

MINUTES
CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
SOUTHWEST CAREER & TECHNICAL ACADEMY, BUILDING B, ROOM 112
7050 W. SHELBOURNE AVENUE, LAS VEGAS, NV 89113

WORK SESSION

Wednesday, September 2, 2009

9:05 a.m.

Roll Call: Members Present

Terri Janison, President
Carolyn Edwards, Vice President
Sheila R. Moulton, Clerk
Chris Garvey, Member
Deanna L. Wright, Member
Dr. Linda E. Young, Member

Member Absent

Larry P. Mason, Member

Dr. Walt Rulffes, Superintendent of Schools

Also present were: Mark Wood, Board Counsel, District Attorney's Office; Maureen Fox, Director, Management Process System (MPS) Office, Office of the Chief of Staff; Cindy Krohn, Executive Assistant, Board Office; Elizabeth Carrero, Secretary to the Superintendent, Office of the Superintendent; and Stephanie Gatlin, Transcriber/Recording Secretary, Board Office.

ADOPT AGENDA

Adopt agenda.

Motion: Moulton Second: Edwards Vote: Unanimous

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Trustee Edwards invited Felicia Nemcek, Principal, Southwest Career and Technical Academy (SWCTA), to say a few words to the Board.

Ms. Nemcek introduced Michael Butler, Assistant Principal, SWCTA. She explained the makeup of the CTA, stating the school opened with 11 programs and encompasses two smaller schools called academies, which are the Professional Service Academy that features hospitality and culinary; and the Automotive Technologies Academy that features biodiesel and alternative fuels. She said they also have the three health sciences, which include respiratory therapy, dentistry, and nursing. She talked about some of the other programs being offered at her school, such as video game technology, entertainment engineering design, interior design, web design, and fashion design.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (continued)

Trustee Young asked what the ethnic distribution was of the school.

Ms. Nemcek stated she believed it was 36 percent Asian Pacific; just below 30 percent Hispanic and Caucasian, respectively; and approximately 12 to 15 percent African-American. She offered to provide exact percentages to the Board via email.

Dr. Rulfes recognized the Board, past and present, for having the wisdom and courage to move forward with the CTA model.

Trustee Young expressed appreciation for Dr. Rulfes's leadership.

APPROVE CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES GOVERNANCE POLICIES

Approval regarding the Board's application of Clark County School District Board of Trustees Governance Policies.

Mrs. Fox began by stating Board/Superintendent communication is an important part of the governance model. She stated that the governing system chosen by the Board is a model whereby the Superintendent is charged with running the school district, adding that the Board members do not have the background and experience necessary to be a superintendent.

Trustee Young pointed out that she possesses the educational and training background to be a superintendent.

Trustee Edwards stated she believes one of the challenges a Board member faces is recognizing the different roles of the Superintendent and of a Board member and to be cognizant of not slipping into the role of the Superintendent even if one believes they possess the background.

Trustee Janison spoke about her background in the business world and having those opinions from that perspective as opposed to the perspective of a policy maker.

Discussion revolved around the difference between the role of the Superintendent and the role of Board members as policy makers.

Mrs. Fox reminded the trustees that at the July 1, 2009, Board work session, there was discussion centered on value and moving an issue forward, and she asked the Board members how they envisioned moving forward from addressing an issue to turning that issue into policy or into a provision in policy.

Answers included providing data and background information through researching and surveying individuals, then bringing that information before the Board for a discussion; and monitoring through the Strategic Plan.

Trustee Moulton suggested the Board should conduct an annual review and update of the Strategic Plan.

APPROVE CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES GOVERNANCE POLICIES (continued)

Mrs. Fox stated that through reviewing the Strategic Plan, the Board can, if necessary, approach the Superintendent and ask for a monitoring report. She stated the trustees can periodically review the Strategic Plan to monitor whether or not they are moving ahead in their objectives. She said the Board now receives information about Strategic Planning objectives in the monitoring reports, which updates the Board on issues related to items they have approved, goals and objectives that are being set, how those objectives are being reached, and what the results are. She said the Board members are, in essence, ambassadors for the District and for the children. She talked about the procedure for resolving issues brought forward by constituents.

Trustee Janison stated that she responds to constituents because it is the right thing to do.

Trustee Young spoke about her efforts to answer all constituents' concerns that she receives.

