

**Dorset Board of School Directors**  
**Tuesday, May 24, 2011**  
**The Dorset School, Dorset, Vermont**

**In Attendance:** 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, Amy Panetta

**1. Call to Order**

***Meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM by Chairperson David Chandler.***

**2. Approval of Minutes**

*A motion to accept the minutes of the April 26, 2011 Board meeting, as well as three special meetings held on May 3, 6, and 9, 2011 was made by Bob Allen. Motion seconded by Vickie Haskins. There were two suggested changes to the minutes. All were in favor of approving the minutes as amended, motion carried.*

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

a) Recommendation to Approve Tuition for 5<sup>th</sup> Year – Based on a review of the student's academic record, Superintendent French recommended the Board approve the tuition request for a 5<sup>th</sup> year of high school in 2011-12.

*A motion to approve the tuition request for a 5<sup>th</sup> year was made by Bob Allen. Motion seconded by Jim Salsgiver. All were in favor of approving the tuition request, motion carried.*

b) Approve Revised Personnel Benefits for 2011-12 – Superintendent French presented a chart showing all of the categories of employment and the corresponding benefits for employees of The Dorset School who are not teachers or union employees. Several changes were made to better align the benefits with those of other districts in the SU, as well as to conform with the new leave system. Bus Drivers will now fall into Category D, to which health and dental benefits have been added. Leave time has been changed from days to hours across all of the categories to ease administration of the system at the SU level.

Mr. Salsgiver asked why term life insurance is not included on the Benefits document, and also asked if employees can buy into the program. Mr. French will bring the pertinent information to the Board to review over the summer.

*A motion to approve the Revised Personnel Benefits for 2011-12 was made by Vickie Haskins. Motion seconded by Jennifer Allen. All were in favor, motion carried.*

c) New Teacher Evaluation System – Superintendent French announced that there is a new teacher evaluation system being implemented SU-wide, which represents about a year of research and work. The administration developed the initial draft of the system, but going forward teachers will give input into revising it. A new entity called the Instructional Leadership team headed by the Director of Curriculum and Professional Development, Jackie Wilson, will guide the development of several of the BRSU's instructional systems including teacher evaluation, professional development, assessment, standards and curriculum development. The group will include a rotating roster of the SU's best teachers.

The new teacher evaluation system is based on Robert Marzano's The Art and Science of Teaching, the content of which each Principal reviewed with their teaching staff to ensure their comfort with it. The system is designed to engage teachers and move them toward improvement, and is organized into three different levels, which don't necessarily correspond to years of teaching experience. The system will be implemented online using <http://mylearningplan.com>, which is the same platform used to manage professional development, and will allow the entire process to be tracked. All of the evaluations will be available on the website and include scoring rubrics describing different levels of performance for each section.

Mr. Chandler asked if the bottom line of the evaluation will be a numerical score or a grade. Mr. French replied that the rubrics will help produce a score, but the system uses a Socratic process, so the score is not the only factor that influences the final decision for the next year's goals. The summary evaluation brings all of the data over the course of the year together and is designed to inform the yearly goals for each individual teacher. This is a formal evaluation system and is not a replacement for the daily interactions between the teaching staff and Principal. Mr. Merryman added that the current system already captures highlights and concerns, however this system will make it easier.

Mr. Salsgiver asked how the system will work in the interest of time, to which Mr. French replied that it is quite efficient. Another system was researched prior to this one and it was too cumbersome, so was not implemented.

d) Ends Policies – Superintendent French said that the Board will need answer the question - What is the future of teaching and learning at TDS? He said that parents and educators alike think of their time in school as students with a 'nostalgia factor', and that the new definition of school is wide-open and much different than in the past. One of the main goals of education today is to create 'global citizenship'. Mr. French showed the group some of the videos offered on the BRSU website (<http://brsu-ends-policies.brsu.schoolfusion.us/>), which are there to provoke ideas to help with creating the Ends Policies. There will also be discussion boards on the BRSU site soon.

Mr. French wrote the following question on the whiteboard:

"The Dorset School exists for what purpose(s)?"

The group had a short brainstorming session to answer the question posed to them. Some thoughts that were shared:

- Prepare students for global future
  - Understanding cultures
  - Problem solving
  - Communities
  - Flexibility
- Fulfill individual potentials
- Become productive citizens
- Instill core knowledge
- Socialization/creativity

Mr. French asked the Board to think about education (commodity) versus schooling (socialization/democracy). He also asked the Board to think about how different constituencies would respond to the question posed to them. The new TDS Principal will engage the teachers to answer this and other questions.

The Board will ultimately engage the public to collect their thoughts and ideas, and the timeline for the Ends Policy process has this happening in September. Some key

constituencies include: the Dorset Board of School Directors, TDS faculty & staff, parents, non-parent community members, and business owners.

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

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

Principal Merryman distributed a write up of his report, which he reviewed with the Board, and included the following:

**Spring Concert** - Our Spring concert is scheduled for May 25<sup>th</sup> (tomorrow evening) at 6:30 pm. It will include all facets of our music program in one night, as the winter performance.

**Electronic Recycling** - The event ended up having 4 and ½ trucks of electronics. The total weight was: 34,996 lbs. (2438 computers, 24057 mixed electronics, 5417 TVs, 3084 monitors). This year's event was a great success.

