

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

***Minutes Approved
January 12, 2010***

MINUTES

Present:

Trustees:

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

Personnel:

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

Others Present:

Mike Malloy, Legal Counsel
Jim Huge, Consultant
Susan Lacey, President Douglas County Professional Education Association
Brian Rippet, Vice President, Douglas County Professional Education Association

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Trigg called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. Item 5, "Elimination of the Tenth Grade Research Paper," was announced as having been requested to be pulled from the agenda.

- A. Mr. Roman led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- B. Mrs. Hales moved to adopt the agenda, with the removal of Item 5, seconded by Ms. Jamin. Motion carried, 6/0.

2. Consent Items (Action)

Mrs. Trigg stated Item 2-E would be pulled for discussion.

Ms. Jamin moved to approve the Consent Items with the exception of Item 2-E, seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Motion carried 6/0.

- A. Approve the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of November 10, 2009.
- B. Approve the Minutes of the Special Board Meeting of November 18, 2009
- C. Approve payments contained in Voucher No. 1116 for FY09-10.
- D. Approve personnel actions described in Personnel Report No. 09-12.

- E. Approve the salary schedules for 2009-10.
- F. Approve submittal of the \$441,000 ARRA grant to the Nevada State Office of Energy as presented.

Rich Alexander, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, explained Item 2-E was pulled to inform the Board the change in salary schedules applied only to the Douglas County Professional Education Association. The Bus Drivers Association contract had a “me too” clause in the last negotiation period allowing for the increase to have been previously put in place.

Mr. Green moved to approve the new salary schedule for 2009-10 for certified, licensed personnel, seconded by Ms. Jamin.

Motion carried, 6/0.

Mr. Moore arrived at 3:45 p.m.

3. Principal’s Report – Piñon Hills Elementary School Administrative Report

Rommy Cronin, Principal, Piñon Hills Elementary School presented progress toward their School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals. Action steps in the SIP focused on using strengths to improve areas of weakness. Mrs. Cronin highlighted independent reading accomplishments for students, provided Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Criteria Referenced Test (CRT) data showing student growth in English Language Arts, and math. Writing skills included in math instruction were reported to have helped to increase math scores. Students following Individual Education Plans (IEP’s) were now included in the regular classroom. Teachers were targeting the needs of students on IEP’s through DesCartes software data, resulting in positive preliminary data. Grant funding allotted in previous years for remediation was reported to have run out, although some additional programs were able to be supported. Parent education was being provided to assist students with reading for grades K-3. Book clubs, grade level goals, balanced literacy and the Safe Schools Ambassadors anti-bullying program were examples provided of programs implemented to help students excel.

Reading Specialist, Holly Harvey, presented early interventions used to assist 39% of students who were below grade level in reading during 2008-2009. Due to improved skills, only 20% of students were identified for this remediation in 2009-2010. Parent volunteers, retired teachers and aides were used in addition to the classroom teacher and reading specialist, in small groups, to target necessary skill sets.

A new perspective in counseling was presented by Carly Strauss, Elementary School Lead Counselor. Assisting students with self control, rather than self esteem, was stated as a best approach for counselors to help students improve academics. School wide support of the program was implemented and monthly classroom visits were in place using curriculum to teach self control. Mrs. Strauss’ goal was to implement this approach in all elementary schools starting the fall of 2010.

Board members asked clarifying questions and thanked Mrs. Cronin for her instructional leadership.

4. Tenth Grade Expository Rubric Revision Discussion and Action

Kerry Pope, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, with Laura Parks, Vice Principal, Douglas High School, explained requested changes for improvement to the Expository Rubric. The teachers were asking for change to include content in interventions. The request would be to clarify and expand the original student rubric.

Board members questioned the particular order of items listed on the rubric, as well as, the need to add fragments and run-on sentences. Additionally, a change had been made to include 10th through 12th grades rather than 9–12, as had been previously done. The explanation for no longer including 9th grade was the new SpringBoard program included an equivalent benchmark assignment for 9th graders.

Questions included whether or not the competency requirement was being reduced to equal state standards. An explanation provided noted the Research Paper Item tabled for another date, was included in the plan for change. Teaching time allocated prior to the Research paper would be shortened.

Mr. Moore moved to approve the replacement of the 10th grade expository rubric with the inclusion of reference to fragments and sentence run-ons, seconded by Mr. Green.

Ms. Parks further discussed proper placement of the additional references within the rubric.

Motion carried, 7/0.

5. Elimination of the Tenth Grade Research Paper Discussion and Action

Item Number 5 was tabled at the time of the adoption of the agenda.

