

**Dorset Board of School Directors**  
**Tuesday, April 26, 2011**  
**The Dorset School, Dorset, Vermont**

**In Attendance:** Judy Adams – Assistant Superintendent, Bob Allen, Jennifer Allen, David Chandler – Board Chair, Dan French – BRSU Superintendent, Vickie Haskins, Jim Merryman - TDS Principal, Jim Salsgiver  
**Absent:** None

**Others Present:** Kandace Beavin, Justine Cook, Beth Eyre, Chris Hubbard, Christine Downey, Cathy Lawrence, Rachel Mark

**1. Call to Order**

***Meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM by Chairperson David Chandler.***

**2. Approval of Minutes**

*A motion to accept the minutes of the March 2011 Board meeting was made by Vickie Haskins. Motion seconded by Bob Allen. There were two suggested changes to the minutes, proposed by Jim Salsgiver and David Chandler, respectively. All were in favor of approving the minutes as amended, motion carried.*

**3. Report of the Superintendent of Schools**

a) Tuition Waiver Request (Executive Session requested– postponed until the end of the meeting)

b) Vermont FiberConnect – Superintendent French presented an offer from Vermont FiberConnect to build out “middle-mile fiber”, which would provide a Wide Area Network (WAN) to the BRSU and districts. Mr. French recommended the Board vote to give permission to look into the project further, by signing a letter of intent to participate to Vermont FiberConnect.

The installation of this infrastructure would be a federally subsidized project, however the service would cost the district \$2,150/month for the ‘central hub’ (most likely the SU offices) and \$700/month for the ‘spoke locations’ (schools), an estimated 60% of which would be reimbursable. Mr. Chandler asked if each school in the SU would be responsible for a portion of the monthly fee associated with the ‘central hub’, to which Mr. French replied that he is not sure at this point. Additionally, telephone services would be included on the fiber connection, so some savings would be realized there.

The capacity of the fiber is 100Mbps vs. 20Mbps with the current service from Comcast. This 5X increase in bandwidth would allow for much greater flexibility in the use of internet-based programs and curricula at the school.

Mr. Salsgiver asked if there is any collaboration happening with The Dorset Village Library, who are also looking into having a fiber connection installed, to which Mr. French replied that libraries get a better rate, as well as they don’t filter internet content, which is a requirement for schools. The installation of fiber by the school would provide options for bringing high-speed internet to other locations in town.

Mr. Allen asked about the timing of the project. Mr. French stated that construction would begin this fall, but service would most likely not start until sometime in 2013.

Mr French reported that ENA out of Tennessee is also working to bring high-speed internet to schools in Vermont, and working with them is another possibility that the Board could consider.

*A motion to sign a letter of intent to participate in the Vermont FiberConnect project was made by Bob Allen. Motion seconded by Jim Salsgiver. All were in favor, motion carried.*

c) Ends Policy Process – Superintendent French opened the discussion with the Board about Ends Policies. Ends policies are part of Policy Governance, a program developed by John Carver, and are made up of three elements: the essential purposes of an organization; who will benefit from these services; and at what cost. One important point to consider is that Ends policies do not include means, which are the methods of achieving the Ends.

Mr. French said that the five districts in the SU will be coordinating Ends policies simultaneously and there are some good reasons for common Ends policies, such as accountability and monitoring on the part of the Superintendent. With different Ends among the districts, it would be difficult for the Superintendent to administer SU-wide means, such as curriculum, professional development and personnel evaluations.

Mr. French says that the taxpayers are the ‘owners’ of their district schools and they will be engaged to determine what they would like to achieve; community engagement in each school’s community will inform the draft policy, which is due out by December 2011. Mr. Chandler believes that inviting community participation will create a dialog and provide accountability, as well as assist in the monitoring process. Mr. Chandler would like to take advantage of Dorset being a small school, which therefore makes it different from the other schools in the SU. Mr. Salsgiver summarized the discussion by saying that the Board, with the help of the community will inform the big-picture goals, the school staff will provide means to achieve the goals and the Monitoring policy will tie together the different aspects of the process.

Mr. French shared a sample draft of a Global Ends policy and an Educational Ends policy with the Board.

The timeframe for the Ends policy process is as follows:

May Board meeting – The Board will participate in an exercise about the difference between Ends and means, as well as discuss what it’s hopes and dreams for the school are in a broad context to create Global Ends, which are the overarching statements.

