

Douglas County School District
Regular Meeting
Douglas High School Media Center
Minden, Nevada
Tuesday, September 8, 2009
3:30 p.m.

*Minutes Approved
November 10, 2009*

MINUTES

Present:

Trustees:

Cynthia Trigg, President
Thomas Moore, Vice President
Keith Roman, Clerk
Randy Green, Member
Sharla Hales, Member
Teri Jamin, Member
Karen Chessell, Member

Personnel:

Carol Lark, Superintendent
Lyn Gorrindo, Assistant Superintendent, Education Services
Rich Alexander, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Holly Luna, Chief Financial Officer

Others Present:

Rick Hsu, Legal Counsel

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Trigg called the meeting to order at 3:40 p.m.

- A. Mr. Roman led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- B. Mrs. Chessell moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by Ms. Jamin. Motion carried unanimously, 7/0.

2. Consent Items (Action)

Mrs. Trigg stated she would be pulling Item 2-F, "Superintendent's Salary," from the Consent Agenda.

Mrs. Jamin moved to approve the Consent Agenda, with the exception of Item 2-F, seconded by Mr. Green.

Motion carried, 7/0.

Regarding Item 2-F, "Superintendent's Salary," Mr. Moore disclosed that his wife is the Secretary to the Board and Superintendent, is employed on a contract basis and could be terminated only for "budgetary reasons or for failure to perform in a manner satisfactory to her employer." In summary, Mr. Moore clarified that his wife was not affected by decisions and information provided herein. Opinions stated were Mr. Moore's independently, and Mrs. Moore had made a conscious effort to remain neutral on matters involving the Superintendent's performance and contract. Following careful consideration that the evaluation of the Superintendent was perhaps the most

important public duty of an elected Trustee, is required to be discussed in public, his constituents would be deprived of his voice if required to abstain, and that there were no material affects due to his wife being employed by the District, Mr. Moore stated he would participate and vote on this item.

- A. Approve Minutes of the Officer's Meeting of the Douglas County School District Board of Trustees of August 11, 2009.
- B. Approve Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of August 11, 2009.
- C. Approve the Douglas County School District test administration guidebook: Procedures and Expectations for the 2009-2010 school year.
- D. Approve payments contained in Voucher No. 1107 for FY09-10.
- E. Approve personnel actions described in Personnel Report No. 09-09.
- F. Approve the Superintendent's annual salary compensation for school year 2009-2010 under her current employment agreement to be increased by 2.5%, effective retroactively to commence July 1, 2009.

Mrs. Trigg read Item 2-F from the agenda.

Discussion ensued as to the reason the Superintendent's salary increase was listed on the agenda. Points made regarding this included the following:

- 1) Mrs. Lark stated she was not asking for an increase, only that her salary not be frozen.
- 2) Regarding other site or district administration receiving a 2.5% increase, Mr. Alexander informed the Board the Superintendent contract was independent from all others and the only contract determined by the Board. A raise of 2.5% equated to a step increase. All administrators were not receiving a step increase. The freeze that administration had been subject to during budget cuts was noted by Mr. Alexander to not have a monetary impact to the Superintendent's contract.
- 3) Mr. Alexander stated the Board was asked to vote on this item separately due to the motion having stated the Superintendent was to receive the same increase as other administration. However, not all administration receives the same increase. Additionally, a time frame for a retroactive increase needed to be clarified, if an increase was granted.
- 4) "Me too" language and Superintendent salary increases approved in the past were discussed.
- 5) Mr. Alexander listed types of raises that could be offered to groups including cost of living, step increases due to tenure, increases due to additional college credits, and longevity bumps. The state was reported to have not funded 2.5% step increases this year.
- 6) Board members previously involved with increasing salary percentages for various Superintendents stated increases had been negotiated for this position beyond the cost of living increase and considerations had included "me too" language.

