

MINUTES
CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
ROY W. MARTIN MIDDLE SCHOOL, THEATER
200 N. 28th STREET, LAS VEGAS, NV 89101

COMMUNITY LINKAGE

Thursday, May 3, 2012

5:30 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present

Dr. Linda E. Young, President
Deanna L. Wright, Vice President
John Cole, Clerk
Lorraine Alderman, Member
Carolyn Edwards, Member

Members Absent

Erin E. Cranor, Member
Chris Garvey, Member

Dwight D. Jones, Superintendent of Schools

Also present were: Pedro Martinez, Deputy Superintendent, Instruction Unit; Priscilla Rocha, Director, Adult English Language Acquisition Services, Education Services Division; Norberta Anderson, Director, English Language Learner Program, Instruction Unit; Cindy Krohn, Executive Assistant to the Board, Board Office; Raquel Bethea, Bilingual Translator/Interpreter, English Language Learner Program, Instruction Unit; Lissette Villa, Bilingual Translator/Interpreter, English Language Learner Program, Instruction Unit; Asalia Pimentel, Bilingual Translator/Interpreter, English Language Learner Program, Instruction Unit; Gladys Recinos, State Board Member, Nevada PTA; Alma Gomez, Director, Family Services, Boys & Girls Club of Las Vegas; Rosemary Flores, Executive Director, Family Leadership Initiative; Juan Medina, Former Clark County School District Student, Winchester Community Center; Luis Arambula, Parent, Halle Hewetson Elementary School; Dalia Jimenez, Parent, Sunrise Elementary School; Lisa Chrapcynski, Administrative Secretary II, Board Office; and Norma Herrera, Administrative Secretary II, Board Office.

ADOPT AGENDA

Adopt agenda.

Motion: Wright Second: Edwards Vote: Unanimous

COMMUNITY LINKAGE

Discussion with invited members of the Hispanic community and their views on what the District has done well, what could be changed and what new ideas could be presented in the future, is requested.

COMMUNITY LINKAGE (continued)

Trustee Edwards gave a description of the community linkage meeting. She thanked everyone for attending the meeting and for their participation.

Trustee Alderman relayed the theme for the meeting. She thanked everyone for taking the time to attend the meeting. She informed the audience members that Deputy Superintendent Pedro Martinez was the moderator. She asked that questions or comments be written on the yellow card and that if there was time during the meeting, the questions would be addressed. She informed the audience members that if there was no time to address the questions during the meeting, they would use them later to start other conversations.

Trustee Wright informed the audience members that they could put their name and address and telephone number on the back of the card.

Trustee Alderman thanked the translators and Dr. Anderson for providing translation services and introduced them to the audience members. She also thanked the Board Office staff for their work in preparing for the meeting.

Mr. Martinez welcomed the audience members and thanked the Board. He relayed that the idea of having this meeting was thought of by Trustee Alderman. He indicated that at this time, the District is aware that improvements need to be made. He informed the audience members that only 50 percent of students are graduating from high school and 10 percent graduating from college or universities. He stated that those numbers need to change. He shared that there are initiatives for those students behind on credits that have not passed the state exams. He indicated that there are programs available for those students in grades 3-8 that are below grade level and that the programs will continue the following school year. He relayed that the District also wants to improve the English Language Learner (ELL) instruction for students.

Mr. Martinez introduced the panel members. He asked the panel members what they think is working well in reference to the programs and changes in the District.

Dr. Rocha stated that Deputy Superintendent Martinez and Superintendent Jones bring a very good vision to move CCSD forward. She thanked the Board members for their support. She indicated to parents and educators that they should also provide support and involvement.

Dr. Anderson gave a brief explanation of her department and its programs and services.

Ms. Recinos stated that her concern is the communication between schools and parents, especially with opening the doors to parents and explaining student report cards.

Mr. Arambula indicated that the community and parents need to volunteer at schools to have a better understanding of the education system.

COMMUNITY LINKAGE (continued)

Ms. Flores indicated that she is part of a committee for ELL. She also stated that she has been part of a Hispanic round table for approximately seven to eight years. Ms. Flores relayed that under the direction of Superintendent Jones and Deputy Superintendent Martinez, a difference and intent has been seen to understand why the children of ELL take a longer time to learn English. She spoke about the "Five Star" schools and how wonderful they did. She indicated that she did not see many parents sharing their recommendations for positive change at schools. She mentioned that parents come to her with questions or concerns. She stated that she conducts research and finds out answers to the questions. She indicated that sadly, there are schools with only one star. She questioned how this "One Star" status could change.

