

Ray-Pec School Board Update
Regular monthly meeting
Nov. 17, 2011

This is a summary of the Ray-Pec Board of Education meeting on Nov. 17, 2011. This is an unofficial record. The official minutes of each board meeting are posted on the district web site at:

<http://www.boarddocs.com/mo/rpsd/Board.nsf/Public>

Action item

Audit

The board approved 7-0 the audit of the district's finances for the year ending June 30, 2011. Brad Steele, a certified public accountant from Westbrook & Co., P.C., Richmond, Mo., presented a summary report.

Steele said the district had a clean audit with no findings. In audit terms, a "finding" is an area of weakness or deficiency that needs modification or correction. A finding may occur for a variety of reasons. For example, the auditors may note missing documents, improvements needed in travel procedures or recordkeeping, or make suggestions to improve cash handling or internal audit procedures.

The audit included fund balances as of June 30, 2011. Steele noted that the debt service fund was nearly \$10 million higher due to the sale of bonds. He reported on the district's outstanding long-term debt, as Ray-Pec continues to pay off bond issues for past construction and leases. During the 2011-2012 school year, more than \$14 million will be paid toward the debt. He said the district's reserves were 25.39 percent on June 30, 2011. He said the balance indicates that the board and administration have been proactive and said the auditing firm likes to see "healthy" reserve balances at 20 percent and higher. They also audited the district's federal programs. The district must follow strict guidelines in accounting for the expenditures of federal funds. There were no audit findings related to the federal programs for Ray-Pec. Steele said that is "not typical."

Steele was complimentary of district staff, saying that he would rank the Ray-Pec staff near the top, if not at the top, among the school districts with which he has worked. He noted that when findings were reported in the past, Ray-Pec was responsive and worked to make sure the issues were corrected.

After his report, Board Member Kim York thanked Steele for spending time with the board to answer questions. She is a former auditor, and she said that the clean audit is impressive. "It's unheard of to not have any findings," she said. "Our staff is fantastic."

You can view Steele's presentation and the full audit report here:

<http://www.raypec.k12.mo.us/index.aspx?nid=565>

Information items

Special Education Program Review

(Each month, specific departments or programs review their programs for the Board.) Dr. Kevin Daniel, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Services, introduced Jacque Underwood, Director of Special Education grades ECSE-4, and Linda Bass, Director of Special Education grades 5-12, who presented the report.

Mission of the program: To meet the needs of students who are identified as students in need of special education services as outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the state and local Compliance Plan.

The program impacts the 468 children who meet the eligibility criteria for one of the 13 categories of a disability as outlined in IDEA. The program also impacts their parents. At Ray-Pec, between 6 and 8 percent of all students have been identified for special education services. Statewide, the average is between 12 and 13 percent.

Goals for 2011-2012:

Goal 1: Facilitate parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.

Goal 2: Continue securing and training highly qualified staff for all special education positions.

Goal 3: Increase in student performance on MAP in the areas of communication arts and math.
Annual MAP results will indicate continuous growth from the previous year.

They shared information about improving communication with parents and the importance of collaboration between regular education and special education staff. As a result of the rise in identification of students with autism, the district is ensuring that more staff members receive training specific to autism. They also shared information about other training for special education teachers.

You may read the entire program review report at: <http://www.raypec.k12.mo.us/index.aspx?nid=85>

Parents as Teachers Program Review

(Each month, specific departments or programs review their programs for the Board.) Cindy Watson, Parents as Teachers Coordinator, presented the report.

Purpose of the program: To educate parents about child development and provide developmental screening opportunities for all children in our district up to age 5 in order to monitor and identify developmental concerns before entering school.

Goals for 2011-2012:

- ◎ SMART goal: 100% of Parents As Teachers families that meet criteria for “high needs” will receive parenting education and developmental assessments for 2011/2012 school year.
- ◎ SMART goal: The number of completed developmental screenings will increase by 20% for 2011/2012 school year.

Cindy said that as of Nov. 1, parent educators had completed 135 home visits to families, 108 developmental screenings, and eight referrals for further evaluation.

You may read the entire program review report at: <http://www.raypec.k12.mo.us/index.aspx?nid=83>

Early Childhood Program Review

(Each month, specific departments or programs review their programs for the Board.) Lindsey Adamczyk, Early Childhood teacher, presented the report.

Purpose of the program: To ensure that pre-kindergarten students demonstrate school readiness skills prior to the start of kindergarten.

Goals for 2011-2012:

- ◎ By May of the 2011-2012 school year, the percent of students whose scores indicate “typical development” on the Fine Motor category of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) will increase by 24.2% for a total of 90%.
- ◎ By May of the 2011-2012 school year, the percent of students whose scores indicate “typical development” on the Communication category of the ASQ will increase by 17.6% for a total of 90%.

Lindsey noted that the goals are associated with the two areas where students need the most assistance: fine motor skills and communication. Students are screened in May prior to their attendance year. Students are assessed in October, December and May to show progress in specific areas.

You may read the entire program review report at: <http://www.raypec.k12.mo.us/index.aspx?nid=76>

Standards-Referenced report cards and grading

The board of education continues to learn about the district’s work in the area of standards-referenced report cards and grading. Last month, four teachers shared their experiences at the regular monthly board meeting and board members also learned more during a work session.

During the Nov. 17, 2011, meeting, board members participated in an exercise to illustrate the benefits of standards-referenced grading.

Karen Hurst, Director of K-6 Curriculum and Assessment, showed the board a page with 24 letters arranged in a pyramid. She asked the board to look briefly at the letters. She then removed the page and

asked them to write down the letters they remembered. Board members recalled from 1 to 16 of the letters. Board member Joe Anthuis said he identified which two letters were missing.

