

Douglas County School District
Regular Meeting
Douglas High School
Minden, Nevada
Tuesday, February 14, 2006
3:30 p.m.

*Minutes Approved on
March 14, 2006*

MINUTES

Present were:

Trustees:

Connie Wennhold, President
John Louritt, Vice President
Teri Jamin, Clerk
Karen Chessell, Member
John Louritt, Member
Cynthia Trigg, Member
Keith Roman, Member

Personnel:

John Soderman, Superintendent
Rick Kester, Director of Business Services
Rich Alexander, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Nancy Bryant, Assistant Superintendent, Education Services

Others Present:

Mike Nivinskus, Legal Counsel

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Wennhold called the meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

- A. Ms. Jamin led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- B. Mr. Louritt made a motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by Mr. Roman.

Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7/0.

2. Consent Items (Action)

Mr. Louritt made a motion to approve the following consent items, with changes made to minutes as in the red folders, seconded by Mrs. Trigg:

Mrs. Chessell mentioned two typos to be changed, also.

- A. Approve the Minutes of the Regular Board meeting held on January 10, 2006.

- B. Approve the Minutes of the Special Board meetings held on January 13, 17, 18, 19, 20, 27, and January 30, 2006.
- C. Approve personnel actions described in Personnel Report No. 06-02.
- D. Approve payments contained in Voucher No. 10673 for 2005-2006.
- E. Excuse from compulsory attendance the students described in the Home School Report for February 2006.
- F. Approve the instructors to teach the FLSEA program.
- G. Approve the requests submitted by Michelle Aldrich, Amanda Bonhomme, Amanda Johnson, and Rachel Kennedy to take the GED examination.
- H. Approve an increase in the District's employee mileage reimbursement rate from 40.5 cents per mile to 44.5 cents per mile effective February 1, 2006.
- I. Approve the revised Douglas County Parks & Recreation Department Vehicle Lease Agreement with Douglas County School District for another five years as specified in the agreement.
- J. Authorize Rick Kester, Director of Business Services to apply for State funding for unexpected group health insurance costs under Senate Bill 525.

Mrs. Wennhold asked for any discussion or public comment on the Consent agenda.

Motion carried by a unanimous vote, 7/0.

3. Items Requiring Discussion and Action (Action)

3-A. Superintendent Selection

Mrs. Wennhold reviewed the superintendent selection process noting that nine team members went to Clark County to visit with Carol Lark, Clark County administration and staff members, after determining that she was the top candidate the Board was interested in pursuing. Team members participated in a variety of meetings and visited Squires Elementary School to confirm the information they learned from her during the initial interview.

Mrs. Wennhold introduced Mrs. Lark, thanked Mrs. Hales for being the Board's liaison in the process, and also thanked Mr. Soderman for funding the team trip to Las Vegas for the final interview of the Clark County staff.

Mrs. Wennhold called for public comment regarding hiring Carol Lark as superintendent.

Mrs. Cronin, principal stated that as part of the Las Vegas visitation team, she talked with many people and felt confident that Mrs. Lark would be a great representative for the Douglas County School District. Mrs. Cronin stated she hoped the recommendation to hire Mrs. Lark was a success.

Lorraine Vogel, parent representative team member, stated she believed that Mrs. Lark would be a motivator and a good leader.

Jim Huge, of Huge, Hager & Associates commented that he had known Carol for a long time and felt she was a match for what the community, staff, and Board were looking for. Mr. Huge added that he had enjoyed working with all staff in both the Lake and the valley and felt it had been a very productive process.

Mrs. Wennhold thanked Mr. Huges for conducting an excellent search process. Mrs. Wennhold asked for any further public comment. There was none.

Mrs. Wennhold then asked for any comments from Board members.

Mrs. Hales made a motion to approve for hire the selection of Carol Lark as the new Douglas County School District Superintendent subject to successful negotiations of a contract between the Board and Mrs. Lark, seconded by Mrs. Trigg.

Motion carried, 7/0.

Mrs. Lark thanked the Board and everyone involved. She stated that she was honored to be a part of the district and that she was very excited.

3-B. Superintendent Executive Session

At 3:44 p.m., Mrs. Wennhold announced that pursuant to NRS 288.220(1), the meeting would recess to Executive Session for the purpose of negotiating the superintendent employment contract with Mrs. Lark.

