

MINUTES OF THE  
Special Meeting of the  
DOUGLAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Walley's Hot Springs and Resort  
January 27, 2006  
8:00 a.m.

**Committee Members Present:** Connie Wennhold, John Louritt, Teri Jamin, Cindy Trigg, Karen Chessell, Keith Roman, Sharla Hales, Ken Stoll, Nancy Evans, Marty Swisher, Cheryl Blomstrom, Lori Pasqua, Marc Tompkins, Sara Zander, Janet Geary, Kathleen Barton, Carly Strauss, Jane Starratt, Tricia Wentz, Anne Loring

**District Staff Present:** John Soderman, Superintendent; Nancy Bryant, Assistant Superintendent, Education Services and Strategic Planning Facilitator; Janice Florey, Director of Assessments, Grants, and Projects; Lisa Fontana, Director of Curriculum and Instruction; and Jan Keith, Director of Special Services.

**District Staff Absent:** Rick Kester and Rich Alexander

The Board Workshop was optional for all committee team members.

### 1. Board Workshop

Board President Connie Wennhold called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m. Mrs. Wennhold led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Hales introduced Anne Loring, a Washoe County Board member and guest speaker for the morning. Ms. Loring noted that she had attended an Education Trust Conference. Ms. Loring presented a PowerPoint presentation reviewing data that led educators to consider improving the rigor of United States high schools. The data reflected information that United States high schools average in the lower half of all nations that participated in studies internationally in both math and reading performance. She stated the NAEP data studies had the same low performance indicators. Ms. Loring noted that an Education Trust Chart shows students who are improving, are doing so due to demographics.

Ms. Loring discussed college remediation rates, the basis for those figures, both math and reading standards, and the need to align courses with college entry level classes, with team members.

The team took a break at 9:40 a.m., resuming the meeting at 9:53 a.m.

Ms. Loring presented nine different education entities that came to different conclusions on how best to increase rigor in high school. She gave a handout describing those same programs that included their websites.

Washoe County master schedules were discussed. Ms. Loring stated she would e-mail copies for team members. She noted that English has a larger variety of offerings than math and is the hardest area to map out. She also explained Washoe County's Gateway Curriculum.

At 11:47 a.m., Ms. Loring wrapped up her presentation by discussing what Board members would need to anticipate in looking at change for the high schools. Some suggestions were to be aware of facility needs, number of teacher's necessary, certifications, interplay of class scheduling, community discussions and training necessary prior to proceeding with any plan.

Mrs. Hales stated that the Board's job was to prepare students for a successful future.

## 2. Lunch

The group took a lunch break from 12:05 - 1:02 p.m.

## 3. Welcome and Introduction

At this time all Strategic Planning committee members were present. District staff members absent were Mr. Alexander and Mr. Kester.

Mr. Soderman called for introductions of all members. He then reviewed the Strategic Planning process and shared his idea of no major changes to the Plan being necessary at this time. He reviewed the three strategies currently in place as the Competency, Graduation, and Career Strategies. Mr. Soderman demonstrated with a Matrioshka Russian nesting doll that the Strategic Plan was the global work of the district. His demonstration showed the order in which the Plan was supported. First, by the District Improvement Plan, second, Board/Superintendent Goals, third, Management By Objective Goals of the Superintendent and principals and then lastly by the specific site and teacher goals. He presented that the Strategic Planning Team was a coordinated effort such as is needed in a scull rowboat, and with all participants working together would be a very productive, successful effort.

## 4. Public Comment

Mr. Soderman called for public comment at 1:27 p.m.

Mrs. Hales took a moment to thank Ms. Loring, and review with team members who were not in attendance during the morning session, her presentation of rigor in the high schools. Mrs. Hales gave members copies of Ms. Loring's handouts as requested.

Next, Mr. Soderman reviewed the agenda and stated that Mrs. Bryant would hand out the Strategic Planning Brochure for individual groups to review. Groups were divided by colored dots on their nameplates.

## 5. Review Strategic Plan Components

At 1:33 p.m. three groups formed to review the Strategic Planning Brochure. After thirty minutes, they returned and suggested changes to each of the following categories: Missions and Beliefs, Strategies, and Commitments. Changes were approved by consensus of the group.

Team members took a break at 2:20 p.m.

