

Minutes
Clark County School District
Meeting of the Board of School Trustees
Edward A. Greer Education Center, Board Room
2832 East Flamingo Road, Las Vegas, Nevada 89121

Work Session

Wednesday, May 7, 2025

4:02 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present
Irene Bustamante Adams, President
Brenda Zamora, Vice President
Tameka Henry, Clerk
Isaac Barron, Member
Lorena Biassotti, Member
Linda P. Cavazos, Member
Lydia Dominguez, Member
Ramona Esparza-Stoffregan, Member
Adam Johnson, Member
Lisa Satory, Member
Emily Stevens, Member

Jhone Ebert, Superintendent of Schools

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Welcome, everyone joining today. I'm President Irene Bustamante Adams and I call this work session on May 7th, 2025 to order. The time is 4:02. I would like to remind everyone to silence your electronic devices.

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is territorial homelands for the Nuwu-the Moapa Band of Paiutes and the Las Vegas Band of Paiutes.

Flag Salute

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

With that, we're going to have Trustee Stevens, please lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance for opening Item 101.

We're going to move to agenda Item 1.02, adoption of the agenda. Before I open that, is there anyone that has not completed a public speaker card to be able to speak on the record? I don't see any Vice President Zamora? Okay, then I will close that.

Adoption of the Agenda

Motion to adopt the agenda with the following changes, reference material has been provided for item 2.01, Board Counsel Review of Proposals.

*Motion: Biassotti Second: Cavazos Vote: Unanimous
Motion passed.*

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Trustee Biassotti, would you like to make a motion to approve the agenda?

Trustee Biassotti:

Madam President, members of the board, I would like to make a motion to adopt the agenda with the following changes. Additional reference material has been provided for Item 2.01 Board Counsel Review of Respondent Proposals.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. I have a motion from Trustee Biassotti. Do I have a second? Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, Madam President. I will second that motion.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. I have a first and a second. Will you please cast your votes? That motion passes 7-0.

Now we'll move to agenda Item 2.01, and so before I open that item, is there anybody that hasn't completed a public comment card? We do have one speaker. We will take that after presentation. And so, I know that I'm going to talk about it later in the agenda, but we are looking into our parliamentary procedures and Robert Rules of Order. We're going to be practicing that and deciding as a team how we're going to move forward with that, but today we'll stick to our format that we have been using.

2.01 Board Counsel Review of Respondent Proposals.

Discussion and possible action regarding the review of the respondent proposals to the Board Counsel Request for Qualifications, and/or possible action regarding the next steps in hiring Board Counsel. **(For Possible Action)** [Contact Person: Irene Bustamante Adams] (Ref. 2.01) *(According to Governance Policy GP-3: Board Responsibilities)*

Motion to table the decision of who to hire for Board Counsel and interview candidates within the next two weeks.

*Motion: Stevens Second: Biassotti Vote: Yeses-2(Biassotti, Stevens); No-5(Bustamante Adams, Cavazos, Dominguez, Henry, Zamora)
Motion failed.*

Motion to table the decision of who to hire and interview candidates in the next two weeks, and if interviews cannot be held in the next two weeks, that they be conducted at the June 4, 2025 Board Work Session.

*Motion: Stevens Second: Dominguez Vote: Yeses-6(Bustamante Adams, Biassotti, Dominguez, Henry, Stevens, Zamora); No-1(Cavazos)
Motion passed.*

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

This is Board Counsel Review of Respondent Proposals. It is an action item and I'm going to ask our legal counsel for some help here. We have two proposals is that correct? And then is Superintendent Ebert, is somebody from the team going to review that? Is somebody from purchasing or Steve Staggs going to read? Okay, then Mr. Staggs, if you would please come forward. And Mr. Staggs just high overview. Yeah, you could either sit down Mr. Staggs, please.

Oh, Mr. Staggs, can you wait for a second, Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, Madam President. I apologize. Mr. Staggs, before he begins, I just want to clarify. So, the training we received on Friday as far as where motions would be made first and then the trustees would do discussion and then we would hear public comment. We're not adhering to that at this time?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you for the question. Part of it is training, not only that we receive the training, so yes, in a short answer, yes. It's not that it is not going to be applied, it's that we are going to also work with the superintendent staff to notify them how we're going to apply the parliamentary procedure. And so, giving everyone a chance to adjust and especially the month of May, but my hope is that we would start practicing after we train the superintendent staff as well in June on how we were taught on Friday.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay, so just to clarify so that I don't make any unnecessary mistakes and cause more problems. So, we're not going to follow the Roberts Rules of Order and the parliamentary procedure that we were taught on Friday, we're not going to do that yet, is what you're saying?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Yes, that is correct.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay. So, we're going to go back to what we did before, which is presentation and then we're going to have the public comment first and then the discussion?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Yes, the deliberation.

Trustee Cavazos:
Okay. I just want to go on the record though that Dr. Alsbury did make a specific point that one of the reasons he did not want us to do that is because of the public comment and because of us possibly being swayed, et cetera. So just want to go on the record and understand that we are going back to the regular way we had done it before.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Yes, we're using the way that we have been using it and giving the time for everyone to adjust by June.

Trustee Cavazos:
For the time being?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Yes, just for the time being.

Trustee Cavazos:
Okay. Thank you.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Thank you. Yes, Trustee Zamora?

Trustee Zamora:
Thank you, Madam President for clarification. We're still following Robert's Rules of Order. It's not that we're not doing that. We still are doing it. It's just in this way.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Thank you so much. Vice President Zamora, Mr. Staggs? No. Okay.

Steve Staggs:
Now?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Okay, there you go.

Steve Staggs:
Okay. There we go. Madam President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert, Steve Staggs for the record. The proposals you have in front of you are from two different requests for qualifications that we did. The second RFQ went out after we only got one response to the first, which is Parker Nelson. On the second one, we actually targeted several firms by sending them

Steve Staggs:

emails, letting them know it was out there, including some of the firms that were discussed during the superintendent contract negotiations. But yeah, for superintendent contract negotiations, they did not. Only one responded and that is North Star Law. So that's what we've got.

You've been provided a rubric that you can use to rate what you see in terms of experience, the technical response, overall, what your impression of the firms are. You've also been provided the pricing matrices and there is a bit of a difference there as I'm sure you've noticed. So, at this point, it's just a matter of tonight you can make a decision on one of these or decide to go a different direction.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you, Mr. Staggs. At this time. Just one more moment. All right, are there any questions from trustees at this time? Trustee Stevens?

Trustee Stevens:

So just to clarify, we're going to ask questions and discuss right now about these two applicants, but we don't get to interview them or anything. They're not here. We're just looking at the resources that we have.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Yes. I don't see anybody in the audience, Mr. Staggs, that is from the law firm, correct?

Steve Staggs:

Correct. We can always ask them to come be interviewed at a future work session if you would like. That's within the realm of possibility.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. Does that answer your question Trustee Stevens?

Trustee Stevens:

It does.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Okay. Trustee Johnson?

Trustee Johnson:

And Mr. Staggs, when you say go in a different direction, that means we could be creative about what we decide we want to do, meaning it's not just binary, these or none. It could be figuring out some other combination of thing we want to do if we decide that neither of these is what we want.

Steve Staggs:

Correct. If you decide you want neither, we could always do another RFQ, maybe get another one in the mix. Or you could approach law firms in town, see if they have an interest in doing the job and just solicit quotes from them perhaps as well. There's a variety. It doesn't have to be through an RFQ process, so if you would like to pick from one of these two, that's wonderful, but it's not absolutely required.

