

**ROCHESTER-STOCKBRIDGE UNIFIED DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
INFORMATIONAL MEETING
THURSDAY, MAY 17, 2018
6:30 PM
ROCHESTER SCHOOL
APPROVED MINUTES**

1. Call to order
 - 1.1. Attendees: Administration: Bruce Labs, David Larcombe. Board: Carl Groppe, Amy Wildt, Megan Payne, Ethan Bowen, Jenny Austin. Members of the public present.
2. Review
 - 2.1. WRVSU originally had 10 districts, and through various mergers this has reduced to 6.
 - 2.2. Community surveys by both Rochester and Stockbridge – both valued having a local elementary school, choice matters, maintaining communities, quality education and equal opportunities, understand 21st century economy and the need to do “more with less”.
 - 2.3. Reasons to support merger – educational and/or fiscally responsible, equal voice for each town on the merged board, reduces costs positively affect tax rate
 - 2.4. Merger articles included that are important for both Towns – grade 7-12 choice, 3 board members from each town, unified board develops single budget, ceiling on budget first year of operation, must be below excess spending threshold, no closure without unanimous vote of board and approval of town where located, district name to be revisited in first year, evaluation of unified district five years out.
 - 2.5. Achieving Act 46 goals
 - 2.5.1. financially – cost control in year 1, opportunities for additional efficiencies over time, Direct financial benefits – merger incentives, tax rate stability
 - 2.5.2. educationally – integrated faculty which share experiences, coordinated curricular, more opportunity for after school programming and potential for sports teams, more opportunities for planned activities (field trips), integrated support system
3. Narrative presentation
 - 3.1. budget goals are transitional goals –
 - 3.1.1. align educational and operational: work towards being consistent between schools
 - 3.1.2. understand infrastructure needs
 - 3.1.3. develop Rochester transition blueprint
 - 3.1.4. determine Stockbridge space configuration – in the past few years discussed adding space to SCS. Need to understand what the space needs are and how to best expand

to reach those goals.

- 3.1.5. create educational “strategic plan”
- 3.2. Administration model – 2 full time administrators, collaborative leadership team, cross campus rotation, responsibilities delegated / shared (vs. locational), hiring process underway. Bonnie will be staying at Rochester school. The interview process is under way for the 2nd administrator.
- 3.3. Staffing
 - 3.3.1. 2 preK & 2 preK paraeducators
 - 3.3.2. 6.8 Rochester (5 classrooms) 4.2 K-6 and 1 paraeducator in Stockbridge
 - 3.3.3. Music .6 Rochester (down .4), .4 Stockbridge (up .2) – combined music teacher between schools
 - 3.3.4. Art .5 Rochester (down .5), .2 Stockbridge
 - 3.3.5. PE .4 Rochester, .22 Stockbridge
 - 3.3.6. Library .3 Rochester, .2 Stockbridge
 - 3.3.7. Guidance 1.0 Rochester, .4 Stockbridge (up .2)
 - 3.3.8. Support staff down 1.5 in Rochester, up .05 in Stockbridge
- 3.4. Stockbridge – classrooms stay the same
- 3.5. Rochester – preK, K, 1, 2/3, 4/5, 5/6. High School is broken into 3 zones. Based on recommendation of Rochester principal, going to shutter down zones 1 and 2 during winter. In the winter going to lower heating zones 2 and 3 because of active sprinkler system (live with water circling in it). The following year(s) the plan may change. The goal is to minimize the educational footprint. There will be a committee to focus on Rochester facilities to decide long-term plan.
- 3.6. Buildings – no elegant / obvious solutions, create facilities committee to develop long-term plan, develop infrastructure inventory/understand true cost, analyze space needs, create accurate maintenance schedule. Need to determine what the heating costs are for both buildings and come up with long-term plan.
- 3.7. Curriculum & school programming – communities want to see greater focus on STEM, wellness and outdoor learning, exposure to world languages, increased exposure to the arts. Forest Fridays in Rochester and farm-to-school in Stockbridge.
- 3.8. This budget – adds money for special programming opportunities; add money for intercampus transportation, creates savings by planning for joint experiences, reducing expenses; reduces local PTO fundraising by formalizing expenditures; and supports community engagement through larger all-district events and increases the social interactions for kids.
- 3.9. Opportunities ahead:

- 3.9.1. Build a new elementary education model that is both visionary and sustainable
- 3.9.2. STEM / maker collaborative learning
- 3.9.3. Intensive arts cross campus
- 3.9.4. Enhance farm to school / outdoor education
- 3.9.5. Increase big adventures capability
- 3.9.6. Leveraging both facilities and location to exploit opportunities – we are right in the middle of the National Forest. We can use our resources to promote families to send their kids to our schools.
- 3.10. Two communities by the numbers
 - 3.10.1. Population 66/34
 - 3.10.2. Grand list – 60/40
 - 3.10.3. Enrollment – 64/36
 - 3.10.4. Expenditure – 59/41
- 3.11. Tuition
 - 3.11.1. Average cost - \$16,500 per tuitioned student. Rochester - \$590K, Stockbridge \$607K.
- 4. Budget presentation
 - 4.1. Tuition PK and K-6 is money coming into towns from kids from other Towns sending their kids to our schools.
 - 4.2. Did not allocate money to Trustee of Public Funds – want to make sure that we are not jeopardizing funds.
 - 4.3. Small schools grant – now officially a merger support grant. As the law is currently configured this grant will remain.
 - 4.4. Guidance has been increased to 0.4 FTE in Stockbridge and putting SAP money directly into guidance staff to have a single point of contact for guidance.
 - 4.5. Repairs and maintenance – Rochester \$49K: heating system repairs, elementary roof, heating and plumbing issues, bathroom expenses, and some smaller expenses.
 - 4.6. \$5400 for Intercampus transportation for combined programming
 - 4.7. State tax figures / methodology for coming up with final numbers is not finalized yet, waiting for State decisions.
 - 4.8. Preliminary equalized tax rate 1.7127
 - 4.9. 3.75 cents in Stockbridge and 4.72 cents in Rochester. Considering the number of phantom students that were removed from Rochester school, the board is pleased with where this number ends up.
- 5. Community Q & A
 - 5.1. Rob Gardner thought the package was well put together.
 - 5.1.1. Remedial – Rochester \$15K versus Stockbridge amount of \$259. Amy noted this may be

the package that the specific staff members are taking.

- 5.1.2. You can't "fire" the SU and you can't negotiate their costs. The five districts operating schools in the SU get 3 representatives on that committee, plus 1 representative from Granville-Hancock (no school in those Towns). The control over the number for SU budget is out of the district's control. Over the years there are more items that are handled at the SU level, including transportation, etc. So much of the SU budget is special education budgeting.
- 5.2. Inspiring presentation and looking forward to seeing how it plays out. Two full time administrators moving between the schools. How is that evaluation going to be determined and will the public be able to read any of the evaluations? Evaluations are the responsibility of the SU by statute. Superintendent usually pushes the teacher evaluations to the principal. Responsibility of evaluations may be one or both of the principals, depending on the strengths of the principals. Bruce noted that Bonnie is in the retirement process and is limited on what her income can be. In addition, there are family responsibilities that she will be taken away for a day or two at a time. Will Bonnie be working just one more year? The actual schedule and amount of time will be decided when the second half of the administrative team is found. It will be determined exactly how it works when we have hired the new second administrator. In Stockbridge there has been institutional knowledge that has been lost. With the current model having two administrators will allow for knowledge to be retained from year to year.
- 5.3. One public noted that she is pleased that Bonnie will be retained and that she has good experience. Bonnie is familiar with multi-age levels and proficiency learning that she can bring to the table. Bonnie noted that the board will need to, as we move forward, continue to look for efficiencies between schools.
- 5.4. Walter Golub – 10% of the remedial amount is dental insurance. David noted the numbers are correct. It is just a matter of what health options the particular staff members are taking.
- 5.5. How much is it going to cost to keep zone 3 open? We do not know at this time. There will be an engineering study to get a better idea. There are anticipated savings in heating costs, but the budget is conservative.
- 5.6. Regarding tuition, if a child wishes to go to a private school how does that work? Carl noted you can go to any public school and State law says we will pay. Tuition is based on parent or guardian. Vermont has a list of independent schools and the Town will pay the average annual tuition. If the school charges more that is the parents' responsibility. If a child were to go to a boarding school - will pay up to a certain amount, will not pay for room and board, food plans, activity fees, etc.

6. Confirm Next Meeting Date(s)
 - 6.1. Tuesday, May 22, 2018 @ 7:00 PM - Annual Meeting @ Rochester
 - 6.1.1. Need to be at the meeting vote
 - 6.2. Tuesday, June 5, 2018 - 6:30 PM @ Stockbridge
7. Public Comment – *see #5 above*
8. Adjourn – adjourned at 7:40 pm

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Jenny Austin