

MINUTES
CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
EDWARD A. GREER EDUCATION CENTER, BOARD ROOM
2832 E. FLAMINGO ROAD, LAS VEGAS, NV 89121

WORK SESSION

Tuesday, October 21, 2008

1:06 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present

Mary Beth Scow, President
Terri Janison, Vice President
Carolyn Edwards, Clerk
Larry P. Mason, Member
Sheila Moulton, Member
Ruth L. Johnson, Member

Member Absent

Shirley Barber, Member

Dr. Walt Rulffes, Superintendent of Schools

Also present were: Bill Hoffman, General Counsel, Legal Department; Dr. Lauren Kohut-Rost, Deputy Superintendent, Instruction Unit; Jeffrey Weiler, Chief Financial Officer, Finance and Operations Division; Joyce Haldeman, Associate Superintendent, Community and Government Relations; Cynthia Sell, Director, Communications Office, Community and Government Relations; Sharon Dattoli, Director II, Demographics, Zoning, and GIS Department, Finance and Operations Division; Elizabeth Carrero, Secretary to the Superintendent, Superintendent's Office; Barbara Moody, AZAC; Erin Cranor, AZAC; Cindy Krohn, Executive Assistant, Board Office; Lisa Chrapcynski, Administrative Secretary II, Board Office; Dale Erquiaga, Principal, Get Consensus, LLC.; and Stephanie Gatlin, Transcriber/Recording Secretary, Board Office.

ADOPT AGENDA

Adopt agenda.

Motion: Edwards Second: Janison Vote: Unanimous

Mr. Mason was not present for the vote.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT

Rezoning – Georgeann Ray

Ms. Ray expressed appreciation of the trustees considering rezoning the district, and she stated she hoped public input was being taken into consideration and that she would be willing to be involved.

BOARD MEMBER ARRIVES

Mr. Mason arrived at the Board meeting at 1:12 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT (continued)

Keri Carter, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) president at Givens Elementary School, stated PTA members feel very strongly that the issue of children attending schools they are not zoned for and creative addressing needs to be addressed before any significant zoning changes are made.

Mrs. Scow asked Dr. Ruffes to address Ms. Carter's concerns, as her concerns are of an administrative nature.

Mrs. Janison acknowledged the concerns brought forth by Ms. Carter with reference to the creative addressing.

Trustee Edwards stated the district needed to review what is required for verification of addresses because the current process is being severely abused and significantly affects zoning.

Mrs. Moulton stated this is an issue among the homeless population as well.

APPROVE FUTURE REZONING OF SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

Approval regarding the possibility of future rezoning of all Clark County School District school boundaries.

Mrs. Johnson stated as part of this process, the Board and staff need to be aware of the timeline. She briefly went over the timeline, stating a facilities meeting to discuss the extension of the 2008 bond program was scheduled for November, and the campaign for the 2010 bond would start in late 2009. She stated she believed the Board should start the process of rezoning as soon as possible to avoid having to rezone the district and reauthorize the bond simultaneously. She added she felt it would be beneficial to take the community through the rezoning process and then consider the bond program in 2010. She suggested considering hiring an outside consultant for the voluminous task of redistricting while the Attendance Zone Advisory Commission (AZAC) participates in the process providing feedback and guidance.

Mrs. Johnson posed the following questions as a guide for moving forward with this project:

- What is the timeline; is this the appropriate time to move forward?
- How would the project be funded; does the Board have the legal authority to pull from bond funds; would it come from the general operating budget?
- What type of communication issues need to be considered?
- What would be the next steps?

Mrs. Janison stated the Bond Oversight Committee (BOC) asked to have the joint meeting with facilities, currently scheduled for November, postponed until February due to concerns regarding the expenditure of remaining funds.

APPROVE FUTURE REZONING OF SCHOOL BOUNDARIES (continued)

Mr. Weiler commented there were questions regarding revision 13, and staff would be responding to the BOC about that issue. He cited reasons for postponing the joint meeting, stating the other major portions of the joint meeting were to be discussion of the master plan and the facilities conditions study, which staff preferred to have put through the BOC process.

Mrs. Janison stated in recent AZAC meetings, the reason for needing to fill seats had been questioned. She said she would prefer not to spend money on building new schools until those existing seats were filled. She stated suggestions had been made to postpone rezoning the district for a year in light of the current economic state.

Mrs. Moulton recalled that in the past it took two years to rezone the district. She stated pending budget cuts need to be taken into consideration. She suggested schools that have seats could be opened up to a program similar to choice schools. She stated the district should also take transportation into consideration, and that participation and parental involvement are also important.

