

**MINUTES OF THE APRIL 26, 2022
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

April 26, 2022

1. Opening Items

1.01 CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 4:01 p.m. in the Board Room of the Central Administration Building, located at 425 East Ninth Street in Reno, Nevada.

1.02 ROLL CALL

President Angela Taylor and Board Members Jeff Church, Adam Mayberry, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Joe Rodriguez, and Beth Smith were present. Superintendent Kristen McNeill, Student Representative Caden Kuster, and staff were also present.

1.03 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Nora Behrens, The Bryan Group, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.04 ACTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA

President Taylor opened the meeting to public comment.

John Eppolito expressed frustration over the change made by President Taylor and Superintendent McNeill to remove the opening general public comment period on all Board agendas. He did not believe it was appropriate for parents who were interested in addressing the Board on general matters to have to wait for hours and that the Board President and Superintendent were only interested in silencing parents and the "Trump mob" as he claimed President Taylor had referred to some parents and community members in a campaign mailer. He mentioned two members of the Board had expressed an interest in having the initial public comment period returned but the Board President and Superintendent had ignored the request.

President Taylor corrected that she had not sent out the referenced campaign mailer and that it had been sent by a Political Action Committee (PAC) without her approval or knowledge. Additionally, only one Trustee had requested an agenda item related to returning the initial public comment period because if two Trustees had requested such

an item, the item would be placed on a future agenda for consideration pursuant to Board Policy.

It was moved by Trustee Minetto and seconded by Trustee Rodriguez that **the Board of Trustees approves the agenda as presented.** The result of the vote was 6-1: (Yea: Adam Mayberry, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Joe Rodriguez, Beth Smith, and Angela Taylor. Nay: Jeff Church.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

2. Items for Presentation, Discussion, Information and/or Action

2.01 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO SELECT A SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS FOR THE WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT FROM AMONG THE FOLLOWING FIVE (5) FINALISTS: MS. JHONE EBERT, DR. SUSAN ENFIELD, DR. SHERRELL HOBBS, DR. SHAWN LOESCHER, AND DR. CAPRICE YOUNG; AS PART OF THE DISCUSSION, THE BOARD MAY CONSIDER THE CHARACTER, COMPETENCE, OR ALLEGED MISCONDUCT OF MS. JHONE EBERT, DR. SUSAN ENFIELD, DR. SHERRELL HOBBS, DR. SHAWN LOESCHER, AND DR. CAPRICE YOUNG

Emily Ellison, Chief Human Resources Officer, and Dr. Bill Bryan, The Bryan Group, provided a brief overview of the Superintendent Search process, which began when Superintendent Kristen McNeill announced her plan to retire at the conclusion of the current school year. After identifying The Bryan Group (TBG) as the firm who would conduct the search process, the Board was asked to identify the basic criteria they were looking for in the next superintendent. TBG utilized a Search Advisory Group (SAG), composed of students and community members, to provide additional information and assist TBG in identifying and then selecting the final candidates for the Board to consider. TBG received 36 total applications, with 16 not meeting the basic requirements set by the Board, and 20 forwarded to the SAG to begin the screening process. The 5 finalists identified were forwarded to the Board to consider. The Board conducted short interviews and then had the finalists participate in various meet and greet activities in the District, including community forums and interviews with the Board during a public meeting. TBG also provided information on the results of the community survey, where members of the community, including District staff and students, were asked to rank the finalists in various criteria. The final step in the process was to allow the Board to deliberate and possibly select their choice for the next Superintendent of Schools for the Washoe County School District and begin contract negotiations.

Present Taylor thanked TBG for all their efforts. She highlighted the process was very different than what many had previously experienced, but one of the reasons TBG was selected was because of those differences. She appreciated all the opportunities

provided to students, staff, and the community to be involved in the process if they wanted

President Taylor opened the meeting to public comment.

Valerie Fiannaca spoke in support of Dr. Sherrell Hobbs to be the next Superintendent of Schools. She believed Dr. Hobbs was the most sincere and relatable of all candidates. She urged the Board not to consider Ms. Jhone Ebert for the position because she felt Ms. Ebert would bring the failed policies from the Nevada Department of Education to the Washoe County School District.

