

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

Thursday, December 5, 2019

5:05 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present
Lola Brooks, President
Linda P. Cavazos, Vice President
Chris Garvey, Clerk
Irene Cepeda, Member
Danielle Ford, Member
Deanna L. Wright, Member
Linda E. Young, Member

Jesus F. Jara, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools

Also present were: Mary-Anne Miller, Board Counsel, District Attorney's Office; Diane Gullett, Deputy Superintendent, Office of the Deputy Superintendent; Elizabeth Carrero, Executive Manager/Director II, Office of the Superintendent; Cindy Krohn, Director, Board Office; Lisa Chrapcynski, Administrative Secretary, Board Office; and Deb Oliver, Executive Director, Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB).

Flag Salute

Trustee Cavazos led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of the Agenda

Adopt agenda.

Motion: Garvey Second: Cavazos Vote: Unanimous

Trustee Ford and Trustee Young were not present for the vote.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

John Chang said Antonio Rael, current principal at Ed W. Clark High School, has an autocratic style and was reprimanded as a principal at Mojave High School prior to this appointment. He said the manner in which Mr. Rael was selected as principal at Clark High School circumvents the procedures outlined in Assembly Bill (AB) 469 Section 28(3).

Jennifer Steele expressed concern regarding the shortage of Specialized Programs Teacher Assistants (SPTAs) and Instructional Assistants (IAs) in the District. She said factors that contribute to the shortage include low pay and an inefficient hiring process. She said this shortage negatively impacts students.

Board Member Arrive

Trustee Ford arrived at the Board meeting.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items (continued)

Naomi Keil said Clark High School is facing administrative challenges, and she talked about how the positive environment has changed since Mr. Rael became principal. She shared some of the radical changes made by Mr. Rael since coming to Clark.

Bindi Parikh spoke about Mr. Rael's handling of an exam policy and how the information was communicated to parents. She said parents demand to know if there are other memorandums not being shared with parents and students. She said they need to be informed in advance of the implementation of such policies.

Board Member Arrive

Trustee Young arrived at the Board meeting.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items (continued)

Kris Parikh said as a member of the Clark High School School Organizational Team (SOT), he requested that meeting minutes be included on the SOT meeting agenda for discussion, and his request was denied by Mr. Rael. He said this violates Open Meeting Law (OML). He cited other violations and stated that Mr. Rael is unfit to be principal of Clark High School.

Amanda McWilliams said the policy change intended to grant access to magnet program opportunities to more students would be a mistake and would minimize the number of high-achieving students attending the best STEM programs. She asked that the Board and Superintendent consider rescinding this policy change.

Melissa Berger spoke about how her daughter's experience as a student at Clark High School has changed in negative ways. She said Clark deserve a positive, nurturing community.

Bret Birdsong stated there have been sudden departures of key staff from Clark High School. He said if the problems at Clark are not addressed immediately, teachers would begin applying for other jobs and once those teachers leave, the District would lose what has taken generations to build.

Autumn Tampa said the Board eliminated the range 4 SPTA position, which pays a higher salary. She said this position is still in the contract and should be reinstated so that the District can motivate people to take those extremely difficult, but critical, positions. She talked about the shortage of substitute teachers and said this was successfully resolved with the pilot program that was eliminated.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items (continued)

Isha Shah spoke about how the Clark High School community was a family but said since the beginning of August, it no longer feels like a family. She talked about how the administrative changes that are taking place at Clark are affecting students.

Sophia Adams discussed how changes that have been made by Mr. Rael are based on the assumption that teachers are not giving zoned students the same opportunities as magnet student, which she pointed out is not true.

Kirsten Calma (phonetic) shared a letter from a friend to Mr. Rael addressing the changes that have been made at Clark High School.

Superintendent Jara said he has also been receiving emails and is aware of the issues and challenges that have been shared here and said staff is working diligently to address them.

Approve Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools

Approval on the evaluation of the Clark County School District Superintendent of Schools.

Trustee Brooks explained the process for the evaluation of the Superintendent and how the evaluation was developed.