6. Presentation and Acceptance of Financial Audit for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2009 Administrative Report/Program Review

Holly Luna, Chief Financial Officer, stated a correction to the agenda blurb. The June 30, 2009 unreserved ending fund balance was written in to the agenda as 10.2% but in actuality was 10%.

Dave Silva, Certified Public Accountant with Solari and Sturmer, LLC summarized findings of the financial audit report highlighting financial statements with the package. A “clean opinion,” the highest level, was awarded as a result of the audit.

A new item reviewed this year included Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB), health care for retirees. Nevada Public Employees Benefits Program (PEBP) ceasing to offer coverage for retirees in September 2008 had impact in the calculations of DCSD’s OPEB obligations. GASB 45 standards were explained with respect to OPEB.

An audit finding regarding proper time and effort reporting documentation support for salary expenditures of employees funded through federal awards due to the amount of federal funds obtained being over \$500,000 was stated. A “Management Letter” with recommendations for consideration would be provided to the District from Solari and Sturmer, LLC as suggestions for improving efficiency. The finding was noted to have no impact on the number of various audit reports related to these funds.

A positive trend and acceptable future financial position was reported for both the General Fund and Special Education Fund. The recommended ending fund balance of 8.3% was exceeded with a final balance reported at 10%.

Four major federal programs were selected for auditing. The one audit finding stated above was reported. Steps were noted to be underway to implement corrections.

Trustees were encouraged to read the Management's Discussion & Analysis provided within the audit materials for a comprehensive overview.

Ms. Jamin moved to approve the 2008-2009 Independent Audit Report and direct the Chief Financial Officer to file the report as Public Record in accordance with NRS 354.624, seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Motion carried 7/0.

7. Consideration of 2009-2010 Budget Augmentations and Amendments Discussion and Action

Mrs. Luna reported the District had a 10% ending fund balance for 2008-2009. Budget augmentations and amendments were presented for incorporation into the 2009-2010 budget following actual fund balances for revenues and expenditures realized for the previous year. Mrs. Luna reviewed the budget history for the past year including budget add backs in July. An update was provided to the Board regarding budgetary matters from July to the present. An amount of 2% in under spending was reported in salaries and benefits, due in part to reduced overtime and delay in filling open positions. 40% in under spending for a line item expenditure was reported and noted to be partly due to reductions in fuel expenses budgeted vs. actual cost. ESCO efficiencies also resulted in under spending in the utilities expenditures due to one time savings incurred through the initial implementation. Mrs. Luna provided information in support of the Board adopting Resolutions No. 09-04, 09-05, and 09-06.

An explanation was provided regarding the 10% actual General Fund ending fund balance stated earlier this evening for the fiscal year FY08-09 as compared to the budgeted ending fund balance amount of 4% noted for the fiscal year FY09-10.

Mrs. Luna stated changes made to initially budgeted amounts such as, salary schedules and PERS; reserve for Premium Holiday reinstatement for employees and spouses, a grievance related expenditure of \$500,000; the Superintendent contract buy out; and a large amount of legal fees in addition to the budget add back accounts for the adjustment in the ending fund balance. Food Services did not need additional funding assistance, as in previous years, from the General Fund due to continued proactive alignment of expenditures with revenues by the program supervisor, Denise Higgins. Special Education fund transfer was reported to remain in line with previous year's expenditures, and Maintenance of Effort funds were reported to have remained unchanged. Reductions in revenues from the Local Services Tax (LSST) were noted, as well as minimal increase in ad valorem (property tax) taxes reflecting the decline of property values off-set by abatement. Motor Vehicle and Residential Building Permit tax revenue receipts in the Capital Fund were also reported as minimal and declining year over year.

Following discussion including funding possibilities for programs previously supported by SB185 grant funding, Mrs. Luna stated administration could make the determination of appropriate reinstatement of programs, provide this information in memo format to the Board, and include the budget changes in an update during the June budget amendment.

Mrs. Trigg called for public comment.

Brian Rippet, Vice President, Douglas County Professional Education Association (DCPEA) commented with regard to the recent decision obtained from an arbitrator regarding Item 2-E, DCPEA salary increases. A history of the time line and percentages considered when increasing salaries was provided. Mr. Rippet stated that the decision was initially made in February and verified on an email March 2008 to award teachers an 8% increase. The clarification stated was an 8% salary increase decision was supported and upheld more recently by an arbitrator allowing for the increase as voted upon this evening.

There was no further public comment.

Mr. Moore moved to adopt Resolution No. 09-04 in its entirety, seconded by Ms. Jamin. Motion carried, 7/0.

Mrs. Chessell moved to adopt Resolution No. 09-05 in its entirety, seconded by Mr. Moore. Motion carried, 7/0.

