

**MINUTES OF THE APRIL 11, 2023
WORK SESSION OF THE
WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

April 11, 2023

1. Opening Items

1.01 CALL TO ORDER

The work session of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 9:07 a.m. in the Board Room of the Central Administration Building, located at 425 East Ninth Street in Reno, Nevada.

Dr. Susan Enfield, Superintendent, sent condolences on behalf of the entire Washoe County School District to Mutiu Fagbayi for the loss to his family. Mr. Fagbayi had been leading the work on the development of the new strategic plan as President and Chief Executive Officer of Performance Fact, Inc.

1.02 ROLL CALL

President Beth Smith and Board Members Jeff Church, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley were present. Board Member Joe Rodriguez was absent from the meeting. Superintendent Susan Enfield and staff were also present.

1.03 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Seng-Dao Keo, Deputy Superintendent, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

2.01 PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON GUIDANCE TO PERFORMANCE FACT, INC. BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES IN ORDER FOR THE BOARD TO PROVIDE INPUT DURING THE DISTRICT-WIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS, WITH THE STRATEGIC PLAN COMING BACK TO THE BOARD FOR FINAL DECISION IN JUNE 2023

Rose Wagner, Performance Fact, provided an update to the Board on the progress of the strategic plan development. It was important to remember the process was about the students and the experiences they were having in the schools. The data was organized into looking at 20 students, so about 8 out of every 20 students were Hispanic and about 3 out of every 20 students were students with disabilities. Different data sets were provided to show how different factors could impact students. The

primary purpose of creating a strategic plan was to ensure unity of purpose or alignment so the programs and structures were moving in the same direction. Performance Fact had been working with various groups within the District and Washoe County to gather diverse perspectives to incorporate in the new strategic plan. The stakeholder engagement calendar was reviewed.

Trustee Nicolet asked if additional community forums would be conducted. She was concerned because of the lack of participation she had seen at previous forums and believed it was important to hear more from the community. Michele Anderson, Chief Communications and Community Engagement Officer, indicated the District had conducted intentional outreach in terms of who in the community was targeted. It was difficult to get a lot of people at the forums for general feedback sessions, unless specific programming was going to be cut. The District would continue to promote the forums and determine if additional in-person or virtual forums should be held. Additionally, survey invitations would be sent out soon to allow for more community participation.

Ms. Wagner reviewed a three-circle bullseye graphic representing how the work was organized, with student learning at the center of the process, then the instruction that would support student learning, and finally the structures that needed to be in place to support the instruction and students. The work to date on the three circle areas was presented. Under student learning, the current vision, mission, and core beliefs were reviewed; any changes to these areas would occur prior to final adoption of the new strategic plan. The Portrait of a Learner/Graduate principals for all students were: skilled communicator and collaborator; resilient learner; inspire innovator; healthy mind and body; and global citizen. The five goals and measures of student progress were: strong start for early success; student voice and advocacy; empowered, safe, supported, and connected students; academic growth toward achievement; and empowering all learners for their future. One area of note was the intentional change in language from "student" to "learner" in the goals.

President Smith expressed her appreciation for the emphasis on student voice in the goals. She felt it was important to include the students in their learning, so education was not happening to them, but with them.

Trustee Nicolet agreed with the emphasis on student voice; however, she was concerned about the absence of parents and families in the goals. Ms. Wagner indicated the goals were about students and the outcomes for students. The next layer, related to instructional effectiveness, did include parents and families.

Superintendent Enfield added that as a school system, the goals of the organization were student success and achievement. How the organization reached the goals included the responsibility to partner with families and staff.

Ms. Wagner continued with the discussion on the goals by revealing the draft measurements. The measurements provided details on how the Board would be able to monitor the progress of the goals. Each goal had three to four measurements associated with them. The discussion moved to the “four pillars” related to instructional effectiveness: consistent, standard-aligned curriculum and instruction; strong partnerships among families, community, and school; commitment to elevating educators and investing in people; and culture of excellence and accountability.

Trustee Nicolet remarked that she would like to see families included as more than a partner in education because families were the first and forever teachers. She felt just calling parents and families “strong partners” made them adjunct. She would like parents and families to be at the top to allow greater participation in their children’s education.

President Smith agreed with the intent behind Trustee Nicolet’s comments; however, she was concerned that the goals needed to remain focused on the students and not create the ability of a parent to make individual level decisions on the curriculum because they did not feel it was appropriate for their child.