Public Hearing

Autumn Tampa said she has read through the documents. She said the factors that she would consider in evaluating a Superintendent are not included for the Superintendent's evaluation. She said she does not have confidence in the process.

Steve Mason addressed issues at Clark High School and Principal Antonio Rael's behavior and how that has been handled by the Superintendent's office.

John Chang spoke about the issues at Clark High School and how Antonio Rael's leadership style has impacted the Clark High School community.

Dr. S. S. Rogers said the Superintendent has not been supportive of the historic West Las Vegas community. He said there is a lack of African-American males in leadership roles.

Jaime Cruz provided documents related to Workforce Connections and the District working together.

Hugh Anderson spoke about the partnership between the District and the Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce. He spoke about the gains the District has seen under Superintendent Jara's leadership and what Superintendent Jara has been able to accomplish.

Approve Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools (continued)

Vicki Kreidel said evaluating the performance of the Superintendent is important. She expressed concern that the evaluation did not assess implementation. She suggested the Board allow for staff and community input in terms of implementation.

Walter Jones talked about the problems that have taken place since Superintendent Jara was hired and issues the Board should consider, such as African-American representation.

Alexis Salt said there is an issue in the District with sexist attitudes and a culture of fear to some extent, and this needs to be addressed. She said there is no mechanism for teachers to express things that are going on at their school, and it seem that the only accountability is at the bottom.

Jeffrey Proffitt spoke about what Superintendent Jara has done for the trades and in providing opportunities for students to consider the trades as career options. He asked the Board to support and expand the programs that have been created.

Dennis Cronin talked about how Superintendent Jara has reached out to the unions and the trades and has been supportive. He said it is clear that the Superintendent is here for the children, and he stands in support of Superintendent Jara.

Superintendent Jara made a statement highlighting his passion and commitment for serving the students of Clark County and his understanding of his responsibilities and the need for oversight. He thanked his team for the work they have done in the last 18 months. He invited the public to review the evidence of the work that has been accomplished and is available on the District's website.

Dr. Oliver talked about the intent and the process of conducting the Superintendent's evaluation.

The Board agreed to move "Miscommunication regarding significant changes..." from Vision to Theory of Action; add "Not all subgroups are represented" to Vision; add "Needs clarification on review of inclusion of all" to Suggestions for measurable growth/improvement; add "...for the purpose of reallocating money back to classrooms" to the end of "Positive reorganization and alignment of facilities, operational services..."; and delete "Overall few gains to reduce achievement gaps."

Trustee Brooks suggested that Dr. Oliver read through the statements in the rubric and Trustees agree or disagree with the placement of the statement.

Dr. Oliver agreed with that suggestion.

The following suggestions and changes were made to the Superintendent's Evaluation Rubric:

Approve Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools (continued)

Vision: adhering to and maintaining focus on the Board's Vision

Evidence for rating: move "Bringing in low-cost or free external reviewers..." to Core Values; move "Cutting central office ELL and Special Education personnel" to Student Success Targets.

Rationale for rating: move "Overall good progress but some issues with ELL reorganization" to Student Success Targets' move "inconsistencies within SOT framework with principal selection" to Core Values; " leave "issues of equity/diversity need to be incorporated into all areas of the District with the goal of inclusivity for all students" and "student safety issues need to be addressed more proactively" remaining in Vision; delete "All programs not reviewed for equity, diversity, and inclusion of all students; move Imbalance of educational opportunities between student groups, including lack of access to diverse educators" to Theory of Action.

Commendations: move "Quickly implemented recommendations after the Council of the Great City Schools' review of business operations" to Theory of Action; add "Momentum in the School Justice partnership."

Suggestions for measurable growth/improvement: move "Continue to focus on increasing graduation rates, ACT/SAT scores, AP test pass rate, dual enrollment and credit opportunities" to Student Success Targets; move "Improve decision-making systems and communication dissemination to prevent organizational pain and disruption" to Core Values; add "Need to ensure every student is provided with a quality teacher."

Trustee Ford suggested adding "Quick reaction to school safety issues. Installing random searches has drastically lowered weapons taken to schools" and "Made changes to Title I funding without consulting the board or school principals and without considering any other options or a hold-harmless plan" to Core Values.

