



RINET Board of Directors

Business Meeting

February 1, 2008

Present: Sharon Hussey, Peter Adamy, Joe Pangborn, Mike Shaughnessy, Melanie Turcotte, Pam Christman, Joan Gillespie, Steve Foehr, Denise Lavoie, Howard Boksenbaum, Maureen Cotter, Jim Monti

Absent: Ed Giroux, Stephen Lindberg, Rosemarie Kraeger, Steve Carmody

Meeting called to order at 9:10 am

MOTIONS

Approval of the November 8, 2007 minutes

Motion: Mike Shaughnessy, Second: Joe Pangborn. Unanimously approved.

Howard Boksenbaum moved to accept the appointment of Mark Dunham to the vacated PSD seat.

Second: Maureen Cotter. Unanimously approved.

Howard Boksenbaum moved to receive Fiscal Year 07 Audit Report. Second: Joe Pangborn. Unanimously approved.

Jim Monti moved to end meeting at 11:46 am. Second: Joan Gillespie

New Business

- Appointment of Mark Dunham to the vacated PSD seat
 - Motion to accept the appointment of Mark Dunham: Howard Boksenbaum, Second:Maureen Cotter. Unanimously approved

Unfinished Business

Governance Committee Chair – vacant

Discussion:

- Chair of the Committee should be a current Board member.
- Role of Governance Committee Chair
 - To support Board development
 - Recruit potential board members who are interested in technology
 - Need to be prepared for Board changes through formalized processes
 - ◆ Term limits
 - ◆ By-laws and policies
 - ◆ Board training and development
 - ◆ Orientation
- Howard Boksenbaum noted Board needs to be flexible. You don't want to chase people off the Board with too many policies and procedures.
- The Governance Committee meets 3 times a year, has light responsibility
- The majority of work is done by committee members
- Chair is responsible for running the meetings, providing advice.
- The committee members have duties spread out to complete tasks
- Joan Gillespie volunteered for the role of Governance Committee Chair.
- Maureen Cotter volunteered to serve on the Governance Committee.

Reports

- **Information Services Strategic Planning Committee**

- Steve Foehr reported on meeting this week with Peter Adamy, Steve Carmody, Pam Christman, Jim Monte, Lee Rabbitt, and Bob Ross.
 - There is State-wide initiative for Science curriculum k-20, through the National Science Foundation.
- The Governor appointed leader for this group is David Cedrone. David is collaborating with a team from RIC, URI and Brown to write a grant proposal for Science teaching support tools through technology.
- RINET would like to be involved systemically
 - To provide network conductivity
 - Data center
 - Collaborative Learning Environment SAKAI
- It was noted that David Cedrone will write RINET into the grant proposal
 - Mike: How do we support the infrastructure?
 - Steve: Through the implementation of SAKAI.
 - Jim agree with SAKAI as the tool for the most effective collaboration.
 - RINET will be part of the vehicle for communication.
- Steve notes that there is an RFP for 20 -30 grants with a total of \$40million to allocate.
- SAKAI Conference in April
 - Steve referenced page six in handout of RINET Projects Updates describing ePortfolio services and the Collaborative Learning Environment (SAKAI suite of course management tools)
 - The purpose of the conference is to reach out beyond our current users and enable schools to engage in everyday classroom instruction through discussion forums shared workspaces, chat rooms, shared libraries, etc. This tool can also be used for credit recovery courses, and to share resources with other districts.
 - SAKAI has an international learning environment. Through the conference we want to see Higher education share with High School level learning environments.
 - There is great interest from Higher Education to build a national K-12 user collaboration.
 - Funding for K-12
 - There is grant opportunity and corporate sponsorship opportunity.
 - IBM is scheduled to come to conference

Maureen: What is SAKAI? What do other non-SchoolMAX districts do with it?

Steve: For an example of non SMAX is Providence school system.

- Their SIS builds class sites for every class.
 - Teachers login and create assignments
 - Students can login and look at assignments
 - Discussion groups involve students and teacher involved in learning processes outside of school walls.
 - Consensus of Board is that the goal of RINET should be to support this tool through out the State.
 - Districts want Management Tools and SAKAI offers this.
- Jim notes: Everything the districts in the committee ask for on a check list of what they expected from SAKAI CLE has been accomplished, and the list for new expectations is still growing. What is considered its best asset is that RINET supports the end users. RINET works with RSMART, the company that holds the programming for the CLE, so the district doesn't have to use their IT resources to support it. The premature departure of some districts was unfortunate. Over time the tool's capabilities has grown and has been an asset to districts.

- **Audit**

Denise Lavoie presented a summary of the Fiscal Year 07 audit:

She noted that the comparative cash position at end of year RY07 shows RINET up by \$500k over FY06 due in part from an increase in demand for Internet bandwidth.

