

**Douglas County School District**

Regular Meeting  
Douglas High School  
Minden, Nevada  
Tuesday, April 11, 2006  
3:30 p.m.

**Minutes Approved  
May 17, 2006**

**MINUTES**

Present were:

**Trustees:**

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

Absent: Connie Wennhold

**Personnel:**

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

**Others Present:**

Paul Anderson, Legal Counsel

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Louritt called the meeting to order at 3:38 p.m.

A. Mrs. Chessell led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Ms. Jamin made a motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by Mrs. Hales.

Mr. Louritt called for any public comment on adopting the agenda. There was none.

Motion carried by a unanimous vote, 6/0.

**2. Board Training**

Mr. Louritt deferred the Board Training to May. He stated that an important part of the training would be that Board members have a three-minute discussion prepared in regards to something they are passionate about that relates to the school district. He recommended the delay because he had not communicated that to the Board. He asked that Trustees be prepared with an item of interest for next month.

### 3. Consent Items (Action)

Mr. Louritt stated changes noted for agenda item, 3-J that it should reflect that the school year be 2006-2007, in lieu of 2005-2006; and Item 4-A to reflect that principal Marty Swisher would give the Principal's Report, in lieu of Janie Gray.

Next, Mr. Louritt noted that several items were to be pulled off the Consent Agenda by members as follows:

Item 3-A, pulled by Mrs. Trigg  
Item 3-F, pulled by Mrs. Chessell  
Items 3-L and 3-O pulled by Mrs. Hales

Mr. Louritt asked if any further items were to be pulled by either Board members or the public. None were requested.

Mrs. Trigg made a motion to approve the following consent agenda items, with the exception of items 3-A, 3-F, 3-L, and 3-O, seconded by Mrs. Hales:

- A. Approve the Minutes of the Regular Board meeting held on March 14, 2006.
- B. Approve the Minutes of the Special Board meeting held on March 13, 2006.
- C. Approve payments contained in Voucher No. 1079 for 2005-2006.
- D. Approve personnel actions described in Personnel Report No. 06-04.
- E. Excuse from compulsory attendance the students described in the Home School Report for April 2006.
- F. Approve Board Policy 230, "Wellness."
- G. Approve the requests submitted by Heaven Adkisson, Anthony Altamirano, Bronson Crisan, Daniel Nicholson, William Penrod, and Josh Silvis to take the GED examination.
- H. Award a contract for a culinary arts classroom at Douglas High School to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder meeting District specifications as detailed in the bid summary.
- I. Approve the selection of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade textbook, The American Journey to World War I and the 11<sup>th</sup> grade textbook, The American Republic Since 1877.
- J. Approve the administration recommendations to increase meal prices in 2006-07 as specified.
- K. Award a contract for the final phase of the Douglas High School mechanical system upgrade to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder meeting District specifications as specified in the Bid Summary. Funding to come from the District's 2004-05 general fund major maintenance accounts.
- L. Approve Rich Alexander, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, as the Authorized Designee for the administration of the one-fifth retirement credit incentive for eligible teachers in schools identified as "In Need of Improvement."
- M. Award a contract in the amount of \$658,388 including the base bid and alternates 1 and 2 for the replacement and upgrade of the mechanical system at Jacks Valley Elementary School to RHP Mechanical as the lowest responsive and responsible bidder meeting District specifications. Funding to come from the District's Capital Projects fund.

- N. Award a contract for the installation of a new metal roof (base bid) in the amount of \$570,900.00 to Roofing Constructors, Inc., DBA, Western Roofing Services as the lowest responsive and responsible bidder meeting District specifications. Funding to come from the District's Capital Projects fund.
- O. Approve the Meet and Confer Agreement with the Douglas County Administrators Association for the 2006-2007 school year.

Motion carried by a unanimous vote, 6/0.

First, Mrs. Trigg discussed a note in the Board's red folder regarding Item 3-A, Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 14, 2006, with a suggested change stating, "Board members discussed the possible closing of a school one year earlier." Mrs. Trigg requested that the Minutes reflect, "Sharla Hales" as a single Board member in lieu of "Board members."