In May and June, the Board will become comfortable TDS’s needs. The Principal will also be engaging the staff to determine their goals.

The community at large will be engaged in September.

Draft Ends policies will be presented and the policy adoption process will begin in December. The goal is to create 3-4 Ends policies.

For more information on Policy Governance, John Carver and Ends policies, please visit <http://policygovernance.com/>.

d) Review Board Operations Policies (LP1, LP2, LP10, LP11) – This item was not addressed.

e) Early Education – Assistant Superintendent Judy Adams was in attendance. She informed the Board and audience about the universal Pre-K partnerships formed between the BRSU and The Lawrence School and Northshire Day School, which are formed under Act 62.

Both The Lawrence School and Northshire Day School have been recognized with STARS (Step Ahead Recognition System) for child care and early education, which is a requirement to participate in Act 62 agreements. The more STARS a center earns, the more subsidies it will receive for those participants receiving assistance. Audience member Cathy Lawrence of The Lawrence School added that additionally, once a center earns 4 and 5 stars respectively, it is awarded a small grant. Mr. Salsgiver asked if the STARS system is useful for determining program quality, to which Ms. Lawrence replied that it is about going above and beyond the requirements as set forth in Act 62. Ms. Adams said that the application process for STARS is intense and involves documenting meeting or exceeding Act 62 criteria. Ms. Allen asked what criteria are examined to determine eligibility in the Act 62 agreements. Mr. French replied that

Act 62 requirements are formulaic, although STARS are considered as well. Ms. Adams added that the Building Bright Futures Council is working toward having both Act 62 and STARS criteria meshing together as one cohesive system.

Ms. Adams reported that parents may request that other pre-K providers be approved for payment, however for budgeting purposes, there will need to be a deadline for such requests.

Ms. Allen asked where the 10 hour allotted timeframe for pre-K came from, and if it adequately prepares children for Kindergarten. Mr. French replied that the 10 hours is basically an arbitrary number and is for care, not specific educational requirements, however, the centers are required to meet standards in 'creative curriculum', assessments and professional development. Ms. Adams speculated that the 10 hours is probably based on a 25 year old average timeframe that children who participated in pre-K took advantage of. She went on to say that the adequacy of 10 hours depends largely on the needs of each individual family and child. Mr. Chandler stated that it might be beneficial to view the 10 hour pre-K allotment as "a foot in the door of pre-K services" and that perhaps the program can be expanded on in the future.

Ms. Allen then asked if students who might not otherwise participate in pre-K do attend because of these programs, to which Ms. Lawrence replied that she currently has 4 such students.

Ms. Allen asked Ms. Adams what the ideal program would look like, to which Ms. Adams replied that would be a question for the community.

The students who participate in the program count toward TDS's ADM or Average Daily Membership, which informs the equalized pupil calculation for state reimbursements to the district. Each pre-K student in the program who attends 10 hours per week (which is 1.0 full week of attendance for pre-K) equates to a 0.4 ADM count. The budgeted fee for each student to participate is in the \$2,100 to \$2,700 range.

f) Principal Search Process (Executive Session requested– postponed until the end of the meeting)

#### **4. Report of the Principal**

Principal Merryman reported that over the last few weeks the search for a 5/6 teacher yielded 35 applicants, 6 of which were selected for interviews. Mr. Merryman and five staff members conducted the interviews of the 6 candidates.

The first session of the anti-bullying education for students was presented by Mike Dreiblatt last week. There will soon be a follow-up session with Steve Breakstone of PAVE (Project Against Violent Encounters). Mr. Merryman has received positive feedback from teachers on the program thus far.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Grade will begin their annual Smokey House Environment Field Studies experience on May 9<sup>th</sup> and there will be a presentation by students upon completion of the program on May 20<sup>th</sup>.

The Kindergarten screening yielded 18 registered students, however, Mr. Merryman believes based on some other families expressing interest in TDS, as well as an average 30% increase in enrolled Kindergartners by September, there will be over 20 students. Mr. Merryman will be posting an 'anticipated' Kindergarten teaching position on the School Spring website tomorrow.

Mr. Merryman said that he is also expecting 4 more students in 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades, as their families will be moving to town soon.