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

Mr. Roman moved to increase the Superintendent's salary by 2.5%, effective retroactively to commence July 1, 2009, seconded by Mrs. Jamin.

Motion carried 5/2, Mrs. Hales and Mr. Moore, nay.

3. “Race to the Top” Proposed Requirements and NRS 386.650 Discussion and Action (Action)

Mrs. Trigg began by reading the information provided in the agenda on this item. Mrs. Hales offered to answer questions.

Mrs. Chessell inquired regarding the law as she understood the District was not eligible to apply. Mrs. Hales responded that should a special legislative session be scheduled, the law might be changed if school boards were to take a position and be prepared. Nevada would be eligible for phase 2 funding if the law were changed in a special session.

Mrs. Trigg clarified that supporting this initiative would be a way of saying student achievement data would be directly linked to teacher and administrative evaluations. Further Board discussion would be necessary with regard to guidelines if the law was changed, due to details of implementation entrusted to Board members in individual counties.

Mrs. Hales moved that we formally support NASB's position to remove the prevention from using student achievement in teacher evaluations, seconded by Mr. Roman.

When questioned, Mrs. Lark stated this was not discussed at a recent Superintendent's meeting although a presentation had been made regarding the issue. A first round of funds had been dispensed.

Mrs. Hales reported that a change was necessary to NRS 386.650 in order to obtain Race to the Top funds prior to submission of the funding application.

There was no public comment.

Motion carried, 7/0.

4. Principal's Report Administrative Report/Program Review

Ken Stoll, Principal, Minden Elementary School, presented School Improvement Plan Goals (SIP). The SIP focused on math and reading needs at various grade levels. MES celebrated having achieved Adequately Yearly Progress (AYP) for the 2008-2009 school year in all areas, improving from the previous year's watch list designation in the LEP subpopulation for English Language Arts (ELA).

Professional development for teachers had been provided in the areas of math and reading targeting curriculum strands found to need improvement in order to increase student achievement. Examples included alignment of vocabulary with state standards and incorporation of writing into math instruction in an attempt to improve student Criterion Reference Test (CRT) scores. Mr. Stoll recognized the fact that Mrs. Cauley, Principal ZCES; Mr. Swain, Principal, SES; and Mr. Frazier, Director of Assessments and Grants redirected SB185 funds to MES to allow for the hiring of a reading tutor. Reading groups were formed supporting movement of students between various levels for best reading advancement. Math, reading, and writing percentages of proficiency were reported both school wide and for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. Collaboration days were noted to be very helpful with creating commonalities in upper grades and examining data to problem solve among teachers at all grade levels.

Monica Hart, Title 1A reading teacher at MES, reported student achievement gains credited to the "Hit Squad" reading remediation and acceleration program. Mrs. Hart stated first grade classes participating in the program had been tracked for a couple of years. Statistics included, the majority of students at all reading levels were gaining one or more years of growth.

Mr. Stoll reported advanced math was offered to students and provided information on the qualification process. Additionally, a University of Nevada Reno professor assisted one day a month in classrooms to enhance critical thinking in math.

Goals for the future were reported. Continuation of SIP activities based on examination of data for best implementation of student interventions was stated. Progress towards high achievement through incorporation of state standards to improve curriculum alignment and create common assessments would be a focus for 2009-2010.

5. DARE Report Discussion and Action (Action)

An informational report was received from Sheriff Ron Pierini, Deputy Griffith, and Deputy Duffy in support of continuance of the DARE drug prevention program. The Sheriff's office enthusiastically encouraged prevention as the key to successful drug resistance. The DARE program was noted to have begun in 1983. Current curriculum had evolved into a research based program including teaching students to handle a variety of peer pressure issues. Students developed trusting relationships with officers, as well. The program initially contained 17 lessons that were reduced and refined to 10 lessons within the last few years. A main goal was to offer students assistance in learning to make the best decisions as they transitioned into high school. DARE America was noted to have support from a university who oversaw the program nationally, as well as, in 54 foreign countries.

