



**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**Mead School District Board of Directors**  
**Monday, June 2, 2014**

The Board of Directors held a Special Board Meeting on Monday, June 2, 2014. The meeting began at 8:30 a.m. and was held at the Mead School District Administration Office. Directors Farley, Denholm, O'Connor, and Olson were present. Also attending was Superintendent Tom Rockefeller, Assistant Superintendents Wayne Leonard and Ken Russell and Executive Director Jared Hoadley.

Others in attendance included Dan Butler (STEM Director for the Mead School District), Danette Driscoll (Riverpoint Academy principal) five Riverpoint Academy teachers and several members of the Riverpoint Academy CTE Advisory Board.

**I. Approval of Agenda**

Director Denholm made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Director O'Connor seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**II. Riverpoint Academy**

Board President Ron Farley started the meeting by reading a prepared statement addressing the assertion, expressed at the most recent Riverpoint Advisory Board meeting, that Riverpoint Academy needs to be turned into a charter school and that the application needs to be submitted within three weeks. (Director Farley, Director Olson and Superintendent Rockefeller were invited guests at this advisory board meeting.)

The entirety of Director Farley's remarks is attached.

Business Services Assistant Superintendent Wayne Leonard presented information on the income and expenditures associated with Riverpoint Academy for the past three years and a projection of income and expenditures for the upcoming 2014-15 school year. He also shared enrollment numbers including how many students reside in the Mead School District (93%-95%) and the number of students from each of the district's two traditional high schools.

Discussion followed that included questions about levy monies and how those are applied to Riverpoint Academy and concerns that the current collective bargaining agreement between the Mead Education Association (MEA) and Mead School District unduly hinders the Riverpoint Academy program.

At Director Farley's request MEA President Toby Doolittle talked about the support of MEA relative to Riverpoint Academy from its inception in 2010. He reported it has most likely been an entire year since he has had a conversation with Dan Butler about the Riverpoint Academy program.

Discussion followed that included reference to that fact that approximately 10% of the MEA membership works in a non-tradition setting and the work they do does not fit the "standard mold." Mr. Doolittle stated his willingness to talk and come up with workable solutions for Riverpoint Academy as problems present themselves. The subject of pay for teachers and pay for serving in positions such as a class or club advisor was discussed, as well as teacher prep time. In conclusion, Mr. Doolittle reasserted the continued willingness of the MEA to modify and adjust and gave the example of the recent one year extension to a Letter of Agreement regarding three teachers who have taken leave from Mead High School to teach at Riverpoint Academy. Mr. Butler expressed his concern that Mr. Doolittle does not have the power to modify and adjust as stated.

Riverpoint Advisory Board members expressed their desire to bring in professionals (engineers) to teach who do not hold Washington State teaching credentials. The additional concern of having the ability to hire and fire who they want was brought forward. Mr. Doolittle responded that all schools in the Mead School District interview for teaching positions and can hire whomever they want.

Superintendent Tom Rockefeller talked about Riverpoint Academy staffing for the 14-15 school year, an operating budget and transportation plan. He additionally referenced the need to make appropriate accommodations for Special Education and ELL students and look at the role of CTE funding at Riverpoint Academy. (A copy of Superintendent Rockefeller's handwritten talking points is attached.) In conclusion Superintendent Rockefeller spoke of his recent discussions with individual board members about parallel Riverpoint Academy program studies, taking this next year to look at whether the program should remain an 11-12 program, change to a 9-12 program, convert to a charter or become a new charter school. He voiced the idea of having someone from the Washington State Charter Commission come and talk about the nuts and bolts of charter schools.

Director Farley raised the issues of medical insurance, salary and retirement for charter school staff members and the fact students would no longer be receiving a diploma from the Mead School District if Riverpoint Academy were a charter school. He again stated the Mead School Board has and continues to believe in and support the education opportunity Riverpoint Academy provides.

Director Farley, as well as Directors O'Connor, Denholm and Olson, stated moving to submitting a charter application in three weeks is much too fast. They do not want to be pressured into going "arm-in-arm" via a dual charter application in that short of a time span. The board wants to take the appropriate time to study the situation and do what is best for kids.