Because the event was so successful, the recycling company has asked TDS to be a model for other towns hosting events. The Board thanked Phyllis Tate, the Bornstein family and the volunteers for their hard work in making this event possible. They also suggested that the process be documented for future reference.

**Graduation** - Eighth Grade Graduation will be held at 5:30 pm on Wednesday June 8<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Chandler volunteered to speak at Graduation on behalf of the Board.

**Assistant Media Director** - We are in the process of interviewing five candidates and hop to have a recommendation by next Tuesday. We have interviewed three of the five to date.

**Farm to School** - The maintenance crew has filled two of three raised beds with topsoil from H.N. Williams. The decision for placement of the third bed is pending.

Ms. Allen thanked Billy Brownlee of H.N. Williams for selling the compost at wholesale cost, Joe Miles of R.K. Miles for selling the cedar at wholesale cost, Dave Brenner, a TDS parent, for building the beds, and the maintenance crew for setting them up and filling them.

**Dishwasher** - No news from The Wastewater Management Dept. to see if we would be able to install a compact dishwasher to clean silverware.

**Lights in Parking Lot** - Upon investigating a couple of possibilities, I came up with estimates ranging from \$2,500 - \$10,000. We are presently pursuing the first phase of the project by upgrading some fixtures and bulbs to increase lighting. Derek is staying within energy approved parameters. The approximate cost of this phase is estimated at \$800 - \$1,300.

**Field Days** - This year's Field Days are here! Please make sure your child is wearing sneakers, comfortable clothing, and has a water bottle. You may also want to consider sunscreen in the event of high temperatures and strong sun.

- Grades K-3 Field Day was held TODAY from 9am-11am.
- Grades 4-7 Field Day will be held on Wednesday, June 1<sup>st</sup> from 9-11:30am and then 1-2:30pm (weather permitting). The rain date for 4-7 is Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> with a second rain date (if necessary) of Monday, June 6<sup>th</sup>.

**First Grade Teacher Search** - A committee is reviewing applications and will narrow the pool to 5-7 candidates to be interviewed. The choices will be made by Friday, May 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Third Grade Historic Project** - Just a reminder, on Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm at the Dorset Historical Society the exhibit will be on display. There will be a time line and a narrative report of historical sites f Dorset. The exhibit will remain in a modified form to help celebrate Dorset's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

#### **Eighth Grade Class Trip**

Wednesday, June 1<sup>st</sup>

8:00 am - Leave The Dorset School  
9:30 am - Arrive at Adirondack Extreme (high ropes course) includes pizza lunch  
2:00 pm - Leave Adirondack Extreme  
2:30 pm - 6:00 pm - Great Escape Waterpark  
5:00 pm - Dinner at the Birch Bank Grill at White Water Bay (WaterPark)  
6:00 pm - 9:00 pm - Adventure Racing Park

#### Thursday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>

8:00 am - 9:00 am - Breakfast at the Great Escape Lodge  
10:00 am - 2:00 pm - The Fun Spot Action Park (Lunch)  
2:00 pm - 6:00 pm - Water Park including dinner at Birch Bank Grill at White Water Bay  
6:00 pm - 8:00 pm - Pirate's Cove miniature golf  
8:00 pm - 9:00 pm - Ice Cream

#### Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>

8:00 am - 9:00 am - Breakfast at the Great Escape Lodge  
9:00 am - 3:00 pm - Great Escape Theme Park includes buffet lunch at the park  
3:00 pm - Depart from the Great Escape Theme Park for school  
4:30 pm ish - Arrive at The Dorset School

Principal Merryman also reported that as of today, there are 19 students verified for the 2011-12 Kindergarten class, so most likely, a second Kindergarten section and teacher will not be needed. Mr. Merryman has spoken with Mrs. Beavin, the current Kindergarten teacher, about the possibility of team teaching for grades K and 1, which currently works very well with the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. This would even out class counts, bringing the incoming Kindergarten's teacher /student ratio down a bit.

There were 170+ applicants for both the 'anticipated' Kindergarten and First Grade teaching positions combined, and those who applied for the former are automatically being considered for the latter. Because there are such a large number of applicants, the criterion has increased to include a Master's degree or beyond and 2-3 years of classroom teaching experience.

The 7<sup>th</sup> grade students recently finished their Field Studies Program at Smokey House, which is undergoing a reorganization of their programming. The students gave a great presentation about their experiences on Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Merryman shared that several of TDS's paraeducators will be moving out of the area, and those positions will need to be filled.

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

None

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

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

### **7. Public Comment**

None

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### **8. Other Business**

Mr. Salsgiver announced that the Town of Dorset has approximately \$10,000 that they would like to contribute to help fund a new playground at TDS. Mr. Salsgiver shared the news with the DPV, whose members have been wishing for a new playground for our students for many years and they will be happy to work together with representatives from the Town to accomplish this. Mr. French added that there are some fund-matching grant opportunities that can be applied for as well as using the town funding to spur fundraisers.

### **Executive Session**

*At 7:30PM, 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 following items were discussed:

3. e) Principal Search Process

*Chairperson David Chandler reconvened the Board in open session at 8:12PM.*

*A motion to approve the principal employment contract as recommended by Superintendent French was made by Bob Allen. Motion seconded by Jim Salsgiver. All were in favor, motion carried.*

### **9. Adjournment**

*Chairperson David Chandler adjourned the meeting at 8:13PM.*

**The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 28, 2011 at 6:00 PM at The Dorset School.**

Respectfully submitted by

Renee Bornstein