

**Douglas County School District**  
Special Meeting  
**Administrative Services Building**  
Minden, Nevada  
Tuesday, May 1, 2012  
5:00 p.m.

**Minutes**  
**Approved**  
**May 16, 2012**

## **MINUTES**

Present:

**Trustees:**

Sharla Hales, President  
Teri Jamin, Vice President  
Karen Chessell, Clerk  
Ross Chichester, Member  
Randy Green, Member  
Thomas Moore, Member

Absent:

Cynthia Trigg, Member

**Personnel:**

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

### **1. Call to Order**

Mrs. Hales called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **2. Webinar Presentation on the Tripod Project (Administrative Report)**

Terri Singleton, Sr. Education Specialist for Cambridge Education, connected to this meeting through a conference call as a representative of the Tripod Project. A PowerPoint was provided for Board members to learn about the Tripod Project, gain background on the creation of surveys/survey substance, and use of resulting student perception data. Ms. Singleton stated Rob Ramsdell, Director of the Tripod Project and Vice President of Cambridge Education, LLC would join the conversation during the course of her presentation. The founder of the Tripod Project was noted to be Ron Ferguson of Harvard University. Tripod, over a ten year period, had developed surveys to better understand how content, pedagogy, and relationships relate to student engagement; the key factor being student engagement.

Training was offered to assist administrators with conducting more effective classroom observations and in how to use Tripod survey results to drive improvement of teacher instruction. An example of usable data was provided to see how teachers scored comparatively, school wide, in that a rank and order would result. The anonymity of student responses relating to individual classroom teacher viewing of data, and how data might be used, is a variable decided upon by district personnel, as well as, what schools, grade levels, subjects, etc. would participate. Teachers would typically see themselves compared to a district benchmark. The reports were created to understand classroom learning practices and student engagement. Following data collection, the results were to be viewed as one source of classroom feedback.

Ms. Singleton informed the Board many questions targeted a similar concept to provide validity of responses. Sample survey topics of teaching practices were shown to be broken down under 7 main categories: care, control, clarify, challenge, captivate, confer, and consolidate. Nationwide, data was noted to not reflect a huge variation from school to school. Variances in the data were basically found within a school from classroom to classroom. The goal therefore, was to assist teachers who were receiving lower ratings, not to rank teachers, but to understand experiences of what is happening in the classroom to help students improve learning. Younger children were reported to relate questions to concepts similarly. Questions could be read to groups of young readers.

Mr. Ramsdale joined the meeting at this time. He reiterated the report information was used to see how much variation occurred from classroom to classroom and how that correlated to achievement gain.

Mrs. Hales inquired if this information helped teachers to improve. Mr. Ramsdale responded the results alone would not create change. The focus on professional development necessary to improve a low area would help to improve results. Some districts used the information for planning, rather than for evaluation purposes. Additionally, Mrs. Hales asked how results were not just reflecting teacher popularity. The answer was, some risk is always involved; although, the patterns of data were systematic and correlated with other measurements, such as achievement gains. Triangulated data for comparison was best.

The Gates MET project was referenced. It was reported districts use student surveys in conjunction with a teacher evaluation system. When surveys were tied to high stakes, multiple administrations of the survey were highly recommended, along with the use of multiple pieces of data. A single administration of student surveys was found to be a reliable measure and predictive of student achievement gains. Data could be gathered in the fall, and again in spring, or year over year. Mr. Ramsdale supported use of survey data as a baseline for professional development goals to look at how the top 1/3 of teachers scored. A demonstration of how to view data in this manner could be made available at another time.

Board members learned both paper and online survey packages were available for purchase at a slightly different cost. Online surveys had a toggle choice for Spanish. Any mark in a bubble would be recognized, eliminating lengthy bubbling sessions. Barcoding and removable labels enabled clean confidentiality measures. The cost for online surveys equaled \$1.50/student; paper surveys, \$1.85/student. Additionally, a District wide administration fee was charged at the rate of \$1,000 per school. In the event only a few teachers were surveyed at one site, the cost would increase to approximately \$2000 per school. It was noted schools varied in their offering of surveys to either 1 or 2 class periods. Similar rankings were typically received for teachers who taught more than one subject, or subject level.

Mrs. Hales offered time for staff and one member of the public in attendance, to ask questions. There were no further questions.

Mr. Moore inquired as to the intent of this item coming before the Board in May. Dr. Noonan responded two Board members had requested student surveys as an agenda item. Upon discussion at a Board Meeting, staff had been asked to provide more background information. Discussion ensued regarding hearing from a school and/or district next, who has implemented the program. Questions were raised as to the honesty and seriousness of student responses, and acknowledgement made that administrators currently recognized weaker teachers without a bar graph comparison being provided. Other thoughts included:

- 1) The need to determine the intent of survey students – the goal being to improve instructional practice
- 2) Positive feedback had been received regarding this company.
- 3) Teacher and Association buy-in would be necessary.
- 4) Schools and teachers could be asked to participate voluntarily.

- 5) Slow, comprehensive implementation was important
- 6) Dr. Noonan could contact Cambridge Education to obtain district and school names for further information gathering.

Mr. Alexander and Mrs. Gorrindo left at this time.

### **Public Comment**

At 6:10 p.m., Mrs. Hales called for public comment.