Trustee Johnson:

Okay, so that's an option. Pick one of these two.

Steve Staggs:

Right.

Trustee Johnson:

Other option is we decide as a board to go in a direction of maybe approaching law firms. Another one is we decide to let law firms but we are not bound by this only decision right here today.

Steve Staggs:

That's correct.

Trustee Johnson:

Okay.

Steve Staggs:

There are options.

Trustee Johnson:

All right, thank you.

Steve Staggs:

You're welcome.

Trustee Johnson:

Thank you.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Trustee Barron?

Trustee Barron:

Thank you, Madam President. Scott, good to see you. Quick question. When I was reviewing here, I guess the proposal from Counselor Parker Law Agency, let's just say the colleagues decided they wanted to go with his law firm. I think you've already answered my question. Would we actually have the ability to go ahead and pick a particular attorney on his firm? Are we hiring the firm in

Trustee Barron:

general or are we hiring someone like Mr. Parker himself or anyone particular? Is that kind of least open for us?

Steve Staggs:

We'd be hiring the firm, but I think we would have an option if we wanted a particular attorney board or excuse me, district counsel would have a better take on that.

Trustee Barron:

And the only reason why I say it is because it seems like for us to begin to build stability, it would be best for us to pick one particular attorney, if we wanted to go with the Parker Nelson and Associates, it would be good for us to pick one particular attorney if they were available and if they fit our needs. Although I would love to have access to, I actually know a couple of the attorneys, they come with outstanding credentials, but I would think that my colleagues would probably be better served to have one person for us to be familiar with, one person for us to basically have, I mean if that person's out on vacation for one, because of course everyone does have to have some time off. It is nice to know that we have the backup of their firm that have someone to come in and fill in for them.

I think I would feel best served if we had a familiarity with one person in particular. That's not really a question. I guess that's just like an opinion. But thank you very much. I do appreciate your answer. General counsel, did you have anything to add to my inquiry?

Jon Okazaki:

Yes, thank you. Jon Okazaki, General Counsel. Typically, when you contract with a firm, you are contracting with the firm and they will assign or designate an attorney at any particular time. A lot of times it's based on not only experience but availability. I think Mr. Parker in his proposal is contemplating this scenario because he's given you a range of fees depending on who from his firm is going to render the service.

My thought and my comment is that at this point in the process, for example, if the board was inclined to start further negotiating with Parker, then you could set terms. We still need to enter into a service agreement with whichever firm or attorney you hire or decide to employ. And so, at that point we can start negotiations as far as the terms and if you wanted to say, "We only want this person because that's the person who has the most experience," that is definitely something you could ask for in your terms.

Trustee Barron:

Thank you.

Jon Okazaki:

You're welcome.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Thank you. Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, Madam President. Mr. Staggs on these presentations that are given here as far as with the two firms, and in reference to what my colleague asked here, I have to agree with counsel too because the only time that we have had just one attorney representing board counsels when the Clark County District Attorney's office appointed someone. And even then, if somebody was on vacation, they usually tried to have a backup attorney, but it didn't always work out.

First of all, I'm going to have a question about conflict of interest, but I'm going to save that. What I'm seeing here is that Parker Nelson has provided us with basically the material and the information having to do with himself and then 1, 2, 3, 4 different other attorneys from the firm that possibly would be available. Now, on the other hand, the other firm, and I can't find the exact part, it looks like I have part of the printout here, but not all of it. But I did read through it. It appears that Mr. Gardner was very upfront and said right in his proposal that North Star is basically kind of like a mini law firm that he put together specifically for this proposal and that he would have to possibly, if they needed assistance, have to look to external consultants. I would take that to mean maybe possibly another firm.

I know that he is with another firm that I believe, and don't quote me on this, I'm not sure if it's correct. I believe that their firm that he's with right now concentrates or focuses on bankruptcy. Was there any vetting done as to how long any of these firms have been in business under their current names? Any kind of vetting at all?

Steve Staggs:

Trustee Cavazos, no, just what they put in their proposal. North Star is a brand-new firm and like you mentioned, and from what I read, it's a one-man band and he's just put that together for this very purpose.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay. Thank you so much. And I will have a question about conflict of interest, but I'd like to give my colleagues a chance to speak.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you, Trustee Cavazos. Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan?

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

So, I want to go to the actual applications. We all were expected to deep read. So, it does say in Parker, Nelson and Associates that he would assume the lead role and that he would defer to other attorneys within his firm based on their expertise. So, I mean, I'm just showing kind of the balance. There is the plethora of skill sets and if you looked at each of their applications, they're very unique diversity of his staff. He also has done some modifying of CCSD legal documents for public works.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

So, he's had some previous experience within our system of education. It says they've been in professional services since 2022.

What I didn't see in the other side of the alternative candidate, Mr. Gardner, was that they have experience with collective bargaining disputes and CBAs collective bargaining agreements. So that's definitely a skillset that we, not that our general counsel, that's his job, but we could ask questions as trustees about the process and such.

Let's go to dollars and cents. This is my question, Mr. Staggs for you. So, the hourly rate of Parker is himself \$300 an hour. If an associate did it, it would be 250. If a paraprofessional is engaged, it'd be 125 an hour. He does have a flat monthly rate of 18,500. Mr. Gardner, who also is equally qualified but also unique because he has a lot of educational experience having served on the board of education. So, there's a vast array of him like being able to hit the ground running, but dollars and cents, his hourly rate is 400 to \$450 an hour, which apparently in the application says that was a discount, but he has a monthly retainer between 34,000 up to 39,000. So, are we required Mr. Staggs to pay the monthly if they, what is that?

Steve Staggs:

Again, I may have to defer to general counsel. They both offered hourly rates as you mentioned, kind of vastly different. And the retainers are vastly different. My impression was you do one or the other, you do the retainer or you do the hours. If we're doing both, it gets a lot more expensive than I thought.

Jon Okazaki:

Yes. Jon Okazaki, General Counsel. Typically, a retainer is you pay the retainer and it's out the door. So regardless of whether you actually required the amount of hours that equal the retainer, you've paid for the retainer, that's part of the deal as far as retaining them. It's usually at a lower rate than hourly. So, if you do stay within the hours, then it's typically less costly, but if you don't use up the hours, then you've paid for hours that you didn't use. And then the other option is just straight hourly. Again though, I'm sorry, you can negotiate whatever terms you want.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

So, because as a follow-up, and I think this is important for us to know, Mr. Okazaki, what was your approximate hours that you served us per week?

Jon Okazaki:

I'm going to estimate that it would easily be 20 hours a week. Yeah, so I'm thinking we're going into negotiations. It just seems like there's always a busy time for the board. Plus, the attendance at board meetings, remember anytime they're going to come to these board meetings, which we have three times a week, three times a month at least, and a regular board meeting usually is five hours. So right there is, you know?

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:
Pass it on.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Thank you. Trustee Dominguez?

Trustee Dominguez:
Thank you, Madam President. Again, I want to defer my question to Dr. I'm sorry. Dr. Mr. Okazaki, did we vet for any conflict of interest? Did we review any kind of interactions they've had with for these two, the law firm and the lawyer? Any interactions with CCSD?

Jon Okazaki:
Yes, Jon Okazaki, General Counsel. For Parker Nelson, we do know that his firm represents Workforce Connections, which President Bustamante Adams is affiliated with. I do not see that there's any conflict from the board in hiring Parker Nelson. The conflict arises when either the board or President Bustamante Adams would receive some type of benefit by doing this and the connection is not there. The only conflict would be is if by chance CCS...no, the board of trustees, not CCSD, the actual board of trustees or any member thereof was directly involved in a lawsuit with Workforce Connections.