Trustee Edwards stated she is unsure if there is a need to rezone at the current time. She agreed that this decision partially hinges on pending budget cuts. She stated she would prefer to have this discussion today and bring this item back before the Board on November 18, 2008, with information and recommendations.

Mrs. Scow agreed with comments made regarding school choice opportunities and stated that information could be brought back on November 18 for review.

Ms. Dattoli provided a map of elementary schools depicting hot spots for 9-month and year-round calendar capacities.

Mrs. Johnson suggested that perhaps the Board could receive a report outlining the anticipated effects of the future budget cuts in terms of those areas surrounding zoning. She stated the district should be proactive in trying to utilize the seats in the best way possible. She requested that, in the event the Board had decided not to move forward with rezoning, Dr. Rulfes make a decision as to whether or not he would consider opening the entire district to open enrollment and have the regions determine the number of available seats for their schools. She recommended that on November 18 the Superintendent could address opening the pilot program of open enrollment to a districtwide program.

Mrs. Janison asked the Superintendent to look into the issues concerning zoning, address verifications and inequities in zone variances, and bring information back to the Board on how schools are addressing these frustrations along with principal input.

Trustee Edwards stated she would like to continue this discussion on November 18 along with receiving the information requested.

APPROVE FUTURE REZONING OF SCHOOL BOUNDARIES (continued)

Mrs. Moulton cautioned that the Superintendent needs to be aware of equity issues when considering expanding the open enrollment program districtwide.

Dr. Rulfes stated he believed the Board's concern was that there needs to be full utilization of the seats available throughout the district and planned for appropriately in the bond planning for 2010. He suggested bringing options back to the Board for dealing with the zoning issue, such as the districtwide open enrollment program suggested by Mrs. Johnson or a choice school program where choice is available in clusters to be able to circumvent any problematic transportation issues a districtwide program may present.

Mrs. Scow recognized Barbara Moody, Vice-Chairperson, AZAC.

Ms. Moody stated AZAC has been considering whether or not filling empty seats would be advantageous since there would most likely be added transportation costs. She stated AZAC's concern with rezoning into a less populated school is the cost associated with transportation. She stated she would prefer to take on the task of rezoning the district rather than hiring a consultant. She suggested piloting an open enrollment program at a time when there are no new schools opening. She stated AZAC does not believe a rezoning of the entire district is necessary at this time.

Mrs. Johnson asked Ms. Moody to elaborate on her comment that districtwide rezoning may not be appropriate at this time.

Ms. Moody stated the public outcry would be tremendous, and she recommended looking at an open enrollment program as an alternative. She reiterated that AZAC's concern would be that rezoning almost always involves transportation.

Trustee Edwards suggested it may be helpful to AZAC for the Board to have a discussion regarding leapfrog zones, and the Board could give AZAC some direction with regard to this issue.

Mrs. Johnson encouraged staff to bring back any creative options and proposals to the November 18, 2008, Board meeting.

Mrs. Scow recognized Erin Cranor, AZAC.

Ms. Cranor suggested the creative addressing issue should be dealt with before any rezoning is finalized because of the impact it is having on the current zoning, which may be significantly resolved if the creative addressing were to be halted. She asked the Board to address prioritization of filling seats and transportation costs.

APPROVE FUTURE REZONING OF SCHOOL BOUNDARIES (continued)

Mrs. Scow summarized the discussion with a list of the following topics to be brought back to the November 18, 2008, Board meeting: leapfrog zoning, utilization and operational funds, use of an outside contractor, budget cuts and possible transportation loss, economic factors, creativity, address creative addressing, open enrollment issues, and the timeline and costs for this project.

APPROVE IMPROVING PLANNING EXERCISE

Approval on developing an Improvement Plan for the Board of Trustees in alignment with strategic planning and school improvement planning process.

Mr. Erquiaga gave a brief update of the discussion of the last Board retreat. He stated the trustees were to make a list of what they consider to be the Board's highlights and strengths, to consider priority concerns for the Board and causes of those concerns, and to outline goals. He gave the Board direction on what he hoped to accomplish at today's meeting.

Mrs. Moulton listed the following as Board highlights and strengths: caring, professionalism, engages the community, vision oriented.

Mrs. Scow listed the following as Board highlights and strengths: monitoring and evaluation of the Superintendent, professional, works well together and are informed, forward looking, the Board has a vision.

Mrs. Johnson listed the following as Board highlights and strengths: community linkage process, through policies the Board has a distinction between roles and responsibilities between governance and management, keeping an eye on the horizon with a futuristic approach, does a more efficient job of being accountable to the taxpayers.

Mrs. Janison listed the following as Board highlights and strengths: Quality Assurance Framework, accountability to the community, completely committed to children and secondly to the community, and community linkage efforts.