Margaret Pross informed the Board, donations had been received for purchase and installation of the benches to be placed at Carson Valley Middle School. The benches were to honor military men and women. She offered to answer any questions regarding the next agenda item on this topic.

### **3. Easement for Placement and Installation of Two Benches by the Town of Gardnerville at Carson Valley Middle School (Consent and For Possible Action)**

Mr. Moore moved to pull Item 3, "Easement for Placement and Installation of Two Benches by the Town of Gardnerville at Carson Valley Middle School," for discussion and action, seconded by Ms. Jamin.

Ms. Jamin inquired about expense related to future relocation of the benches should it become necessary. Ms. Luna responded, should a change occur in the future to the orientation of traffic, and movement of the benches was necessary, with proper notification and agreement as to the new location The Town of Gardnerville would provide for the relocation. Ms. Luna referenced the Easement agreement and stated this was the intent of the language within the contract.

The actual language was addressed and the need to make a direct statement with regard to responsibility for expense associated with relocation of the benches upon granting the easement. Ms. Luna stated she could revise the easement agreement to add a sentence to address the concern.

Mrs. Chessell asked for history regarding the bench initiative and an explanation of how the location was chosen. Ms. Pross stated she and her husband had the idea to dedicate benches to the Town of Gardnerville in support of service men and women who were currently working, as well as to those who had given their lives for the country. Ms. Pross, President of the local Main Street Board, initiated donations and researched the validity of inscriptions and stars that would be placed on the benches to mark this effort as an official dedication to military personnel. The proximity to the highway, Historical Society/museum and school was the reason the location had been chosen.

Ms. Jamin moved to approve the easement and instruct Business Services to file the easement for recording, with the additional language as suggested, seconded by Mr. Moore.

Motion carried, 6/0.

### **4. Board Self-Evaluation Tools (Discussion)**

Dr. Noonan summarized the documents provided as reference for improving Board performance through self-evaluation. Appreciation was shown for Ms. Jamin's work to gather materials for review at this meeting.

Mr. Moore stated his understanding was that a committee of the Board would do the background work on this item and follow up with a presentation to the Board at a Regular Meeting. Dr. Noonan appreciated the Board's attendance for the Tripod presentation and for having a quorum to vote on

the previous Consent Item. This committee topic happened to be timed such that it could be scheduled along with the other topics on this date. The Board was informed a Closed Session would not be held following this discussion.

Mrs. Hales thanked everyone in attendance and stated a vote would not occur on this Item.

Committee members responded this was their understanding as well.

Mr. Moore, Mr. Green, and Mr. Chichester left at 6:21 p.m. Mrs. Hales, Ms. Jamin, and Mrs. Chessell conducted the discussion.

Ms. Jamin referred to the publications related to School Board Self-Evaluation. Ms. Jamin's interest was to conduct an evaluation of the Board as a whole, not of the individuals. Committee members commented and offered ideas regarding questions that might be used for the evaluation, as well as who might be included in completion of the forms. Additionally, the committee considered creating Board goals, the timeline for conducting an evaluation and the how often this topic might be reviewed by Trustees. Other thoughts on a new form and process included:

- 1) Including an area for written comments on the evaluation form
- 2) New Board members would be introduced to the process during orientation.
- 3) A new several step process could include a) assessment, b) goal creation, d) setting a baseline, e) use of general indicators, f) modeling core values and continual reflection of a model put in place could result
- 4) The questions could be styled to approach areas with an aim to obtain different points of view.
- 5) Would the Board members score each other?
- 6) The Board secretary could compile the evaluation information and a short agenda item could address the results.
- 7) The Board could focus on one area for improvement.
- 8) Professional Development sessions could be incorporated with meetings to include professional development including resources offered by Dr. Noonan.

Dr. Noonan shared past experiences of working through efforts to improve Board workmanship, in conjunction with consultants. A consultant had asked Cabinet to participate in an evaluation of the Board, creating an uncomfortable situation in that the fear was comments could be construed as criticism. The Board/Superintendent team was best when focus was placed on continuous improvement as a whole, rather than attempting to address singular, individual situations. Dr. Noonan suggested the Board address areas such as: conducting meetings well with conversations specific to the agenda topics, running a timely meeting, and allowing for all Board members to speak.

Mrs. Hales added that extended meetings that ran extremely late resulted in major decisions taking place under extreme circumstances and were viewed as dysfunctional. Mrs. Hales added this Board is "highly functional" and not needing extreme assistance. Support was ordered for a simplistic process of continuous improvement.

Committee members took a few moments to mark questions and areas on examples provided that they would like to see compiled into a draft evaluation document. Consensus was to create a single page template for the Board to consider. It was suggested the Board Code of Conduct protocol be used in conjunction with the evaluation template. The committee preferred to bring their findings to the Board at the June Meeting due to the length of the upcoming May Agenda.

Evaluation of voters was discussed with regard to overall public perception; although the Board self-evaluation process was considered to be independent of individual voter perception.

## 5. Closed Session

There was no Closed Session.

## 6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Submitted by,

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Carolyn Moore  
Secretary to the Board of Trustees

Approved:

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Clerk of the Board

Note: Upon approval by the Board of Trustees in a public meeting, these minutes become the official minutes of the meeting held on the above date. Board minutes are kept on a permanent basis and are available for public review in the office of the Superintendent.