Ms. Wagner noted that in the various discussions and community forums, there was a desire to place a greater emphasis on safety and connections in schools. It was determined the best way to accomplish that goal was to create safety and connection as a beam or foundation that supported the four pillars. The presentation was concluded with information on next steps and how changes would occur to the current draft.

Trustee Mayberry asked what the general feedback from the forums was and requested clarification on the difference between the goals and objectives. Ms. Wagner noted much of the feedback from the community forums centered on Portrait of a Learner. Initially there had been more principles, but based on the feedback, they were able to combine some to the five principles presented. The feedback on the goals was positive, as was the feedback on safety and student voice. The goals were what the District hoped to be true for all students, beginning with a strong start for early success and ending with empowering them for whatever came next.

Superintendent Enfield emphasized that the ultimate goal was that every student graduated empowered for post-secondary success. The other goals had to be in place for that ultimate goal to happen. For example, the District would not reach the final goal if they did not invest in strong early learning programming, provide opportunities for students to advocate for their own learning, allow students to feel safe and connected to their schools, and ensure students were able to measure their growth so they were able to reach the final goal.

Trustee Westlake indicated she agreed with Trustee Nicolet and was interested in seeing parent and family engagement as a goal. She did not believe the District would be successful in any of the goals if parents and families were not provided opportunities to be part of the school experience.

President Smith opened the meeting to public comment.

Dana Hardt was a parent in the District. She encouraged the District to look to the benefits of dual language programming for all students. She provided information on the various benefits such programming could provide, such as higher grade point averages and performance data. She referenced research related to dual language programming to support her viewpoint.

Leslie Hermann was a former teacher in the District and advocate for the schools in Incline Village. She was interested in assisting the District with their conversations on the future of schools in Incline. She believed the recent meeting at Incline High School was a debacle as District staff were unable to provide answers to the simplest questions, such as was anyone from Incline involved in the conversation related to the possible closing of Incline Middle School. She mentioned that the optics to the community was that the closing of the school was a foregone conclusion.

President Smith reviewed the process for the Board providing input on the strategic plan. She reminded the Trustees that the difference between the Board providing input and the community providing input was that the Board's input was done during a public meeting. The intent was for the Trustees to see what the staff and community had developed, then provide areas for refinement.

Superintendent Enfield noted the process for the development of the new strategic plan was very different than prior strategic planning sessions conducted by the District. The goal was to develop a strong, inclusive plan created by the District and community that provided a roadmap for the future. She agreed with the importance of ensuring families were featured prominently in everything done by the District, but the intention of what needed to be done had to change. Instead of parental involvement and partnerships, the District had to focus on teaming with parents and families in service of the children. That said, the end goal was not teaming with families, but the success of the children. The goal could not be achieved without families. She suggested the inclusion of a preamble or values statement that emphasized the importance of parent and family involvement.

Trustee Nicolet appreciated the suggestion of a preamble. She wondered if there should also be an additional pillar related to Instructional Effectiveness regarding the

strength of families and staff because those components were critical to student success.

Trustee Woodley agreed in the first goal because it was critical for the schools to have a strong start in creating student success. He wondered if the pillars should actually come before the goals or if there was a better way to correlate the importance of families from the pillars to the goals. Part of the challenge was that people felt what came first was most important so including a commitment to families as part of a preamble would help.

Trustee Westlake stated the District could not take on the responsibility for educating the whole child, including the social and emotional aspects, without teaming with the families. The District would also need to teach the parents that their input was important and they had to be involved in their child's education as well.

President Smith indicated she was interested in seeing the safety and connection aspect of the pillars as a beam or umbrella and not a foundation. She noted the school had to ensure safety and connection before they were able to start on the pillars of instructional effectiveness.

Trustee Church agreed that parental involvement had to be in the forefront and could support the idea of a preamble. He wanted to ensure those students considered at-risk were able to receive support from the entire community so they could also succeed. He wanted to ensure the violence in the schools was addressed but was not sure where or if that should be placed in a strategic plan. He emphasized that the first goal should be quality of education and getting students back to the "3 R's." He felt the strategic plan should emphasize education over everything else.

Superintendent Enfield thanked the Trustees for the discussion. She appreciated the concern and agreed parents and families had to be included as part of the promise of the Washoe County School District. She knew the District would never be able to succeed in the promise to know every student by name, strength, and need, and graduate ready for a future of their choice without teaming with and listening to families on the education of their children.

It was moved by Trustee Nicolet and seconded by Trustee Woodley that **the Board of Trustees directs the Superintendent to develop additional messaging surrounding the District's promise to include an emphasis on the importance of families.**

President Smith opened the motion for discussion.

