

Douglas County School District
Regular Meeting
Douglas High School
Minden, Nevada
Tuesday, December 9, 2008
3:30 p.m.

**Minutes Approved
January 13, 2009**

MINUTES

Present:

Trustees:

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

Personnel:

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

Others Present:

Mike Malloy, Legal Counsel

1. Call to Order

Ms. Jamin called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m.

A. Mr. Louritt led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following agenda changes were recommended:

- 1) Postpone Item 9, "Staff Report on Technology and Infrastructure" until January due to the lengthy agenda.
- 2) Postpone Item 13, "Superintendent Evaluation Update" to January, as well.
- 3) Pull Consent Item 2-G, "Addendum to Lease Agreement between Douglas County School District (DCSD) and the Douglas County Historical Society for the "Old High School Building" at Carson Valley Middle School (CVMS)," due to further clarification needed prior to approval.

The consensus was to postpone Items 9 and 2-G. Item 13 would be decided upon later in the evening.

B. Mr. Roman moved to adopt the agenda, seconded by Mrs. Trigg. Motion carried unanimously, 7/0.

Ms. Jamin asked Board members and the public if they wished to pull any other Consent Items. There were no further requests.

2. Consent Items (Action)

Mrs. Trigg moved to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Mr. Moore.

- A. Approve the Minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of November 14, 2008.
- B. Approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of November 21, 2008.
- C. Approve payments contained in Voucher No. 1012 for the 2008-2009 fiscal year.
- D. Approve personnel actions described in Personnel Report No. 08-12.
- E. Approve the DCSD Distance Education Program application to be sent to the State for final approval.
- F. Approve Corrective Action implementation by the school and teacher.
- G. Accept amendment to lease as provided by legal counsel.

Mrs. Hales stated an amendment to the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of November 14th had been provided in the red folders for review.

Motion carried, 7/0.

3. Special Recognition

John Louritt, completing eight years of service as a Douglas County School District Board member, received several certificates of appreciation and an acclamation from the Nevada Association of School Boards, and Senators Reid and Ensign.

4. Principal's Report (Douglas High School) Administrative Report/Program Review

Marty Swisher, Principal, Douglas High School presented an update on their School Improvement Plan goals. Mr. Swisher stated the school's mission statement and additionally focused on student success beyond graduation. Site goals were stated as ensuring that all students grew academically in language arts and mathematics; to increase the number of students graduating with a regular diploma; and to prepare students in the class of 2010, and after, to pass the science HSPE exam. Supporting test data was reviewed and overall findings were provided. 2006 vs. 2007 class comparisons were shown that included test data, drop out rates, and credit deficiencies. All groups, including the special education sub population supported through attainment of a confidence interval, were reported to have made Adequate Yearly Progress.

SB185 grant money usage was reported to include English, math, and science tutoring opportunities for students. Opportunities available in the alternative school setting, through the use of OdysseyWare software, were reported to have benefitted students in credit retrieval. Fifteen percent of students were stated as being credit deficient.

Programs offered to students were reviewed including Advanced Placement classes (AP), JROTC, clubs and sports.

Mr. Malloy, attorney, arrived at 4:28 p.m.

5. Report on Textbook Selection for Adoption Administrative Report/Program Review

Mrs. Bryant, Assistant Superintendent, Education Services, and Lyn Gorrindo, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, informed the Board of the recent textbook adoption process. Two teachers who participated on the selection committee presented pro's and con's of the top two selections for adoption of the 10th grade English textbook. The decision made by the committee, was to recommend adoption of the McDougal Littell Literature English text. An overview of a textbook offered by SpringBoard promoted much discussion, although, the committee as a whole voted to adopt the McDougal Littell text, the SpringBoard text was presented to the Board for further consideration. The SpringBoard program, newly implemented in the middle school level was noted to feed into this text, but had not been widely accepted by teachers. Discussion ensued as to the best possibilities for students, noting changing curriculum was difficult for many teachers.

Board discussion included the desire for data driven decision making. SpringBoard, newly implemented, would require an assessment for comparison, following the current year of implementation. Consensus was to review data from the current year and submit the recommendation for adoption after the deadline required by the State, to determine the best choice for student achievement. The final edition of the 10th grade English SpringBoard textbook was reported to possibly be available in the spring. Uncertainties of the District's ability to provide the SpringBoard requirement of four days of professional development for teachers to bring the new curriculum on line by fall of 2009 were stated. The decision, once made, would be a seven year commitment.

Mrs. Hales moved to defer the decision for adoption of the 10th grade English textbook, seconded by Mrs. Trigg.

Ms. Jamin clarified that the consensus was to defer the decision based upon receipt of further information.

Motion carried, 7/0.