## 6. Review of the District Improvement Plan

Mrs. Bryant reviewed a PowerPoint presentation of the District Improvement Plan. She noted that a lot of the original Plan is now in Policy or in best practices. Mrs. Bryant stated that the DIP is required by state law, involves AYP issues, and holds short-term goals for the long-term vision of the Strategic Plan. She reviewed the three parts to the plan including Data Elements, or student achievement information, Curriculum and Instruction, which included District and State Standards, and then Professional Development.

## 7. Reports on Progress Towards Strategies

Dr. Florey and Dr. Fontana gave a PowerPoint presentation that reviewed the Competency Strategy. Dr. Florey shared assessments currently being administered in the District, including ALT's, ITBS, and Oral Proficiency tests. She next reviewed annual targets, and stated that the ALT reading test is not currently at a level of target expectations for students.

Dr. Florey discussed AYP data and how this information was used to help develop School Improvement Plans. She assured team members that belief statements and goals were being kept at the forefront of the plan.

Dr. Fontana stated that the data collection for the Teach for Success Observation protocol would continue. Next, she noted that the K-6 reading critical content was being revised. She then reviewed curriculum advancement, how PEP's are used to document curriculum advancement, followed by staff development information.

Dr. Florey reviewed the SB404 grant, the various suites involved in the pilot of Des Cartes and noted that program would target reading and math.

Next, Mr. Swisher presented a PowerPoint presentation reviewing the Graduation Strategy. He stated that our graduation rate was 93%. He noted that PEP's might need to be implemented more at the high school level. He offered that the group could also look at having the PSAT offered at the middle school level, 9<sup>th</sup> grade, to help increase the graduation rate.

Team members discussed the issue of auditing student achievement and credits and possibly incorporating it more often at the middle school level.

Mr. Swisher stated areas of concerns, including common assessments that needed to be developed at the secondary level. He noted that all schools through School Improvement Planning, could continue to evaluate intervention and remediation needs of students, and that a systematic way to involve community volunteers in the intervention and remediation process could be addressed.

Ms. Wentz reviewed the Career Strategy as written, and added that she shared concerns of the 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition process, stating the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year without certain considerations, could lead to student misdirection. Ms. Wentz discussed changes, new hires, class course additions, incentives, and priorities at Douglas High School this year.

Mr. Soderman instructed the team on the next process. He advised them not to wordsmith the strategies, but to use the large paper charts available to visualize changes to be made to their assigned strategy, and dots to denote the five subject areas of most importance.

## 8. Revise Action Steps if Necessary

At 4:25 p.m. the groups reconvened separately as assigned, to analyze the Competency, Career and Graduation Strategies.

## 9. Dinner

The team took a dinner break at 5:15 p.m., reconvening at 5:45 p.m.

Mr. Soderman stated procedures for the next step, informing the groups that they were to choose a presenter who will state all changes they would like to have implemented.

## 10. Strategy Groups Report Out Top Five Priorities

At 5:45 p.m., the groups reconvened as a whole. One representative for each group reported on the proposed changes for each of the Strategies. After a brief discussion, the team accepted the proposed changes of each group.

Mrs. Hales expressed her concerns that a rigorous course of study for high school was not included. She noted that the Competency Strategy did not state this vision. She stated that a rigorous course of study should be a new specific objective.

Mr. Soderman reviewed the Strategies and discussed that the high school rigorous course of study could be Plan 6 in the Competency Strategy. The group as a whole came to consensus on this.

Mr. Soderman asked for group leaders to review with the team their priorities listed on the charts.

## 11. Establish Top Five Priority Actions From the Entire Strategic Plan for the 2006-2007 School Year

At 6:45 p.m., after hearing the priorities as presented, the three charts representing the individual groups were brought to the front of the room for team members to place dots on the five items they believed were the ultimate priorities.

*The top five Strategic Planning priorities were identified as:*

- \*Integrate academic standards into CTE/elective courses
- \*Develop a policy that promotes a rigorous high school course of study
- \*MAP training and implementation
- \*Critical Content and common assessments for all core subjects

\*Audit proficiency and credit requirements to inform students/parents of their progress toward graduation and continuing education and career aspirations for students who are transitioning from grades 8 to 9 and 11 to 12, and for credit deficient students in grades 9 to 10 and 10 to 11.

Team members shared comments regarding their views of how the structure of the day had progressed. They unanimously supported the Strategic Planning effort, felt it was impressive how they had come to consensus, and were glad to be involved.

## 12. Public Comment

At 6:50 p.m. Mr. Soderman called for Public Comment. There was none.

## 13. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by,

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*Carolyn Moore*  
*Secretary to the Board of Trustees*

Approved:

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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.