Mrs. Hales moved to adopt Resolution No. 09-06 in its entirety, seconded by Mr. Moore. Motion carried, 7/0.

8. Consideration of and possible Action to Appoint Holly Luna to act, until such time as an Interim Superintendent of the District Shall be Appointed, as “Chief Administrative Officer” of the District for the Purpose of Executing the Certificate Required by NRS 350.155(2)(j) to Permit a Negotiated Sale of Qualified School Construction Bonds
Discussion and Action

Clarification was provided by Mrs. Luna that this was a one time request necessary to completion of the Qualified School Construction Bond process. Should an interim superintendent be appointed this evening, that individual would be responsible for future signatures of this type of legal capacity.

Mrs. Trigg stated allowing Mrs. Luna to sign bond documentation as the Chief Administrative Officer for the District was in the best interest of time and efficiency.

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

Mr. Moore moved to appoint Holly Luna to act as Chief Administrative Officer for the District, for the purpose of executing the certificate required under NRS 350.155(2)(j) to allow a negotiated sale of Qualified School Construction Bonds until such time as an interim superintendent may be employed, seconded by Mr. Roman.

Motion carried, 7/0.

Public Comment

Mrs. Trigg called for public comment. There was none.
A break was taken from 5:52 p.m. – 6:20 p.m.

9. Consideration of 2009 Qualified School Construction Bond Resolution
Discussion and Action

Marty Johnson, JNA Consultants reported the various elements necessary to obtaining the \$2,565,000 Qualified School Construction Bond approved at the last meeting. This Tax Credit Bond and the Resolution legally necessary to continue with obtaining these funds for construction, improvement, and equipment purchases for school facilities, was explained. Financial benefits in the way of tax credits could allow the District a savings of an estimated \$500,000 compared to traditional general obligation bond financing. A complex, time consuming process was reported to be involved including the State awarded allocation that could revert back to the State if not used by December 31, 2009. If the process was not concluded by the deadline, the State re-allocation would be pursued to return the allocation to the District in January to continue pursuit of the bond sale. Conversations were reported to have occurred with the State to request the return of the allocation to the District in January if necessary. With the Board's decision to approve the Resolution, a Preliminary Official Statement would be released to potential buyers.

Mrs. Trigg called for public comment on this issue. There was none.

Mr. Moore moved to approve the 2009 Qualified School Construction Bond Resolution No. 09-07, as submitted, seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Motion carried 7/0.

10. District Improvement Plan Discussion and Action

Lyn Gorrindo, Assistant Superintendent for Education Services reported goals for 2009-2010 based on 2008-2009 data. Action steps necessary to progress towards District Improvement Plan implementation were listed. The goal for 2009-10 remained the same as it was written for 2008-09. The goal was to increase the District's ELA and math Percent Above Cut (PAC) rates by 5% for all students and subpopulations. Additionally, subpopulations not meeting the PAC rate were expected to increase by 10% in order to achieve a Safe Harbor Adequate Yearly Progress rating. AYP target scores were noted to increase 10% for 2009-10, as well. English Language Arts (ELA) and math results were reported with respect to progress towards goals. Following a comprehensive review of Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP), Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), Teach for Success data, and School Improvement Plan (SIP) information, a dip in both 5th and 8th grade reading and math scores was noted. DCSD was reported to rate above the state average on the state Criterion Reference Tests (CRT's). Additionally, drop out and attendance rates for students were reviewed.

In order to work towards higher student achievement, training for staff would be provided in the areas of co-teaching for special education and English Language Learners (ELL), diverse learner strategies, reading and writing content for grades K-12, scope and sequence for ELA, and Pre-AP professional development. More rigorous classroom assignments would be incorporated this year to meet the State's Depth of Knowledge based levels of testing. Development of K-12 scope and sequence, aligning of critical content, state standards and common assessments would be underway until completed. Fourth year math and science curriculum would be investigated for more rigor, as well as, the new SpringBoard program. Ongoing improvement would be made to credit recovery and alternative programs. Career and Technical Education (CTE) offerings would be reviewed to support student interests and maintain enrollment.

Ms. Jamin moved to approve the District Improvement Plan, seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Motion carried 7/0.

11. Status Report and Recommendations Regarding (1) Selection of an Interim Superintendent; and (2) Regarding the Process and Expected Time Frame for Selection of a Permanent Superintendent Possible Action

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 provided by Mr. Moore were his independently and Mrs. Moore had made a conscious effort to remain neutral on matters involving the Superintendent's performance and contract.

Jim Huge, Board consultant, presented the criteria used for selection of the interim superintendent and findings gathered from all input received with respect to the hiring of an interim superintendent. Issues to be addressed by June 30, 2010 were identified and expressed. Staff

members were reported to have mentioned their own need for help in certain areas, the need for improved communication, and incorporation of best practices.

