

Douglas County School District

Regular Meeting
Kingsbury Middle School
Minden, Nevada
Tuesday, October 9, 2007
3:30 p.m.

**Minutes Approved
November 13, 2007**

MINUTES

Present were:

Trustees:

John Louritt, President
Teri Jamin, Vice President
Cindy Trigg, Clerk
Karen Chessell, Member
Sharla Hales, Member
Thomas Moore, Member
Keith Roman, Member

Personnel:

Carol Lark, Superintendent
Nancy Bryant, Assistant Superintendent, Education Services
Rich Alexander, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Holly Luna, Director of Business Services

Others Present:

Mike Malloy, Legal Counsel

1. Call to Order

Mr. Louritt called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

- A. Sue Shannon, Principal George Whittell High School, led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- B. Mrs. Jamin moved to adopt the Agenda, seconded by Mrs. Chessell. Motion carried, 7/0.

Mrs. Bryant and Mrs. Luna arrived at 3:35 p.m.

2. Consent Items (Action)

Mr. Louritt stated that Talya Fanter was inadvertently left off the list of students to be approved on Item 2-G, GED approvals, and she would need to be noted for the record as being added to the list of students for approval. The necessary paperwork had been provided previously to the Board in their packet of materials.

Mr. Louritt offered the opportunity to Board members to pull and discuss items listed in Consent. No items were pulled. An opportunity for public comment was offered. There was none. The Consent Items were passed, without objection, as follows:

- A. Approve the Minutes of the Regular Board meeting of September 11, 2007.
- B. Approve AB280 Corrective Action implementation by the school and teacher.
- C. Accounts payments contained in Accounts Payable Voucher No. 1008 for FY 2007-2008 fiscal year.

- D. Approve personnel actions described in Personnel Report No. 07-10.
- E. Authorize Rich Alexander, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, to administer the New Teacher Bonus Program.
- F. Authorize the district to continue to participate in the Class Size Reduction program using the Alternative Plan.
- G. Approve the requests submitted by Nicholas Alexander Barrette and Calvin Louis O'Brien to take the GED examination.

3. Administrative Reports and Program Reviews

3-A. Principals' Report – (George Whittell High School)

Sue Shannon, Principal of George Whittell High School reported on the implementation of their new 2007-08 School improvement Plan. The Plan for the previous year focused on remediation. The current goals were stated as being focused toward all students being engaged in high level academics through a "Culture of Excellence," and a newly developed "Honor Code." Site revitalization was underway in an effort to entice residents with students who enrolled elsewhere to return to Whittell High School. Reasons for enrollment loss were identified and the challenge of meeting all needs with a small population of students was addressed in order to reestablish a positive image in the community. Student accommodations were improved through scheduling, including zero period and seventh period course offerings. Advanced Placement (AP) courses were reported to have been increased. A remediation effort where students identified, were placed in math boot camp, was held prior to the High School Proficiency Exams (HSPE's). Community support and student participation was noted to be excellent with 40% of students playing multiple sports.

Mrs. Shannon reported on HSPE assessment data. The number of students passing the HSPE's in tenth grade by comparison from the Class of '07 to the Class of '09 had increased from 61% to 78% in math and from 88% to 93% in reading. Additionally, a decrease in the number of seniors still needing to pass the exams was noted by comparison of the Class of 2007 to the Class of 2008.

The School Improvement Plan provided additional focus on both professional development involving academic rigor and on school consolidation implementation necessary for building and staffing changes in the upcoming year.

The new undertaking related to Empowerment Grant funding was discussed. This being a new program, the basics were still being identified by the State. Mrs. Shannon stated that one year of planning was allowed and visits would be underway to sites currently implementing empowerment plans. Grant funds allotted at the rate of \$400 per student for two years were stated as being temporary. This being the case, the planning committee was taking into consideration staff usage, building capacity, and the number of courses to be offered. Distance learning through use of technology was being explored.

Board members thanked Mrs. Shannon for all of her efforts.

Prior to starting Item 4-A, Mr. Louritt asked the audience to please sign the Public Comment sheet if they wished to comment about Lake Consolidation.

