

**MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 8, 2023
REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

August 8, 2023

1. Opening Items

1.01 CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 2:03 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 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, Student Representative Arabelle Deason, and staff were also present.

1.03 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Adam Searcy, Chief Operating Officer, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.04 LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

President Smith read the land acknowledgement.

2. Consent Agenda Items

It was moved by Trustee Nicolet and seconded by Trustee Mayberry that **the Board of Trustees approves Consent Agenda Items 2.02 through 2.03**. 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.

- 2.02 The Board of Trustees approved the grant application to Goggle, Inc. to fund Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) lab technology for Cold Springs Middle School, Lou Mendive Middle School, Yvonne Shaw Middle School, and Sparks Middle School for \$135,000.
- 2.03 The Board of Trustees approved the appointment of Anthony Marini as the parent/guardian representative to the Nevada Interscholastic Activities

Association (NIAA) Board of Control from the Washoe County School District, with a term ending June 30, 2024.

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

3.01 PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE DESIGN PHASE FUNDING ALLOCATION TOWARD THE REBUILD OF E. OTIS VAUGHN MIDDLE SCHOOL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,200,000 AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CAPITAL FUNDING PROTECTION COMMITTEE

Tami Zimmerman, Chief Facilities Management Officer, provided a presentation on the proposed rebuild of E. Otis Vaughn Middle School, as recommended by the Capital Funding Protection Committee. The design phase funding allocation would get the project through the permitting phase, with the intent of starting construction in June 2024. A video fly-through of the new building was shown. The building would be reconfigured to better fit the neighborhood. Included in the new building would be a community room and family resource center with separate access from the school for improved community usage.

Trustee Nicolet wondered why there were separate spaces for general education classrooms and electives. Ms. Zimmerman explained larger spaces were often needed for many electives, such as music and some career and technical education (CTE) classes.

Trustee Church requested additional information on any energy efficiency upgrades and if the project would be funded through the use of bonds. Ms. Zimmerman noted the project was included in the approved 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) but specific questions regarding funding would be answered by the Business and Finance Office. The District was always looking at energy efficiency projects for all schools, to include the use of solar panels and the orientation of the building to maximize sun exposure.

Trustee Woodley inquired if the community would continue to have the ability to access the sports fields. Ms. Zimmerman mentioned staff had been working with the City of Reno to ensure the fields were not only what the school required but also what the community needed. She highlighted the reason there were two softball fields was because of current community usage.

Trustee Mayberry asked how the rebuild process would work with the intent of not having any interruptions for students. Ms. Zimmerman detailed the process that was used for the William O'Brien Middle School Rebuild Project.

Trustee Mayberry wondered if the cell tower produced any revenue for the District and what those funds were used for. Ms. Zimmerman stated the cell towers were revenue producers and the funds were used to purchase technology for all schools.

President Smith opened the meeting to public comment.

Roger Edwards mentioned he was a 50-year resident of the neighborhood. He indicated he did not believe it was appropriate for a school to be rebuilt until the curriculum was improved so students were graduating with basic skills. He wanted to see the District move away from “nonsense curriculum” when students were graduating with the ability to compete in the real world.

Pablo Nava Duran thought the new building would be amazing for all the students in the area. He believed the new school would help change the culture of the school.

It was moved by Trustee Mayberry and seconded by Trustee Westlake that **the Board of Trustees approves the design phase funding allocation of \$5,200,000 toward the rebuild of E. Otis Vaughn Middle School, as recommended by the Capital Funding Protection Committee.** 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.

3.02 FOLLOW UP PRESENTATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) ASSESSMENT COMPLETED TO IDENTIFY THE STRENGTHS, GAPS, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT AS IT RELATES TO WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT’S HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT AND ITS CURRENT FUNCTIONS

Dr. Kristina Mason, Chief Talent Officer, provided an update on the status of changes occurring to the Office of Human Resources based on an assessment completed by the Urban Schools Human Capital Academy. The assessment identified 41 recommendations for improvements to make the Department more effective and efficient, including upgrading the human capital management system to increase functionality, evaluating Department structure and capacity to better meet the needs of schools, and creation of human resource (HR) partner roles to directly support school leaders with the recruitment and retention of staff. The Department would also be rebranded to the Office of Talent and Professional Growth Systems (TPGS). Information on “pooled” postings of qualified applicants, the expanded partnership with Teach for America, improved fingerprinting capacity, and launch of 0-day benefits for new hires was presented. The next steps for TPGS and current school site vacancies were outlined.

Superintendent Enfield explained the partnership with Teach for America and some of the other changes put in place had put the District in a much better position in terms of school site vacancies than the previous school year. While the status was not where she wanted it, the numbers were improved, and she believed future years would be even better.

President Smith requested additional information on the reorganization and if subsequent changes would be presented to the Board. Dr. Mason explained the process was to look at the needs, based on the 41 recommendations, and determine what the impact of any changes would be on the schools, as well as the system as a whole. The realignment of positions would be provided to the Board once the process was complete and any requests for additional positions would be made through Superintendent Enfield to the Board.