Desired characteristics for the interim included working with teachers to improve instruction, experience mentoring administrators, ability to earn respect and establish trust within the District quickly, prior superintendent leadership experience and the ability to facilitate a smooth transition to the new superintendent. In the local area, four people were noted to fit the criteria.

Mr. Huges stated nine out of ten people he spoke to recommended Mr. Soderman due to his knowledge of the district, the School Improvement Planning Process, and continued training in McRel Balanced Leadership practices.

A concern raised of Mr. Soderman's involvement in current Lake issues was addressed. Mr. Huges reported having spoken with Sue Shannon, Principal, George Whittell High School, who supported working through current Lake projects with Mr. Soderman.

Mr. Huges suggested work toward putting in writing responsibilities of the various levels of staff, including District and site administrators, defining the acceptable variances of expectations, as well as, the establishment of district goals as a focus for improvement.

Mr. Huges stated John Soderman as his recommendation to the Board for the interim superintendent.

Board members inquired and discussed expectations, availability due to previous consulting commitments, and the soonest possible starting date for Mr. Soderman.

Mrs. Trigg called for public comment.

Dave Brady, parent and community member, began by stating "history repeats itself." John Soderman was stated as having been involved in all aspects of the interim and permanent superintendent hiring process in the past. Mr. Brady supported hiring Mr. Soderman as the interim in order that the transition is smooth and guided through his integrity and leadership. Mr. Brady asked the Board to show their support through a unanimous vote and that any individual who voted no, explain their position.

Mr. Moore moved that the Board of Trustees appoint John Soderman effective as soon as practicable, to serve as Superintendent of schools of the Douglas County School District on a temporary, interim basis in exchange for a daily sum of \$484.90 pursuant to a written agreement to be executed by John Soderman and the Board. I further move that the interim Superintendent shall serve in such capacity at the pleasure of the Board or until such time as a permanent Superintendent may be subsequently selected by the Board and has begun serving as the permanent Superintendent, seconded by Mr. Roman

Motion carried unanimously, 7/0.

Mr. Moore complimented the Cabinet on having received factual, detailed information during the recent weeks.

Mr. Huges encouraged the Board, should they hold a Board training, to review protocol and procedures as that would be of interest to an incoming permanent superintendent. Board members responded with some thoughts regarding this topic.

Next, Mr. Huges addressed the process and time frame for selection of a permanent superintendent. The Board was asked to decide whether or not they wished to pursue hiring a

service or to proceed with the process on their own. Mr. Huges suggested that a quick Request for Proposal (RFP) be issued to facilitate hiring of a firm to assist in the superintendent search. A time line was offered with the recruiting process beginning in January, applications to be received in February, and contract negotiations concluded by the end of March. This would allow for a transition plan to be in place by the hire date of July 1, 2010.

Verification was obtained that an RFP was not legally necessary to retain this service.

Board members each commented on their support for Mr. Huges's continued service. Mrs. Trigg called for public comment. There was none.

Mr. Moore moved to utilize Mr. Huges's services in selecting a permanent superintendent, seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Motion carried unanimously, 7/0.

As a result, Mr. Huges stated a written proposal would be forthcoming and recruiting would begin.

12. Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB) Report

With a change of leadership, the new President, Jim Lemaire, was noted to be considering joining the National School Boards Association (NSBA). Training for both new and continuing Board members would continue under Mr. Lemaire's. Mrs. Chessell added through NASB training, she learned how the role of the Board fit organizationally with the Superintendent, community, and staff. Mrs. Hales stated she had gained an idea of providing acknowledgement and recognition from the Board and principals, to staff, that were excelling at instruction in the classroom.

13. Correspondence

Mrs. Trigg inquired with Board members to see if anyone wished to get together to complete the Legislative Commission's Committee (ACR2) Survey of Opinions, due December 15th.

Mr. Malloy commented that a Board Committee Meeting would need to be publicly noticed. It was decided that Mrs. Trigg, Ms. Jamin, Mr. Roman, and Mrs. Hales would meet at 8:00 a.m., Tuesday, December 15th to complete the survey.

14. Possible Agenda Items for Future Board Meetings

Mrs. Hales stated she would like to discuss funding possibilities for programs previously supported by SB185 grant funding, seconded by Mr. Moore. Mr. Moore added that he would like to see this item on the agenda for January.

15. Executive Session

At 8:39 p.m., Ms. Jamin moved to recess to Executive Session in order to discuss matters pertaining to negotiations pursuant to NRS 288.220(4), seconded by Mr. Roman.

16. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

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.