4. Information and Discussion

4-A. Radon Mitigation – ZCES, KMS, GWHS

Holly Luna, Director of Business Services, along with experts from the Nevada State Health Division, provided technical explanations relating to tests performed and results obtained for radon levels at all Lake schools. Experts representing the State included Alex Hart, Administrator, Adrian Howell, Radiation Physicist, and Martha Framsted, Public Information Officer. Dick Roper, Certified Mitigation Consultant, from Fallon Heating and Air Conditioning was also present.

PowerPoint's were provided to explain basic facts about radon, including EPA recommendations, current test results, and the District Action Plan put in place for mitigation.

Mrs. Luna stated the District was working within EPA recommendations and with a consultant in order to obtain the safest environment for everyone. The consultant maintained a certification in radon testing and mitigation. The history of radon testing at Lake sites was reviewed including use of a sealant during an initial testing phase. Experts at this time were recommending a ventilation and filter strategy in order that the progeny level remain below 4pCi/L (picocuries per Liter of air), as recommended by the EPA.

Recent results were reported to average less than 2.5 pCi/L's in all classrooms tested. The worst scenario was stated as a closed room wherein particles accumulate with no air movement.

Board members clarified testing methods, timelines for both retesting and filter replacement, and the fact filters would be monitored by an outside consultant. Mrs. Luna stated filters would be cleaned at intervals of 1-2 months, and replaced every five years.

Following the PowerPoint presentations, Mr. Louritt called for questions and comments from the public. Many parents asked for clarifications on issues surrounding radon facts and safety considerations. State personnel answered a variety of questions and reviewed information presented, resulting in the following answers:

- 1) Two houses can vary greatly even if located side by side.
- 2) Testing and retesting should be performed due to the constant change in the ambient levels.
- 3) The best test is long term in order to accommodate the many environmental factors.
- 4) The most valid test for school was stated to be through a school year - September through June.
- 5) Filtering was stated as being an effective way of removing radiation from a room.
- 6) Radon progeny attaches itself to other particles, walls, etc. Movement releases the particles allowing for them to be filtered out. One theory was stated as unproven by the physicist, that being, that if particles such as dust were filtered out, the progeny would have nowhere to attach itself and would remain.
- 7) Testing would occur in every classroom and small spaces, followed by periodic future testing.
- 8) The equipment used by experts is not intrusive to classrooms, was specialized and expensive, therefore not generally conducive for individuals to conduct that type of testing at home.

- 9) Plan B would be to ventilate under slabs and out through roofing into the open air if progeny levels were not within appropriate EPA levels. TRPA had been contacted to check what exemptions were available for public safety in order to extend past the October 15th deadline of no coverage movement.
- 10) The outdoor ambient air had not been tested at this time. With air coming from the outside, inside levels could not be below ambient outdoor levels unless continually filtered.
- 11) Everyone in attendance was encouraged to use a free home test provided for anyone interested in testing their own home.
- 12) Radon decays into radon progeny which is the gas that is breathed in as small particles. The solid particles are what lodges in lungs radiating cells that cause cancer over a long term.
- 13) Overall, public buildings have good air movement with the number of people moving around, as well as, through the outside doors.
- 14) Progeny levels below 4 pCi/L were feasibly controlled through mitigation and the classroom test results were below that level. The highest recording taken was in the closed, unused room that registered 3.3 (pCi/L). The classrooms were 1.1 (pCi/L).
- 15) There were two ways to measure radon
 - A) Working Level (WL) – the radon exposure
 - B) PicoCuries (pCi/L) – approximate level or radon exposure
- 16) Current levels were lower than recommendations to filter, but the District had decided to go ahead and reduce levels through filtration. Levels of 0 would be best case scenario, but not probable. The District would use the EPA guidelines to determine results of HEPA filtration mitigation.

Mr. Louritt called for a break at 5:25 p.m.

3. Administrative Reports and Program Reviews (Continued)

3-B. Enrollment Report

Mrs. Luna presented enrollment data for the 2007-2008 school year. Overall, the District was reported to have incurred a loss of 93 students, 1.4%. Comparing the peak year of 1998-1999 to current enrollment figures, a decline of 7.7% or 567 students was reported over nine years. This enrollment decrease equated to a loss of three million dollars, in today's dollars, from DSA funding, the District's main source of revenue. Lake schools were reported to have realized a 45% decrease in enrollment over ten consecutive years equal to 426 students. The data presented included break downs by grade for site roll up considerations.