- RINET was able to reduce pricing for Internet Access for FY08-FY09.
- FY07 was the first year in past 3 that RINET had positive assets of 500K.
- FY07 increased expenses due to the increase in staff to support the SIF data warehouse project.

- Net Assets including equity (surplus and losses over the years) is estimated at \$2.5M.
- Operating reserve of \$1.7M in cash and the rest is capital in equipment owned by RINET. This reserve is required so there is a 6-12 month operating to cover costs of new technology without incurring debt through financing.

Members agree that RINET needs to have a 6-12 month reserve to ensure our services to our customers will be consistent through any economic climate.

Denise reported that there were no comments in the management letter as the three items from the previous year were addressed satisfactorily and that there were no new issues. She commented that changes in the accounting rules going forward would necessitate a clear segregation of duties. Denise explained that segregation of duties is related to size of staff limitations and internal controls It deals with how many people see and touch financial statements.

- **Performance Review**

Sharon reported that she recommended and the Executive Committee approved that Steve Foehr receive a 3% salary increase based on his recently completed performance review. Sharon described Steve's accomplishments with managing the SIS, RIEPS, training groups and the expertise that he brings to RINET. She is comfortable in approving his increase and giving him this performance review.

- **Overview of Services**

- Provided to Board members as a reference document.

This was created by Sharon to inform the Board current project and services provided by RINET. It contains the description, value to members, and current activities of each service.

Maureen requests that there be an addition to this form. It was decided that the number of districts and current users should appear.

Sharon explained that there is a Services Matrix within the RINET policy manual which has the names and numbers of districts that have services provided by RINET.

- **Vertical SIF**

Question was raised by Maureen: If all districts don't participate in Vertical SIF what will happen?

Pam- Per RIDE all districts must participate. RINET has 18 districts that use SchoolMax which transfers data from SchoolMaxx to the state. RINET is sub contracted by the state through ESP who are paid by RIDE.

Providence paid \$100K to build their own SIF. They are not a participating SchoolMax district.

Pam explained that Vertical SIF holds Student Information System Data, Horizontal holds transportation, library, food services data.

Steve: the hidden value in SIS with SchoolMax is that the vertical integration is done for the district.

Once North Kingstown completes the transportation system portion of Horizontal SIF it will automatically update with SIS. Other districts can use the bus data system once it is built, RINET can give other districts the opportunity to have this system.

Maureen- How does RINET deal with competition of SIS programs with other districts who do not use School Max?

This led to the conversation of Pawtucket leaving SchoolMax as of July 1,2008.

It was discussed that there are more and more demands on technology in districts with less and less funds. Using RINET would help consolidate with value through cost efficiency since RINET maintains and upgrades all districts as a group. RINET takes on the cost burden instead of all the districts separately.

Howard: RIDE needs to provide incentives for districts they provided start up money to stay with SchoolMax.

Question: Why doesn't RIDE have an input in district's decision to leave SchoolMax? The example is Pawtucket, where RIDE put in 180K to start off SIS with SchoolMax.

RIDE is cautious about unfunded mandates. Narragansett has completed an RFP for SchoolMax but RIDE is not answering if they will give a subsidy like they have with other districts in the past.

The question posed is does this weaken the consortium? Because RINET lost 9000 students there needs to be some cost recovery, but not by raising prices for current members.

- RINET needs to bring in other districts
- Need to stay strong by providing good services and more services
- Need to improve the services we provide.
- Stay in SIF and automate for SchoolMax users.

PULSE demo made RINET staff interested.

Steve: Tools seem flexible. It will be easy to include data collected in local assessment systems such as NSEs and RIEPS.

- **Enterprise Upgrade**

- The superintendents supported the RFI process and decision to upgrade.

Discussion of RINET defraying costs for conversion to keep costs the same was made.

- Districts are anticipating large deficits and are looking at every cost cutting opportunity.
- Can RINET help districts with funding for upgrade?
 - Assume costs of conversion, since RIDE isn't funding conversion or start up costs
- If everyone stays at \$9 a student do we have enough in savings to fund conversion?
- RINET needs to let their customers know that the more districts involved in collaborative, the more benefit there will be for each district.
- Board agrees RINET needs to have a model for conversion for new SchoolMax customers.
 - Contracts for several years of participation should be instituted
 - Current costs for new customers is \$25 per student first year and \$9 every year after that.
- Jim: We need to offer the same deal but districts need to all have contracts. Costs will go down over the span of the contract.

- **SAKAI Workshop**

Date: April 8th and 9th

Location: Possibly Hyatt in Newport

All agree to establish a fee structure to defray the costs.

- RIEPS- Tier Prices
 - Howard- Offer fellowships if there is a financial need.
 - Ideas- If you are a RIEPS participant you would get one free seat with a paid seat.

- **Public Relations**

- North Star Marketing is helping RINET with WEBSITE upgrade and ideas for how the organization should be portraying itself to the public.

Next meeting: April 4, 2008