Mrs. Trigg made a motion to approve Consent Item 3-A, Minutes of the March 14, 2006 meeting, and have them reflect "Sharla Hales questioned the possible closing of a school one year earlier. Mr. Soderman suggested that this is the Board's prerogative based on the situation at hand. Mr. Kester suggested that a date should be chosen and held to," seconded by Mrs. Hales.

Motion carried, unanimously 6/0.

Second, Mrs. Chessell discussed Item 3-F, changes to Policy 230, Wellness. She stated on page 1 of 8, in the list of nutrition education programs where it would be appropriate for nutrition and wellness to be taught should include, Food and Nutrition/Culinary Arts in order to evolve with current program changes. Mrs. Bryant added that Home and Careers, a 9<sup>th</sup> grade class should be included, also.

Mrs. Chessell noted that on the second from last page, "these holidays provides," should be corrected by dropping the "s" from provides.

Third, Mrs. Chessell discussed with Mrs. Bryant the list of holidays that could be celebrated, noting the change could be "any" to include more diverse religions. Mrs. Bryant replied that the Administrative Regulations could be changed at any time and that this request could be accommodated through their inclusion in a teacher's lesson plan.

Mr. Louritt called for public comment on Item 3-F. There was none.

Mrs. Chessell made a motion to adopt Item 3-F for a second reading with the changes being, the list of classes wherein wellness would be taught will include, Food and Nutrition/Culinary Arts and Home and Careers, and the "s" will be dropped from "provides" on the *Celebration Ideas* page, as suggested, seconded by Mrs. Trigg.

Motion carried, unanimously 6/0.

Third, Mrs. Hales discussed Item 3-L, the One-Fifth Retirement Credit for Teachers in Schools Designated as "In Need of Improvement." Mrs. Hales stated this was a big expense and that it was not providing a needed incentive. Mrs. Hales added that this was an un-funded mandate

by legislature.

Mr. Soderman stated that the "hard to fill positions" is funded this year. The legislators are looking at changing this to possibly, incentives for student achievement, getting out of AYP, or student growth, and not having it be for schools designated as "In Need of Improvement."

Mr. Louritt called for public comment on Item 3-L. There was none.

Mrs. Hales moved that we approve Rich Alexander, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, as the Authorized Designee for the administration of the one-fifth retirement credit incentive for eligible teachers in schools identified as "In Need of Improvement," with objections as stated, seconded by Ms. Jamin.

Discussion ensued as to the Board having legal obligations to approve the incentive. It was noted that the law states the Board be made aware of it and approve a designee.

Motion carried, 6/0.

Fourth, Mrs. Hales discussed Item 3-O, Approval of Meet and Confer Agreement with the Douglas County Administrators Association for 2006-2007, number 4, referencing pay in regards to the lowest responsibility factors for administrators.

Mr. Alexander explained three different responsibility factors dependent upon enrollment, had been reduced to two. He noted that with the change, and hold harmless no longer a factor, that this reflects the enrollment numbers as they are now and keeps the budget within the 4% increase.

Board members stated their disagreement for the dollar amount of the doctorate stipend listed in this item. It was agreed that this was nominal, but that it was negotiated with regard to the 4% increase.

Mr. Louritt called for public comment on Item 3-O. There was none.

Mrs. Hales made a motion to approve the Meet and Confer Agreement with the Douglas County Administrators Association for the 2006-2007 school year, seconded by Ms. Jamin.

Motion carried, 6/0.

#### **4. Administrative Reports and Program Reviews**

##### **4-A. Principal's Report – (Douglas High School)**

Principal Marty Swisher presented a PowerPoint on their School Improvement Plan, what DHS had implemented in the current school year, the results, and additional initiatives outside of their Plan. He stated the first goal was to increase the percentage of students proficient in English/Language Arts at least 2% school wide and to increase subpopulations below a 78% proficiency rate on the HSPE by 10%. The second goal was to increase the percentage of students proficient in math by 2% school wide and to increase

subpopulations below a 53% rate on the HSPE by 10%. He noted that the goals focused on the needs of special education and English Language Learners as the populations to be addressed in order to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress. He stated that DHS made AYP last year, which in turn set difficult restraints for the current year, noting that this years

special education students need to show a 10% growth in light of good past performance.