Site capacities were announced. Mrs. Luna stated Pau-Wa-Lu Middle School was down 92 students from the previous year, allowing for movement of personnel from Special Services to PWLMS. All sites, with the exception of Piñon Hills Elementary and Minden Elementary, were reported to be well situated. PHES and MES, with similar capacities of 475 students were at their maximum. The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) had previously included the construction of an extra wing for whichever site demonstrated the greatest need. This project had been removed from the CIP and would be addressed in the KIDS Committee meetings currently underway.

Mrs. Luna stated enrollment projections over the next five years would be prepared in the following months. The results of this data would be presented to the Board in the future, should the need arise for rezoning.

Public Comment

John Houghton, KMS teacher, approached the Board to state his concern of not receiving a stipend for his work with the Choir, performed outside of the school day, from Kingsbury Middle School. This concern was for money he believed was due him from the 2006-2007 school year. Mr. Houghton understood stipends were allotted for activities at the principal's discretion, that he had no paperwork supporting payment, but had provided a beneficial student service without pay, and wanted to make Board members aware.

Ms. Meta Penwell, JVES parent made an appeal to the Board regarding the Policy on knives for elementary students. She felt the penalty was extreme and would like the severity of consequences to be changed. She explained that her son was suspended for ten days after accidentally bringing a pocket knife, for a first offense, to school. Mrs. Penwell stated her son was unaware of the Policy, but she did understand it was in the student handbook.

Mr. Felton, KMS and ZCES parent, provided a document that compared and supported the closing of ZCES rather than KMS when Lake schools were consolidated at the end of the current school year. He emphasized changes had occurred through time and reviewed issues including budgeting, location, building repairs, and radon concerns.

Chris Sullivan, KMS and ZCES parent, reinforced what Mr. Felton previously stated, in that she would like to see ZCES closed rather than KMS. She added that traffic safety was an issue to be considered, KMS having a gym available was desirable due to the GWHS additional practice gym considered in the past, not having been built.

Kevin Kjer, KMS and ZCES parent, supported closing ZCES rather than KMS. He reiterated previously mentioned concerns including traffic and radon, asking the Board to reconsider their choice in school closure.

Sally Swoger, parent, first stated her support for Mr. Houghton as a teacher. She inquired as to what would happen to the KMS property upon closure. She supported closing ZCES noting KMS had fewer building project needs.

Public comment concluded at 6:25 p.m.

3-C. Report on Results of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and American College Test (ACT)

Brian Frazier, Director of Assessments and Grants reported that this was the second year of revised SAT assessments, participation had increased district wide from 28% to 37.9% over the last two years, and DCSD students scored above both state and national averages.

Through discussion, Mr. Frazier clarified that data for one year is not trend data, and a variety of factors could contribute to the increased number of students taking the SAT's.

The differences between the new assessments introduced in 2006 were reported to be in Critical Reading, now requiring higher level thinking; a writing component was added; algebra II was a new addition; and open-end math problem solving was put in place of quantitative comparisons.

Scores reported for the SAT Critical Reading/Verbal Comparison category were stated as being down, but were above state and national averages. The math and writing categories were reviewed and scores were reported to be above state and national averages, as well.

Mr. Frazier stated the ACT was the assessment of choice in the State of Nevada. He reported a consistency across time.

3-D. SB404 Report

Mr. Frazier, presented a PowerPoint on the 2006-2007 SB404 grant usage disseminated by school sites. A chart categorizing fund usage throughout the District was provided. Categories funded included, literacy, math, and PLATO professional development; MAP testing equipment/materials; instructional literacy materials; computers, software and licensing; teacher collaboration days; and informational texts (books).

Mr. Frazier reported on English Language Arts PAC rates for all students, by comparison over the last two years, showing growth ranging from 1.8% to 7.5% by site. The Math PAC rates were variable and included growth up to 10% among all sites.

4. Information and Discussion

4-B. Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Lark reported on regularly scheduled meetings including Site Communications, the Leadership Team Advisory Group, the Fireside chat held prior to the regularly scheduled Superintendent's meeting, Teach for Success school observations, and the Western Nevada Regional Training Board. Common assessments were noted to be a topic being concentrated on, primarily at the secondary level in administrative meetings. Also, Mrs. Lark attended a Town Hall meeting conducted for the Lake schools parents for the purpose of discussing radon issues. She reported the meeting was successful in building trust through presenting facts. Mrs. Lark also reported having been interviewed on the local television station on the topic of enrollment issues.

