

MINUTES
CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER, 4TH FLOOR, ROOM 466
5100 W. SAHARA AVE., LAS VEGAS, NV 89146

COMMUNITY LINKAGE

Wednesday, April 30, 2008

4:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present

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

Members Absent

Ruth Johnson, Member
Shirley Barber, Member

Dr. Walt Rulffes, Superintendent of Schools

Also present were: Dr. Lauren Kohut-Rost, Deputy Superintendent, Instruction Unit; Principals Cheryl Joyce, Miley Achievement Center; Kathy Mead, Lawrence Junior High School; Timothy Stevens, Desert Pines High School; Rosalind Gibson, Liberty High School; Lawrence Russell, Monaco Middle School; Grant Hanevold, Moapa Valley High School; Maribel McAdory; Diaz Elementary School; Kimberly Bauman, Lied Middle School; Leo Amador, Valley High School; Jerre Moore, Bendorf Elementary School; Mike Barton, West Prep Academy; Mike Piccininni, Global Community High School; Cindy Krohn, Executive Assistant, Board Office; and Francesca Haak, Transcriber/Recording Secretary, Board Office.

ADOPT AGENDA

Adopt agenda.

Motion: Edwards Second: Moulton Vote: Unanimous

PUBLIC HEARINGS/RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

COMMUNITY LINKAGE

Discussion with invited Clark County School District principals for the purpose of obtaining their perspectives on the education students receive in relationship to the Ends policies of the Board.

Mrs. Janison read from cards submitted by principals present at random regarding something unknown written on each card without mentioning the name, and those present were asked to guess who had written what was read by Mrs. Janison.

Trustee Moulton gave a brief history on CCSD's community linkage meetings.

COMMUNITY LINKAGE (continued)

Mrs. Janison indicated that a summary would be produced of today's community linkage meeting and would be sent to those present. She asked the principals present what policies they felt were working and helping to improve student achievement.

Some of the answers were as follows:

- The collaboration and partnership with College of Southern Nevada (CSN) and the extended offerings available;
- The magnet school option for 8th graders;
- The curriculum alignment;
- State standards and using specific books and curriculum approved by the district has helped high school proficiency; and
- Standard student attire has improved safety.

Mrs. Moulton asked if waivers should be allowed regarding standard student attire.

Some principals disagreed with allowing waivers in attire, and some agreed that certain colors could be considered gang related.

Dr. Kohut-Rost stated middle schools and elementary schools allow blue jeans.

Answers continued as follows regarding policies that were working:

- Student attendance (Policy 5113), although difficult to enforce, and the importance of a response from families when a letter is sent to them regarding absences; and
- Promotion law to require students to pass science and social studies.

BOARD MEMBER ARRIVES

Mr. Mason arrived at the Board meeting at 4:20 p.m.

COMMUNITY LINKAGE (continued)

Mrs. Moulton asked what the principals would like changed.

Some responses regarding student attendance were:

- A recommendation to change how to bring about a campaign to attract students to remain at school;
- Coordination with the legal system; and
- Make students' lack of attendance uncomfortable for the parents.

Mr. Mason asked for opinions regarding cell phones, and some responses included:

- It was agreed that cell phones were a big problem;
- Metro advised against confiscation for a whole day, but advised to return phones to students when they leave school property so the school is not held liable if something happens to the student on the way home from school;
- The new policy is a good one which enables teachers to confiscate cell phones and return them after students leave class;
- Students are watching music videos during class, and it was questioned where the teacher is at this time. It was felt there are some weak teachers who allow this.

COMMUNITY LINKAGE (continued)

Mrs. Janison asked what the negatives were with taking cell phones away, and some responses and solutions included:

- When phones get stolen from a teacher's desk or get stolen overnight, it was felt to be a huge issue;
- A suggestion was locking them up;
- Some teachers are more liberal than others, which can demoralize staff, so one voice would be beneficial to enforce the confiscations of cell phones;
- A suggestion was to make teachers react uniformly and consistently;
- A positive side of cell phone usage is that they are sometimes used to videotape incidents which enables faculty to identify the wrongdoer so there is no dispute, but the bad side of it is it can end up on *You Tube*.

Mrs. Moulton asked if it could be recommended that teachers, principals, and students become involved in the development of this policy.

Some principals responded that they should all be involved, and that student involvement would be very important.

Some other suggestions included:

- To lock up cell phones over lunch, although it was questioned whether lockers were secure;
- Mrs. Janison suggested having a table in the classroom where they hold the phones, and they retrieve their phone when they leave, but the negative of that would be students may pick up the wrong phone;
- Scramble the satellite network so phones cannot work on campus, although the negative would be that teachers' cell phones would not work either;
- Enrollment in a behavioral school over a cell phone infraction was discouraged, so seats could be saved for more serious infractions;
- There should be something in a policy that use of a cell phone is not a right, but a privilege; and
- Impose a \$15 fee to get phone back if the student was in violation of having the phone ring during class, even if it was in the student's backpack.

Dr. Kohut-Rost stated it was suggested that there needs to be a 21st century solution and that just taking them away will not work, so it would be better to educate parents about why schools may confiscate phones. She stated most parents were in agreement. She also stated that this was included in the thought process of the information that was included in a letter distributed to principals last week.

Mrs. Moulton stated communication and education of parents was paramount on this subject.

