fact that everyone is in attendance today for several presentations. Chairman O’Brien suggested a ½ hour break for lunch.

Mr. Welford made a motion to continue the meeting which was seconded by Ms. Fortunato and approved.

Moved: Mr. Welford
Seconded: Ms. Fortunato

Approved: Dr. Barnes
Ms. Fortunato
Ms. Iacovelli
Mr. Lindberg
Mr. O’Brien
Dr. Ottaviano
Mr. Welford

Opposed: Dr. Dellith
Dr. Macera

Dr. Dellith, Attorney Steve Robinson, and Dr. Macera left the meeting at this time.

Discussion followed on how much money the Collaborative would need to operate if \$5M is refunded to the districts.

At 1:20 pm, Chairman O’Brien suggested the meeting break for lunch.

At 1:55 pm, Chairman O’Brien reconvened the meeting and questions continued with Mr. Walter Edge. Mr. Edge left the meeting at 2:00 pm.

6.0 Business Manager’s Report

The Executive Director gave a PowerPoint presentation on “Where Did the Surplus Come From?”

Discussion followed on the surplus and the origination of NRIC.

Attorney Greg Picirilli requested copies of NRIC’s By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation. Joe Rotella of Cumberland District also requested copies of NRIC’s By-Laws.

7.0 2007-08 Audit Report

Pat Boucher of Bacon and Company presented her review of the “NRIC Summary of Audited Financial Statements as of June 30, 2007” and entertained questions from the Board. Ms. Boucher advised, based upon the audit, that the only sums potentially available for distribution were proceeds from the sale of property and cash in the Holding Company. Attorney Scungio pointed out that the elimination of cash assets in the Holding Company would require the Board to review its current strategic plan with respect to acquiring a building and plans to offer professional development.

Ms. Boucher left the meeting at 3:15 pm.

Mr. Welford motioned to accept the 2007-08 Audit Report as presented, which was seconded by Ms. Fortunato, carried by all.

Moved: Mr. Welford
Seconded: Ms. Fortunato

Approved: Dr. Barnes
Ms. Fortunato
Ms. Iacovelli
Mr. Lindberg
Mr. O’Brien
Dr. Ottaviano
Mr. Welford

Mr. MacDonnell distributed copies of “Executive Summary” and reviewed for the Board.

8.0 Pawtucket School Committee Resolution

Chairman O’Brien read Pawtucket’s Motion and Resolution for the Board’s consideration. Mr. Lindberg motioned to move the resolution forward for discussion, which was seconded by Mr. Welford.

Discussion followed regarding how the disbursement amounts in the resolution were calculated, the amount needed for NRIC’s working capital, consulting the auditor, other options for distribution.

A roll call vote was taken to adopt Pawtucket’s Motion and Resolution as follows:

Approved: --
Abstained: Dr. Barnes
Dr. Morelle

Opposed: Ms. Fortunato
Ms. Iacovelli
Mr. Lindberg
Mr. O'Brien
Dr. Ottaviano
Mr. Welford

Further discussion continued on the need to maintain sufficient working capital and utilizing the funds to stabilize tuitions, along with revisiting the idea of a new building and a cost analysis regarding renting versus buying. Mr. O'Brien suggested a separate meeting be scheduled in April to discuss this issue. Attorney Scungio suggested developing a plan of action for the next meeting.

Information:

9.0 "Board Actions Relating to Using NRIC Surplus"

With no further information to report, Mr. O'Brien entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:00 p.m., which was moved by Dr. Ottaviano, seconded by Ms. Iacovelli, and carried by all.

Moved: Dr. Ottaviano
Seconded: Ms. Iacovelli

Approved: Dr. Barnes
Ms. Fortunato
Ms. Iacovelli
Mr. Lindberg
Mr. O'Brien
Dr. Ottaviano
Mr. Welford

Respectfully submitted,

Robert O'Brien, Chair