Student Success Targets: creation of student success targets, maintaining focus on student success, and monitoring results

Trustee Ford addressed the rating she gave for this category, which was not included. She stated that the rating should not be based on the ability to create targets but on whether or not the thought process and vision around those targets were accurate.

Trustee Brooks stated that typically in first-year evaluations the metric is based not on whether or not progress was made, but on whether or not the superintendent has systems in place to measure progress in the future and whether or not it was reported.

Dr. Oliver suggested that Trustee Ford could add her rating and comments as they go through this category.

Approve Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools (continued)

Evidence for rating: delete "NWEA partnership"; delete Establishing CCESCU; delete "Partnering with School Justice Partnership."

Rationale for rating: Add "We need to make certain that a balance of educational opportunities exist and are available for ALL students in the CCSD and that starts with qualified and committed teachers, support staff professionals, and school instructional leaders from all cultures and races that populate schools in both affluent as well as identified communities of poverty."

Commendations: No change.

Suggestions for measurable growth/improvement: Add "As each school pursues students success goals, we must continuously analyze each school's student data, identify the root cause, choose the focus areas, set objectives, select and organize strategies, and then monitor the teacher and school's progress."

Trustee Ford said with reference to "Scheduling fewer presentations in each Board meeting," she would like to note that the issue may not be the number of presentations in a meeting, but that they are placed in the beginning of the agenda and much of the Board's time is spent in reviewing the presentations. She suggested that reorganizing the structure of the agenda may need to be considered.

Trustee Brooks stated that the agenda had been restructured because the Board's priority is monitoring the Superintendent's progress and student outcomes.

Trustee Ford suggested finding a more concise way of presenting that information to the Board so that the items that must be approved by the Board could be addressed earlier in the meeting.

Trustee Ford suggested adding language that speaks to "keeping the Board president up to date with the amount of time allotted for the presentations or expected amount of time so that the president can plan accordingly and devote enough time to important agenda items."

Superintendent Jara stated that the Board-approved calendar for bringing presentations forward could be changed.

Ms. Miller said it is the responsibility of the whole Board to review the agenda, and the Board has the ability to decide to move action items forward in the agenda that may require a substantial amount of time.

Trustee Ford asked that her rating of 2.75 for the category of Student Success Targets be included.

Approve Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools (continued)

Dr. Oliver noted the new rating for Student Success Targets was 3.39.

Core Values: adhering to and continuously aligning with established core values while promoting a culture aligned to core values

Evidence for rating: delete "Integrity expressed through positive intentions;" delete "Miscommunication regarding significant changes, i.e. removing Dean positions, Title I funding, and bond revisions;" add "bond revisions" to the third paragraph on page 7 under Evidence for rating; delete "This section did not include leadership, which is central to every aspect of core values;" move "Ensuring a high-quality teaching force is one of the most important things to raise student achievement" to Theory of Action; attach "Juice/Java with Jara" to the statement "Moves with a sense of urgency; working tirelessly his first 90 days to complete a listening tour."

Commendations: No Changes.

Suggestions for measurable growth/improvement: delete "Build trust between Trustees and the Superintendent so that we can trust each other to not use such information in a negative manner to undermine decisions made by staff."

Trustee Ford said the above statement relates to some of the concerns she had and made note of. She said also it does not make sense to have something under suggestions for measurable growth where there was nothing related to that in the evidence. She said some of the items she listed that would pair with evidence and rationale are related to integrity and communication in how the Superintendent communicates with and supports the Board and individual Trustees. She said she would like to add "lack of Board support" and "making decisions without Board approval."

Dr. Oliver offered that much of what Trustee Ford spoke about was encompassed in some of the statements in the evidence list.

Trustee Ford said her statements would be under governance/integrity/communication with Board members, but there is not a category for governance in this document. She said she would like something noted in evidence to support the suggestions for growth so that it makes sense to do them.

Trustee Wright suggested adding language similar to "Continue to build strong, positive relationships with the Board."