Shelly O'Quinn (Riverpoint Advisory Board Member) stated she can appreciate the comments made but disagrees. Her expressed desire was that the Mead School District Board of Directors joins the Riverpoint Advisory Board and submits a charter school application by the mid June deadline. She stated the Riverpoint Advisory Board wants to partner with the Mead School District. She expressed concern that school districts move slowly and that a forced deadline will get things done.

Superintendent Rockefeller referenced an email he sent to Dan Butler at the end of April where he communicated that the Mead School District Board of Directors wanted to take the next year to study charter schools.

Ms. O'Quinn reported the Riverpoint Advisory Board plans to submit a charter application and hopes it is in partnership with the Mead School District.

Once again, Director Farley stated the Mead School District Board of Directors is not interested in submitting a dual application for Riverpoint Academy to become a charter school. The board does not see the need to move to a charter and believes the district is in the best position to move Riverpoint Academy forward.

Superintendent Rockefeller reminded those in attendance that the Riverpoint Advisory Board is a CTE advisory committee . . . similar to the district's Facilities Planning Committee. They can make recommendations to the school board but it is the school board that makes decisions regarding Mead School District schools.

In closing Director Farley asked if there were any additional comments. Ms. O'Quinn expressed frustration and her feeling the meeting was disingenuous because it did not allow for the free flow of dialogue she had hoped for.

**III. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

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President

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Secretary

At your last Advisory Committee meeting the committee asserted that it believed the RA needed to be turned into a charter school. While nobody gave evidence of how the current school was failing, it was noted that due to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the school could not function in the manner needed. Further, there have been ongoing allegations that the District and/or the Board does not fully support the RA program.

The Mead School District Board of Directors believes enough in the type of program offered through RA that it devoted several years and hundreds of thousands of dollars to bring it to life. We believe that type of programming choice is necessary for the students of Mead. We also believe that at this point, it could and should be done within the framework of the school District because the District has the professional experience, capacity and financial ability to continue to develop a successful program without going to a charter school approach. The result of that belief culminated in the RA program, which has been an award winning, highly acclaimed and recognized program. The District's belief in that school and that program remains.

Apparently the Advisory Committee believes the program can be better run as a charter school. The District disagrees, but let me state at the outset, the Mead School District intends to continue to offer the programmatic education established through development of RA regardless of the choice the advisory group makes.

While the advisory group stated they wanted to develop a charter school arm in arm and not create an us versus them approach, the avenue selected by the group makes that impossible. First, the RA administration was notified in writing on April 30 of the Board's position that the Board believed the interests of the program and the students would best be served by the District continuing to operate RA and the Board was not interested in switching to a charter school arrangement at this point.

Second, in spite of the fact the Mead Board had made known to the RA leadership that it believed the program would best be served as a District program, the advisory group appears to have decided to adopt the position a charter school is necessary. By taking that position, that group is stating their belief that the Mead School District is incapable of operating the program. The history and fact of RA itself belies that position. Further, had there been a real intent to engage in an arm in arm approach the committee could have made its interest known to the Board well in advance of a meeting in which the Advisory Committee wanted agreement to convert within a three week time frame.

It additionally appears that in spite of the notification by the Board to the RA administration that the Board was not interested at this time in converting RA to a charter school, the RA school administration has continued to advocate for such a conversion by soliciting parental approval for a change and by engaging the teaching staff in discussions to approve charter school status. This behavior in the face of the explicit position stated

by the Board that it was not interested at this time in moving to a charter school questions the legitimacy of a purported arm in arm approach.

The Mead Board has developed the RA on the basis of a plan which would allow the program to develop over the first two years and then begin a study of how the program could be improved or changed as needed. That remains the Board's approach. There has been nothing shown that identifies how the RA program has suffered under this approach or that it is destined to suffer in the immediate future.