The Board reconvened in public session at 4:53 p.m. This session began with the Gardnerville Elementary principal report as it was accessible while Mrs. Lark's contract was being prepared and printed for signing.

4. Administrative Reports and Program Reviews

4-B. Principal's Report (Gardnerville Elementary)

Cris Etchegoyhen, principal presented a PowerPoint on their School Improvement Plan goals and activities. Goals included increasing student achievement in Reading and Language Arts (Balanced Literacy), increasing student achievement in math, and developing a Family Involvement Plan. Mrs. Etchegoyhen referenced charts of data disseminated by year from a baseline of 2002 –2003 to the current school year. She reviewed progress made with the Teach for Success protocol and changes made to their tutoring program. With the efforts toward goals, Gardnerville Elementary came off of the watch list during the 2004 – 2005 school year.

While discussing their efforts to increase student achievement, Mrs. Etchegoyhen stated they prioritized special services and interventions available for students, offered tutoring programs geared to student's Personal Education Plans, offered instructional grouping in 5th and 6th grades, made data driven decisions, and prioritized professional development resources. She added that the new Family Involvement Plan was a three-year plan based on the Epstein Model and listed the goals they are striving for. The plan includes Family Nights, sending home positive post cards or phoning parents, recruiting volunteers, compiling family resource information and developing family help cards.

Next, Mrs. Etchegoyhen reviewed K-6 Writing Plan highlights and gains due to effective instructional strategies, newly approved instructional additions due to the SB404 grant, what they feel still needs to be refined within the tutoring program, the need for better volunteer coordination, and remodeling at GES.

The Board returned to Item 3 to complete in open session the process of hiring Mrs. Lark as superintendent after the contract had been prepared.

3. Items Requiring Discussion and Action (Action)

Mrs. Wennhold called for public comment regarding the acceptance of Carol Lark as the new superintendent for the Douglas County School District. There was none.

3-C. Superintendent Selection and Approval of Contract – Open Session

Mr. Nivinskus asked that any changes to be made to the contract, be made in a written format.

Mrs. Hales made a motion to approve the superintendent contract as written, with the same basic provisions as the current contract, except for 1) changes made in paragraph 4 regarding the dismissal process, 2) changing the term to 3 years beginning July 1, 2006, and 3) changing the annual salary to be \$120,000, which will also be the amount of severance pay should there be a dismissal without cause. Also, that the Board approves early accrual of Mrs. Lark's first two months vacation days, district payment of reasonable and customary moving expenses, and up to ten days per diem salary and expenses for her trips here for transition activities, seconded by Mrs. Trigg.

Mrs. Wennhold asked for any discussion from the Board. There was none. Motion carried, unanimously, 7/0.

At 5:19 p.m., Mrs. Lark signed the superintendent contract. Mrs. Lark left the meeting to fly home shortly after the signing.

4. Administrative Reports and Program Reviews

4-A. Principal's Report (Scarselli Elementary)

Brandon Swain, principal presented a PowerPoint on their progress towards school goals using student achievement data. Mr. Swain noted they had achieved AYP for the second year. In reviewing Teach for Success data he showed areas of strengths and growth. Mr. Swain stated the School Improvement goals were to increase student achievement in literacy, increase student achievement in math, and increase parent involvement. To attain their goals, Mr. Swain added they would provide professional development to better strategies for diverse learners at all grade levels, provide interventions as needed for proficiency in literacy and math, continue family literacy activities, implement a homework incentive program and encourage teachers to integrate math and literacy strategies. Their school evaluation process included reviewing data, surveys and needs assessments.

Mr. Swain reported that SES had received the SB404 grant that would allow for more resources, interventions and professional development.

Through questions from Board members, Mr. Swain stated that SES offered ninety hours of tutoring a month to students. He stated they achieved 90% in both creating and maintaining effective learning environments and teacher elicits students to be engaged categories of the Teach for Success protocol, due to the staff creating an environment conducive to learning.

Mrs. Wennhold stated that Items 5-A and 5-B would be deferred to the end of the meeting.