Trustee Ford suggested adding language similar to "The superintendent would commit to continuing to learn about and following Balanced Governance™ and supporting the Board in Balanced Governance™."

Approve Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools (continued)

Trustee Brooks suggested adding "...through the use of Balanced Governance™" to the end of "Develop a clearer definition of operational decisions and differentiation from oversight..."

Trustee Ford agreed to that suggestion.

Theory of Action: adhering to and creating a culture aligned to establish Theory of Action

Evidence for rating: move "Need for short/long term plans for teacher/sub shortages and diversifying teacher leadership pool" and "Need to develop systems to economically, professionally, and emotionally support pre-service and new teachers" to Suggestions for measurable growth/improvement; add "Low levels of staff retention."

Rationale for rating: No changes.

Commendations: No changes.

Suggestions for measurable growth/improvement: move "Need for short/long term plans for teacher/sub shortages and diversifying teacher leadership pool" and "Need to develop systems to economically, professionally, and emotionally support pre-service and new teachers" from Evidence for rating to this category as noted above.

Trustee Cavazos stated her submitted rating of 3.5 was an error and should be changed to 2.5.

Trustee Ford stated that she would change her rating from 1.75 to 2.25 taking implementation of the hotline into consideration.

Dr. Oliver stated the new rating would be 2.39.

Dr. Oliver talked about the process going forward and coming up with approximately three very specific goals.

Trustee Ford read a statement to the Superintendent explaining her position as it relates to her responsibilities as a Trustee and what she feels are priorities that would enable the Trustees to do their job effectively, help the Superintendent grow as a leader, and help the District be successful.

Trustee Young said the culture and the climate of the District is important, and there is a lot of fear in the District. She said for her anything they do would always be about the children.

Superintendent Jara thanked Dr. Oliver for facilitating this discussion and exercise. He thanked the Board for conducting the evaluation. He said every decision he makes is for the students of Clark County, and he acknowledged there is a lot of work that needs to be done.

Approve Evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools (continued)

Motion that the Board of School Trustees submit the Superintendent's Evaluation with the changes noted during discussion and the ratings that were approved by the Board.

Motion: Garvey Second: Cepeda Vote: Unanimous

Approve Self-Evaluation of the Board of Trustees

Approval on the self-evaluation of the Clark County School District Board of Trustees.

Trustee Brooks stated her suggestion would be that the Board would have time to absorb this document during the Board retreat in January and then develop a more streamlined rubric that also encompasses the focus of the Board. She said a list of questions would be compiled and provided to the Trustees before the retreat.

Trustee Ford stated that pages 43 through 53 of 67 are her notes taken directly from Balanced Governance™ on how the Board could conduct their self-evaluation next year, page 50 of 67 is an example rubric of a superintendent's evaluation, and page 53 of 67 includes other Balanced Governance™ information.

Board and Superintendent Communication

Superintendent Jara shared that the Centennial Bulldogs would be playing against the Liberty Patriots in the football state championship.

Trustee Request for Agenda Items or Information

Trustee Young said there are a lot of angry, hurt people in the District and asked if there was some way the Board could address that.

Trustee Brooks suggested that would be a good question to bring forward during the retreat in January or during the next Board meeting if Trustee Young wanted to bring something more specific forward.

Trustee Wright said she would like to discuss going back to having specific days scheduled for briefings.

Trustee Garvey suggested having a discussion related to the Board's version of Balanced Governance™ as part of the retreat.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Marcie Gambetta talked about how the changes that have been rapidly made by Mr. Rael have negatively impacted the Clark High School community. She said she is unsure if her child should remain at Clark or if her younger children should attend.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items (continued)

Darian Gambetta shared the positive experiences she had while she was a student at Clark High School, and she spoke about the decline of the school under Mr. Rael's leadership. She said she is concerned for the education her younger siblings would receive at Clark and for the future of the magnet program.

Terri Shuman said there are hurt people in the District. She shared that because she and a coworker do not get along, she is working in an extremely hostile work environment, and this has affected her physically, and she had to visit a doctor. She said nothing has been done to help her.

Adjourn: 10:15 p.m.

Motion: Wright Second: Garvey Vote: Unanimous