Trustee Church requested clarification on implementing the strategic plan with discipline and if that referred to student discipline.

Superintendent Enfield explained that the strategic plan would only be successful if it were implemented with intentionality and the wording did not relate to student discipline.

The result of the vote was Unanimous: The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jeff Church, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

It was moved by President Smith and seconded by Trustee Mayberry that **the Board of Trustees directs the Superintendent to have the "safety and connection" aspect shown as a primary beam related to the 4 pillars.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: The result of the vote was 5-0: (Yea: Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley. Not Present at Vote: Jeff Church.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

President Smith moved the discussion to determine if the Trustees were interested in seeing an additional pillar added that focused on the importance of families or if the pillar related to strong partnerships should be restructured to provide a greater emphasis on families.

Trustee Westlake mentioned she was interested in seeing language around making a conscious effort to encourage or empower families, administrations, teachers, and others to help students reach the end goal of going out into the community and becoming successful.

It was moved by Trustee Mayberry and seconded by Trustee Nicolet that **the Board of Trustees revises Pillar B to include a stronger emphasis on family partnerships.**

President Smith opened the motion for discussion.

Trustee Mayberry believed it was important to include a stronger emphasis so no one in the community would be able to come back and say the Washoe County School District did not support parents or want them involved in their child's education.

The result of the vote was Unanimous: The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jeff Church, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

It was moved by Trustee Nicolet and seconded by Trustee Woodley that **the Board of Trustees provides input to the Superintendent and Performance Fact, Inc. regarding the District-wide strategic planning process, with the strategic plan coming back to the Board for final approval in June 2023.**

President Smith opened the motion for discussion.

Superintendent Enfield thanked the Trustees for the conversation and the opportunity for her to become a better learner. The strategic plan would be a document that would galvanize the community and provide a way forward for the District.

The result of the vote was Unanimous: The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jeff Church, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

President Smith recessed the meeting for 15 minutes.

2.02 PRESENTATION BY STAFF AND DISCUSSION BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES REGARDING THE DISTRICT'S FISCAL YEAR 2023-24 TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR ALL DISTRICT FUNDS; PROCESS AND STATUS; POSSIBLE ACTION TO DIRECT THE SUPERINTENDENT TO ANALYZE AND REPORT BACK TO THE BOARD SPECIFIC BUDGET ISSUES, ITEMS, OR OTHER CHANGES TO THE DISTRICT'S FISCAL YEAR 2023-24 BUDGET PROCESS; AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO PROVIDE APPROVAL OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2023-24 TENTATIVE BUDGET

Mark Mathers, Chief Financial Officer, and Jeff Bozzo, Budget Director, provided a presentation on the tentative budget, which was required by Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) to be filed in April, even though the Nevada Legislature had not provided final revenue numbers to school districts. The knowns, unknowns, and department critical needs requests for the District were presented. The updated review included a new estimated surplus to the General Fund of \$68 million, down from \$76 million provided in a presentation in February, based on actions taken by the Board, utility cost increases, health insurance rate increase, and department critical needs requests.

Trustee Church mentioned he would hear from constituents that the number one priority of the District should be education and he also knew the District was seeing declining enrollment. He wondered how he could justify approving critical needs requests that would add central office staff versus adding teachers to classrooms. Mr. Mathers stated the central services staffing levels were lighter in the District than in any other governmental agency he had worked for. Many departments were struggling with increased demands and workloads that had not been addressed over several decades. Comparison with other school districts could be provided on central office

staffing levels. Additionally, the work performed by central office staff was often done in or for direct support to the schools.

Trustee Church asked if the District could look at freezing positions in areas where there had been a decrease in the caseload and use those funds for more teachers or teacher raises. Mr. Mathers noted the Board and District had reduced scores of central services positions since 2017 to address an over \$20 million deficit. The positions cut were both vacant positions and some filled positions, including the recent reduction of the Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) positions. The District was able to manage performance during that time, but with new systems being considered the District would need staff to manage those systems and make them usable for those in the schools.

Mr. Mathers and Mr. Bozzo continued with the presentation with a review of the specific department requests that could be covered through the surplus in the General Fund and were included within the tentative budget. The remainder of the \$68 million surplus could be used for employee compensation, class size reductions/staffing guideline changes, and any new programs aligned to the new strategic plan or new legislative requirements. For the tentative budget, the surplus was placed under salaries and benefits as a place holder, otherwise the District would exceed the 16% fund balance threshold. Based on current known information, the District's projected fund balance would remain at the same amount as last year, but the percentage would decrease to around 9.2%. The Board was reminded the fund balance target was 12%.