At that point, Parker Nelson has represented to me that they would have to represent Workforce Connections and therefore the board would have to either defer to general counsel or another type of outside counsel to represent them. I will tell you; we have not had any situation like that with Workforce Connections. So, I don't think it's a concerning possibility, but that's what would happen if that occurred.

In regard to Mr. Gardner, I didn't do any actual investigation as to conflict. My understanding is he was, we all know he was board counsel for NDE and then I think he's striking out and just creating this private company so that he could do this work instead. So as far as North Star Law, I don't think he has any other clients. I think this would be it.

Trustee Dominguez:
Thank you. So just so my understanding, he is representing Workforce currently as their main attorney.

Jon Okazaki:
Mr. Parker?

Trustee Dominguez:
Yes. The Parker Nelson?

Jon Okazaki:
Yes. I think his law firm is their primary attorneys. That's my understanding.

Trustee Dominguez:

Got it. And then are there any other conflicts that we have that anybody else here would like to disclose? If we have anything? I just want to give an open mic to anyone.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you, Trustee Dominguez. I do want to speak up since I am employed by Workforce Connections and I was trying to put myself in the queue. And so yes, I disclosed that that is my place of employment the last time that the RFP came up and we decided to open it back up. And so, they do represent the staff. They represent the organization, and then the local elected officials that govern us, they're represented by their legal counsel. So, I thank you for making sure that I put it on the record.

Trustee Dominguez:

Thank you.

Jon Okazaki:

And I'm sorry if I could just make one more comment. I didn't have a chance to speak with you privately. I'm just going to do it now. I think if the board was to put to vote Parker Nelson, in an abundance of caution, I would recommend that the president abstain because of her relationship with Workforce Connections.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Trustee Stevens?

Trustee Stevens:

Is it Mr. Staggs? Am I saying that right? Okay.

Steve Staggs:

That's correct. Yes. I go by whatever I'm called.

Trustee Stevens:

So, I want to be fair to Mr. Staggs, I don't have questions for you. I have questions for them.

Steve Staggs:

Understand.

Trustee Stevens:

You know what I mean? And it's not really fair to you. So, this is really more for discussion for my fellow trustees. We are in a really unique position here. In the past, we were just given someone, and now that that is not the case and we actually get to make this decision, we have an opportunity to vet them ourselves. An actual interview. In my professional career, I would never hire somebody based on their resume alone. I just wouldn't. And that's what we're looking at here today. So, I'm not going to make a motion because we're not there yet, but I would like to submit to my fellow

Trustee Stevens:

trustees the idea that it's possible that while we ask some questions to Mr. Staggs and we discuss this. For me, I don't feel great about making a decision tonight knowing that the folks that we are looking to potentially hire are not here to answer some of these questions that we have.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you, Trustee Stevens. Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, Madam President. In reference to what my colleagues Trustees Dominguez and Stevens have brought up. Trustee Dominguez, we did have previous times when our president was asked about the affiliation and she was very open and transparent about coming forth and stating her affiliation. And we did weigh in with counsel as far as not having a conflict. And Mr. Okazaki, I just want to confirm, we have not had any instances with any lawsuits with Workforce Connections. Is that correct?

Jon Okazaki:

I can't definitively say that. I can definitively say that you've never had a Workforce Connection lawsuit. That in which any board member or the board as a whole was an actual defendant and that was the only time a conflict would occur. If workforce was to get into a contractual dispute with Workforce Connections that still would not present a conflict with them because he's only representing you the board.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay, and thank you for that. That was my understanding, but I just wanted to clarify that. The other thing also too is in reference to what Trustee Stevens had brought up. Trustee Stevens before, we did have the opportunity in 2021, we did have the opportunity when we put together this rubric to actually in groups of two or three and we did virtual meetings and we did get to interview. Then when we got to the very last time that we got them narrowed down to three firms, we had one trustee that brought up that we could get a free attorney from the County DA's office. So, three months of interviews and the rubrics and everything, I'm just going to say it, they went down the drain and we had gotten to interview them. So that's a very good point that she makes.

I do want to go on the record of saying that not only would it be good to interview people, but I'm just going to say that I'm uncomfortable with Mr. Gardner, although he's being upfront and honest at saying this. I would want to know, is he still with this other firm and an active partner in that firm? But then he has North Star, as he stated very clearly here. This is something that he put together. So, I don't see any other support staff or any other attorneys that he has that would be able to step in. When he says external, he would have to go to another firm to ask them for assistance, whereas Parker Nelson has four other attorneys with a wide diversity of experience. So, I just want to put that on the record. That is an area of concern to me. Thank you.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Thank you, Trustee. Trustee Biassotti?

Trustee Biassotti:
Thank you, Madam President. I'm going to be honest, when I first came in here, I was expecting to see them here so we can ask them direct questions. So, these are all really valid points. I would like to have been able to ask questions. I am impressed with David Gardner's resume, the scope of his services. For that reason, I would like to be able to further this interaction with him and ask more questions. And I would like to make a motion to table this selection. I'm not sure if that's?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Yeah, we're not going to-

Trustee Biassotti:
Not yet?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Not yet.

Trustee Biassotti:
Okay. So, it would just be my personal opinion that if we could move forward with another round of questions that we have David Gardner for that. Thank you.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Thank you, Trustee. Trustee Satory?

Trustee Satory:
Thank you. Yes, I as well was surprised not to see them here. That was my question were they aware that it was on tonight's work session?

Steve Staggs:
No, they were not asked to be here. We were not appraised that there was going to be-

Trustee Satory:
Okay. So, they were notified for discussion at this work session because that was kind of concerning to me that if they would know and wouldn't choose to send a representative or attend.

Steve Staggs:
No, we weren't asked to schedule them for this evening.

Trustee Satory:
Okay, but if we were to table it, we could make that request to both of them to attend the session?

Steve Staggs:

Yeah, absolutely. Okay. I'm sure if one or either really want the job, they will show up.

Trustee Satory:

Yeah. Yeah, I think so.

Steve Staggs:

In fact, I believe Mr. Parker was here last time and that was on his own volition. That was not because we asked him to be here.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. And Mr. Caruso, I don't know if you want to add anything to that conversation, but also Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan? Okay.

Joe Caruso:

Madam President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert, Joe Caruso for the record. So just a reminder, the motion made on the last board work session was to reopen the RFQ for board counsel, ensure it's open for two weeks and bring it back to this work session. So that was what the pleasure of the board was at that. So, if the intent was to have candidates interview that wasn't included in the direction from the board. I just want to remind, so I don't want Mr. Staggs to go home and feel like he didn't do his homework. So that was the pleasure of the board then. If there's a different direction, then we just need to get clarity to move forward.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you so much. Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan?

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Okay, so it's obvious people want them to come interview. I know you're not entertaining a motion. There is a potential that we could lose the two candidates we have.

Steve Staggs:

Well again, it depends how bad they want the job. And we can interview one, we can interview both. It seems like there's differing camps in terms of who would be best.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Do the interviews have to be in public?

Steve Staggs:

Probably a good idea.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Mr. Okazaki?