Dr. Rocha relayed that these five star schools are doing well at this time. She informed Mr. Martinez and the Board, however, that there were two important factors. She said that the parents are treated in a poor manner when arriving at some school offices, and that office staff is not trained to greet people with limited English language. She said that it is important for staff to understand the culture. She stated that parents need to be involved and also volunteer at the schools.

Ms. Gomez stated that the Boys & Girls Club of Las Vegas is located near schools. She stated that schools are only open for parents to use computers until 4:00 p.m. She relayed that their clubs are open until 8:00 p.m. and that parents can use their computers.

Mr. Medina indicated that teachers need to know how to work with ELL students.

Dr. Rocha recommended having a facilitator assist parents with Rosetta Stone®. She encouraged parents to spread the word about the adult ELL programs available. She stated that education begins at home and that parents should help guide their students to success.

Mr. Martinez reviewed the topics discussed up to this point, including: work is needed to see improved student achievement, there needs to be better communication between the District and the Hispanic community, additional teacher training is needed, and the District needs to improve the way parents are welcomed at schools.

Mr. Martinez asked the panel where CCSD could improve or change.

Ms. Flores indicated that early childhood education from ages 0-6 is very important. She stated that the children need to be prepared for kindergarten. She encouraged parents to support full-day kindergarten and preschool.

COMMUNITY LINKAGE (continued)

Dr. Anderson informed the audience members that the funds provided by the government to the ELL program are very limited. She indicated that the State of Nevada is one of the five states in the United States that do not designate funds specifically for students in the ELL program. She encouraged the audience members to speak to legislators and senators regarding the funding.

Ms. Recinos stated that it is very important to understand what to do so that students can graduate from high school and be ready for higher education and employment. She indicated that parent meetings usually take place when parents are working. Ms. Recinos said it is very hard for parents to access student grades because many do not have access to the Internet. She stated that parent-teacher conferences take place in grades K-5 and not middle or high school.

Dr. Rocha relayed that parents should be involved in the student's learning experience by working with CCSD, their children's schools and the community. She indicated that teachers should be trained on cultural diversity. Dr. Rocha also shared there is a need for a Global Community School at the elementary and middle school level.

Mr. Arambula indicated that he teaches his son the importance of going to school. He stated that by providing his son with educational support, he will see his son succeed. He relayed that focus should be on continuing education after completing high school.

Mr. Martinez informed the audience members that our state suffers from many people not having jobs. He indicated that the numbers in Clark County are above the state average. He stated that individuals who graduate from college have a better chance of finding jobs than those students who have not graduated from high school.

Ms. Flores indicated that the Family Leadership Initiative received a grant from the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). Thanks to this grant, their office tries not to take funds from the Clark County School District (CCSD), because they are aware that the District does not have any funds available. She stated that they implemented the Family Leadership Initiative program that works with parents so they can learn to advocate and help within the school district. She relayed that one of the items brought to her attention by parents is the need for more magnet schools and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) student ambassadors program. She indicated that some of these schools that have the STEM program have community centers for parents to use computers free of charge. She recommended that the school district start thinking about how the schools can be used as community centers for parents to learn technology.

Ms. Flores further indicated that parents need to feel welcomed at school. She stated that a community center could help parents feel welcome and help close the culture gap.

COMMUNITY LINKAGE (continued)

Mr. Martinez stated that they have learned that students might feel that because they are behind on credits, they have lost their future. He stated that everyone should work together so this thinking can change.

Ms. Gomez indicated that parents say that if they had a good experience with their child's elementary school, this motivates them to establish a good relationship with the middle and high schools. She indicated that if the parents had a negative experience, they will not try to speak to school staff and administration.

Ms. Gomez informed the members of the audience that one of the schools invites parents, once a month, before schools begins, to meet with the principal. The principal has pastries and coffee available for the parents. She indicated that the principal does not speak Spanish but always has a translator available. She stated that this particular school has a lot of parent involvement. She stated that she would like to see this type of event occur at other schools.

Ms. Jimenez indicated that teen pregnancy has been a major factor in dropping out of school. She indicated that parents need to be supportive of the situation. She relayed that parents need to be educated so they can educate their children. She stated that parents and teachers need to unite to communicate.