Dr. Rulfes stated we need to fight technology with technology and that he hopes to pilot a program utilizing blocking satellite signals with the ability to unblock the signal in an emergency.

COMMUNITY LINKAGE (continued)

Mrs. Moulton asked what policies have not helped student achievement, and some of the responses were as follows:

- The grading assessment needed to be looked at further because teacher determination may not be fair. The suggestion was that the system of how to grade should come from a higher level with a committee to explore this further, or to make grading standardized;
- Being at an at-risk school was a plus with field trips being educational, but the negative sides are that there are not enough funds, and it is hard to collect fees from parents, which is an equity issue;
- Suggestions were to retain quality and effective teachers to boost student achievement with a monetary incentive, although some said that merit pay may cause distension among the ranks;
- Schools considered at risk are staffed at high student-to-teacher ratios; and
- Filipino teachers have run out of three-year visas, even though they are happy and want to stay, but policy is lacking so they are moving out of state to gain citizenship.

Dr. Rulfes responded that the teachers who have signed a contract must return to fulfill their obligation. He also stated he has received complaints that the language barrier was a problem. He felt paying about \$20,000 for the three-year, J-1 visa would be better given to an American citizen teacher as opposed to a foreign teacher.

Mr. Mason stated liability was very high in order to sponsor these individuals.

Some issues for foreign teachers included that students cannot understand teachers and will not do well, especially with the need to raise math scores.

Continued responses to Mrs. Moulton's question regarding policies that were not working well were:

- Sick leave was an issue because teachers utilize Form 101 instead of retiring, and long-term substitutes are used, which affects student achievement; and
- Staffing being cut back was difficult, forcing cuts in remedial reading, extra math, and electives. The suggestion of a remedy could be looking at trend data, and it was suggested that schools that have not shown a drop in enrollment should not lose teachers.

Mrs. Moulton suggested going to the regional superintendents regarding cuts in staffing.

Dr. Rulfes stated this has been a district-wide issue, and exceptions were being made.

Some positive policies expressed were professional development and instructional duties and responsibilities.

COMMUNITY LINKAGE (continued)

Mrs. Janison requested other ideas, suggestions, or thoughts the principals had regarding budget cuts, and some responses included:

- Regarding staffing or materials funds, do not cut staff across the board and do not cut them where they are most needed. It was suggested that staffing could be tied to the Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL) program;
- It is a waste of money for a new school's curriculum when many books are being filtered out and discarded because they have expired; and
- Because of the economic uncertainty in Las Vegas, it was questioned whether there could be an increase in the ending fund balance from 2 percent to 4 percent.

Trustee Edwards responded that the ending fund balance was still available for negotiation and not guaranteed.

Mrs. Moulton suggested a rainy day school fund so the district does not have to make these cuts.

Mrs. Janison asked about having Pay Per Play for sports, and she suggested applying the same type of program that is used with the FRL program.

Trustee Edwards suggested if students were eligible for FRL, more students may apply because of the secondary benefit of free or reduced Pay Per Play.

Mrs. Janison asked about increasing the percentage for busing in high school from two to three miles.

Most principals disagreed with that idea because it would result in students who refuse to walk and are absent. Another concern was safety of students crossing major streets. A suggestion was to have the district become collaborative with Citizens Area Transportation (CAT).

Mrs. Moulton stated that option was given to parents, but they objected to it. She spoke about leadership and longevity of principals over time. She stated principals were key to what goes on in the district, and she asked what was important and what could be done through policy to develop good leadership.

Some responses included:

- More support staff at busy schools;
- A partnership and experience with higher education, such as a cohort program, to prepare newcomers;
- Principals and teachers should be assigned a mentor within the district for additional insight, knowledge, and experience; and
- In order to increase Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a strong understanding of curriculum was paramount.

Dr. Kohut-Rost stated there are currently leadership coaches available to each of the regions based on needs. She indicated that Martha Tittle, Chief Human Resource Officer, Human Resources Division, was evaluating and researching a certification program to be a mentor.

Mrs. Moulton thanked everyone for their attendance and expressed appreciation for taking care of CCSD presently and into the future.

COMMUNITY LINKAGE (continued)

Regarding the math committee, it was asked if anyone was speaking with the students regarding what they feel the problem is with algebra. It was suggested that some teachers are not really teaching algebra, and students take the problem with them to college.

Mrs. Janison suggested emailing any other suggestions to the School Board Office.

Dr. Kohut-Rost stated the district was listening to students, and they have been an ongoing part of discussion.

Mr. Mason stated along with concerns, that solutions be suggested also.

It was felt that something was wrong with the Algebra I curriculum in middle school which does not prepare students for high school. Another problem was different pacing in different schools, which affects district test scores. The suggestion was to give more options at middle school to be better prepared in high school.

It was stated that the word "rural" only comes up once in the policies, and rural schools feel they do not have a voice. It was suggested to form a committee of rural school principals who could meet with Superintendent Rulfes a few times a year to help get issues resolved.

Mrs. Scow stated there had been a Community Educational Advisory Board (CEAB) for the rural schools, and the district was trying to bring it back again.

Mrs. Janison thanked everyone present, reiterated that a summary would be distributed, and she encouraged feedback.

ADJOURN: 5:42 p.m.

Motion: Edwards Second: Mason Vote: Unanimous