Jon Okazaki:

Jon Okazaki General Counsel. No, the only thing that has to be in public is under the open meeting law, which means that if you have a quorum of the board or a series of meetings that constitute a quorum in a meeting, that would have to be in public. But what Trustee Cavazos was describing before, when three trustees without a quorum were interviewing people, that's not an open, that's not a meeting subject to open meeting.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

I'm just going to say to my fellow trustees that we need to expedite this. We've been waiting for like two years, maybe, Cavazos was longer? I think what for, to have representation? So, I just want to, let's be creative. Could we do the interviews, however where it doesn't violate open meeting law and then do the deliberation and decision thereafter? Just a consideration so we can help Mr. Okazaki to do his day job because he is really doing three jobs I believe. Forgive my humor.

Steve Staggs:

But again, as Trustee Cavazos mentioned, doing it in groups took several months, so it won't be the most expeditious manner.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

We need Caruso, then, we need-

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Yeah, I was just going to, Mr. Caruso, could you come up and help us to frame how could we, because there is an interest in just wanting to see how we could make that work, even though May is extremely complicated.

Joe Caruso:

Madam President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert, Joe Caruso for the record. So, May is difficult. As you know, the last two weeks of May, we've reserved for graduation, so everything's pushed up. You have tomorrow night a regular board meeting. You have next Thursday night, a regular board meeting. The following Monday you have adoption of the budget meeting. So, trying to find a day for 11 people to do together is a challenge. Might I suggest you have a June work session. Perhaps you put that as an agenda review of respondent and interviews and then do an action item as the section item to have discussion and possible action to make that decision then. And that way there, it's already noticed it's on your calendars and perhaps instead of adding an additional meeting, maybe go for that direction, especially since May is as packed as can be. Just a thought.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you for that insight. That's very helpful. Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, madam President. I wanted to weigh in with counsel again. I told you, Jon, warned you. When you were talking to us before and I believe Mr. Staggs had reiterated also. It's basically if we wanted to go a retainer, that's one route. If we wanted to go hourly, that's another route. It's not recommended that we would do both. And when you had spoken with us before, you had talked with us quite candidly about at first when you started this unbelievably, shall we say, thrilling job of being our interim counsel that you were having just like a few hours a week. But then as things escalated and with superintendent selection and several other things, it did grow to about 20 hours a week. So, when you were talking about 20 hours a week before, you were not saying that it was going to be 20 hours all the time, but that 20 hours would be a reasonable estimate. Accounting like say closed sessions, attending board meetings, etc. Is that what you're saying? It'd be a good number?

Jon Okazaki:

Yes, definitely. When I started in October, it was not 20 hours a week. And so, it started picking up with the new trustees and then when we started ramping up the superintendent search it, then it escalated. And since then, it has been averaging about 20 hours a week. The only reason I said that that may be a good number is because you're going into negotiations. So, I think you're going to be meeting more often in closed sessions, 288 meetings and things like that. And that's why I said it tends to seem like you guys are always busy. So, I'm not sure what happened in October that allowed me to maybe only be doing like 10 hour, five, 10 hours a week. I don't know. I think at least half if not more than it's going to be 20 hours a week.

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, Mr. Okazaki. Because we have had some issues in the past with previous board counsel for one reason or another, not being able to be there for meetings, not being able to phone in and not being able to be present at closed session. So, one thing that I would ask my colleagues to look at here is again, what Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan is bringing up. Let's face it, there's not like people breaking down our door to work with us. Okay. They're just not. And so, when Mr. Staggs talks about trying to be able, and Joe, as far as getting the meetings together, it did take a few months, but we were starting with about, I don't remember exactly, I'd have to ask Joe, but I think Joe was around 10 at the beginning and then we broke it down to three. So, it did take a while.

I want to point out again something that Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan brought up and we're looking at the monetary value here and also the quality of work that we are asking somebody to commit to. So, if we're looking at Parker Nelson at 300 per hour, if we went that way, if we were looking at Gardner, we'd be looking at 550 an hour. Although he says he might give us a discount, and so that's good because that's always negotiable. But if we did a retainer, we've been looking at a difference of about 216,000 a year on a retainer with Parker Nelson and we're looking at about half a million for David Gardner if we went the retainer route. So, I just want to go ahead and just make that point and kind of reiterate what Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan said. Thank you.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Thank you. Trustee Barron?

Trustee Barron:

Thank you, Madam President. Actually, my question was actually going to be for Joe, but I think he kind of answered it. I have a feeling that even if we wanted to interview both firms, as I understand the last time that this board interviewed, they had multiple candidates? Like more than five, right?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
About 10.

Trustee Barron:

About 10. So, I could understand why that would actually take longer. We're talking basically two firms here to interview. I always underestimate, but I don't think if we had already some set questions that we asked the firms that we had developed, we'd probably ask these questions probably within about an hour or so, even in the smaller groups and get through them in a relatively quick time. I don't think this is going to be as difficult as we really think. Time is kind of like of the essence. We have our general counsel who has to get back to doing his job, which is overseeing and litigating. This board has already shown that it wants to move in any new direction.

I could be wrong, but I think we actually have a diversity of qualified applicants here with only one law firm, which is we're probably going to be well online with what we might be willing to pay as in a conscientious fashion as stewards of the public trust. And I also point out that if we wanted to, this board could also make sure that it's only a one-year contract. So, we see how that works and if at this time next year after we assign people along, we can always go ahead and go in a different direction. But I would say that time is of the essence.

With Parker Nelson, I think we have reasonable candidates that we could probably ask them to come in and talk to them and find out how we want to work with them. Again, advice is like whatever, you get good advice, you get bad advice, but we could probably get competent advice at a reasonable rate. And I think if we as this board set its parameters, we could probably do this in a very reasonable fashion because we don't have a whole lot of, I think we did well to pick our superintendent. But we did have experience. We did have experience with it, right? And this we don't have any experience. So, at this point I know I'd be ready to make a motion. But I think I'll wait until our discussion has ended and at that time that our president chooses to open it up for the motions though.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Thank you, Trustee. Trustee Johnson?

Trustee Johnson:

I have a process question. This is for you, Mr. Okazaki. Step one, question one, what would be the... because I heard Mr. Staggs, can you pronounce your last name please?

Steve Staggs:
Staggs.

Trustee Johnson:
Staggs. Mr. Staggs.

Steve Staggs:
Staggs, yes.

Trustee Johnson:
Mr. Staggs mentioned that an RFP wasn't required to do this process and I think we just went that route. And so, if an attorney heard this on the news or got approached by us tomorrow, what would be the process if they were like they want to be interviewed too? What would they get into the pool? Or is it only these two now because this is where we are?

Jon Okazaki:
Jon Okazaki, for the record, yes, this is a personal service contract, so it's not subject to public bidding. The process of putting it out for a request for a proposal was just something that the board decided to do and that's the way they did it in the past. It's not required. So, if at any point any of you get in contact with a firm that says they'd like to work for you and everything, it could be put on the agenda just like any other item or any other contract that we enter into for the board to consider. And as far as how you negotiate terms before that, as long as you're not doing it as a quorum and deliberating it, you can get some of the specifics before you present it to the board.

Trustee Johnson:
Okay. So, to be clear, if tonight I get a call from a firm and they said, "We also want to be considered, now we heard that this process is having, you all might be interviewing," would I then just reach out to the board president and say, assuming that we decide we're going to do a set of interviews at some point, this is a set of assumptions. We decide we're going to do interviews, would I then reach out to the board president and say, "Board president and I got three firms that asked me to be part of the interview pool," and I would just hand those firms over to her and that would be the way that those firms would be able to be part of the interview slate?