Board members inquired as to the information received by the Sheriff's Department with regard to program effectiveness. Their response was, time allowances within schools and funding were past concerns. At this time the program was funded 100% by the Douglas County Sheriff's Office.

Mrs. Hales stated a desire to review recent studies and gather any available information on the new research based curriculum prior to making a decision. This was due to past studies of the DARE program having shown no effect on drug prevention.

Mrs. Trigg thanked the Sheriff's Department for providing Spanish curriculum in addition to English.

Mr. Green moved to continue the relationship with the Douglas County Sheriff's Office and continue the DARE program as part of our educational curriculum within the school district, with no changes in the program, seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Further discussion included the desire to obtain data relating to student success following participation in DARE, whether or not the program's impact was easily measured, the value of relationships gained for students with the police force, and the fact that the Sheriff's office had researched a variety of drug prevention programs.

Mr. Moore offered a friendly amendment to the motion in an attempt to unite the Board in their decision. The motion was restated as follows:

To maintain an open partnership with the Douglas County Sheriff's Office to combat drugs, gangs, and abusive issues throughout the District.

Mr. Green accepted the friendly amendment.

Clarifications were made that consensus was to have the District and Sheriff's Department work together to research drug prevention. Mrs. Lark offered to initiate a search for information through the Education Research Service (ERS). Mrs. Trigg stated her desire to obtain this research.

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

Motion carried unanimously to include the friendly amendment, 7/0.

6. Report on DCSD Summer School Program for 2009 Administrative Report/Program Review

A report on summer school was received from Rob Parks, Principal, and Lyn Gorrindo, Assistant Superintendent of Education Services. Courses were offered this year at Douglas High School and Carson Valley Middle school. Instruction included several Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) classes, competency recovery performance assessments, a math High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) class, and English credit recovery. English was available through OdysseyWare software for credit deficient students, grades 7-12. A charge of \$25.00 was assessed for competency recovery; \$100.00 for English credit. Fees for students needing economic assistance were waived. An explanation was provided regarding qualifications necessary to waive fees. Lake students were offered transportation to the valley in order that they could attend summer school.

Mr. Moore requested to be informed of the percentage of free/reduced lunch students who attended summer school.

The criteria for enrollment in MAP courses were reported to include students who were one grade level below this year. Previously, students qualified if two grade levels below MAP target scores. Schools were credited for having offered remediation opportunities during the regular school year, decreasing enrollment by 50 students this summer.

Mr. Roman inquired about the equivalency of English instruction offered at summer school, as compared to regular coursework. Mrs. Gorrindo responded one English class in summer school was equivalent to one regular semester of coursework. The OdysseyWare software was noted to be a rigorous curriculum, difficult for some students to complete.

Mr. Roman expressed he would like to see math offered in summer school, as well, in order to improve graduation rates. In response, Mrs. Gorrindo stated math was not available through OdysseyWare although, science and history were attainable. The 9th grade class of 2009-2010 was noted to be the first class required to take three years of math.

Statistics were provided that included, of 833 students invited to summer school, 45% attended; MAP, competency, and HSPE improvement percentages of student achievement were presented; and 57 of 80 students enrolled in English, obtained one half credit. Recommendations for improvements to the program were discussed.

An onsite counselor was not available for staff and students this year. Board members discussed the possibility of having at least a part time counselor in attendance.

Mrs. Trigg commented that summer school recommendations might be included in future agenda items.

Ms. Jamin inquired if counselors could be asked to encourage more students who were invited to attend.

Item 8 was heard prior to Item 7.