4-C. NASB Report – John Louritt

Mr. Louritt announced the NASB conference would be held this week, Thursday – Sunday at the Reno Airport Plaza Hotel.

4-D. Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association NIAA Report –

Mr. Roman reported on the recent NIAA meeting. The realignment of schools within the Nevada membership was noted to be minimal, and would remain similar to the last several years. The change made was in the Northern Nevada 4A. Southern schools would be included in one division, creating an even split.

4-E. Report to Board on Bond Committee Results

Mr. Louritt reviewed the KIDS Committee meeting of September 27th. He verified that Board members had received a list of Committee members, the rules and regulations, and timeline. The first working meeting was reported to be the day after this meeting, October 10th, at C. C. Meneley Elementary School. 6:30 p.m. Officers were stated as being Johnelle Prado, Chairman and Gerene Sayer, Clerk. The Vice Chair was to be decided upon at the upcoming meeting.

5. Items Requiring Discussion and Action (Action)

5-A. Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan – Revisions and Approval of FY2007-08 Plan

Holly Luna shared a revised Five Year Capital Improvement Plan reflecting FY06-07 actual revenues and expenditures, updated projections of revenues and expenditures, and revisions to the list of future capital projects.

Mrs. Luna reviewed facts of decreasing revenues, including the Residential Building Tax income being 70% lower now than in previous years. Construction expense had increased greatly affecting remodel projections listed in previous Plans. Mrs. Luna stated the KIDS Committee would be reviewing the Five Year Capital Plan in their upcoming meeting. That Committee, tasked with reviewing funding sources and capital projects, would recommend to the Board any proposed changes to The Five Year Capital Plan and bond measures if deemed necessary, upon completion of their information gathering efforts. Therefore, decisions reflecting Capital Plan priorities would need to be put in place this evening.

Three spreadsheets were provided. One showed the Plan approved by the Board in April 2007. The other two were Plan A and Plan B created for Board members to review capital projects while seeing the impact of their decisions on expenditures within the Capital Project budget.

Capital Project considerations were discussed with regard to the five phase remodel at GES (2 phases completed in previous 10 years); Lake Consolidation concerns including GWHS classroom remodels and additional course needs due to increased HSPE requirements; and additional gym requirements for the increased GWHS student population, as well as, additional funds set aside for District wide radon mitigation.

Discussion ensued as to the listing of projects in Plan A and Plan B. The major differences in the two Plans were noted to be that the GWHS practice gym was included in Plan B only, and Plan A included completion of all five phases of the GES remodel versus only two additional phases in Plan B. Mrs. Luna recommended to the Board that they approve Plan A to complete the remodel that had been listed in the Plan for many years.

Mr. Louritt called for public comment.

Cris Etchegoyhen, GES principal, reported on the various needs of the GES facility, including their impact to instruction and students. She indicated that most of the original GES facility was very old and many instructional needs and expectations had changed over the years, but that the building, as is, created many obstacles to today's instructional methodologies.

Sue Shannon, GWHS principal reported on the necessity of GWHS obtaining a practice gym. She provided a chart listing all seasonal sports and discussed the impact of accommodating the additional sports requirements for 7th and 8th grade students incoming due to consolidation.

Mr. Felton commented with regard to facility needs related to the gym. Additionally, he stated facility needs at ZCES vs. KMS and inquired as to budgeting concerns for various improvements.

Dan Wold, KMS principal, reiterated Mrs. Shannon's concerns of accommodating the increasing number of teams at GWHS.

Mr. Kjer, parent, stated the previous gym plan was not approved due to the new gym building plan not having been distributed to all parents. He supported building the new gym at GWHS and believed the community as a whole felt the money had been earmarked for gym improvements.

Discussion ensued among Board members as to their priorities, previous plan rationale and commitments, instructional needs, available off site facilities for accommodating sports, and their overall vision for the future.

Mr. Moore moved to approve the updated FY 2007-08 Five Year Capital Improvement Plan, for Option B, seconded by Mrs. Trigg.

Mr. Louritt called for public comment. There was none.

Motion carried unanimously, 7/0.

A short break was taken at 9:06 p.m.