6. Staff Report on Status of Performance Contract with AMERESCO Administrative Report/Program Review

Mrs. Luna, Chief Financial Officer, introduced Paul Ira, Senior Account Executive for AMERESCO, and George Davis, Construction Manager. Mr. Ira explained the performance contracting process, reiterating to the Board that the savings incurred was guaranteed by AMERESCO to cover the debt service. The third party consultant, Jess Franco, of Celtic Energy also provided information regarding energy efficiencies. The process to date was stated as well organized and quick, due to excellent administrative staff involvement and site participation. Overall, the project status was reported as being ahead of schedule and under budget. Mr. Davis reported changes made to the original scope of work included upgrading the DHS parking lot lighting and Energy Management system in order to best control the various site HVAC systems. Increasing the output of classroom lighting was also being addressed. A complete project list was provided for review.

A formal report of projects would be provided in July and a follow up provided annually.

7. Presentation and Acceptance of Financial Audit for Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2008

Item Requiring Discussion and Action (Action)

Mrs. Luna introduced Mr. David Silva, Certified Public Accountant with Solari and Sturmer, LLC. Summarizing the findings of the financial audit report, Mr. Silva stated the team of auditors' opinions was "clean on the unqualified, unmodified reports, and all contractual compilation requirements were met." There were no audit findings reported for the year ending June 30, 2007. An excess ending fund balance was noted. Two major programs were tested during this audit process and nothing was found that was required to be reported. The reporting of retiree benefits was noted to be changing due to GASB 45 reporting requirements. Changing reporting requirements would increase transparency in government financial statements and were being driven by increased health care expenditures.

Mr. Louritt moved to accept the 2007-2008 independent audit report, seconded by Mr. Roman.

There was no public comment.

Motion carried 7/0.

A break was taken at 5:50 p.m.

Public Comment

Ms. Jamin called for public comment at 6:15 p.m.

Ms. Baettcher, Carson Valley Middle School librarian stated concerns regarding reductions proposed for certified, secondary, librarians. Ms. Baettcher elaborated on curriculum involvement being a continuing necessity for student learning. Ms. Jamin asked that further supporting information be submitted to the Board for review.

8. Promethean ActivBoard Demonstration Administrative Report/Program Review

Brian Frazier, Director of Assessments and Grants, along with Jacobsen High School teacher, Mike Laxague, demonstrated new technology in place and due to be incorporated increasingly at more sites. A hands on demonstration of the Promethean ActivBoard using hand held ActivSlates was provided to Board members to use, as in a classroom setting with the software. The Boards were being provided through two grant sources, a piggy back contract with Washoe and Pershing counties, allowing for enhanced classroom education. The cost was reported as approximately \$3900 for a board, projector and installation. The boards were not portable and would be mounted where they were installed. A review of the software included a demonstration of how the teachers operate the screen in a touch mode. The benefit of 100% student participation during a lesson was realized due to the ability to support full participation through use of the handheld slate, rather than one or a few children who are called on to respond verbally or by getting out of their seat to work at a white board. Lessons were reported to be modifiable for specific content.

9. Staff Report on Technology and Infrastructure Administrative Report/Program Review

The technology report was postponed until the January Board Meeting.

10. Review of Competency System at Secondary Level Items Requiring Discussion and Action (Action)

Sue Shannon and Marty Swisher, DCSD high school principals, provided an overview of the competency system from the secondary perspective. A data analysis, with a main focus on Douglas High School, was provided for review. Incorporation of critical content supporting state standards was recognized as an addition to the initial DCSD competency implementation process. The recording of competency data was maintained through a spreadsheet and supported by one classified, secretarial position at DHS. Twenty five percent of one administrator's time was currently slated to review student competency requirements. Letters were sent to invite students to remediation opportunities, when not meeting requirements for graduation, on a senior's enrolled first, basis. The 2008-2009 list of students needing remediation was provided and discussed. Competency report cards were issued, at a minimum, of one time per year. The Terra Nova assessment was reported to no longer be a legislated requirement, therefore eliminated from the list of testing requirements this school year. It was noted that DCSD credit requirements were one half credit higher than state requirements. The competencies required for a student to graduate were reviewed. Statistics and data patterns reflecting student accomplishment of various competencies were discussed.

Mr. Swisher requested a review of the implementation process for particular competencies. Board members discussed the procedure that best fit addressing changes to the current system.

Nancy Bryant, Assistant Superintendent for Education Services, provided a PowerPoint that included the history of the competency system that included a review of the form to be used to request a change to the process. Student achievement, supported through implementation of the competency system that incorporated high standards, was reported. Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments were noted to assist teachers in identifying specific student needs, at a minimum, on an annual basis. An obligation to provide remediation opportunities due to State requirements apart from the competency system was stated. Data was provided for review, including drop out rates, a comparison of changing graduation requirements, and the numbers of both students graduating with an adult diploma and those who had moved out of the District. Expenses related to implementation and a break down of hours required by staff was provided. The PSAT was administered to all sophomores for the first time this school year, in accordance with the Strategic Plan.