6. Items Requiring Discussion and Action (Action)

6-A. Presentation and Acceptance of Financial Audit for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2005

Mr. Kester introduced Rich Peters, CPA representing the firm of Richard J. Peters, Jr. and Company, who briefly reviewed the audit for the period ending June 30, 2005. Mr. Peters addressed the Board and reported that the audit is done through a testing process of comparative analysis. He referenced the Auditor's Report, quoting that "the basic financial statements referred to present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, the business-type activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information.."

Next, Mr. Peters referred to the audit and noted that their results disclosed "no instances of noncompliance that are required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards." He added that the audit of compliance in respect to major programs for grants included a variety of tests on various areas of office management and budget, including going to the schools and reviewing student files. Mr. Peters stated, "Douglas County School District complied, in all material respects, with the requirements ..that are applicable to each of its major federal programs for the year ended June 30, 2005. He stated this translated to, the District is in compliance with the NRS and all financial statements reflect all necessary material.

Mr. Kester reviewed the eighteen-year history of general fund financial history provided for the Board. He noted that the 2004-2005 year ending balance was slightly lower and reviewed some problems that were responsible, such as phasing out of defective buses and the lack of funding for the state retirement credit program. He noted that of \$46,000,000 revenue, budgeted, there was only a \$96,000.00 difference at the end of the year between budgeted and actual revenue.

Mr. Kester reviewed special education funding, and the self insured health fund, which saw expenses exceed revenue by \$236,809.00 for 2004-05. The health fund experienced extremely high health claims this year, and impact was significant as we used \$1,000,000 of the fund's reserve in the first six months of this year. He added that losses in food services resulting from better nutrition programs have been noted in both Clark and Washoe County and that since the District was implementing its new nutritional standards next year, we could experience the same.

Mrs. Wennhold thanked Mr. Kester for his report and for his twenty-eight years of service to the District.

Mrs. Trigg made a motion to accept the 2004-2005 independent audit report, seconded by Ms. Jamin.

Mrs. Wennhold offered opportunity for comments from the Board and the public. There was none.

Motion carried unanimously, 7/0.

Item 6-C was heard prior to 6-B in order to fit public comment in the schedule as timely as possible.

6-C. Guardianship Policy 501

Mrs. Bryant presented the Guardianship Board Policy No. 501. She referenced memos written from 1994 and noted there were requirements of the schools to have a notarized signed proof of guardianship. She said that then would fit into Policy 501 which deals with the eligibility of out of state, non-resident children. After reviewing the Policy with District legal counsel, who had recently done the same for Washoe County, it was determined that in order to meet the NRS requirement the form would need to be signed by both parents, notarized, and would then be good for six months. She added that although the six-month period seems impractical, it was law.

Mrs. Wennhold called for public comment. There was none.

Mr. Louritt made a motion to approve the first reading of Board Policy 501, seconded by Mr. Roman.

Motion carried, 6/0, Cindy Trigg abstained.

Public Comment

At 5:55 p.m., Mrs. Wennhold asked for Public Comment.

Ryder Evans, parent of two ZCES students, expressed concerns of the proposal to eliminate a teacher at that site. In response to Mr. Evans desire to obtain evidence reflecting that combination classes are successful, Mrs. Wennhold deferred to Mrs. Bryant to provide that data.

Mike Jessup, teacher suggested in regards to the calendar approval that this would be a time to look at merging the elementary and secondary calendars, noting that the elementary schools are phasing out utilizing the three week breaks for remediation, due to poor attendance.

Johnny Prado, ZCES parent club president requested the Board agendaize the possible cut of a teacher at ZCES.

Mrs. Wennhold called for a fifteen-minute break at 6:04 p.m.

6-B. Adoption of the Revisions of the Douglas County Strategic Plan

Mrs. Bryant presented a PowerPoint that reviewed the Strategic Planning Meeting held January 27th. She reviewed that a morning workshop presented by Anne Loring was about high expectations to promote academic rigor at the high school level. The main plan components of mission and beliefs, strategies and goals, and commitments and assurances, changes made by team members were noted. Next, Mrs. Bryant reviewed the District Improvement Plan, and the Competency, Graduation, and Career Strategies.

Continuing with a review of the day, Mrs. Bryant stated that groups were formed to decide on changes to the Strategic Plan and the quality indicators, ending with the prioritizing of action steps. This resulted in the five areas of focus for 2006-2007. Mrs. Bryant stated that they were:

- 1) Integrate academic standards into CTE/elective courses
- 2) Develop a policy that promotes a rigorous high school course of study
- 3) MAP training and implementation
- 4) Critical Content and common assessments for all core subjects
- 5) 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.