Mrs. Fox commented that the community linkage meetings developed by the Board, in her opinion, are the strongest strategy the Board has as a linkage to the Board for bringing valuable information back to the District. She returned to an exercise she gave to the Board at the previous meeting. She asked the Board to think about the list they previously made about topics that are important to them and find the Executive Limitation (EL) policy where the Board has directed the Superintendent with relation to their specific concern.

The discussion included the trustees' rationale for choosing the policies they did; clarification of the policy with relation to how the Superintendent interprets his responsibility; the process of receiving concerns, gathering backup data to bring to the Board, and suggesting revision of the policy; how the Superintendent addresses the issue brought to him by the Board through guiding them toward the corresponding regulation; addressing problems in enforcing policies when reasonable funds are not available due to recent budget cuts; addressing who the persons are that should be responsible for writing regulations and addressing enforcement of the regulation through discussion with the Superintendent and/or the Superintendent designees and through monitoring reports; and resolving frustrations of Board members due to not receiving information requested, such as bringing the request back as an agenda item and having discussions directly with the Superintendent.

Mrs. Fox asked Dr. Rulfes what constitutes an operational issue, in his opinion, when listening to the Board.

Dr. Rulfes stated examples of Board members getting into operational issues would be soliciting him to hire a certain individual, asking him to override magnet school rules to get students in, and requesting that he overlook major violations by employees. He said although it may be offensive to some Board members, he adamantly refuses to engage in such misconduct.

Mrs. Fox pointed out that the Superintendent's obligation to the Board, as outlined in their own policies, is to inform the Board when they are not functioning under their own policies.

APPROVE CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES GOVERNANCE POLICIES (continued)

Trustee Janison noted the importance of the Superintendent alerting the Board that they are moving into an operational issue when they do so in a public meeting to negate confusion among members of the public.

Dr. Rulffes expressed his reluctance to pointing that fact out in a public meeting, and he said he typically approaches any requests that may be operational by recommending that it be brought forward by the full Board.

There was discussion regarding the Board's and Superintendent's roles and responsibilities and how that is conveyed to constituents and how to respond to requests and concerns brought forth by parents and community members.

Mr. Wood notified the Board that while discussions are taking place at the Board meeting, the trustees need to be aware of the direction and the broadness of the discussion in relation to the specific agenda item.

There was discussion regarding how the Board goes about clearly communicating direction to the Superintendent.

Mrs. Fox stated the governance policy model is in place to serve as a tool to cultivate the relationship between the Board and their employee, the Superintendent, and the Superintendent's ultimate responsibility of running the school district.

There was some discussion regarding conversations at Board meetings between the Superintendent and the Board members regarding matters of concern and then moving forward and requesting an agenda item to address the specific concern at an upcoming Board meeting.

Trustee Edwards suggested that Board members review the policies and bring forth any content changes or recommendations they want to bring forward, and those can be brought to the Board while also making the grammatical changes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DIGNITARIES AT BOARD MEETINGS

Discussion and possible action to develop a process that acknowledges former Board members, current and former elected officials, and school namesakes during Board meetings.

Trustee Young explained this item was placed on the agenda to develop a process whereby Board members can recognize dignitaries present at their meetings. She explained that she and Mrs. Krohn had crafted a sign-in sheet that would be provided at each meeting, and that information would be passed on to the Board president.

Trustee Moulton pointed out that some individuals may not want to be recognized.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DIGNITARIES AT BOARD MEETINGS (continued)

Trustee Wright stated it may become problematic due to dignitaries coming and leaving at different points of the meeting and knowing when they would be recognized.

Trustee Janison stated most people are present in the first hour so she prefers to wait until the end of the first hour to recognize those dignitaries present, and it would be at the chair's discretion as to when to recognize individuals after that point.

Trustee Edwards stated she believes it is important to recognize all those present at some point in the meeting.

Trustee Wright suggested placing something on the sign-in sheet that would allow that individual to indicate that they prefer not to be recognized.

There was some discussion regarding who would be recognized.

Mr. Wood stated that a clarification could be included that candidates would not be recognized but elected officials would be.

Trustee Moulton suggested that Dr. Rulfes should also be able to recognize other individuals and invitees present at Board meetings as well, such as a superintendent from another school district.

Trustee Edwards suggested the sign-in sheet should include an area where the individual would be able to identify whether they were an elected official, a former trustee, or a school namesake.

Trustee Janison stated this procedure could be started at the September 10, 2009, Board meeting.

Trustee Young suggested using the form on a trial basis and bringing it back to the Board in approximately six months.

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

ADJOURN: 11:37 a.m.

Motion: Moulton Second: Young Vote: Unanimous