Changes made to various competencies, due to a need for vertical alignment necessary to changing curriculum, as well as, changes incorporated through submission of the Competency Change Form, were reported.

Ms. Jamin called for public comment.

Ray Bacon who participated on the original District Accountability Committee (DAC) provided information supporting initial research and implementation of the competency system.

Cheryl Blomstrom, parent, expressed support of the current competency system.

Volunteering to participate on any group that might be created to review competencies, Mrs. Blomstrom expressed that the best product should be in place to support achievement.

DHS counselors, Kris Roberson and Tricia Wentz, stated opinions that included concerns of redundant testing and that an overall review of the competency process needed to be performed to justify validity in a number of areas. ESL and special education students currently required to pass competencies for graduation, were another concern.

John Soderman, former DCSD Superintendent, stated that prior to changing the competency system, a strategy would need to be in place to address inefficiencies before interruptions to the current process took place. An example was provided that an essay in social studies might count for meeting a competency requirement currently implemented through a different means. The development and use of formative classroom assessments was stated as a method of increased accountability that would improve the current system.

Marc Tompkins, parent, original DAC and Strategic Plan team member, stated he supported the standards based system that incorporated high standards. An emphasis was placed on the need to measure student progress, through the MAP assessments, to obtain high achievement.

Dave Brady, parent and former Board member, stated his support of the current competency system. The Board was asked to reaffirm their commitment to the system. Through support of the competencies, Board members could then look at how the implementation process was working, possibly through the organization of a group to review the process.

Mr. Roman expressed concerns of the system's efficiency at DHS.

Through further discussion, Ms. Shannon reported that George Whittell High School, a smaller school, was better able to implement the process, and expressed support of a group review process that might incorporate embedding competency requirements, rather than having competencies added to curriculum.

Mrs. Lark stated the Competency Change Form, when used, was an affective method of change.

Mrs. Hales moved that we emphatically reaffirm our commitment and renew our support for the competency system, seconded by Mr. Moore.

Motion carried, 7/0.

Mr. Moore moved to ask staff and administration to get together and provide an outline to the Board of what issues there are, based upon the procedural aspects of the competencies, seconded by Mrs. Chessell.

Motion carried, 7/0.

The intent of the motion was restated by Mr. Moore. That was, to have high school staff members meet with district office administration to compile recommendations in order to resolve competency issues. Should the need exist to include the Board to a further extent, that could then be determined.

A fifteen minute break was taken at 9:15 p.m.

11. Consideration of 2008-2009 Budget Augmentations and Amendments Items Requiring Discussion and Action (Action)

Holly Luna, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed a summary of general fund budget changes that included a reduction in the Distributive School Account (DSA) of \$900,000 due to textbook reduction adjustments and Special Session legislation reductions of approximately \$400,000 additional reduction to the DSA. Approved reductions were incorporated to ready the budget for submission to the Department of Taxation on February 1st. A brief explanation was provided regarding the relation of declining enrollment to the decreasing revenues.

Ms. Jamin called for public comment. There was none.

Mrs. Trigg moved to adopt Resolution No. 08-07 in its entirety, seconded by Mr. Louritt. Motion carried, 7/0.

Mr. Louritt moved to adopt Resolution 08-08 in its entirety, seconded by Mr. Roman. Motion carried, 7/0.

Mr. Moore moved to adopt Resolution 08-09 in its entirety, seconded by Mrs. Trigg. Motion carried, 7/0.

12. Bond Advisory Committee Recommendation Items Requiring Discussion and Action (Action)

Carol Lark, Superintendent, discussed information gathered from other entities relating to the formation of a bond advisory committee. The KIDS Committee, created to provide information to the community on the school bond measure, was noted to include members from all segments of the population. The KIDS Committee was commended for their hard work in assisting with the recent passing of a school bond measure.

Discussion ensued between KIDS Committee Chair, Cheryl Blomstrom, Committee member Gary Thurm, and Board members as to the role, membership, and purpose of the new group. It was noted that a committee of the Board included a chair person that was appointed by the Board President, through an application process. The Chair would then organize members. How the committee would be managed was discussed, as to perception of the community of maintaining a Board committee, versus a private group of citizens, who would express their interest in project decisions.

Mr. Malloy, attorney stated that if the Board appointed a committee, using public funds, then the Board controlled the committee, unlike an organized group created privately. The main difference being that a private group would voice an opinion, not provide advice.

Mr. Alexander stated that the Superintendent could form a committee, with persons selected by the Superintendent that could operate in an advisory capacity. Mr. Malloy read from the Open Meeting Law Manual and cautioned that an appointed committee would need to operate in a public noticed setting.

