

**MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 10, 2023  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

October 10, 2023

**1. Opening Items**

**1.01 CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 2:02 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, Joe Rodriguez, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley were present. Superintendent Susan Enfield, Student Representative Arabelle Deason, and staff were also present.

**1.03 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Richard Peraldo led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1.04 LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

President Smith read the land acknowledgement.

**2. Consent Agenda Items**

President Smith provided comments related to Consent Agenda Item 2.07, Approval of the Fifth Amendment to the Commercial Lease Agreement for 1301 Cordone Avenue. She was interested in highlighting the lease agreement because it was an example of why she advocated for a new central administration building. She emphasized the district was spending hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in lease agreements when those funds could be used to support students.

Trustee Church provided comments related to Consent Agenda Item 2.07, Approval of the Fifth Amendment to the Commercial Lease Agreement for 1301 Cordone Avenue. He agreed with President Smith's remarks and was also interested in seeing a new central administration building because the district would see a savings if they were able to house administrative employees in a central location.

---

President Smith opened the meeting to public comment.

John Eppolito spoke to Consent Agenda Items 2.04, 2.05, 2.08, and 2.11. He expressed concern over the amount of money the district was spending on student laptops and software, which totaled over \$3 million on the current Consent Agenda. He had heard some colleges refused to use some of the programs the Board was set to approve, nor did he allow his children to use the programs. He was concerned over the district's use of iReady and wondered if the Board actually looked at what they were approving. He disagreed with the new creation of a PreK Coordinator position and felt the district could use the funds to hire more teachers.

It was moved by Trustee Woodley and seconded by Trustee Rodriguez that **the Board of Trustees approves Consent Agenda Items 2.02 through 2.11**. The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jeff Church, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, Joe Rodriguez, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

- 2.02 The Board of Trustees approved the minutes of the July 25, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees.
- 2.03 The Board of Trustees approved Renewal #1 of Request for Bid #20-B-07-23-LR, Districtwide Emergency Roof Repair and Roof Maintenance Repair Services, to Kodiak Roofing & Waterproofing Co. for an estimated amount of \$228,331 for an additional 1-year term beginning November 9, 2023 and ending November 8, 2024.
- 2.04 The Board of Trustees approved the renewal of the Turnitin Program for the approximate cost of \$106,500 for 2023-24 School Year.
- 2.05 The Board of Trustees approved the creation of the new position of P-3 Coordinator to be funded by the Strategic Plan Budget in Fiscal Year 2023-24.
- 2.06 The Board of Trustees approved the 2-year agreement with Raptor Technologies for electronic visitor management software in the total amount of \$167,030.
- 2.07 The Board of Trustees approved the Fifth Amendment to the Commercial Lease Agreement for 1301 Cordone Avenue with 1301 Cordone LLC, for the RiSE Academy for Adult Achievement program, to extend the existing lease 1 year and modify other terms related thereto.

- 2.08 The Board of Trustees approved the agreement with CWD-G to purchase 8,717 student laptops using Federal Communications Commission Emergency Connectivity Fund grant funding for \$3,298,687.14.
- 2.09 The Board of Trustees approved the contract award to Building Control Services (BCS), as a sole source provider, to replace the Alerton heating, ventilation, and air conditioning controllers and associated equipment at 14 sites in the District for \$979,605.
- 2.10 The Board of Trustees provided final approval of draft Board Policy 9070, Board Policies, Administrative Regulations, and Administrative Procedures/Manuals.
- 2.11 The Board of Trustees approved the Agreement with Prisms of Reality, Inc. to purchase student licenses, hardware, and support services using funding from Assembly Bill 495 from the 2021 Nevada Legislative Session for \$160,150.

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

#### **3.01 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO WAIVE THE REQUIREMENTS OF BOARD POLICY 7110, NAMING OF SCHOOLS AND OTHER DISTRICT FACILITIES, AND APPROVE THE RENAMING OF THE GYMNASIUM AT NORTH VALLEYS HIGH SCHOOL IN HONOR OF BASKETBALL COACH, ATHLETIC DIRECTOR, AND SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER RICHARD PERALDO BASED ON EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES**

Lauren Ford, Secondary Associate Chief, and Tomas Macaluso, Principal, North Valleys High School, provided a presentation on why North Valleys High School was interested in renaming the gymnasium in honor of Richard Peraldo. Mr. Peraldo became head coach of the Panthers boys basketball team in 2010, which was the same year he began teaching at North Valleys High School. In 2014, Mr. Peraldo was hired as the athletic director and promoted a culture of excellence that continued to be fostered at the school. In 2021, Mr. Peraldo was named 3A Director of the Year by the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA), which was the first state award for North Valleys High School. They believed if Mr. Peraldo had not had to battle cancer, he would continue to serve North Valleys High School, impacting all students, staff, and families.

Richard Peraldo stated he loved teaching, coaching, and being the athletic director and that everything he did in the role of coach and athletic director was to support his student athletes. He explained that he loved teaching special education students

because he was able to work one on one and really get to know them. He was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer in May and had to take time for himself after battling cancer three times previously. He expressed great appreciation to the North Valleys High School community and Board for even considering naming the gymnasium after him because he did not do what he did for such an honor, but for the kids.

President Smith opened the meeting to public comment.

Jennifer Caldwell was a long-time friend of Richard "Dickey" Peraldo, having known him since 8<sup>th</sup> grade while students at Archie Clayton Middle School. She spoke about how Dickey had been there for her and her family throughout good and bad times, including teaching her sons how to play basketball. She felt Dickey was a role model in every sense and was a constant reminder about how precious life was. She knew basketball was a lifelong passion of Dickey's; naming the gymnasium after him would ensure his legacy of never giving up without a fight and whenever possible to fight with a smile.