Jon Okazaki:
Yes, as long as when you create the agenda, you create the agenda, you identify which firms you're going to be considering and interviewing, that would satisfy the clarity of the agenda item for purposes of our meeting. So, for example, tonight if you guys decide, let's schedule a meeting and interview potential candidates including Parker Nelson and North Star Law, and then you say, okay. And then in the meantime more firms come up. As long as before the agenda, when you put the agenda item together and you actually create an agenda for a board meeting, you list all the names of the firms that you're going to consider. That's perfectly fine.

Trustee Johnson:
Understood.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Trustee Johnson, I'm going to ask Mr. Staggs to chime in because he's making a face. I don't understand it.

Steve Staggs:
No, Mr. Okazaki is completely 100% accurate from a legal standpoint. From a business standpoint, I'm a little concerned that people who didn't want to play with us and submit responses could come in and interview. One of the things with the RFQ process is they got to see our professional services agreement. They had an opportunity to take exceptions to it, which one of them did. So, we'd be starting fresh with the other. Doesn't mean we can't do it, but just from a personal, well personal professional perspective, it would rankle a little bit.

Trustee Johnson:
Got it.

Steve Staggs:
That's my problem. No one else's.

Trustee Johnson:
Then the other question I had, the other process question is I was under the impression that when we talked about rates, especially with retainers and then hourlies in all of my experience with attorneys, and so Mr. Okazaki, you can help me better understand the retainer is paid monthly regardless, like that's just the fee of doing business. So, to say you are my attorney, I pay you 18.5 and that's whether I call you once, I'll call you a 1000 times and then after that there's some set of hours that 18.5 covers and then after 18.5, I pay you hourly on that. But maybe I'm misunderstanding.

Jon Okazaki:
I've seen it done actually a couple of ways. One is that the retainer is really a retaining fee, meaning we are your attorneys and we will continue to agree to represent you. You pay us an amount a month per month just for that, and then any actual hourly work we do we'll charge you. The other more common way is you give us a retainer, we'll give you this many hours of service in exchange for that retainer. This is the way Mr. Gardner's represented it. He says, "Here's my retainer. That's 20 hours a week. If you go over 20 hours a week, it's hourly rate."

Trustee Johnson:
Understand. Okay. Thank you for the clarification.

Jon Okazaki:

But you're correct in that once you pay the retainer you could not use them at all. You're still out that money.

Trustee Johnson:

You're still out the money.

Jon Okazaki:

Yes.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. Trustee Biassotti?

Trustee Biassotti:

Thank you, Madam President. I just wanted to add a comment. Two things keep popping up in my head. Haste makes waste and fools rush in. So, I like Mr. Caruso's idea. I would be in favor of a work session in June potentially. Thank you.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. Trustee Barron?

Trustee Barron:

Yeah, I think we have two firms that have expressed interest. I think Mr. Staggs is totally right. Although I would not be in favor of hiring one of them right now. I think definitely calling one or if you prefer both in and we talked to them, I think that makes sense. Look, we could have someone, anyone of the trustees, you would have numerous contacts in the community. We can have someone give us a call tomorrow. Are we going to wait another week or two weeks to go ahead and then incorporate them? We could be doing that for months and that's just untenable.

I think again, we have two firms that have expressed interest. Mr. Staggs did a good job presenting as the board wished he didn't exceed his directives and he did what he was supposed to do. I think at this point we can very easily go ahead and take some initiative and either call in one or both as my colleagues wish, to be interviewed, and then if you decide to pick one, if we decide to pick one, then negotiate the actual terms. That's just the way you see. I would be totally against and aghast if we're three months from now still getting phone calls from attorneys who, "Hey, I think I want to weigh in now." And again, if we want to keep on waiting for these, this is something that we'll never get to an end.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you, Trustee Barron. Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan?

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

Are you ready for a motion?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

No, I'm going to take public comment and then Trustee Stevens I think is in the queue.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

You're going to stay? Okay.

Trustee Stevens:

So, we have a few, that's fine.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Okay. So, I am going to go to public comment, see no other questions. Miss Binder, if you could please come up.

Public Hearing

Anna Binder:

Okay. Madam President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert, Anna Binder for the record. I'm going to read what I prepared. I liked your discussion and then I'll see what I have left after that. This may seem like a routine decision, but selecting legal counsel for this board is one of the most consequential structural choices you'll make. This role exists to protect your independence, support, your ability to govern and ensure clear, unbiased oversight of your one employee, the superintendent.

One candidate before you today is David Gardner. It's auspicious that a law firm was created on the heels of this from an attorney that has been working alongside your one employee for many years now at the Nevada Department of Education. Regardless of intent, the prior working relationship creates an appearance of a conflict that's impossible to ignore, especially when the role you're hiring for is meant to provide a legal oversight of the very person he has worked alongside. In contrast, Parker Nelson does not have that.

The board has fought to reclaim its authority. You've been asked to lead with transparency. If you want to restore confidence in your decisions, you must start by choosing legal counsel that reflects independence and credibility, not proximity to power. So, for some of you trustees who may not know, Mr. Gardner also spearheaded the legislation of AB469. So, I caution you again about bringing someone into your inner circle who has been working from the outside to rip you apart. And Parker Nelson has never done that. And Parker Nelson for the record, has applied every single time this district has put an RFQ out for counsel. And that is, I believe, going all the way back to 2018 if not further. So, they have a long-standing committed, I mean, they keep coming and keep saying, "Hey, we will do this work for you." And for myriads of reasons through the years, this board has not been able to hire its own independent attorney.

In addition to one pointing out that we had one for free at the time that we were at this juncture the last time, there was heavy discussion around the fiscal responsibility of the expenditure, which I think now though we know that an investment in this is well worth it because we can't put ourselves

Anna Binder:

in the same boat as we saw ourselves most recently. So again, I just caution and I'll be back for more conversation as you guys continue your work.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. See no other public comment. Mr. Caruso, I'm going to have you come up before we take the motion. I want to make sure that you have what you need in order for us to entertain possibly an interview. So please tell us what you need so that we can incorporate in the motion, make sure we get it right.

Joe Caruso:

Okay. Madam President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert, Joe Caruso for the record. So, if we're targeting June 4th board work session, that would mean that we would need to send a draft to the board on Thursday, May 22nd, which would mean we would post based on GP-10, our guidelines on Tuesday, May 27th. And keep in mind we have a Memorial Day. So that is part of the reason why that's a little bit different. So time-wise, eight days prior, so that math is right, right? May 27th and then that would give you the full eight days prior to the meeting to review the respondents, which you already have in case there's anything additional that they may want to turn in. And that would give us enough time.

So, what, two weeks basically we would be sending you a draft. So, then the respondents would have about two weeks to get their information in. Maybe a week and a half because we'd want to make sure we'd have a chance to have the board office put the reference notation on it, post it. And then you would basically come back here on June 4th, have your meeting. And then we can do like we did with the superintendent interviews, have one firm in the large conference room and then have the other firm present and then flip-flop if so, be it. So, does that capture that correct?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you for that clarity. Mr. Staggs, do you have any clarity before we take a motion?

Trustee Stevens:

I have a question.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

You have a question for Mr. Caruso?

Trustee Stevens:

Yeah.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

If you could please come back.

Trustee Stevens:

So just to be clear, when we're making this motion, it's so that we can schedule interviews publicly, we're not going to break into groups, is that what we're saying?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

That is what I'm hearing, yes. From the team is that we would do it as a team.