In addition, the advisory group is just that, a CTE advisory group and it does not establish District policy, programs or guides. While the District realizes the group could attempt to establish a conversion school, even if successful in getting a charter contract, the Mead School District will continue to operate the program as established through the RA approach.

Superintendent Rockefeller and Directors Olson and Farley were asked to attend a meeting of the RA Advisory Committee, with the indication they were to address the District's commitment to the program. Instead, they were faced with the proposition the Advisory Committee intended to apply to convert to a charter school. As depicted to us at the time, we were challenged with providing a reason an application/notice of intent to file for a charter school should not be filed within basically three weeks of that meeting. The issue had never been broached to the Mead School Board prior to that time and consequently, we were not completely prepared to respond to the Advisory Committee's proposition. This meeting constitutes that response.

Finally, before anyone suggests or implies the decisions of the Mead School Board do not take into consideration the best interests of the students of the Mead School District I want to remind you that the only reason RA came into being is because of the dedication and commitment made by this Board and the Mead School District to develop an innovative approach to learning within the District and without resort to charter schools. In addition this Board currently has nearly 70 years combined volunteer service on behalf of public education in the State of Washington generally and the Mead School District in particular. It is our considered opinion that the immediate and future health and growth of RA will best be met with the support available through the District and under the direction of the District and Superintendent Rockefeller who has over 15 years experience as a Superintendent, with 37 total years in education. Any suggestion that this is a case of adults fighting and ignoring the best interests of the students, patrons and staff of Mead is both insulting and spurious.

11-12:30

Rockefeller Notes 6/2/14

(125 / 123)

- BUDGET
- ESTABLISHED AN OPERATING BUDGET FOR 2014-15
    - ALLOCATES FOR 6.6 TEACHER POSITIONS
    - ALLOCATES FOR .6 TEACHER LEADER (PA POSITION)
    - ALLOCATES FOR ELL, SPED, AND CTE FUNDING AS APPROPRIATE
    - REVIEWING FACILITY/CAPITAL NEEDS
    - WORKING ON TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

- PROGRAM
- PROGRAM WORK
    - SPED #5
    - ELL # 1-2
    - WILL BE ASKING MATT FOR CTE DEPARTMENT REVIEW - WHAT PERCENTAGES EXPECTED (MATCH REPORTING/ACTUAL) TO MAXIMIZE FUNDING - CURRENTLY REPORTING 50+%
    - ALIGNING ALL PROGRAM WORK WITH STATE/FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

### - PRIORITIES

- COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR 14-15
  - ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS WITH HS PRINCIPALS - TO THEIR COUNSELING DEPARTMENTS / STAFF
  - REVIEW OF RAS COMMUNICATION PLAN
  - REVIEW OF RAS GOALS
- STUDIES TO BE PERFORMED CONCURRENTLY
  - KEEP AS 11-12 PROGRAM
  - CHANGE TO 9-12 PROGRAM
  - CHARTER STUDY - POSSIBILITY OF CONVERSION OR NEW SCHOOL CHARTER
- WASHINGTON CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMISSION

- ESTABLISHING WEEKLY MEETINGS - ASK STAFF TO HELP BY TAKING A SMALL BUSINESS APPROACH

- IDENTIFYING WORKDAY
- IDENTIFYING WORK HOURS
- STIPEND NEEDS
- STAFFING

- ALSO ENGAGING IN A STUDY WITH WSU FOR THE CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF EVALUATING THE EVALUATION OF STEM SCHOOLS 500K LOOKING AT HOW, WHAT, WHY, ETC

ISSUES: THE PROGRAM ITSELF IS

- STUDENT FTE IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE - HOW DO WE PROVIDE STUDENTS TO PROGRAM (ISB)
  - NEED TO REVIEW REPRESENTATION OF STUDENTS
  - WORKING WITH SECONDARY SCHOOLS - ALL - SMILE PEAKLE, MT. SPOKANE, MEAD, NORTHSTAR, MEAD. - TO DEVELOP PATHWAY BETWEEN SCHOOL
  - INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITH BORDER SCHOOL DISTRICTS
  - BOARD POLICY CHANGES.
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