Mr. Swisher reviewed Adequate Yearly Progress Data collected for 2004-2005 stating that students in Douglas County do well in relation to districts across the United States.

Mr. Soderman noted that DHS made AYP due to Safe Harbor and that they made it through improving, or having at least 10% less students non-proficient. Mr. Swisher added the special education population had reflected 22% growth.

Mr. Swisher reviewed four Action Plans in place to impact student achievement. He reported that the Social Studies department had finalized their common assessments and that they are being implemented this school year. The math & English departments are developing their common assessments to be administered in the fall. Additionally, all departments have reviewed and are implementing state standards in critical content as a goal. He discussed remediation opportunities and how they are working towards juniors being included in remediation, in addition to seniors. Mr. Swisher addressed professional development and reviewed student classroom engagement strategies. He reported that the parent group was well attended and that DHS worked to put out information for parents through these meetings, as well as, through printed and electronic newsletters. Also, parents had begun to provide tutoring through the after school-tutoring program held each Wednesday.

Mr. Swisher reported in addition to School Improvement Plan goals, DHS would be implementing the new science proficiency exams in the fall of 2006, that AB404 grant money had been used to purchase 15 Plato licenses and additional money had been obtained from state funding to purchase laptops and carts. DHS is working towards providing parents through Edulink software, access to online database information contained in SASXP such as attendance, transcripts, and registration.

Next, Mr. Swisher reported the JROTC application process was ongoing, and the goal was to implement it in the fall of 2007. He stated that the facility improvements were underway that would allow five sections of culinary arts in the upcoming year, and that advanced placement classes and new testing requirements were being lined out according to the new policy.

In conclusion, Mr. Swisher stated DHS was working toward placing remediation opportunities in the school day, offering more courses, and refining policies and procedures.

Board members asked questions and thanked Mr. Swisher for his comprehensive report and data driven decisions.

## 5. Information and Discussion

At 4:36 p.m., Mr. Louritt stated that Agenda Item 5-B would be taken out of order due to a guest speaker being present.

### 5-B. NASB Director's Report

Mrs. Hales introduced Norm Scoggins, president of Nevada Association of School Boards, noting that he was visiting all School Boards within the state.

Mr. Scoggins briefly reviewed their current objectives, and acknowledged the loss of both Mr. Soderman and Mr. Kester to retirement this year. He stated the NASB purpose as, student achievement through successful leadership, noting they offer training, education, and knowledge in aspects of leadership to school Board members, including new Board member workshops after elections.

Mr. Scoggins stated that one main goal was to be the collective voice for the School Boards representing education to the State of Nevada.

Next, he noted changes in leadership to the organization as being the hiring of a full time Executive Director, Dr. Dottie Merrill of Washoe County School District, as opposed to having had a part time director in the past.

Mr. Scoggins reported that the State Department was changing formulas for education funding in an attempt to remove inadequacies due to certain districts receiving advantages over others.

Ms. Jamin expressed interest in learning the process necessary to become a Certified Public Official and asked that information regarding classes be made more available to Board members.

Mr. Louritt stated his appreciation to Mr. Scoggins for his counseling and efforts extended to him while being a Board member.

Mr. Scoggins stated that the NASB has the opportunity to present bills to the legislature and looked to the Board to respond to some inquiries from him. First, he mentioned building impact fees that are based on population, and asked would the Board be interested in supporting that those fees be in place for all counties. Mrs. Hales responded that it had been discussed, and this Board was in favor of supporting that. Second, he addressed the One-Fifth Retirement Credit fund stating that it pays teachers as a legislative band-aid, noting the money could be left in the fund to hire more teachers, and asked the Board to discuss this with Mrs. Hales who could bring forth their decision to NASB. He concluded by encouraging Trustees to attend the State Conference to be held in Carson City, following elections in November.