Trustee Mayberry requested clarification on where the District's ending fund balance stood as compared to other school districts in Nevada. Mr. Mathers explained the District had the second lowest ending fund balance as a percentage of expenses. With the anticipated increase in revenue from the state, even with the same amount of cash in the ending fund balance, the percentage would decrease because the denominator would be larger.

Mr. Mathers reviewed the analysis of the request to return walk zones to 2018 service levels. Background information on the changes made by the Board to walk zones and other actions related to bus driver shortages was presented. If the Board were to reduce the current walk zones for elementary and middle schools by 0.25 miles the result would be the need for 13 additional bus driver positions with a total cost of \$865,105. Other considerations included challenges in the recruitment of bus drivers and timeline of when new drivers could be hired and trained.

President Smith indicated she was not interested in the Board taking action related to any of the analyses conducted because it would be important to know the final numbers from the state and any new programming associated with the new strategic plan before such action should occur.

Trustee Westlake wondered if there was a correlation between increases or decreases in walk zones and impacts to attendance. Mr. Mathers mentioned there was not specific data related to the walk zones, but there was data from when the rotation system was utilized that showed there was an increase in absenteeism for those areas not being served, especially for schools with higher populations of at-risk students.

Trustee Westlake felt it would be important for the District to consider other factors when determining walk zones, especially if there was a correlation between transportation and absenteeism. She urged staff to look at targeting at-risk areas to get more students in the schools; though she was concerned there could be equity challenges associated with such an approach.

President Smith noted there were also some elementary schools where no general education transportation was provided because all households were within the walk zone. She had requested the analysis because the Board that made the tough decision to extend the walk zones had also recommended a future Board look at reversing the decision when revenues allowed because they understood the hardships the change would create for some families, no matter their socio-economic status.

Trustee Church agreed with Trustee Westlake that there should be a targeted approach to providing transportation because there were other factors impacting how a student got to school, such as lack of sidewalks and snow removal.

President Smith believed if the Board were to approve the item in the future, the District would provide a needs-based assessment on how additional drivers and routes would be implemented.

Mr. Bozzo presented the analysis on the request related to expanding School Police officer presence at middle schools. The current School Police coverage was explained, and the various options developed by School Police for consideration provided. The options included authorizing one officer at each middle school and the subsequent positions required to support them to grouping middle schools to reduce the number of officers and support positions needed. The total costs for the options ranged from \$1.5 million to \$2.6 million. Other operational considerations were reviewed, which could include campus supervisor positions on middle school campuses.

Trustee Westlake requested additional information on the role of campus supervisor. She believed it was critical for the District to do something and move past any roadblocks related to funding or recruitment. She saw the School Police officers as being a positive role model for students and staff and would show the community that the District was doing something to address school violence. Mr. Bozzo reviewed the job description for campus supervisors. The position reported to the school administrators and not School Police.

Trustee Westlake remarked that she could support the idea of campus supervisors at schools, but felt some campuses would require more than one position because of their sizes.

President Smith thanked staff for the options provided. She cautioned against the Board selecting options that placed positions in specific areas because that could create challenges in the future. The Board had to provide flexibility so the Superintendent and Chief could develop a model that best served the needs of the schools. Jason Trevino, Chief of School Police, explained many of the current challenges related to staffing levels were due to cuts and freezes made to departments beginning in 2009. The largest hurdle at the present time was related to recruitment because District salaries had not kept up with other law enforcement agencies. Information was provided on a possible police career and technical education (CTE) program that could be created in the high schools. While any student in the program would not be able to enter the academy until they turned 21, the program would allow School Police to recruit and then have participants serve in community service officer (CSO) type positions in the schools. The program would be similar to the "grow your own" program for teachers. In terms of the various options, School Police would recommend Option D, which allowed for rover positions to lessen the impact of an officer being out because of illness or other reasons.

President Smith expressed an interest in seeing additional analysis conducted on campus monitors and CSO positions at a future work session.

Trustee Church thanked staff for the information. He liked the CSO idea but was not clear on if there would be a difference between a CSO position and a campus supervisor position. He believed others in the community might be interested in the CSO positions as well, such as retired military. He indicated he would like to see either position begin their day riding on the buses to address discipline issues there.