Mrs. Trigg inquired as to changes in the AP Policy being incorporated into the Strategic Plan. Mrs. Bryant responded that would need to be done in the Plan next year.

Board members discussed the importance of informing parents of eighth grade students the meaning of courses prior to the ninth grade year.

Mrs. Wennhold asked for public comment. There was none.

Mrs. Trigg made a motion to adopt the changes made to the Strategic Plan and to reflect the Policy adopted tonight for AP, seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

The Board thanked all staff who participated in the Strategic Planning process, and expressed they felt the workshop was very beneficial.

Motion carried, 7/0.

6-D. Second Reading of Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 229 Advanced Placement (AP) Classes

Mrs. Bryant led a discussion regarding changes as directed by the Board to Board Policy and Administrative Regulation 229 Advanced Placement (AP) classes. She noted that a meeting had been held at Douglas High School to discuss reasons to opt out of AP testing. Participating teachers sent a revised AP policy, included in Board packets. Mrs. Bryant noted that their proposed changes do not meet with original policy or direction from the Board that she received in January. She reviewed the changes as proposed by the high school teachers, noting the major changes were in the wording “expected” vs. “required” on the student application, with the high school allowing students to opt out and retain the AP designation and a weighted grade on their transcript.

Board members discussed with Mrs. Bryant the AP designation as a label of the College Board, honors classes as a high school but not national designation, and the fact that AP is looking at evaluating their program through common assessments in the future. Mrs. Bryant verified that there would not be an honors class with the same title as an AP class. They also reviewed whether or not colleges attach value to AP if the exam grade is not presented on the transcript.

Mrs. Wennhold called for public comment on the AP issue. She asked that comments not be repetitive.

Douglas High School teachers, Phyllis Bateman, Jeanne Turnbeaugh, Larry Lippman, Randy Green, and Ernie Monfiletto spoke in support of the Policy they had submitted to the Board for approval. They reviewed issues of colleges accepting the AP designation, named some they

believed did not accept it, but supported that AP should be listed, so college counselors knew what students had taken. They also supported allowing for opt out for students taking the AP test, and continuing with weighted grading as the coursework offered, was much different in relation to the regular education classes. Teachers gave examples of problematic results being due to the timing of the test, and that students might not enroll in an AP class, missing the opportunity to learn more in depth, or challenge themselves. Other issues brought forth were that AP is marketing curriculum that some colleges use as a criteria, and that not taking the exam did not diminish student's efforts, they were earning their grades.

Kaylee Hames, DHS student expressed her views of AP, stating that she would like to see the Policy reflect that the AP tests not be mandatory. She stated she would be taking many AP classes and was uncertain if she could study for and pass all of them at once. Additionally, she believed that colleges look at the rigor of a students course load.

Mrs. Wennhold closed public comment.

Mrs. Bryant stated that AP accreditation would occur next year and the consensus to date was their audit would be approximately one year away.

The Board discussed possible revisions to the opt out requirements and points brought forth by the high school teachers.

At 8:10 p.m., Mrs. Wennhold expressed appreciation to the DHS teachers for coming to the Board meeting and expressing their views.

Mr. Roman made a motion to accept the Administrative Policy with the exception that the AP designation and grade point for AP designation, continue on whether they take the test or not, but that specific reasons for opting out be listed as: Credits for this exam cannot be applied in my major field of study; I will be attempting an excessive number of AP exams; eliminate "other," seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Mrs. Chessell amended the motion to have in place of "other," the statement, special education or 504 study team could get together and work on a plan, seconded by Mrs. Hales.

Motion carried unanimously, 7/0.

Mrs. Trigg made a motion to amend the main motion adding "extreme, verifiable family emergencies," to the opt out list, seconded by Mr. Roman.

Motion carried unanimously, 7/0.

Mrs. Trigg made a motion to amend the main motion to include as a "senior only" for the two opt out options, of: My selected college or university does not accept AP credits and Credits for this exam cannot be applied in my major field of study, seconded by Mr. Roman.

Members in favor of motion as amended were 6/1, Sharla Hales, nay.