Katy Simon Holland advocated for the Trustees to select Dr. Susan Enfield as the next Superintendent of Schools for the District. She thanked and expressed appreciation for the work of The Bryan Group. She believed Dr. Enfield would continue with the current strengths of the District, while at the same time acknowledging and working on the challenges. She highlighted that Dr. Enfield was selected as one of the top superintendents in the country by EdWeek and had the most experience within a classroom and as a superintendent of all the finalists.

Phil Kaiser, Washoe Education Association, spoke in support of Dr. Susan Enfield to be the next Superintendent of Schools. As a member of the Search Advisory Group, he commended the Board on their selection of The Bryan Group to conduct the search because he believed it was extremely thorough and extensive. He was impressed with the community forum process, which also allowed students the ability to participate in both formal and informal time with each candidate. The Washoe Education Association supported Dr. Enfield due to her extensive experience as a superintendent and as a superintendent during COVID. He believed Dr. Enfield would be a collaborative leader who was interested in hearing from various people before making a final decision.

James Benthin advocated for the Trustees to select Dr. Sherrell Hobbs as the next Superintendent. He discouraged the Board from selecting Ms. Jhone Ebert because he believed she was responsible for Nevada being ranked last in education. He believed Dr. Hobbs would increase standards for students and their learning. He would like to see goals established for the new superintendent based on past performance that would improve education for all students. He was specifically interested in seeing improvement to the District's ACT scores and academic performance measures. He also felt Dr. Hobbs would be able to work with a completely new Board since it would be changing dramatically in June.

Bruce Parks felt the Board had a difficult decision ahead of them in selecting a new superintendent because he believed prior superintendents had not been the best for the District. He urged the Board and community to move forward and not focus on the past. He was interested in seeing any new superintendent look at the number of

central office administrators, especially the number of area superintendents, because he believed there was a lot of “bloat” that had to be removed. He hoped the next superintendent would focus on improving academic standards because he felt it was important to look at the whole picture and not just selected statistics.

Melanie Sutton agreed with the comments made by Mr. Bruce Parks. She was interested in moving away from a focus on pronouns and seeing academic excellence and the amount of violence in schools addressed.

Pablo Nava Duran provided his thoughts on each candidate based on all the information provided and the community forums. Ultimately, he believed Dr. Susan Enfield was the best candidate for the Washoe County School District because of her experience in Seattle, Washington.

Shannon Coley spoke in support of the Trustees selecting Dr. Sherrell Hobbs as the next Superintendent of Schools. She believed Dr. Hobbs was extremely personable and wanted to be involved in the community. She expressed concerns with Dr. Susan Enfield because of her focus on restorative justice practices.

John Eppolito, Protect Nevada Children, reminded the Board about a former student from Robert McQueen High School who had dropped out of school because he did not support what the student claimed his teacher would be focusing on for the year, which was LGBTQ+ and Black Lives Matter, and about the concerns raised by members of the community related to the teaching of LGBTQ+ in elementary and middle schools. He did not believe conservative and Christian families were represented on the Board or in the schools. He felt the only candidate who would focus only on educating students was Dr. Sherrell Hobbs.

The Board received emails from the following:

Joe Morabito

Bobbie Oneto

Nikki Buhrmann

President Taylor reviewed the process the Trustees would use to narrow the number of candidates and ultimately select a superintendent, which would be similar to the process used when appointing Trustees to vacant seats. The process would begin with each Trustee and the Student Representative providing their feedback and thoughts. A straw poll would be conducted after the discussion to narrow the field even more, from there either another poll could be administered or a motion made, depending on the desires of the Board. If there was a motion to extend an offer to a particular candidate, the Board would then hear Agenda Item 2.02

Trustee Smith thanked The Bryan Group for their work. She mentioned she heard from many members of the community that they appreciated all the opportunities to provide feedback and the way The Bryan Group guided the process. She provided her thoughts on each of the candidates and the benefits each would bring if selected for the position. Currently, Dr. Susan Enfield rose to the top of the list in her mind based on the numerous roles and competencies developed by The Bryan Group and based on information and feedback from the community.