Trustee Mayberry expressed his support for additional law enforcement positions and believed it was important to let School Police determine where their services were required. He wondered if there were other benefits to working with the District's School Police Department versus other law enforcement agencies that could be used to recruit more officers. Chief Trevino stated many officers who came to the Department as lateral transfers did take a cut in pay and benefits, but the tradeoffs were the other benefits, such as working days only and summers and other breaks off. However, the difference in the salaries continued to grow wider and there were not as many officers interested in lateral transfers because their families could not afford the reduced wages.

Mr. Mathers presented the analysis on keeping learning facilitators at all elementary schools after the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) grant

funds expired at the end of the 2022-23 School Year. Background information on where the learning facilitator positions came from were reviewed. Currently, the District had 65 learning facilitators in the schools, with 20 positions paid out of the General Fund and 45 positions paid with ESSER funds. The District provided three options for the Board to review, including maintaining only the 20 positions paid for out of the General Fund, expanding learning facilitators to all elementary schools, or outsourcing the learning facilitator services.

Trustee Nicolet stated she was supportive of each elementary school having a highly trained learning facilitator because of the services and support they provided to schools. She requested clarification on why expanding the number of learning facilitators would result in pulling 45 teachers from classroom positions. Joe Ernst, Chief Accountability Officer, mentioned the District had made the commitment to put a highly qualified teacher in every classroom. Because most of the learning facilitator positions were filled by former classroom teachers, if the teachers remained in the facilitator positions, there would be 45 vacant classroom positions. The District would draw learning facilitators from the pool of highly qualified teachers, which were master elementary school teachers.

Trustee Nicolet wondered if the 20 current learning facilitators would be redistributed to schools with high-risk populations if that school would be losing a grant-funded learning facilitator position. Mr. Ernst explained the 20 learning facilitators funded out of the General Fund would remain at the least successful performing schools in the District. The grant-funded learning facilitators would still be able to assist their schools with the professional learning knowledge they received when they were in the learning facilitator positions.

Trustee Nicolet indicated she would be interested in seeing an effort to continue to grow the learning facilitator positions or training when and if resources became available. Mr. Ernst noted the District would always look to match resources with needs if additional revenue became available.

Trustee Westlake wondered if the District could look at combining efforts from the second and third options, namely using current teachers and retired teachers. She knew there were schools who would be losing their learning facilitators because they had been able to increase their scores and she was concerned those schools would see their test scores drop again. She asked if there were ways to provide incentives to teachers in those schools to take on additional duties related to the services the learning facilitator provided so the support would continue. Mr. Ernst highlighted one of the challenges in education for a long time was what happened to additional resources in schools once they were able to increase their scores. The District had provided stipends at one point related to learning facilitators so that was an idea that could be brought back.

Mr. Bozzo presented the analysis on the elimination of stand-alone principals at elementary and K-8 schools. The District did have some assistant principal (AP) or dean positions funded out of Title I. Those positions were not included as part of the analysis. For the 2023-24 School Year, 29 of the 66 elementary schools would have an AP or dean position; additionally, some of the duties of a learning facilitator position could be used to support the principals in place of an AP or dean, resulting in 42 of 66 elementary schools having one of the three positions for next school year. The options related to the analysis were reviewed, including the creation of a flex position schools could use for an AP, dean, or learning facilitator, creation of a dean position at all elementary schools, or continuing with current staffing guidelines.

President Smith expressed support for the first option that provided some site-based decision making and allowed the principal to determine which position would best support the needs of the school.

Trustee Nicolet indicated she would like to see defined roles in terms of the flex allocation positions. She wondered if there were ways to alter the dean position so they could be a co-evaluator because she knew evaluations took a lot of time for principals. Superintendent Enfield mentioned the ability to conduct evaluations was a matter of licensure. Deans were not required to be licensed administrators and NRS required evaluations be conducted by licensed administrators.

President Smith asked if becoming a licensed administrator could become part of the process of becoming a dean and making the position a longer-term effort. Lauren Ford, Lead Area Superintendent, explained deans could shadow and coach but could not conduct evaluations. However, if that was the desire of the Board, the District could look at making that part of the requirements for the position. In other school districts in Nevada, the dean positions were licensed administrators, so it was not something unique.

Mr. Mathers concluded the presentation with a review of all other funds. A summation of all funds was provided and next steps in the budget process explained.

It was moved by Trustee Nicolet and seconded by Trustee Woodley that **the Board of Trustees approves the Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-24**. The result of the vote was Unanimous: The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jeff Church, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

3. Closing Items

3.01 PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at this time.

3.02 **ADJOURN MEETING**

There being no further business to come before the members of the Board, President Smith declared the meeting adjourned at 12:32 p.m.

Elizabeth Smith, President

Joseph Rodriguez, Clerk