8. Master Plan - Update Administrative Report/Program Review

Holly Luna, Chief Financial Officer, introduced Ed Humble of MGT of America, Inc., DCSD Master Plan consultant. The Board was provided an update on the status of information gathering to be

used to compile a facility Master Plan in the near future. Internal employee interviews and teacher focus groups were reported to be underway and would continue through September. Opportunities for external entities to provide input had been provided including two public charettes scheduled at each of the high schools. Additionally, the District Web site would include both English and Spanish surveys. An architect or engineer, and an educator would tour school sites in order to obtain in-depth building and facility assessments. Data gathered would be compiled and shared in a future meeting.

Mr. Moore requested a copy of the outline to be used by the group who would review facilities.

A break was taken at 6:04 p.m. The meeting resumed at 6:35 p.m.

7. Science Inquiry Competency Discussion and Action (Action)

Lyn Gorrindo, Assistant Superintendent for Education Services, Kerry Pope, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and Danita Anderson, PWL science teacher, presented proposed changes to the Science Inquiry Competency.

The competency revision presentation included the following points:

- 1) The previous Science Inquiry rubric was reported to be vague, out of context of the curriculum, not student friendly, and to not be used effectively in the classroom, as currently written. Starting in 7th grade, students were asked to perform a lab, create a graph, and summarize their findings. Students were expected to restate lab findings with little teacher guidance. The level of science understanding under the current rubric was more simplistic.
- 2) The competency, as created initially, did not always result in effective scientific questions.
- 3) The new rubric was not specific to a particular lab, allowing that any classroom lab qualifying under the rubric could be incorporated. Transfer students could more easily accomplish the competency, the rubric was student friendly, and the technical writing and science inquiry competencies had been combined.
- 4) Ms. Anderson piloted the new rubric written by science teachers last spring in her classroom, in order to determine the best layout to connect the competency to critical content. The competency would be designed to include a written component of summarization, an increase of written material, and interpretation and analyzation of data.
- 5) Depth of Knowledge (DOK) was a process used incorporating level descriptors requiring students to receive or recite fact or to use simple skills or abilities incorporated into state standards. DOK was used to increase rigor and incorporate higher level thinking skills.
- 6) Students would be offered opportunities in the 7th – 12th grades to complete the competency.

A concern was expressed by Mrs. Hales regarding loss of the inquiry piece of the competency process. The focus on literacy appeared stronger in the new rubric, although the aspect of a more controlled experiment was desirable.

Mrs. Gorrindo stated initially, the competency focused on inquisitiveness in science. The proposed rubric focused on data interpretation.

Any improvements to the competency process were stated as favorable by Mr. Green. Mr. Green stated intentions of those involved in writing competencies, initially, were not that competencies remain static. Review when necessary over time was desirable. Inclusion of instructional staff was appreciated, as well.

Discussion continued regarding whether or not rigor had been increased or reduced with requested changes.

Mrs. Hales moved to approve the direction of the new Science Literacy Competency to

replace the existing Science Inquiry Competency as a pilot this year with the understanding that staff would come back with a more specific competency sheet and backup documents to know what these items detailed, seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Mrs. Chessell stated she believed this change would assist students in passing the High School Proficiency Exam.

Mrs. Gorrindo reiterated the major change to the competency was to add to the process conclusions based on data that would now best meet the needs of students. The previous rubric required an experiment, but lacked this piece of instruction.

Mrs. Trigg called for a vote on the motion.

Motion carried, 7/0.

Mrs. Gorrindo stated a report would be provided to the Board in the spring following the pilot program and that her goal was to standardize the science curriculum.

Mrs. Hales asked that more detail with regard to forms used by students and teachers be provided sooner than the spring to ascertain no loss of previous competency requirements had occurred during the transition.

Use of the form in order to determine effectiveness, was deemed necessary by Mrs. Pope, as well as, inclusion of a discussion on a collaboration day following the usage of the new rubric.

Board members recognized they had been provided the student portion of the rubric. It was requested that they also be provided the instructional portion used by teachers.

Mrs. Gorrindo offered to provide the Board with the rubric designed for teacher use subsequent to the meeting.