Trustee Stevens:

Does that have to be in the motion? Can the board decide? I'm a very general person. So, when I say like we're going to interview, if we decide to interview in groups of two or three over the course of the next two weeks, can we do that for flexibility's sake or is it has to be we got to interview them in a public?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

No, we can decide what the team wants to do. I would just say that if we want to break up and do it into groups, we've got to give Mr. Caruso that opportunity to figure out how he's going to schedule it in between the month of May for because of our graduation responsibilities and the other Memorial Day weekend, the other stuff that comes up. So, we get to decide how as a team, how we want to do it.

Trustee Stevens:

Okay. I think I know what he's saying.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. Mr. Staggs, do you want to add anything?

Steve Staggs:

The only thing I would mention is Trustee Barron mentioned earlier about the length of the contract. Typically, we always try to go one year with annual renewals possible and if during that first year we decide for some reason this firm is not what we expected, the contract that we'll be signing them to gives us an out, we can terminate for convenience at any time. So, it's not a long-term, well hopefully it's a long-term relationship, but the contract will be annual.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Okay. Thank you. Trustee Cavazos, did you want to add something?

Trustee Cavazos:

Yes, I did. I wanted to find out where in the discussion, I'm not sure, we didn't take any kind of vote. Did we have taken away from us the ability to make a motion to go with either one of these two firms? Did we ever have that?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

We have not gotten there yet, no.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay. So, can we make a motion right now?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

I've asked Trustee Stevens to, she had wanted to make a motion, so yes.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay. Because I think that Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan had asked first if she could make a motion. She was told no. And I think Trustee Biassotti was after her, I'm not sure.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

So, the vice president has kept track for me and so she has Trustee Stevens as first.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay. But it doesn't have to be the one having to do with tabling. This is what I'm asking.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

That is correct.

Trustee Cavazos:

Okay. Thank you.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Trustee Stevens, would you like to make a motion?

Trustee Stevens:

Yes, I would. Thank you. I would like to make a motion to table the decision of who we'd like to hire for counsel after we interview them and that we perform these interviews within the next two weeks.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. So, I have a first, do I have a second? Trustee Barron?

Trustee Barron:

Thank you. Actually, it was going to be a question to Mr. Staggs, but it was going to be a question to just... The only question that I have is in case both law firms get spooked with the decision, what will be the-

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Trustee Barron, we are actually in the motion category, so I would need a second.

Trustee Barron:

Okay. In that case, I will defer to see if anybody else has a second.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Okay. Does Trustee Biassotti, would you would like to second that motion?

Trustee Biassotti:

Yes, I would like to second the motion.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. I have a first and a second. Our legal counsel, did you want to weigh in?

Jon Okazaki:

Yeah, I think the motion needs to include a provision for if you don't get the interviews done in two weeks. The way you phrase the motion is that you want to interview in two weeks. You have to have a contingency for what happens if that doesn't get accomplished.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Okay. Hold on for a second. I'm going to ask my parliamentarian vice president. Hold on. So, we do have a motion already on the floor and a second, and it would be just to table the decision offer and have the interviews within the next two weeks. And so, we're going to take the vote. If that vote fails, we can come back and make another motion with Mr. Okazaki's recommendation or not. But we do have a vote on the floor, so I'm going to ask the trustees to cast their votes. All right, that motion fails 5-2. So then I would like to ask Trustee Stevens, would you like to amend your motion?

Trustee Stevens:

Sure. This is so stupid. So, I make a motion that we table this decision to hire our counsel so that we can interview our applicants over the course of the next two weeks. And if we don't interview them in the next two weeks, then the decision still has to be made. Right? So, then we still make the decision on the work session in June, which is June, what?

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Fourth.

Trustee Stevens:

June 4th, or is it the third?

Trustee Cavazos:

No fourth.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

It's the fourth. So, thank you. So, we have a motion from Trustee Stevens to table the decision today, but we want to conduct the interviews with the two proposals over the next two weeks. If we are not able to do it in the next two weeks, then we will do it at a board work session on June 4th. Do I have a second? Trustee Dominguez?

Trustee Dominguez:
I will second the motion.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Okay. I have a first and a second. Can you please cast your votes? Okay. That motion passes 6-1. Thank you. And I just want to, Trustee Barron, yes, this is the first time that we've encountered hiring possibly our own legal counsel and it's a learning opportunity for all of us and it is a critical decision for us as a team. So, thank you.

Next, I'd like to go to Item 2.02, adoption of the 2026 and 2027 Board Meeting Calendars. Before I open that item, is there anyone who did not get a chance to complete a public speaker card? Seeing none. I'll close that and go ahead and turn it over to Super... It's our board. It's our board. It's not the superintendent, it's not the regular school calendar. So, Mr. Caruso, if you could come up please and just give a general statement about our meetings as a board.

2.02 Adoption of the 2026 and 2027 Board Meeting Calendars.

Discussion and possible action to adopt the 2026 and 2027 Board Meeting Calendars. **(For Possible Action)** [Contact Person: Irene Bustamante Adams] (Ref. 2.02) *(According to Governance Policy GP-6: President's Role and GP-9: Meeting Planning)*

Motion to approve the adoption of the 2026 and 2027 Board Meeting Calendars.

Motion: Johnson Second: Cavazos Vote: Unanimous

Motion passed.

Joe Caruso:

Madam President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert, Joe Caruso for the record. So, before you this evening, we have two calendars. So, 2026, 2027 Board meeting calendar, January through December. This is required as part of Governance Policy-6, President's Role and Governance Policy-9, Meeting Planning. The calendars were designed with a few key factors in mind. One, graduation. So, as you know, the last two weeks in May we reserve for graduation because that's typically when they're scheduled. We also keep in mind the annual Council Great City Schools Conference in October as the board's typically attended that. So, we keep that week open. We've also looked at the May. I know the trustees have requested as much information in advance. So, we've put on there this time for the next two years, we put the final budget meeting so that you can plan accordingly and have that information in advance.

And then the other factor we look at is the 25-26 school calendar for staff. And then I looked at the proposed 26-27, 27-28 school calendars that were on a previous agenda just to make sure that we didn't have any conflicts. So, the goal is we typically bring this back to the board just to make sure that the schedule is still at the board's pleasure. And then once the board approves, we'll post this online. Do keep in mind that we have the board committees that build their schedules around the board meeting calendars. For example, AZAC will look at board and Bond Oversight will look at when board meetings are. They try to do it opposite just so that the boardrooms, if they go longer,

Joe Caruso:

they have space and then other events as well. So, it's just a planning piece. We try to bring this back about this time every year. So, with that said, if there's any questions.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. Any questions from the trustees? Okay. And I didn't see anybody for public comment. Then I will entertain a motion for Item 2.02. Trustee Johnson?

Trustee Johnson:

I motion to approve both calendars.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. I have a motion to approve the 2026 and 2027 Board Meeting Calendars. Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, Madam President. I will second the motion to approve 2.02 adoption of the 2026 and 2027 Board Meeting Calendars.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. I have a first and a second. If you could please cast your votes. That motion passes 7-0. Moving on to agenda Item 2.03. This is not an action item.

2.03 National School Boards Association Annual Conference.

Update regarding the National School Boards Association Annual Conference. [Contact Person: Brenda Zamora, Tameka Henry, Adam Johnson] (*According to Governance Policy GP-18: Travel and Other Board Expenses*)

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

This is a report from our trustees who attended the National School Board Association Annual Conference. I'll turn it over to Vice President Zamora, Trustee Henry and Trustee Johnson.