Hurst asked board members to consider how the activity might be graded. Should someone be considered proficient if he/she remembered all of the letters, half of the letters, five letters, or one letter? After some discussion, she shared that human brains can typically recall a series of seven letters, digits or shapes. She also had board members share strategies that they used to remember the letters.

Hurst then asked the board to look at a second series of letters, and told them to try to remember as many letters as possible in order from top to bottom of the pyramid. Most of the board members improved. Hurst said that knowing the learning target (recalling the letters in correct order) and using strategies (such as nonsense words or abbreviations) helped improve performance.

With a standards-referenced grading system, students are told the learning target before the learning takes place. Students and teachers work together to identify strategies to assist with learning. Students may re-take assessments to show mastery. And in the example at the board meeting, someone who recalled seven letters may be considered proficient, while someone who recalled 14 letters may be considered advanced.

To read more about standards-referenced grading, go here:

<http://www.raypec.k12.mo.us/index.aspx?nid=749>

The Missouri Vision Project

Dr. Jeff Kyle told about the Missouri Vision Project, a joint effort of the Missouri School Boards Association and the Missouri Association of School Administrators. Planning teams created a long-term vision for public education in Missouri.

The project has seven areas of focus:

1. Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Differentiate teaching methods and instructional time for every public school student in Missouri according to his or her needs and abilities.
2. Early Learning and Student Success: Provide every family in Missouri with access to a voluntary, free, quality preschool program.
3. Climate, Culture, and Organizational Efficacy: Make every school building in Missouri an inviting and safe place for every student, parent, staff and the larger community.
4. Human and Organizational Capital: Attract and retain high-quality teachers in every Missouri school district by providing excellent salaries and benefits.
5. Physical Resources: Provide state support for school construction and renovation that will enable every Missouri student to be educated in a quality learning environment.
6. Governance, Leadership and Accountability: Ensure that local, state and federal education policy be focused on providing the best education for students, not on partisan ideology.

7. Financial Resources: Provide an adequate and equitable school finance system that will place Missouri in the top 10 in rankings of state support for school funding.

Here is a web site with more information: www.visionformopublicschools.org

The John T. Belcher Scholarship

Three board members volunteered to review scholarship applications and recommend a student to represent the Ray-Pec School District in this scholarship competition. The board members are: Leo Anderson, Ruth Johnson, and Kim York. A \$750 scholarship is awarded annually to a winner in each of the 17 regions of the Missouri School Boards Association. From that group, a statewide winner is selected to receive an additional \$750.

Superintendent comments

Superintendent Dr. Jeff Kyle shared information about:

- Kansas City, Mo., School District accreditation status. School officials in the Kansas City and neighboring school districts have been meeting together and with state officials to determine how the loss of Kansas City's accreditation will impact other districts.
- Joint legislative platform prepared by the Cooperating School Districts of St. Louis and the Cooperating School Districts of Greater Kansas City.
- Youth Court, which is scheduled to begin in March in Cass County. Offenders ages 13-19 may have cases heard in Youth Court, which will be staffed entirely by youth.
- Polar Plunge, a fundraiser for Special Olympics. The next Polar Plunge is scheduled for Jan. 28, 2012, at Longview Lake. Dr. Kyle will join many school district students and employees in the fundraising effort.
- Thanksgiving dinners. Districtwide, the district's Child Nutrition Department will serve about 8,000 turkey dinners. Parents, grandparents and guests attend the annual meals with students.

He also shared a letter from Theresa Cotter about her positive experience as a substitute teacher for the Early Childhood program. He also shared a letter from Rep. Chris Molendorp, R-123, praising the district's after school care program. Both letters can be seen here:

<http://www.boarddocs.com/mo/rpsd/Board.nsf/Public>

Other business

Consent agenda

The board approved 7-0 the consent agenda, which included the business report, personnel report (hirings and resignations), and minutes for the Oct. 2 and Oct. 27 meetings. You may view these reports at: <http://www.boarddocs.com/mo/rpsd/Board.nsf/Public>

Application for Early Graduation

As part of the consent agenda (listed above), the board also approved a list of students who have applied for early graduation. The students are: Iman Yusuf Al-Hassan, Hannah Arnold, Bailey Barnett, Lauren Bennett, Shelby Bouzek, Katie Brock, Matthew Brooks, Morgan Butterworth, Kelsee Carter, Shayna Crosswhite, Kailynn Cummings, Lisa Fairman, Cameron Green, Kayla Haling, Zana Hines, Mary (Tori) Holm, Melinda Johnson, Samuel Langley, Briceson Lee, Paige Leible, Janae Mitzner, Deron Moore, Breanna Rhoades, Shelby Shearer, Tiffani Sims, Hannah Troxel, Elissa Tusa, Taylor Valentour, Jessica Watson, and Kallie Williams.

Presentation

A presentation that was listed on the agenda under Public Comments did not take place, as the presenter was unable to attend the meeting.

Board member comments

- Ruth Johnson thanked Kendra Hutsell, chief financial officer, and Pam Steele, secretary to the board and superintendent, for their work leading to the clean audit.
- Leo Anderson said the Veterans Day program at Creekmoor Elementary was outstanding.
- Kim York said that she and Leo Anderson were judges at the Ray-Pec High School Forensics and Debate Tournament. She was impressed with the planning and logistics involved in hosting the tournament. Kim enjoyed judging humorous interpretation.
- Dana Hille said that she also judged at the tournament, but she judged debates about the electoral college.
- Kyle Gillespie announced that the middle school play opened that night, and that all three performances were sold out.
- David Crabtree said he attended the Thanksgiving lunch at Bridle Ridge Intermediate School.

Upcoming meetings

The next regular meeting of the Ray-Pec Board of Education is scheduled for 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 17.