Mrs. Moulton added the use of data, the ability to recognize mistakes and improve, and possessing the willingness to change to promote student achievement as Board highlights and strengths.

Mr. Erquiaga asked Board members to identify priority concerns and root causes of those concerns.

Mrs. Moulton listed the following: a concern for lack of participation and recent Board member attendance, the ability to speak with one voice, accountability and communication with the public, need for resources, retaining and recruiting quality teachers, and the building of leadership, and family participation.

APPROVE IMPROVING PLANNING EXERCISE (continued)

Mrs. Scow added the following key strengths related to Board policies: calendaring and organization, perpetual calendar; accept positive and negative information, improvement; monitoring, takes Board responsibilities seriously and carries them out; ethics and conduct, do not let politics enter into Board action and responsibilities, works hard on the entire district. She listed the following as priority concerns related to Board policies: GP-4: Board Members' Principles of Operation – Conduct and Ethics, cross over into administrative decisions instead of policy makers; training and development, crucial with anticipated Board turnover; GP-7: Vice President's Role, E and F, communication, particularly with the community; community involvement; GP-2: Governing Style, Board assessment and debriefing, needs to be strengthened; and focus on the long term in policies.

Mrs. Johnson agreed with the strength of the Board's ability to handle negative information. She listed the following as priority concerns: funding specifically for communicating effectively for the purposes of accountability, moving forward in a meaningful way in community linkage, institutionalizing the culture of public service, moving toward more individualized educational planning.

Mrs. Janison listed the following priority concerns: parental involvement, inability to raise funds to educate students to the best of the Board's ability, communication to the community and district staff, working under Policy Governance®.

Trustee Edwards listed the following priority concerns: public perception of the Board, the district, and the teachers; the Board's ability to communicate with the public in a meaningful manner to address concerns and issues raised by outside sources that may be misrepresented; conducting Board assessments in a more meaningful way; funding.

Mr. Erquiaga suggested the Board should consider the following as goals: participation – Board, parent, and community participation and involvement; resources and funding – addressing this at the root cause, the Nevada Department of Taxation; communication – meaningful two-way communication – position both Board and district, gain meaningful assessment information from themselves and from others, and sharing that information. He asked what the Board sees as the causes of those concerns.

Mrs. Scow stated she believed the cause of administrative and policy crossover was the Board's concern for constituents and the operation, and a possible solution would be instituting a process to address concerns in a more effective manner. She stated the cause for her concern regarding Board turnover is the election, and a solution would be training and development and an outside consultant to work with the Board on an annual basis on the Board and Superintendent relationship and Board governance. She stated the cause for the communication issues are the negative press and public perception. She suggested using existing tools to better communicate with parents, students, and staff. Finally, she stated the concern regarding staying focused on the long term is caused by the Board's day-to-day focus, and the Board needs to use their calendar in Board meetings to ensure having continuing discussions focused on the long term.

APPROVE IMPROVING PLANNING EXERCISE (continued)

Mr. Erquiaga asked Board members to identify their goals to address these priority concerns.

Mrs. Janison clarified that there is positive media coverage of the district as well as negative.

Trustee Edwards agreed with Mrs. Janison that there is positive press coverage of the district but stated it does not change public perception in a positive way. She stated she personally struggles with how to address public perception.

Mrs. Scow read information taken from an Iowa study on “moving” districts and “stuck” districts that highlighted qualities found in high-achieving and low-achieving districts that were comparable in demographics and other similar categories.

Mrs. Moulton stated her envisioned goal is to produce, in every classroom, an individualized learning environment by reducing class size and by gathering and employing the techniques to produce teaching to individual learning styles.

Trustee Edwards stated she focused on the Board and listed the following goals for the Board: remain customer focused and responding to owners effectively; Board participation in relevant professional development programs as often as needed; ensure clear, regular, and meaningful communication between Board members, the Superintendent, school administrators, and staff.

Mrs. Scow stated having a vision of the big picture by having professional development and training through an outside facilitator is essential. She said another goal for the Board should be to focus on the long term through having a plan through the perpetual calendar for long-term thinking.

Mrs. Moulton stated another goal for the Board should be to engage the community so that the community would become part of the solution to educational challenges.

Mr. Erquiaga outlined the Board’s goals and gave the trustees suggestions for addressing those goals.

Mrs. Johnson clarified her idea that producing individual learning opportunities for students would include programs not necessarily limited to the classroom. She gave the example of the Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) program at the elementary school level.

Mr. Erquiaga restructured the Board’s goals to include the following four objectives and asked the Board how they preferred to proceed:

- Change public perception of Board, district, and K-12;
- Produce, in every classroom, an individual learning environment; learning opportunity options within the district;
- Provide relevant professional development programs; and
- Resources and participation

BOARD MEMBER LEAVES

Mr. Mason left the Board meeting at 2:45 p.m.