Mr. Medina stated that the students, teachers and parents need have a good relationship. He informed the parents that they need to ask their child questions such as "How did your day go? What did you do in school today?" He relayed that parents need to let their children know that they care about them and love them and that teachers need to let the students know that they care about them and want to teach them.

Dr. Anderson indicated that a problem does exist with communication between parents and the principals and teachers due to the parents' language barrier. She informed the audience that parents can call her department at 799-2137 with questions or concerns regarding school matters. She indicated that she had Spanish-speaking staff in her department.

Mr. Martinez asked the panel members what ideas they had on what could be improved in the District.

Dr. Anderson stated her department is in the process of working with an expert of ELL instruction. This expert will create a report that will indicate what should be done to improve the District's ELL program.

Ms. Jimenez recommended that the health department schedule educational health meetings at the schools to educate parents. She also suggested having basic computer classes for parents at the schools.

COMMUNITY LINKAGE (continued)

Dr. Rocha suggested that the school parent center should offer family literacy nights so parents can learn how to help their student with homework on the computer. She indicated that this could also occur at a community center. She also expressed that the District has done a very poor job of informing the community of the services available. She stated that many people did not know about her program until she had an event one or two weeks ago.

Mr. Medina stated that one of the things that can improve in the District is to have an open mind for ideas and to treat the students with respect.

Ms. Recinos declared that there is a need for improved collaboration between parents, elementary, middle and high schools and community organizations.

Dr. Rocha said that administrators at schools need to form parent-teacher committees so they can share their ideas on how to improve the school.

Mr. Arambula stated that parents need to be educated with technology and be able to help their child at a student-parent center at the school.

Ms. Flores stated that the community needs to send a message to legislators demanding that they have a plan for educating the community. She asked that the community support teachers. She asked the audience and the CCSD Community and Government Relations office to demand financial educational support from the legislature.

Ms. Jimenez indicated that the parents need to be informed of what is available at schools by a designated school staff member.

Mr. Martinez thanked the panelists for all the ideas that were presented. He stated that all the ideas that were presented at the meeting would be available on the CCSD website.

Trustee Edwards thanked Mr. Martinez and the panel members. She stated that one of the things that they have learned at this meeting is that CCSD needs to do a better job of communicating what services are available.

Trustee Alderman thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Trustee Young thanked the audience for attending the meeting and the staff at Roy Martin Middle School. She also thanked Trustee Alderman and Trustee Edwards for organizing the community linkage meeting. Trustee Young also thanked the translators.

AGENDA PLANNING: ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

None.

DISCUSSION AND REQUEST FOR SPECIAL MEETINGS

None.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Zoraida Caldera, University of Nevada, Reno, Cooperative Extension, congratulated the Board for conducting the meeting. She suggested that a "Bring your Parent to School Day" should be implemented. She also indicated that the Cooperative Extension should be allowed to go to schools to provide information on programs that are available for the community.

Andres Mendoza thanked the panel members for providing information to the parents on programs that are available in the school district. He stated that it was made clear that parent participation and support to the District with these kinds of programs is important. He provided a special thanks to Trustee Alderman for providing District D with a community linkage meeting.

Rosalba Ulloa stated that the students should be provided with motivation in the classroom. She said that she would like to be more involved at the school.

Jose Ulloa asked if there are employment opportunities available at the school district.

Beatriz Rubio, PTA president at Ronzone Elementary School, indicated that there are not enough translators at the schools.

Mayte Heredia, Hollingsworth Elementary School, Title I Parent Center, informed the audience members that the school's center is available for all parents in the school district. She stated that there are seven parent centers available in the District.

Ary Lomeli, CCSD teacher, thanked the panelists for the ideas. She stated that a teacher was needed as a panelist. Ms. Lomeli stated that she has many opinions as a teacher. She said she would have liked to have expressed her opinions because she is also interested in student success.

Hilda Martinez, parent of a 16-year-old special education student, stated that she has always been involved in her son's education. She said that the focus at the meeting was only on general regular education students and asked that special education be addressed in the future.

Trustee Young thanked everyone for attending the meeting and stated that it is very important to communicate what is going on in the school district and the community. She also thanked Trustee Alderman and Trustee Edwards for a wonderful event and suggested having this event annually. She thanked Mr. Martinez and panel members.

ADJOURN: 7:11 p.m.

Motion: Edwards Second: Cole Vote: Unanimous