The need to move forward with specific capital project improvements for the first round of projects determined to be priorities, was discussed. This included rekeying locks in buildings, replacing of HVAC systems in poor condition, and fire alarm panels working improperly. Cheryl Blomstrom and Gary thurm encouraged the Board to proceed with critical need projects. The KIDS Committee had already reviewed and prioritized project listings and

indicated it was well understood that the listing was to be fluid and subject to change.

Mr. Moore proposed to let the KIDS Committee develop a committee based on five individuals, with diverse backgrounds, including Lake and Valley residents, and follow the proposed procedures that were provided, seconded by Mrs. Trigg.

Following further discussion, Mr. Moore amended the motion to state the following:

Mr. Moore moved that the existing Committee carry on with review roles as outlined, with the caveat that they follow committee procedures as outlined, seconded by Mr. Roman.

Mrs. Hales stated she would not hold the Committee to the outline as provided.

Motion carried, 6/1. Mrs. Hales, nay.

The intentions of the committee were further discussed. Consensus of the Board and presenting KIDS Committee members was that the review role would not include committee assistance with the bidding process or detailed involvement in selection of projects. Alternatively, the intent of the committee would be to review projects approved by the Board to provide transparencies of the process with the community regarding use of bond funds.

Mr. Malloy stated that any group formed would not have the power to make decisions relating to spending of public money.

13. Superintendent Evaluation Update Administrative Report

Mrs. Lark stated that the Board had received data in their packets to use for general information. Board members discussed evaluation scheduling. It was noted, in the past, data was reviewed prior to the Strategic Plan Meeting in a mid year evaluation, due to changing goals. Following some discussion, the consensus was to schedule another time to review the data and share any concerns. This would be scheduled as a discussion item, with no action to be taken, in January or February.

14. District Improvement Plan Items Requiring Discussion and Action (Action)

Nancy Bryant reviewed a PowerPoint that stated main points resulting from the District Improvement Planning (DIP) process. The District achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements this year, although a goal of attaining a 5% increase for all students including sub populations was not met. Ethnic groups meeting the size requirements for reporting purposes were reported to have not achieved an increase in either ELA or math in elementary, middle, or high school. Data was reported for all three school levels. The DIP process was reviewed. Mrs. Bryant stated that time was spent reviewing data in order to formulate both strengths and concerns, in order to look at steps necessary for improvement. Data incorporated into the Plan included information obtained from all of the School Improvement Plans. The ability to evaluate the plan had been refined this year. A new goal resulting from the process was reported. The Board was briefed on Action Steps necessary to Plan implementation.

At 11:00 p.m., there were no members of the public present for public comment.

Mr. Moore moved to approve the District Improvement Plan, seconded by Mr. Louritt.

Motion carried unanimously, 7/0.

15. Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA) Report

Mr. Roman, NIAA Vice President, reported parents were involved in a lawsuit surrounding recruitment rights of an empowerment school. Realignment of State athletic divisions was noted to be controversial. The focus being, the AAA league size be increased and provide more game opportunities at that level. The idea of a four day work week would be reviewed by Mr. Roman with the NIAA.

16. Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB) Report

There was no information reported at this time.

17. Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Lark reported that the Western Nevada Regional Training Program (WNRTP) had compiled a study for Churchill County on the topic of implementation of a four day work week. Meetings were noted to be ongoing regarding prioritizing of budget reductions. The upcoming DCSD Town Hall Meeting, allowing for public input, was announced as to be held December 15th, at Carson Valley Middle School. The recent collaboration day was reported to have focused on writing and spelling at the elementary level. Mrs. Lark stated a meeting regarding governance of the school zone flashing lights had occurred and that the County would now maintain that responsibility. Recent incidents of student drug use were reported to have been addressed through a press release in conjunction with the Sheriff's Department. A parent symposium was being organized to assist parents in recognizing signs of drug use and prevention methods. The Nevada Association of Superintendents conference, that included all Cabinet members, was scheduled for January and would be fully funded by NASA.

18. Correspondence

There was no correspondence presented.

19. Possible Agenda Items for Future Board Meetings

Mr. Moore requested that the Board be provided a training or overview regarding best practices for Board members to communicate outside of Board Meetings. The request was made that this be addressed as soon as possible, but not added to an otherwise lengthy meeting.

Mr. Malloy stated a discussion requested by the Board, with their lawyer, need not be listed on an agenda.

20. Executive Session

At 11:15 p.m., Mrs. Trigg moved to go to Executive Session for the purpose of considering employer/employee negotiations pursuant to NRS 288.220(4), seconded by Mrs. Hales.

21. Adjournment

At 11:25 p.m. Mr. Moore moved to return to regular session, seconded by Mrs. Jamin.

The meeting was immediately adjourned.

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.