Trustee Rodriguez appreciated the commitment to education of all the candidates and expressed his thoughts on each. He agreed with Trustee Smith that Dr. Susan Enfield stood out because he felt she believed in many of the same things he did, such as a commitment to law enforcement and working on the human trafficking problem. He appreciated her work with the Washington State Legislature and felt she would be able to bring that same dedication to Nevada. He mentioned many of the emails he received from the community were also in support of Dr. Enfield and her commitment to transparency.

Trustee Church indicated he was extremely impressed with all the applicants. He provided constructive criticism for each candidate based on their interviews. He noted his top two preferences were Dr. Sherrell Hobbs and Dr. Susan Enfield based on the in-person interviews and meet and greet opportunities, with Dr. Hobbs rising to the top. He appreciated her direct responses to his questions, her warmth, and her focus on quality of education. While he believed Dr. Enfield would be a fine superintendent, he was concerned how she would work with a new Board.

Student Representative Kuster thanked the Board and The Bryan Group for the ability to participate in the process. Speaking on behalf of the Student Voice Committee and Superintendent's Student Advisory Committee, the top two candidates were Dr. Susan Enfield and Dr. Sherrell Hobbs. The students liked the personality and compassion shown by Dr. Hobbs; however, they believed Dr. Enfield was the best fit for the Washoe County School District based on her realistic, achievable, and innovative ideas and the way she responded to questions during the forums and interviews made it clear she was interested in supporting everyone in Washoe County, not just a single group. The students also believed Dr. Enfield had the longest and most extensive experience as a superintendent and working with state legislators.

Trustee Mayberry expressed his appreciation to The Bryan Group for providing the most extensive and transparent search for a public chief executive officer he had ever seen. He appreciated the work of staff and their collaboration with The Bryan Group. He thanked each of the candidates for their interest in the Washoe County School District. Based on the input he received from constituents and what he felt as a father of students in the District, he believed the best choice at the present time was Dr. Susan Enfield. He noted Dr. Enfield was the only candidate to talk about leading by example,

had success with state legislators to increase funding, was a vocal advocate for all students, and had a lengthy tenure as a public schools' superintendent.

Trustee Nicolet thanked all the Trustees for their commitment to the process and deeply thinking about what was best for the future of the District. She appreciated the work of The Bryan Group and their Search Advisory Group. She provided her thoughts on the process and mentioned she had listened for the use of certain words and phrases by the candidates, such as students, student performance, the well-being of students, families, different levels of employees, and the community. She listened for those groups to determine if the candidate had an understanding of what would be required to lead the District. She wanted to ensure the candidate she would ultimately support had an understanding of the needs of all students, staff, families, politics, public funding, and financing. She believed Dr. Susan Enfield was the one candidate who raised the words and phrases more than any other candidate and that she would be the best fit for the District and the community.

Trustee Minetto agreed with the prior remarks from Trustees and thanked everyone for their involvement in the process. She noted longevity was important to her and there was only one candidate who had been in the same position for the past 10 years, which was Dr. Susan Enfield. She appreciated that Dr. Enfield had been a superintendent for those 10 years and that she had prior classroom experience.

President Taylor expressed her thanks to everyone involved in the process and their commitment to the process. She provided her thoughts on each candidate and highlighted she used the numerous competencies developed by The Bryan Group and the Search Advisory Group as a guide in determining her top choices. Her top two choices were Dr. Susan Enfield and Dr. Sherrell Hobbs; though, she was leaning towards Dr. Enfield because of the depth of her experience and her ability to acknowledge mistakes then figure out how to move forward.

President Taylor had a straw poll conducted. Each Trustee was to indicate who their top choice was. The results would be tabulated and announced.

President Taylor recessed the meeting for 5 minutes.

The results of the straw poll were provided:

One Trustee selected Dr. Sherrell Hobbs as their top candidate (Trustee Church).

Six Trustees selected Dr. Susan Enfield as their top candidate (Trustees Mayberry, Minetto, Nicolet, Rodriguez, Smith, and Taylor).