Trustee Johnson:

All right. I guess I'm talking to colleagues and not just to the crowd out there, but I guess I can talk to the crowd too. So, I'll do my best to share with everybody. Trustee Henry, Vice President Zamora and I had the opportunity to travel to Atlanta in early April to attend the National Association of School Boards Conference. It was my second time attending the conference. We went to the one, so trustees, Vice president Zamora and I went to the conference a year ago in New Orleans. And that first time I was just trying to kind of understand what all of this was and trying to figure out how to make meaning of so many school boards from around the country. And then how to figure out what's the best way to kind of drive my learning.

Trustee Johnson:

This year was actually a lot better experience for me because I had the opportunity to focus in on two areas of learning in particular. One was a community engagement, which is one of the things we spent a lot of time talking about, at least initially. And I spent a lot of time independently thinking about it. And then the second was partnership with our superintendent and then their administration. And so, all of the sessions that I attended were centered around those. So, there were six sessions in particular, building bridges between the board and community, creating the conditions for family school community partnerships, a collaborative partnership building, monitoring and maintaining family and community engagement, the importance of board superintendent communication, board superintendents in the power of transformational leadership. And then building bridges best practices for effective collaboration between boards and administration.

So again, really focusing my learning on two areas I think I could grow the most in and be able to provide some additional value while I'm doing my work here. It was really interesting to hear how other boards large and small. So, what I found to be most interesting was that not every board does it the same and even in places. So, there were really small boards that I took some learnings from while some of the school boards were, yeah, we know we're a school board of five and we oversee one school in a really small place while their community is different than ours, the structure is what I learned from. And so, it was really interesting to hear how different places do it. So, I think there were things that we could adopt here.

And so, my hope is that from the notes that we have, we can begin to use some of those after we've gotten our strategic plan in place and we really have our clear vision and direction, we can start to implement some of those structures that we want. I think the first step and the most important step is having a really clear vision for what we all want to accomplish and then we can start building out some of the structure. So, it was good learning, it was great to be able to understand that. And then I'm really excited for us to work together to move into some of those more collaborative spaces.

And before I turn over to Trustee Henry and Trustee Zamora, I really wanted to highlight the keynote speaker that was there, or at least on the Saturday that I was there. I can't pronounce his last name so I'm going to butcher it a bit. So actually, I'll spell it. First name was Ravi, last name spelled H-U-T-H-E-E-S-I-N-G. But he had this really unique life story. So, he played drums for The Hansons. So, he was a rock singer. And then his parents or his family lineage was his great-grandfather, was the first Indian Prime Minister. So, he had this long lineage of both unique experiences and he talked about how children today need to be ready for the pivot, which I thought was incredibly important.

So, talking to board members about how we can prepare students to be able to pivot because what we are helping children learn today won't be the same as what they have to deal with in five years. And so how we can be forward-thinking enough to create the systems and structures that schools

Trustee Johnson:

have to implement in order for students to be successful. So, it was a really inspiring talk. I left feeling energized.

The one thing that he said that continues to stick with me today, and I don't know if this is right to say out loud, but he said it in front of a 1000 people, so I'll say it in front of 150. He said, we need to figure out a way to make peace profitable. And that really, really resonated with me because he said you for the longest time, a conflict has been very profitable and you think about how much it costs to make bombs and bullets and somebody wins when they make those, but we've not found a way to make peace profitable. He said he charged us with can we help our students think about the way to make peace profitable so that we have enduring peace on our planet versus what we see today, which is oftentimes enduring conflict.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Trustees and Vice President Zamora?

Trustee Zamora:

Thank you, Madam President. I'm going to age myself, not how usually people expect it, but I learned about the Bacon Brothers. They actually had a very inspirational story too, and how they grew up with their mom who was an educator. So, they had an interesting story to share. And then they played some music and I remembered the beat somehow. So, this year I was able to kind of narrow down on their app and narrow it down with leaders like the government leaders so I can really focus on how to be a better vice president and improve in my skills.

And then one of the things we spoke, one of the training workshops was about effective communication with the superintendent. And it's really interesting that we are one of the few boards that really have to follow open meeting law because there are so many great ideas out there that I wish we can do and we are not able to do it because of open meeting law. But I'm still sitting with how can we still implement some of these ideas.

So, for example, there are districts that have a running document and it has kind of the updates from the executive cabinet. They're able to go in there, put updates in there, all the trustees are able to see in updates as they're coming in. We have the superintendent's calendar, what schools they're visiting, kind of what to expect, where to see them, and some news articles that gets attached to it. So, if I have time in the middle of the night and I want to look at this document, I'm able to get a good grasp of the district as a whole, which I found really interesting and I might have to throw it to John, how can we implement something similar because we all have day-to-day jobs, so how can we still all be open and communicating on top of the briefings we have and all these other communications?

The other thing that I attended was actually one of the workshops was called Classrooms Not Courtrooms, and we are one of the few districts that have our own police department as well. So, I was interested in seeing what police departments are putting their resources in to help our students

Trustee Zamora:

not just do the classroom to prison pipeline. And they actually do work with their police department on how to get them in a program in collaboration with the district to remove their citations they might have. And it becomes a whole community effort because they bring the parents in, they're able to bring siblings in if they're setting a bad example.

And that resonated a lot with me because I've been able to participate in ERBs. I don't know if I can share that. But one of our roles as trustees is to participate in expulsion review boards and some of the stories we hear there, there's a lot of interventions that I feel like can happen before we get to that point. So, this program was really interesting to get a glimpse of. And I know I'm taking too much time, but it was really good. And I think the president and the members that did go, because it's really enriching information that we do receive and different points of views and it's always grounding, I want to say that word, it's grounding to know that we are looked, Clark County specifically, we're looked like a museum kind of piece because when people find out how big our district is, we definitely get all eyes on us and we are moving.

I personally move in those spaces of I'm going to listen. I don't want to share where I'm from because then everybody's like, how do you maneuver through that? How do you do this? How do you do that? And I don't want that. I want to really kind of suck in all the information I can from other smaller districts and then I get to listen to everyone. So yeah. Thank you. I'm very grateful. It's very grounding.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. Board Clerk Henry, please.

Trustee Henry:

Thank you so much. Was thankful for the opportunity to attend the conference. I was trying to get into my app because I did collect a lot of notes there, but I cannot access my app, but it's okay. It's okay. This is my first time-serving on the board and it was important for me to find those tracks that were for new board members, especially around transformational leadership. I've served on many boards before and also just working alongside our board members and not micromanaging our superintendent. That was something that was just really important to me. Just learning what things are operational, although we go through that here daily, hearing it on a national level and from other board members on how they truly implement that was really important to me.

I cannot remember her name, but I met a board member from Mississippi who has served on her board for nearly 30 years, which was like, whoa, that can happen? That can happen? And she's also, an educator at a neighboring county. So, it's like listening to her and her experiences and her stories, and also her being the only African American on her board and also assuming that role after her father had held that role for many years and he passed away, what legacy. That was something that really stood out. What legacy, the dedication to be an educator, but also serve on a board for so many years in a neighboring district. It was truly inspirational. I'll say that.

Trustee Henry:

And so, the words that she did share with me is, "Come here, learn all that you can, but also go home and make sure that you implement that. Be the model." And she did say, "Support your superintendent." So, it was very timely, it was very timely, and again, thankful for the opportunity.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. That concludes our agenda Item 2.03. We're going to go ahead and move. Oh, Trustee Cavazos, did you want to add something?

Trustee Cavazos:

I just wanted to thank our three colleagues for their most excellent report. That was a conference that I wasn't able to go to this year, but your reports really helped and each of you had a very diverse perspective on what you experienced and what you took away. So, I just wanted to thank you for that. It was really good.