Item 10 was heard prior to Item 9.

10. Student Evaluations

Administrative Report/Program Review

Mrs. Gorrindo provided a summary of research regarding student evaluation of teachers. The majority of information Mrs. Gorrindo found was related to college evaluations. Some sample forms obtained and used at the high school level were provided. A major concern included a lack of maturity of high school students with student grades tied to higher teacher ratings. Feedback on curriculum, textbooks, or teacher strategies would be more accurate as students would not affect a student's achievement in the same way. Mrs. Gorrindo asked for direction from the Board. This had been an agenda item requested by Board members.

Mrs. Hales stated she was interested in having student evaluations in Board Policy that included open ended questions. Currently students were unable to provide feedback. Some teachers were noted to be providing students an evaluation form at the end of their course. While this form could be provided to supervisors as helpful information, including student feedback in teacher evaluations was not the goal.

Research received by Mrs. Gorrindo included the fact that student evaluations at the high and low end of the scale might be tossed, while the middle of the road comments were typically the most valuable.

Board discussion included the following points:

- 1) Hand written responses could be difficult to read.
- 2) NRS did not prevent the use of student input for teacher evaluations, although this was not recommended by District administration.
- 3) Mr. Hsu, Attorney, stated policy could be created for consultation with the unions.
- 4) Students would need to be allowed enough time to complete evaluations.
- 5) Mrs. Trigg offered to supply Mrs. Gorrindo with a packet of information she had accumulated.
- 6) Pros and cons were stated with regard to having teachers summarize student evaluations for supervisors.
- 7) Grade levels involved in completing surveys were undetermined.
- 8) Trends obtained through the student evaluation process were deemed important for teachers and supervisors.
- 9) Mrs. Gorrindo offered a task force of teachers could be assembled to obtain their input.
- 10) Keeping the process simple was favorable. This might include asking only three questions.
- 11) Providing student input to teachers might be scheduled after actual evaluations.
- 12) Obtaining information from students prior to the release of report cards might enable gain of valuable input.
- 13) Development of the questions could be left to teachers or created with supervisory input.

Mrs. Lark thanked the Board for clarification and noted that at the college level she had both completed and gathered classroom surveys.

Mr. Moore left the meeting at the start of the next item.

9. Agenda Process Change Discussion and Action (Action)

The Board received sample agendas gathered from surrounding districts. The purpose was to review the possibility of changing the agenda with relation to time listings. Reactions varied. The following points emerged from the Board's discussion:

- 1) The ability to shuffle agenda items during a meeting, as needed, was appealing in that meetings might be shortened overall and outside speakers could be best accommodated.
- 2) Flexibility to permit movement of items forward or backward on the agenda was available if time listings were eliminated.
- 3) Inclusion of times on the agenda allowed that items could be moved to a later time during the meeting but could not be addressed earlier, due to public expectancy.
- 4) Times listed on the agenda guided the public to attend accordingly and provided a service.
- 5) The Open Meeting Law would not be violated by not listing times with topics on the agenda.
- 6) Both the Call to Order and Public Comment could remain a set time.
- 7) Non action items were typically moved forward to fill time gaps when necessary.

Mr. Hsu, attorney, noted the statement currently on the bottom of the agenda would need to be changed if consensus was to allow items to be moved within the agenda.

Suggestions were offered for changes to the agenda to allow for flexibility. Mr. Hsu offered to wordsmith the agenda for review.

Mrs. Hales moved to change the wording to have items be taken out of order, and directed legal counsel to come up with the language, seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

There was no public comment.
Motion carried, 6/0.

11. Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Lark provided a PowerPoint presentation informing the Board of efforts underway to implement common assessments, described as meaningful formative assessments, within the District. A definition had been created through collaboration of elementary and secondary personnel. The purpose of using common assessments was reported to be to share best practices leading to improved delivery of instruction to increase student achievement. Mrs. Lark stated one of her MBO's was to evaluate common assessments in order to add rigor in the classrooms. At the secondary level, these assessments in core content areas had been completed. Career and Technical Education was an area currently being focused upon at the secondary level. Elementary schools, having received new English Language Arts standards, would be incorporating the state standard criteria while creating their common assessments. The production of math assessments by elementary teachers would follow.

Student achievement was reported to be the number one goal. Administrators were versed in the new process for creating common assessments during a two day Forum this summer. Scope and sequence, the nuts and bolts of curriculum, would be created first. Site administrators were asked to include the development of common assessments in their Management by Objective's (MBO's). The plan was to progress by incorporating a focus on the process they were as explained at the Forum, in their School Improvement Plans.

The first assessments given to elementary students were scheduled on or about the end of October. The November 2nd Collaboration Day was to be used for reviewing assessment results at the elementary level. Middle school would begin by reviewing state standards for 7th and 8th grade math. Secondary ideas and questions were planned to be addressed in October.

Mrs. Lark reported the District focus on common formative assessments was supported through her supervision, professional development, and the budget add back allowance for substitute teachers enabling teachers to be out of the classroom for training. The concentration on the process of alignment of curriculum, creation of assessments, and collaboration to arrive at best practices was stated to be a rewarding, successful experience. Mrs. Gorrindo, Mrs. Pope, and the PDC trainers were acknowledged and thanked for their work in this area.

Mr. Roman expressed concerns of the amount of work requested of teachers. Mrs. Lark replied that teachers, if presented appropriately, enjoyed refining their work and saw value in the end result. Administrators were noted to be working with their staff to receive honest feedback.

12. Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB) Report

New Board member orientation Part II was scheduled for September 18th. Mrs. Trigg and Mrs. Chessell would be attending. Mrs. Trigg asked that Board members read the letter on the front page of the NASB newsletter this month to gain insight with regard to rules, responsibilities, and relationships necessary to operating a school district. Encouragement was provided for Board members to read online information regarding the November NASB convention. Mrs. Trigg invited any comments and constructive criticism.

Mrs. Trigg suggested a Board retreat or workshop might be held prior to the Strategic Planning meeting in January. Mrs. Trigg offered that she could work with the Board Secretary to arrange a time to hold this special meeting, and invited input from Board members.

NASB award nomination forms were requested to be turned in to Mrs. Trigg prior to the September 15th deadline.

The early registration deadline for the NASB conference, November 20-22, was noted to be October 15th.

13. Correspondence

Mr. Roman informed the Board that he had been requested to participate on the NIAA committee formed to realign athletics in Nevada.

Mrs. Hales shared that the Certified Public Official program offered through the UNR Extended Studies program was seeking to have a school board member on their panel of presenters for a meeting at Harvey's, September 14th. The panel would be asked to share their experience as an elected official. Mrs. Trigg offered to participate on the panel.

Public Comment

Nancy Hamlett, parent and DCSD employee, suggested the Board might video tape meetings in order that persons wishing to view public meetings could be better informed. Broadcasting meetings would enable those persons who were unable to attend due to medical or transportation issues to have an opportunity to be involved.

14. Possible Agenda Items for Future Board Meetings

Mrs. Trigg stated prior to leaving, Mr. Moore expressed that he would like to discuss Ms. Hamlett's suggesting of videotaping Board Meetings, seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Mr. Green stated although not necessarily an agenda item, it had come to his attention that there was an inconsistency with regard to the newly written student drug testing policy that needed to be properly aligned.

15. Executive Session

At 8:54 p.m., Ms. Jamin moved to adjourn to Executive Session in order to discuss matters pertaining to negotiations pursuant to NRS 288.220(4), seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Motion carried, 6/0.

16. Adjournment

At 9:50 p.m. Mr. Roman moved to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Jamin. Motion carried, 6/0.

Submitted by,

Carolyn Moore
Secretary to the 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.