It was moved by Trustee Smith and seconded by Trustee Rodriguez that **the Board of Trustees selects Dr. Susan Enfield as the next Superintendent of Schools for**

the Washoe County School District, subject to negotiations and approval of the final contract by the Board of Trustees.

President Taylor opened the motion for discussion.

Trustee Church remarked that he would like to see the other candidates considered, if Dr. Enfield were to decide not to take the position, rather going through the process a second time.

President Taylor believed that would be the next steps if the Board and Dr. Enfield could not come to an agreement.

The result of the vote was 6-1: (Yea: Adam Mayberry, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Joe Rodriguez, Beth Smith, and Angela Taylor. Nay: Jeff Church.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

President Taylor took the opportunity to thank Dr. Kristen McNeill for her continued dedication to the Washoe County School District throughout the process. She praised Dr. McNeill's work ethic and noted she had not decreased her intensity to the position or the student of Washoe County since announcing her retirement. She knew the past few years had been extremely challenging, specifically dealing with COVID, and wished Dr. McNeill the best in her well-deserved retirement after 30 years in education.

2.02 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO DETERMINE THE INITIAL CONTRACT TERMS TO BE OFFERED TO THE CANDIDATE SELECTED AS SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS TO INCLUDE THE ADDITION OF LANGUAGE REGARDING MEDIATION PROCEEDINGS, DETERMINATION OF START DATE, TERM OF AGREEMENT, ANNUAL SALARY, PERFORMANCE BONUS, AND VEHICLE EXPENSE ALLOWANCE

Emily Ellison, Chief Human Resources Officer, and Anthony Hall, Board Counsel, reviewed the revisions to the draft contract made based on prior direction by the Board. Mr. Hall presented the new language regarding mediation and the tightened up language regarding termination. The substance of the document was not changed but cleaned up. Mr. Hall believed the contract was solid.

Trustee Church appreciated the inclusion of mediation; however, he was concerned that the Board was not involved in the negotiation process.

President Taylor remarked The Bryan Group had reviewed the draft contract with each candidate as part of their processes so there should not be a lot of new items to negotiate. Ms. Ellison noted the intent of finalizing a draft contract prior to the final selection was to provide the information to the applicants so they were aware of the

general areas. If there was a counteroffer, she would bring the information back to the Board.

Trustee Nicolet asked if there was a timeline for both the District and Dr. Enfield to complete the contract. Ms. Ellison indicated the schedule of the Board meetings provided a good timeline of deadlines and allowed for possible agenda items.

Trustee Smith stated she would like to see if there was an opportunity for overlap between Dr. Enfield's start date and Dr. McNeill's end date.

President Taylor agreed and was hopeful June 1, 2022 could be the start date because that would allow for a month overlap. However, there would still need to be discussions with Dr. Enfield. Ms. Ellison felt any motion should be that the start date be as soon as possible to allow for the overlap desired by the Board as well as parameters she would be able to work with in terms of negotiations.

Trustee Church commented that there remained a lot of blanks within the contract that would need to be filled in, which was what he was concerned about in terms of negotiations. Ms. Ellison mentioned part of the agenda item was to fill in as many blanks as possible or to provide parameters on negotiations. The main areas that would need to be determined by the Board at the present meeting were the effective date, term of the contract, and salary.

It was moved by Trustee Nicolet and seconded by Trustee Mayberry that **the Board of Trustees approves the start date of the employment agreement as: as soon as possible but no later than Monday, June 13, 2022.**

President Taylor opened the motion for discussion.

Trustee Church expressed his discomfort in the negotiation process because it was public. He wanted to ensure there would be able to be meaningful negotiations and that if Dr. Enfield did not agree to the proposed start date, that would come back to the Board for consideration.

President Taylor indicated that was correct. She believed the intent of the agenda item was to include what the Board wanted to see and allow Dr. Enfield to then counter areas where she wanted to see something different.

Mr. Hall mentioned the final motion for the agenda item should include that the final contract, including any motions made during the meeting, was subject to negotiation and approval by the Board.