## **5. Employment: Appointments/Resignations**

Principal Merryman recommended that Amanda Chalmers, the current Media Center Assistant Director, be hired to fill the 5/6 teaching position for the 2011-12 school year. The Board decided to discuss this recommendation in Executive session at the end of the meeting.

## **6. Directors' Orders and Financial Statements**

Reviewed and signed by Board members and returned to Superintendent French.

## **7. Public Comment**

Justine Cook asked if there would be a parent representative participating in the Principal search process, and she volunteered herself. Mr. Chandler stated that the selection committee will be comprised of the Board, Superintendent French, two teachers and a parent. Ms. Allen started a dialog with the officers of the DPV, who have demonstrated their commitment and dedication to TDS, to ask who they would like to represent the parent contingency. The DPV did not want to appoint a representative, however the Board came up with 4 names for the parental candidate, and it plans to decide who that will be during tonight's Executive Session.

Ms. Allen reported that there has been sentiment from parents that they would like to participate in an online survey to be able to offer their opinions on the subject of the Principal search. Mr. French said that this matter can be discussed in Executive Session.

Ms. Cook asked what the potential of installing the fiber cable would be and if it would allow for virtual learning. Mr. French replied that the fiber connection would provide much greater bandwidth, which could allow teaching via video-conferencing, lessons involving video, sound, film, and more generally anything that requires streaming large quantities of data.

Ms. Cook also asked, in the context of the Ends policy process, how the Board would receive varying views on what the 'owner' (taxpayer) envisions for TDS, and how it would weed through personal choice. Mr. French replied that the Board would strive to have a good draft to present to the community with specific concepts, and would assess it against the community's vision.

## **8. Other Business**

Mr. Chandler asked Mr. French if there is any information available about the Rosetta Stone pilot program. Mr. French said that John Dawson, Director of Instructional Innovation for the BRSU will be compiling data SU-wide very soon. Mr. Merryman shared that 20 students at TDS in 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> grades have been participating in the pilot and are being monitored by Phyllis Tate and Diego Uribe. He believes they are utilizing the German, French, Swedish, and either Hindu or Chinese programs. The Board asked for specific feedback regarding the pilot at the next meeting.

Mr. Chandler and Mr. Salsgiver shared that they met with Brad Ring and Bill Drunic, of Friends of MEMS, to discuss the possibility of TDS benefitting from the horse show gate fees. Mr. Ring and Mr. Drunic were open to the idea, however, at this point they already have their volunteers for this summer's event scheduled. It might be beneficial to create a 501c3 not-for-profit organization to make the process cleaner, as this process would not be as simple as a typical fundraiser. It would also be worthwhile to look into coordinating with the DPV. Therefore, this will require some follow up to determine if it will be feasible for summer 2012.

Mr. Chandler reminded the Board that the VSBA (Vermont School Boards Association) is hosting a survey to assess the needs of Board members throughout the state. He distributed

copies of the survey to the Board members and asked that they complete the survey either as a group or individually.

Mr. French reminded the Board that BRSU Gmail accounts are available – if any members are interested in opening an account, please let him know.

### **Executive Session**

*At 7:49PM, a motion to call the meeting into Executive Session was made by Jim Salsgiver. Motion seconded by Jennifer Allen. All were in favor, motion carried.*

The following items were discussed:

Tuition Waiver Request

Hiring of Ms. Amanda Chalmers to the 5/6 teaching position

### **Open Session**

*Chairperson David Chandler reconvened the Board in open session at 8:15PM.*

*A motion to approve a tuition waiver request for the remainder of the school year was made by Jim Salsgiver. Motion seconded by Bob Allen. All were in favor of approving the tuition waiver request, motion carried.*

*A motion to hire Amanda Chalmers for the 5/6 teaching position was made by Jennifer Allen. Motion seconded by Vickie Haskins. All were in favor of hiring Amanda Chalmers for the 5/6 teaching position, motion carried.*

### **Executive Session**

*At 8:17PM, a motion to call the meeting into Executive Session was made by Jim Salsgiver. Motion seconded by Bob Allen. All were in favor, motion carried.*

The Board discussed a personnel matter.

### **9. Adjournment**

*Chairperson David Chandler reconvened the Board in open session at 9:45PM. No action was taken. Mr. Chandler adjourned the meeting at 9:46PM.*

**The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 24, 2011 at 6:00 PM at The Dorset School.**

Respectfully submitted by

Renee Bornstein