Mrs. Wennhold called for a short break at 8:34 p.m., resuming at 8:42 p.m.

6-E. School Calendar

Mr. Alexander presented the elementary and secondary calendars for the next three years prepared under the adopted Board guidelines. He asked the Board for any recommendations of adjustment to them.

Board members discussed current remediation practices of the schools in order to determine if they were utilizing break times for that.

Mr. Alexander stated that at a District level with regards to Human Resources and payroll, one calendar would be of interest, noting difficulties of transfers and monitoring of pay and benefits.

At 8:50 p.m., Mrs. Wennhold called for public comment, stating that there would be a three-minute limit to speakers.

Mr. Monfiletto, DHS teacher asked that a different calendar be considered. He offered a suggestion of starting the school year two weeks prior to Labor Day and eliminating a week at spring break, stating this would be an advantage for AP, would help with coaching, and would eliminate a two week break prior to finals, wherein students weren't studying for their finals.

Mr. Frazier, CCMES principal stated that the elementary schools needed a calendar approved immediately due to the start of kindergarten registration. He supported more frequent shorter breaks being built in for students, and believed that elementary and secondary schools should work together involving these changes to be made.

Mrs. Hales asked Mr. Swisher, DHS principal to comment on effects of remediation results if the semester was changed at the secondary level.

Mrs. Hales made a motion to approve the elementary calendar for one year as put forth for 2006-2007, have the secondary calendar start 8/21/06 and end the semester before Christmas and shorten spring break to one week after Easter, seconded by Mrs. Trigg.

After some discussion, Board members realized the need to address change thoroughly and proposed the following amendment:

Ms. Jamin made a motion to amend the main motion to approve for one year the calendar as presented for elementary schools and bring back the secondary calendar to explore ideas and discuss ramifications of changes, seconded by Mr. Louritt.

The amended motion carried, 7/0.

Board members asked Mr. Alexander to discuss the issue with staff and to include intervention strategies for their information.

The main motion carried unanimously, 7/0.

Motion carried on the amendment, 7/0.

Motion carried on the main motion, 7/0.

Mrs. Wennhold called for a short break at 9:26 p.m.

7. Executive Session: Litigation Session

Ms. Jamin made a motion to move to Executive Session pursuant to NRS 241.015 (2)(b)(2) in order that the Board could meet with counsel to receive information regarding potential or existing litigation involving a matter over which the Board has supervision, control, jurisdiction or advisory power and to deliberate toward a decision on the matter, or both, seconded by Mrs. Trigg.

Motion carried, 7/0.

At 9:58 p.m., Mrs. Trigg made a motion to go back into public session, seconded by Mrs. Trigg.

Motion carried, 7/0.

8. Items Requiring Discussion and Action (Action)

8-A. Level III Grievance: Alleged Violations of the Grievance Process – Executive Session

At 10:04 p.m., Mrs. Hales moved to recess to Executive Session pursuant to NRS 241.030 and NRS 241.034 for the purpose of hearing a Level III grievance filed by Greg John alleging violations of the Classified Negotiated Agreement, seconded by Mr. Roman.

Motion carried, 7/0.

8-B. Level III Grievance: Alleged Violations of the Grievance Process – Open Session

At 12:29 a.m. the meeting resumed in open session. Due to the Level III grievance not being completed, the Board discussed possibilities with Mr. Cahill for scheduling.

Mrs. Trigg moved that the Board continue the grievance hearing at the first available date that Mr. Cahill, Mr. John, and District counsel could attend, the latest date being the next scheduled Board meeting on March 14, 2006, seconded by Mrs. Trigg.

Mrs. Wennhold called for public comment. There was none.

Motion carried unanimously, 7/0.

Board members decided not to finish the agenda due to the unreasonableness of the time.

12. Adjournment

Ms. Jamin made a motion to adjourn at 12:31 a.m., seconded by Ms. Trigg
Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 7/0.

9. Correspondence

Due to the late time, Board members did not discuss correspondence.

10. Possible Agenda Items for Future Board Meetings

Due to the late time, Board members did not discuss future agenda items.

5-A. Superintendent's Report

Due to time constraints the Superintendent's Report was not given.

5-B. NASB Director's Report

Due to time constraints the NASB Director's Report was not given.

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.