Trustee Johnson:

You haven't sent us on picture yet.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you.

Trustee Johnson:

Send some pictures. It's still not ready.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. With that, we're going to move on to agenda Item 2.04, Balanced Governance Professional Training, and that is mine.

2.04 Balanced Governance Professional Learning.

Update regarding the Balanced Governance Professional Learning provided to the Board of Trustees. [Contact Person: Irene Bustamante Adams] (*According to Governance Policy GP-2: Governing Style, and GP-4.2: Board Members' Principles of Operation*)

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

I'll ask my other colleagues if they want to chime in afterwards. But I do want to let the public know that in January, this team made a decision and it was unanimous. And we adopted the Balanced Governance™ Model as our guiding framework of how we're going to govern ourselves and govern the school district. And this was a pivotal moment for us to have that collective commitment for excellence, accountability, and improved student outcomes.

And then last Friday on May 2nd, we held our second balance governance training session facilitated by Dr. Alsbury, who is a nationally recognized expert in school board governance. And I want to extend a sincere gratitude to each trustee and the staff member who invested their time

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

and energy to make this happen. What was pivotal for us on that Friday is that we became a team of 12 since we hired our new superintendent last month. And so no longer were we just looking at ourselves, but now looking at our CEO of the school district and that Superintendent Ebert got to participate with us.

And so, in this short time, it's been over 100 days, but we continue as a team to make the commitment to this work. And we're already yielding growth. I've heard so many comments from the community stakeholders and saying, "I can see that this team is moving forward." It is small steps. It is going to take several more to turn the ship, but we are moving in the right direction. And I'm really, really pleased with the cohesiveness, the focus and our eagerness to learn about the governance policy.

Some of the training covered critical components in our journey to become a highly effective board, including parliamentary procedure practice. And Trustee Cavazos mentioned that we gained a deeper understanding of how to follow the foundation on operational rules that could make us more effective and build trust through structure and fairness. And we made a commitment that we would also work with the superintendent with her team in order to apply what we learned.

We also did some team building, and I'd like to thank Trustee Johnson and Trustee Stevens again for stepping in. When asked to develop what we did. And it provided not only the team building but mutual respect and open communication. I learned a lot about the why of why everyone is serving. And then we dug in heavily on the Balanced Governance™ Standards and the practice review. We revisited the core roles of trustees, particularly the distinction between us acting as a representative voice and a delegate of a stakeholder interest. And we held conversations to reinforce our responsibility to lead with the vision while maintaining appropriate boundaries.

And then the last thing, we had discussions on agenda development, social media use, school visits, official representation and communication protocols. These guidelines helped us and will help us to operate transparently, professionally, and consistently. And so just pleased in the work that we're doing. Like I said, it's a little over 100 days. And as a new team, very proud of the progress that we are making, step by step.

In closing, I want to reiterate my appreciation also to the superintendent who joined us and now we are a team of 12, like I said. And I want to use the word intentionality. We are being intentional in how we govern and how we hold ourselves accountable. And I'm looking forward to the steps that are going to come for the second quarter and the third quarter and look forward to making sure that the students are at the top of our priority. The staff and the community can be proud of the work that we're doing. So thank you to each of the team members. Does anybody else like to add any comments? Trustee Cavazos?

Trustee Cavazos:

Thank you, Madam President. And thank you for the comprehensive summary of everything that we worked on. I think that you really gave a good overview. I wanted to emphasize something. And as you said, Dr. Alsbury, he is the only research-based expert on Balanced Governance™. I mean, he is Balanced Governance™, and one of the things that he emphasized as we were going through all of our different exercises is transparency and accountability. He emphasized that we must know our policies. If we don't know our policies, we cannot have oversight. If we don't have oversight, then it's hard for us to interact with our superintendent that's trying to do her job with, I don't know what our exact enrollment is right now, but with a lot of schools and a lot of employees. And so, he was very direct about that.

And I think that's something that all of us, we have to look deep within us because we have a hard job, but we asked to be in this job. So, to be in this job, we need to know our policies, we need to do our homework, and we need to be there for the people who elected or appointed us. And so, I'm just so happy that we have that agreement with Dr. Alsbury and that we're going to be moving forward with looking at the policies that are working for us and the policies that might maybe just need a little bit of tweaking that we need to revise. And I know a lot of trustees are heavily invested in that. So, thank you again, Madam President.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you, Trustee Biassotti?

Trustee Biassotti:

Thank you, Madam President. I just wanted to add that and I wanted to commend you as president. I think you've done a phenomenal job in having us all engage and feeling that each one of us matters and our voices matters, and you bring our views and our opinions to the forefront for every issue and topic. So, I really appreciate that. And I just want to say I learned a lot. I learned a lot, and it was very insightful. It was just a very growing moment. I felt like I really grew in it. So, I was grateful for the training.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

Thank you. Any other trustee? I do just want to tell the public, so for the first 100 and something days, we have learned some habits that aren't necessarily balanced governance. And it is going to be a step for us to be mature and learn how to abide by the policies. And it's a grace, but also a firmness that we need to apply to ourselves so that we can be the best that we can be for our new superintendent because she needs us as a team to make sure that we hold ourselves accountable. And it's a good journey. Sometimes very painful, very painful. But we have accepted the responsibility in January when we made the unanimous decision that this is how we were going to govern. So, thank you.

It's not an action item. I'll move to 3.01 public comment.

Public Comment on Items Not Listed as Action Items on the Agenda.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

I do have, before I open that up, is there anyone that has not completed a public comment card? If not, I see Ms. Binder has signed up, if you would, please come forth.

Public Hearing

Anna Binder:

Thank you, Madam President, members of the board, Superintendent Ebert. I just love saying that. I mean, I've said it many times over the years, just not in this room. Anna Binder for the record. So, I also have been out on YouTube watching other districts, and I kind of actually started doing that after we hired Ebert. And it wasn't that I haven't seen some across the country over the years because there's been other projects that you guys have. Mr. Caruso, go back and find stuff in comparable settings and whatnot. But I just really want to say publicly, y'all dodged a bullet. Could you imagine sitting here during your conversation and when you turn to your superintendent for comment, they just sit there and go, "I love you guys. I just really love you guys. You know, I love you." That's what Ben Shuldiner does to his board.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

All right, thank you. Seeing no other public comment, I'm going to move on to 4.0, which is upcoming meeting announcements.

Upcoming Meeting of the Board of Trustees – Thursday, May 8, 2025, 5:00 p.m.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:

The next meeting of the board of trustees is tomorrow, Thursday, May 8th at 5:00 p.m. here in the boardroom.

Now I'm going to move to agenda item number 5.0. Accept a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan?

Adjourn: 5:28 p.m.

Motion to adjourn.

Motion: Esparza-Stoffregan Second: Henry Vote: Unanimous

Motion passed.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:

I know, we're a little more informal. I will make a motion, but I would like to acknowledge that we have our new deputies in the space. So welcome, Dr. Jesse Welsh and welcome Felicia Gonzales. It is their first I believe, work session. I just want to acknowledge them in the space, and we may relocate some people in the future hopefully.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
Thank you.

Trustee Esparza-Stoffregan:
Yes. So, the motion will be made to adjourn this meeting at hold on, old eyes at 5:28.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
All right, I have a first. Trustee Henry?

Trustee Henry:
I'll second.

Trustee Bustamante Adams:
I have a first and a second. To adjourn the meeting, please cast your votes. That passes 7-0. The meeting is adjourned.