## **5-A. Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Soderman reported to the Board regarding activities of the past month and upcoming District events that might be of interest to them. In reviewing the recent meeting with the Business Council, he noted that a presentation was given by himself and Mrs. Hales regarding ideas for high school rigor. He encouraged Board members to attend some of these community meetings and presentations to see perspectives outside of education, related to the Douglas County School District. Mr. Soderman stated the Big George groundbreaking had taken place, had involved students, and went very well. Next, he reviewed regular meetings such as the Family Involvement Team, site visits, and Communication meetings past and present. He reported attending Teacher Quality Taskforce, along with Mrs. Lark, where efforts are focused on aligning what is being taught at the Universities, with licensing, re-licensing, staff development, and school district's needs. In regards to the Nevada Superintendent's Academy he reported attending a presentation on class and school, with a main message using statistics based on subjects such as poverty and health care, that showed the achievement gap was created by a number of elements in the nation that are outside of schools causing difficulties for students. Next, Mr. Soderman stated that interviews had been held for the principalship at GWHS, and a final recommendation would be forthcoming in May. Mr. Soderman reported that he would attend a meeting this week with Dan Holler regarding property discussions that would hopefully lead to a recommendation of which school to close, KMS or ZCES, for the Lake consolidation recommendation presentation in May. Also, in the coming week he noted a meeting for superintendents with Senator Reid that he would attend and bring up ROTC. He added that Senator Reid was working on issues of rural school transportation and legislation involving Nevada realizing some tax benefit from federal lands currently being excluded. Mr. Soderman asked that Board members attend the Teacher of the Year luncheon at Walley's, May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

In conclusion, Mr. Soderman reported that a new contract for the Douglas County Sheriff officer was in place including a limit on the salary amount. Regarding volunteering, a meeting would be held that includes the Family Support Council and the Sheriff's Office regarding a grant recently created, having a goal of coordinating all volunteers, for Active Volunteers In Douglas County (AVID). He announced a NIAA meeting in May and invited Board participation.

## **Public Comment**

Mr. Louritt called for public comment at 5:20 p.m. There was none.

## **6. Items Requiring Discussion and Action (Action)**

Mr. Kester commented that in the area of finance, the Board should look at creating one platform that would incorporate the State Department of Education into the School Board legislature agenda to approach the legislators with a single agenda as a unified front for education.

Mr. Soderman stated that he learned from Dr. Rheault that their BDR will be consistent with Invest for the next biennium.

## **6-A. Consideration of 2006-07 Tentative Budget and Scheduling of Public Hearing on Wednesday, May 17, 2006**

Mr. Kester reported that normally the budget would be more complete than what was being presented at this time, but that it would not have too much change prior to the final budget being presented in May. Mr. Kester stated the first unresolved issue was property tax revenue, as property tax reform has thrown uncertainty into the District revenue as it is hard to predict and will not be finalized until May 30, 2006. He did feel he would have enough information to complete the final budget prior to the May meeting. The second unresolved issue is in the area of health insurance benefits and the cost of that for next year which is included in the tentative budget at a 15% increase. The District will be held harmless this year in enrollment on last year's enrollment figures. With a loss of 180 students this year, adjustments have been made accordingly in the future. If enrollment is equal or less than this year, the District will lose the two-year hold harmless funds, equating to a drop in revenue of \$674,000 in the 2007-2008 fiscal year. The budget reflects appropriate cuts on the expenditure side to allow for this drop to take place, so that cuts do not have to be made later.

Mr. Kester reviewed potential general budget cuts listed for the Board, noting that he didn't believe any of the cuts would need to be instituted once final property tax numbers were available, and that health insurance costs in excess of 15% would determine if any future cuts would become necessary.

This tentative budget shows a 3.5% ending balance and guidelines suggest 4%. Mr. Kester stated this would be solved in the final budget.

Through questioning from Board members, it was determined that ACR10 does not affect the budget for next year and that Mr. Kester was currently on the State panel that would be reviewing those formulas. Mr. Kester reiterated that unless health insurance goes up about 20% he would not foresee any of the listed budget cuts proceeding for next year.

Next, Mr. Kester reviewed the tentative budget, stating that our expenditures will increase \$1,192,000 with \$1,038,000 representing salary and benefit increases. This amount reflects a 4% salary increase and a 15% increase in insurance costs.