Trustee Mayberry asked if there were fees associated with fingerprinting and which positions were the most difficult to fill. Dr. Mason mentioned there was a fee; however, the Department did implement the recommendation to waive the fee for certain income brackets, with the idea of absorbing the fee for everyone in the future. Some of the most challenging positions to fill were those linked to special education, which was not atypical for school districts the size of Washoe County School District. She noted they were also seeing more fluctuations with administrative and executive assistant positions than anticipated due to salary restrictions.

Trustee Woodley wondered if the intent of the HR partner positions was to provide a better connection between the employee and HR so there was less confusion when an employee needed to contact human resources for assistance. Dr. Mason responded in the affirmative. The intent was for those positions to partner with principals on the needs of specific schools and the execution of the recruitment vision for the school. The positions would also be available to assist current employees with questions they might have surrounding benefits and other HR areas.

Trustee Westlake inquired about the status of vacancies for aides and assistants. Dr. Mason stated the District was currently processing applications for around 130 educational support professionals, so they were working on filling the vacancies.

Superintendent Enfield concluded the presentation by explaining recruitment and retention was an on-going process that was never done. She emphasized that the new strategic plan and WCSD Promise would do a lot to bring in new employees because they provided information on the vision and priorities of the District.

President Smith reordered the agenda to accommodate guests who would be present for Agenda Item 3.03.

4. Reports

4.01 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

This item was not heard.

4.02 BOARD REPORTS

Members of the Board of Trustees reported on their activities, meetings, and events.

4.03 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Susan Enfield reported on her activities including meetings with staff, community leaders, and the media.

5. Closing Items

5.01 PUBLIC COMMENT

Roger Edwards requested the Board begin conducting community meetings again so the public could have conversations with the Trustees. He was also interested in learning more about upcoming events the Trustees and superintendent would be hosting. He wondered if there were more locations the agenda could be posted to so the public was aware of what the Board would be discussing. He believed the District needed to address student behavior and improve the quality of education in order to recruit and retain teachers.

Pablo Nava Duran indicated he was looking forward to the start of the new school year. He was concerned about the number of gang members in the schools and hoped there would be less behavior problems in the new school year.

President Smith recessed the meeting for 23 minutes.

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

3.03 PRESENTATION TO INTRODUCE NEW SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND COMMUNITY

Dr. Troy Parks, Chief Academic Officer, and the associate chiefs introduced the 21 new principals in the Washoe County School District for the 2023-24 School Year.

5. Closing Items

5.01 PUBLIC COMMENT

The Board received emails from the following:

Veronica Copple

Maggie Babb

5.02 NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The next Regular Meeting would take place on Tuesday, August 22, 2023

5.03 ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business to come before the members of the Board, President Smith declared the meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Elizabeth Smith, President

Joseph Rodriguez, Clerk

From: Veronica Copple
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2023 8:48 AM
To: Public Comments
Cc: Enfield, Susan; Church, Jeffrey; Westlake, Colleen M; Rodriguez, Joseph M; Smith, Elizabeth A; Woodley, Alex; Mayberry, Adam; Nicolet, Diane M
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Spending and Budget

Hello Dr. Enfield and Board Members,

My name is Veronica Copple and I am a teacher librarian at Cold Springs Middle School. I'd like to introduce myself to you and give you some background about myself and give you some numbers to consider as you continue to spend money on programs and create positions which remain unfilled.

I have lived in Reno for most of my life. I'll be 39 in August. I attended Lemmon Valley Elementary and Alice Maxwell, Sparks Middle School and Sparks High School. I graduated in 2002, and got my first job with WCSD at Robert Mitchell Elementary School in 2008.

In 2008, I was a 1:1 CLS Aide. I worked with a boy who had Down's. Some of my job requirements included toilet training and safety. I made \$11:50 an hour. Today, in 2023, a 1:1 Special Education Aide makes \$11:56/hr. As I am sure you are aware, that is a .06¢ increase over a 15 year period.

Through the years since then, I steadily moved through different Classified positions until I was finally able to finish college and become a fully certified teacher. Due to the low pay district wide, and higher education costing what it does, it took me longer to finish my degree since I had to work an extra job over the summer months.

But I digress. I began teaching in the summer of 2015 as a summer school teacher at North Valleys High School. Shockingly, but not really, none of the teachers on staff wanted to teach summer school there due to the low pay offered. As an individual with student loans due who had just come off of a 16 week non-paid internship I couldn't pass the opportunity up.

I was then hired to teach at Vaughn Middle School that fall. My classroom was a basement boiler room, and I was told I was going to need to use a program for intervention. It was called Edmentum. The students hated it, it was confusing to learn myself, and the data was not thorough. We switched to Scholastic Action. That program was much more effective, so we got rid of Edmentum. The rest of the students used Step Up to Writing, and Read 180. I continued to teach in the boiler room of Vaughn Middle School making \$32,000 for the remainder of the year.