5-B. First Reading of Board Policy No. 203 “Supplemental Materials”

Nancy Bryant, Assistant Superintendent for Education Services, reviewed changes to Board Policy No. 203, “Supplemental Materials.” The recommendation for changes to this Policy followed the discussion held at the previous meeting. Mrs. Bryant stated parents would be notified by way of letters, information would be included in class syllabuses, course catalogs, and the Web site, in order that parents are aware that certain courses might contain potentially controversial subject matter. Mrs. Bryant stated that principals supported film approvals that had been previously processed, not being reviewed a second time.

Mr. Louritt called for public comment. There was none.

Mrs. Jamin moved to approve for a first reading, changes made to Board Policy No. 203, “Supplemental Materials,” seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Motion carried 7/0.

5-C. DCSD Energy Efficiencies – Holly Luna

Holly Luna, Director of Business Services, stated information had been previously provided to Trustees regarding various methodologies for achieving energy efficiencies that she had been researching. Several Energy Services Companies (ESCO's) had been approved by the Nevada Public Works Board and Mrs. Luna asked that she be allowed to move forward with one of these ESCO's. She would request a preliminary audit and then return to the Board to obtain a Request for Performance from those companies in order to make a decision that would lead to a Letter of Intent. This would allow Business Services to move forward with energy saving measures in the District without reinventing the wheel of requesting Request For Performance's (RFP's) from various companies.

Mr. Louritt called for public comment.

Mr. Felton, parent, stated proposed revenue and capital projects would be of interest to review in order to understand needs. Mr. Louritt invited Mr. Felton to attend KIDS Committee meetings in order to understand both funding and needs of the District.

Mrs. Luna stated with regard to replacement of double pane windows and other energy upgrades, financing could be obtained through short or medium term obligations. However, there may be certain projects that would not be able to be completed with an ESCO due to the length of time to obtain a payback. She explained this as borrowing money against savings that would be gained in the following year, due to the savings incurred from the efficiencies. The ESCO guarantees the District would break even or their company pays back to the District, any difference lost.

Mr. Moore inquired as to how the company would be chosen from the State list. Mrs. Luna replied she had contacted two companies that were chosen for their qualifications and recommendations. Discussion ensued as to the Request for Performance (RFP) that is submitted to the State in order that a company is incorporated on the list and whether or not a particular RFP was reviewed in order that their company aligned with District needs.

Mr. Malloy clarified the intent of Mrs. Luna's recommendation had changed from the Board choosing a company, to allowing Mrs. Luna to choose from the State list and awarding a contract. Mr. Malloy stated NRS would need to be reviewed regarding exemptions from the public bidding process. It was determined that RFP's would need to be requested rather than use the Public Work Board recommendation.

Next, Mrs. Luna stated she had been advised by the KIDS Committee consultant, Marty Johnson of JNA Consulting, to move forward with energy efficiency solutions in order that the District could separate issues related to energy in the area of capital projects that might be funded in this manner, versus requesting bond monies.

Mr. Moore moved to approve the request by Business Services to move forward with Requests for Performance (RFPs) listed on the State's Public Work Board ESCO list, contingent on compliance with state law. Business Services will return to the Board with a Letter of Intent from the selected ESCO, seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Motion carried, 6/1, Mr. Louritt, nay.

6. Correspondence

There was no correspondence shared.

7. Possible Agenda Items for Future Board Meetings

Mrs. Chessell proposed that one agenda item could be discussion of how courses will be interjected into the curriculum and scheduling for high school students. This request was in light of recent legislation involving additional math and science requirements for students. Mrs. Hales seconded her request, stating a report on course accommodations would be desirable. Mrs. Bryant recommended this report take place after the NAC is written and distributed to the District.

Mrs. Hales stated she had an interest in discussing the Policy relating to weapons and the consequences for elementary students, as time allowed, seconded by Mrs. Trigg.

8. Executive Session

At 9:45 p.m., Mr. Roman moved to go into executive session for the purpose of considering employer/employee negotiations pursuant to NRS 228.220(4), seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

9. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:52 p.m.

Submitted by:

Carolyn Moore
Secretary to the Superintendent and
Board of Trustees

Approved:

Clerk of the Board

Note: Upon approval by the Board of Trustees in a public meeting, these minutes become the official minutes of the meeting held on the above date. Board minutes are kept on a permanent basis and are available for public review in the office of the Superintendent.