In an analysis of health insurance costs for next year completed by our consultants, predictions were that in order to cover the deficit for the current year, plus a 10% increase in expected costs for next year, the District would need to incorporate a 34% cost increase in health insurance expense. Mr. Kester noted the number of claims at this time, as fifteen that are over \$55,000, compared to last year, wherein there were eight over \$55,000.

Mr. Kester reported that the District applied for \$1,000,000 through a state-funding offer related to unexpected health care costs. The legislature set aside \$4 million to help out districts and received \$40,000,000 in applications. Through that effort, the District will realize \$100,000 in revenues to support increased health costs for 2006-2007.

Based on losing 180 students this year and an expected 100 students for the next school year, Mr. Kester reviewed the staffing reductions included in the tentative budget. He also discussed the reduction in workers compensation rates from 1.5% to .5% as being due to a build up over the last three years in this reserve that would be used, based on an actuary report from workers compensation. He added that there were no other changes in department budgets.

Other changes included increases in utilities, a reduction of major maintenance funds, and transfer of special education funds basically due to salary and health insurance increases.

In terms of tax rates, the debt service rate had been decreased from 17.8 cents to 10 cents and was being reduced to enable the district to keep a tax rate and thus its governmental service tax distribution until we are debt free after five years.

Mrs. Hales expressed her interest in having an additional counselor at DHS. Additionally, she suggested that a daytime alternative education school be considered.

Mr. Kester stated that the budget was created to reflect Board priorities, and that alternative education in the day had been looked at in the past, housing it was an issue, and it was an expensive proposition.

Suggestions of alternative possibilities were discussed, such as partnering with the Boys and Girls Club, including this in county land negotiations, and in discussions with JPO, who has a need to place students productively.

Ms. Jamin made a motion to approve the 2006-2007 Douglas County School District Tentative Budget and declare a public hearing on the budget for Wednesday, May 17, 2006 at 5:00 p.m. in the Kingsbury Middle School Library, 1900 Echo Court, Stateline, Nevada, seconded by Mrs. Trigg.

Mrs. Hales amended the motion to include that staff be asked to consider whether an additional counselor could be used in increasing high school rigor at DHS, and how that counselor would be funded, seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Mr. Soderman stated that the personnel cuts previously made from both PDC and the DHS counselor were not meant to be permanent, but that the balancing of the budget was of importance at this time.

Mr. Louritt called for discussion on the amended motion. Board members discussed the process with Mr. Soderman of what encompasses personnel cuts and how they are taken into consideration with respect to the budget.

Mr. Kester commented that he interpreted the motion to mean he should bring back the budget with a counselor included if data suggested it was necessary and inform the Board what was impacted accordingly. He added that the ending budget balance could be 3.9% instead of 4%.

Motion carried on the amendment, 4/2, Mrs. Trigg and Mr. Louritt, nay.

Next, Mr. Louritt called for a motion on the main motion. This motion was carried unanimously, 6/0.

Mr. Soderman reminded the Board that the next meeting, by law, is the third Wednesday of the month, May 17<sup>th</sup>.

## **7. Correspondence**

Mr. Louritt called for any correspondence to be discussed that Board members had received. There was none.

## 8. Possible Agenda Items for Future Board Meetings

Mrs. Hales mentioned that a Chamber luncheon was going to be held on May 17<sup>th</sup> at Walley's, and that she had been invited to give the same presentation on rigor that was presented to the Business Council in March. She also mentioned, she was involved in a professional judgment aspect of the Adequacy Study to be held April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Hales added that Mr. Roman had the idea of obtaining a DHS jacket with Big George's name on it to be presented to him.

Mrs. Hales commented that she would like principals to report on the use of the AB404 money they had received.

Mr. Roman suggested that a daytime alternative education program be on the agenda along with possibilities of where the money would come from, seconded by Mrs. Hales.

## 9. Executive Session

There was no executive session.

## 10. Adjournment

At 6:20 p.m., Mrs. Chessell made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Jamin.

Motion carried unanimously, 6/0.

Submitted by:

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Carolyn Moore  
Secretary to the Superintendent and  
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.