In the spring, I was told that because I did not have my TESOL certification that I would be overaged. I applied for transfer to Mendive Middle School. I worked at Mendive for three years. During that time, a contract negotiation was made in which steps were removed from the pay schedule, and some steps were added. Unfortunately for me, that meant that a new teacher with zero experience was making the same amount per year that I was. There was no compensation or adjustment for teachers who were already teaching. Around that same time, we went into a pay freeze, so I also had to contend with a year of no increase whatsoever. There, the intervention program was dyslexia related, and since it is no longer used, I don't remember what it was called.

It got to the point that I could no longer afford the commute from my home in Stead, all the way to Mendive. I transferred to Cold Springs Middle School and taught ELA. Over the past five years at CSMS we've used Read 180, Springboard, System 44, Phonics First, and i-Ready. All the while being told by you all that there isn't any money to

increase teacher salaries. Additionally, Reno began to grow at a rate of 20% higher than expected. Cost of living began to increase.

In 2021, the Board approved a renewal of the contract with Microsoft. There were so many zeros in that expenditure I lost track. The justification was that it did not have security issues like the FREE, easier to use Google Classroom and G Suite products. However, all programs are susceptible to hacking and issues, and Microsoft suffered a major security breach. 90% of schools nationwide use Google Classroom and there are plenty of resources to support the G Suite and Classroom applications it makes teaching much easier.

Home prices continued to rise, and then inflation began to increase. From 2016-2023 interest rates have risen from 3% to over 7.

This upcoming school year will be my 15th year as an employee with WCSD. I am beginning a new position as a librarian. Per district policy, I am required to take seven more graduate level courses to receive my endorsement to work in the library. This will cost me approximately \$5000. My Master's Degree is not sufficient enough to run a middle school library.

Over the last three weeks I have been informed of several colleagues leaving the district for higher paying positions elsewhere.

One left to go work at UNR.

One left to go work with the County Medical Examiner.

One is moving back to her hometown of Los Banos, California (where the cost of living is the same as Reno) to double her salary. As a third year teacher she will make \$81,000 per year.

One left to stay home with her children because as a teacher, she could no longer afford childcare.

Further, the last few weeks have also seen decisions by neighboring school districts to increase teacher pay. Carson City just voted to increase teacher pay by 21%. 21%! Already, a teacher with my same experience makes \$7,000 more per year than I do. That is before the 21% increase.

I have literally dedicated over half of my life to this school district, and the returns I am seeing in return from the Board are dismal. Please stop wondering why teachers are running away from Washoe County and start paying us a living, competitive wage.

Thank you for your time,
Veronica Copple MA TESOL

From: Maggie Babb
Sent: Sunday, August 6, 2023 7:15 PM
To: Westlake, Colleen M; Nicolet, Diane M; Rodriguez, Joseph M; Woodley, Alex; Mayberry, Adam; Smith, Elizabeth A; Church, Jeffrey; Enfield, Susan; Public Comments
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Public Comment-Discretionary Funding

Dear Trustees and Superintendent Dr. Enfield,

My name is Maggie Babb, and I am a 2nd grade teacher in the Washoe County School District. I am writing today to echo concerns brought to your attention at the July 25 board meeting. At this meeting the presidents of the WEA and WSPA addressed this board to ask that you postpone all discretionary spending until after all units have completed bargaining their contracts. Contracts should be negotiated first and then the remaining funds can be used for various programs and training.

I am writing to you at the start of my 9th year with the district. I moved to Nevada and began working with the Washoe County School District in 2015. In the time that I have worked here I have seen the district invest money in many programs. Examples include, LLI program kits for K-3 teachers, Microsoft office/teams software, ELlevation curriculum to aide with the implementation of the Benchmark Advance curriculum, School City Assessment program for district wide common assessments, Virgin Pulse Wellness programs, Learning A-Z, MAP, I-Ready and plus many more that are no longer in use. From my observation this district is always pursuing the next new and exciting program or software and has for years neglected to invest in its workforce. As we have spent money on all these programs and curriculums our educator payouts are some of the lowest in the state.

I am by no means saying that these programs are without merit. Many of these programs have been of great use in the classroom.

We are at a critical moment in time in the School District. The 2023 legislature has passed an historic budget for funding in education. Which gives the immense opportunity to invest in the staff, the educators, and most importantly, the **students**. We know even the best program or software we have funded will fail if there are not dedicated individuals there to implement. With the current funding our district is seeing, I urge you to invest in the people who make the schools run. Prioritize the contracts of your staff members so that we can recruit and retain quality educators to do the best for our students. Also consider that we now need to remain competitive with school districts in the surrounding area who have seen upwards of 20% raises for their staff and teachers including Carson City School District and Nye County. do not invest any new funding in programs or training until our contract negotiations have been completed. It is time to put **people** over programs in the district.

Thank you for all the work you do.

Respectfully,

Maggie Babb