The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jeff Church, Adam Mayberry, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Joe Rodriguez, Beth Smith, and Angela Taylor.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

Ms. Ellison moved the discussion to the term of the agreement. It was important to note Nevada Revised Statutes did not allow a first term superintendent to have a contract exceeding 4 years. Typically, initial contracts for superintendents were for 3 years. While 1-year contracts were appealing to boards, they were not appealing to candidates, especially those coming from out of state.

Trustee Smith added the training provided by the Nevada Association of School Boards highlighted new superintendents needed at least 3 years to see effective change from there leadership. She states she could not support anything less than 3 years.

Trustee Mayberry agreed with Trustee Smith.

Trustee Church indicated he would like to see something less, such as 30 months, but could see where the Board was leaning. He appreciated the numerous areas that allowed for termination if that was required.

It was moved by Trustee Mayberry and seconded by Trustee Rodriguez that **the Board of Trustees approves the term of the employment agreement as: from the negotiated start date through June 30, 2025.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jeff Church, Adam Mayberry, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Joe Rodriguez, Beth Smith, and Angela Taylor.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

Ms. Ellison moved the conversation to the salary and reminded the Trustees the previously approved range was \$275,000 to \$310,000 annually for base salary.

Trustee Smith wondered if it would be appropriate to keep the range in place to allow Ms. Ellison the ability to negotiate. Ms. Ellison indicated she would not be negotiating the contract, but acting as an intermediary between Dr. Enfield and the Trustees.

President Taylor asked who would be conducting the negotiations on behalf of the Board. JJ Batchelder, Board Services Coordinator, mentioned the Board Leadership Team had previously been the ones to negotiate the agreements with superintendents. Mr. Hall indicated the Board did have the ability to direct that an individual or certain individuals conduct the negotiations. He mentioned if the Board were to direct him to enter into negotiations, he would prefer to have a salary range instead of specific amount to allow for thorough negotiations. Ms. Ellison requested if the Board were to direct a person or persons to negotiate the contract, she would like to recuse herself since it would be awkward to negotiate terms with her future supervisor.

The Trustees and Mr. Hall continued a discussion on if the Board Leadership Team or just certain members of the Board should be involved and work with Mr. Hall. The contract would have to return for final approval by the Board. The consensus was that discretion should be provided in the remaining areas needed to be decided to allow for effective negotiations.

It was moved by Trustee Church and seconded by Trustee Rodriguez that **the Board of Trustees authorizes the Board President, Vice President, and Legal Counsel to enter into negotiations with Dr. Susan Enfield regarding compensation, possible performance bonuses, and vehicle expense allowance, and brings the final contract to a meeting of the Board of Trustees for final approval, as soon as possible.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jeff Church, Adam Mayberry, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Joe Rodriguez, Beth Smith, and Angela Taylor.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

3. Closing Items

3.01 PUBLIC COMMENT

Pablo Nava Duran thanked the Board for their selection of Dr. Susan Enfield as the next superintendent. He expressed concern over the increase in school violence in the Clark County School District and urged the Board to consider additional mental health supports so the same challenges did not occur in Washoe County.

Mike Croghan reminded the Board that the Washoe County School District was a public school district, which meant that they had to accept everyone who came to the door, including Christians, Queers, whites, blacks, and everyone else. He commented that everyone in the schools deserved justice, including restorative justice. He believed it was the duty of the citizens to support the public schools so everyone in the schools were able to learn and respect each other, no matter their background or moral code.

John Eppolito claimed the quality of education in the Washoe County School District had declined since his children began school in 2003. He believed the reason for this decline was due to the focus on social and emotional learning, comprehensive sex education, critical race theory, common core, no cursive, and teachers advocating for LGBTQ and Black Lives Matter issues. At the recent superintendent forums, he had asked each candidate about the amount of data collected on students by Infinite Campus and only Dr. Enfield seemed confused by the question. He added he would have a problem if far-right ideologies were also taught in the classroom and that he wanted the focus to be on education.