APPROVE IMPROVING PLANNING EXERCISE (continued)

Mrs. Scow noted the Board should be careful not to move into the operational issues while addressing these goals. She suggested encouraging creativity and innovative thinking with regards to "Produce, in every classroom, an individual learning environment; learning opportunity options within the district."

Trustee Edwards asked about next steps.

Mr. Erquiaga explained the process to the Board members and asked for their direction.

Trustee Edwards suggested globalizing "Produce, in every classroom,..." to reflect an overall intent of the Board to have high expectations of high achievement of themselves, of the Superintendent, of principals, and of the students. She stated globalizing it would place this goal at Board level.

Mrs. Johnson recommended folding that goal into the third goal of "Provide relevant professional development programs," and add another bullet point that says, "To create policies that include the expectation that the Board has high anticipation for classroom learning, and the Board expects creativity..." She stated by placing this direction under "Provide relevant professional development programs," the direction is being produced through the Superintendent and staff.

Mrs. Scow recommended that Mr. Erquiaga bring back the finalized goals to the December 3, 2008, Board meeting.

The Board agreed with Mrs. Scow's suggestion through consensus.

APPROVE REPORT ON BOARD PRESENTATIONS QUARTERLY COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Approval on the Board's process and practice of hearing presentations at regular meetings in alignment with the quarterly communication strategies, as recommended in Reference 3.03.

Mrs. Haldeman stated the purpose of this agenda item was to ask the Board to approve a new process for Board presentations. She suggested the Board and district could use the webcasting of the Board meetings to communicate more effectively with the public. She listed, as examples of communication opportunities, topics that are covered in the trustees' newsletters, Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings, Public Service Announcements (PSAs), messages while on hold on the telephone, School Matters, Inside Education, posts on the Web site home page, internal reports, and Board presentations. She stated the purpose of the presentation is to allow staff to match the Board presentations with the messages that are going out to the public via other communication tools during a particular quarter.

APPROVE REPORT ON BOARD PRESENTATIONS QUARTERLY COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES (continued)

Mrs. Sell presented part of the communications plan, the CCSD Quarterly Communications Alignment, which highlighted alignment of common themes at a given time of the year with specific events and messages. The document also included Core Means to Promote Messages.

Mrs. Haldeman stated this procedure would allow the district to be proactive in the messages that are shown to the community.

Motion to approve.

Motion: Johnson Second: Moulton

Trustee Edwards asked how individuals are selected to give presentations.

Mrs. Haldeman answered they would be chosen on the basis of order of applications submitted, who requested the presentation, and then relevance to current topics.

Trustee Edwards asked if these types of presentations would be separate from those presentations that, for instance, the Superintendent has asked the regions to come forward with to talk about dropout prevention.

Mrs. Haldeman stated, generally, these would be presentations that do not require Board action.

Trustee Edwards asked how a distinction is made as to who fills out an application.

Mrs. Haldeman stated everyone is required to submit an application to conduct a presentation.

Trustee Edwards talked about having presentations other than music presentations, such as a performance of forensics.

Mrs. Haldeman stated that would be at the discretion of the Board. She encouraged Board members to remain cognizant of whatever the quarterly message is at any given time, as would staff, so that message can be relayed by the trustees, the Superintendent, and staff at every opportunity.

Mrs. Moulton commented that she would like the flexibility to cover current events.

Mrs. Johnson suggested adding target timelines to each of the agenda items solely as a guide for the Board members to follow to move the meeting along at a productive pace. She suggested there should be some protocol among Board members for individual Board requests for presentations. She suggested those individual requests could be directed to the Superintendent. She recommended adding to the alignment, information concerning upcoming application processes and deadlines for special programs in the schools.

APPROVE REPORT ON BOARD PRESENTATIONS QUARTERLY COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES (continued)

Mrs. Haldeman thanked Mrs. Johnson for her suggestions. She stated if a Board member requested a presentation, that trustee would be asked to submit an application which would allow the Board president to review the request and make a determination of whether or not that is a presentation that would be beneficial for the Board as a whole. She stated she would work with Mrs. Krohn to development a timeline for the agenda. She asked the Board to allow the presentations to be completed before asking questions, in the interest of time.

Dr. Rulfes asked where a presentation would be placed if it is in alignment with an agenda item.

Mrs. Haldeman explained that if it is a presentation that is tied to Board action, it would be within the agenda itself.

Vote on Mrs. Johnson's motion was unanimous.

Mr. Mason was not present for the vote.

ADJOURN: 3:27 p.m.

Motion: Edwards Second: Johnson Vote: Unanimous

Mr. Mason was not present for the vote.