3.02 ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business to come before the members of the Board, President Taylor declared the meeting adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

Angela D. Taylor, President

Ellen Minetto, Clerk

From: Morabito, Joe
Sent: Thursday, April 21, 2022 9:05 AM
To: Public Comments
Cc: The Bryan Group
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Selecting A New Superintendent - Wait Until The Next Board Is Seated

The current Washoe County School Board should wait until after the next election in November to appoint a new Superintendent since Board composition is likely to change. This could put an appointment now in jeopardy since a majority on the next Board may not approve of the person selected. Given three failed Superintendents in a row, the Board needs to get this right. The current Board should appoint an Interim Superintendent until a new Superintendent can be approved by the next Board majority. Life as we know it will not end, since there are no current plans in place that are designed to improve the Quality of Education in Washoe anyway. Finally, the process used by the Bryan Group to select a new Superintendent is tainted and suspect, since no known Republicans or conservatives were involved in the process. We can only conclude that there must have been an “enemies list” provided by someone in the district to the Bryan Group, since no one who opposes the current school board was selected to serve on this Committee, or for that matter any other district committee. And, there were likely teacher union representatives on the Selection Committee, which is a major conflict of interest. The five finalist candidates may not be the best choices to choose from. There were 25 other candidates that were eliminated perhaps for political reasons that should be explored before a final decision is made. JM

Joseph Morabito

From: Bobbie Oneto
Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2022 8:43 AM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Superintendent choice

Sherrel Hobbs

She can deal with first issue..

Staffing

Without staff. Nothing else matters

Thank you

24 year staff member

I was the meeting staff that asked all to spend 30 seconds

WHAT IS SUPPORT MEAN TO YOU

DO YOU REMEMBER
INFLUENCED THE VOTE THAT DAY

DO THE RIGHT THING

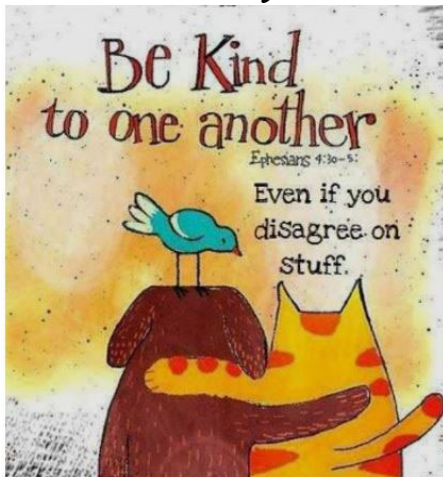
From: Buhrmann, Nicole
Sent: Tuesday, April 26, 2022 12:41 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: Please Hire Dr. Susan Enfield as our next WCSD Superintendent

Dear WCSD Trustees, As a parent and employee of WCSD I implore you to hire Dr. Susan Enfield as our next Superintendent. I spent many hours after work watching all the candidate meet and greets along with the actual interviews. Dr. Enfield is the only candidate qualified to hit the ground running if hired. I appreciate her passion for the work necessary and communication style. We desperately need a fresh approach and unbiased view of our district's strengths and shortcomings. Please take into consideration the will of our staff, parents, and administration through the results of the survey and hire Dr. Enfield.

I appreciate you time and consideration.

Sincerely, Nikki Buhrmann

Nikki Buhrmann
Donner Springs Librarian
Kindness Always ❤️



From: Jordan Zito
Sent: Monday, April 25, 2022 5:50 PM
To: Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] WCSD Superintendent.

Hello, my name is Jordan, and my comment would not necessarily be for whom should be picked, but would be about contract details.

I would suggest a one and one; then look long term.

What I mean is, a one year contract flat out, with the option for either the Superintendent or the District to opt out; no penalty, after one year, or opt in for one more year; with penalty in the second year, only for the Superintendent; because at that point it would be less than a year remaining, before revisiting in February of 2024 for a long term commitment of 5 years, making it a total of 7 years, if all goes well, with an either side option at year 3; with penalties/payout to be applied; unless wrongdoing is established; of the 5 year deal, if the new Superintendent makes it that far.

What are you thoughts, concerns on structuring in this manner? Does this make sense to you?