It was moved by Trustee Rodriguez and seconded by Trustee Nicolet that **the Board of Trustees approves the renaming of the gymnasium at North Valleys High School in honor of Richard Peraldo.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jeff Church, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, Joe Rodriguez, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

### **3.02 PRESENTATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE AND RATIFY THE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT (WCSD) AND THE WASHOE EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS (WESP) FOR A TERM OF AGREEMENT FROM 2023-2027**

Neil Rombardo, Chief General Counsel, and Kevin Pick, Associate Counsel, reviewed the proposed revisions to the collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the Washoe Education Support Professionals (WESP). WESP was the district's second largest bargaining group and included employees such as bus drivers, nutrition services workers, custodians, aides, assistants, and carpenters to name a few. The proposed agreement included a 13.2% cost of living adjustment (COLA) in Year 1, 2.0% COLA's in Years 2 – 4, and a Senate Bill (SB) 231 match. The agreement included signing and retention bonuses for special education aides and assistants. Other proposed changes to the agreement included language clarification and the streamlining of procedures.

President Smith requested clarification on the SB231. Mr. Pick explained SB231 provided limited matching funding from the state for COLAs. WESP eligible employees would receive an approximate 4% match in Fiscal Years 24 and 25 if the district's plan was approved by the Interim Finance Committee. This meant WESP employees could receive a 17.2% COLA in Year 1.

Brian Lee, Nevada State Education Association (NSEA), thanked the Board and district for their collaborative efforts during the 2021 Nevada Legislative Session and throughout the negotiation process. Education Support Professionals (ESPs) were the backbone of the school districts because they provided the support the teachers needed to ensure they were able to educate students in a welcoming environment. He appreciated that ESPs were treated as equal partners and provided similar opportunities to other bargaining units in the district.

The Trustees and Superintendent Enfield offered their thanks and appreciation to the members of WESP for their collaborative efforts.

It was moved by Trustee Mayberry and seconded by Trustee Rodriguez that **the Board of Trustees approves and adopts changes to the negotiated agreement between the Washoe County School District and the Washoe Education Support Professionals.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jeff Church, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, Joe Rodriguez, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

### **3.03 PRESENTATION TO UPDATE THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON THE ELECTRIC SCHOOL BUS (ESB) GRANT FUNDED PILOT PROGRAM TO OPERATE AND INSTALL CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TWO SCHOOL BUSES**

Adam Searcy, Chief Operating Officer, and Scott Lee, Director of Transportation, provided an overview of the Electric School Bus (ESB) grant funded pilot program. The district had applied for the grant about a year ago. The grant allowed the district to install two charging stations, but they did have the ability to expand to another eight stations as needed. The buses had a limited range but there were ways to increase the distance and the district was looking at providing training for drivers to maximize range.

President Smith asked if the drivers on the routes received any specialized training for the buses. Mr. Lee explained the different training drivers of the electric buses received from the manufacturer, including the start sequence that had to be followed before the bus would start.

Dr. Jason Geddes, Energy Conservation & Sustainability Manager, provided additional information on how the buses helped the district reach various goals related to energy efficiency, sustainability, and environmental and social justice.

Trustee Westlake wondered what the lifespan of the batteries was, as well as the costs of the batteries. Mr. Lee remarked the lifespan depended on the number of times the batteries were recharged and other factors, but there was an 8-year guarantee on them from the manufacturer. Each bus had two battery packs. The replacement cost was around \$70,000.

Trustee Rodriguez inquired if the new buses had the standard features of the older buses, such as the cameras for security. Mr. Lee responded in the affirmative.

Trustee Mayberry asked what the range was for the buses with a full charge. Mr. Lee noted in the field tests completed by the district the range was between 85 and 105 miles. Based on the field tests, the district would look at the best routes to have the buses operate on. Dr. Geddes added the lifespan continued to improve with each new generation of batteries so it was anticipated the district could see a greater range from the buses in the future.

Marie Steele, NV Energy, provided information on the NV Energy School Bus program and the additional programming that would come out of the program.

**3.04 QUALITY OF EDUCATION – REVIEW OF SMARTER BALANCED ASSESSMENT (SBA) MATHEMATICS AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) DATA, NEVADA SCHOOL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK STAR RANKINGS, AND HIGH SCHOOL CORE CREDIT ATTAINMENT FROM THE 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR FOR STUDENTS IN THE WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT AND HOW THE WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT USES THE INFORMATION TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Superintendent Enfield prefaced the presentation, stating it was important for the District to review the data publicly and own where they stood; however, it was also important to review the state and national data so the Trustees and community had the ability to understand what was occurring was not an issue in a single school district. The strategies being put in place would be presented so everyone would know what was being done to improve the data.

Joe Ernst, Chief Continuous Improvement Officer, began the presentation and introduced Dr. Raquel Pelletier, Principal, Alice Maxwell Elementary School, who then introduced the Student Superstar, Urijah Rutherford. Urijah was selected as the Student Superstar because of his leadership at the school. Urijah spoke of the many reasons he liked attending Alice Maxwell Elementary School and the various ways to be part of the school community.

Mr. Ernst and Dr. Laura Davidson, Director of Research and Evaluation, began the presentation on the district's data in context with state and national data. The data was sobering and showed the magnitude of the impact of the pandemic on our students. The district understood there were significant challenges ahead to improve and would focus on the goals of the strategic plan to develop strategies to improve student achievement. The district's data continued to mirror what was occurring

nationally with students, but there were some bright spots, with younger students performing better than pre-pandemic levels. The pandemic also exacerbated existing disproportionalities, with Black and Hispanic middle school students needing an additional 6 months of instructional time to reach pre-pandemic levels. The star ratings helped the district understand the magnitude of what needed to occur; however, more than half of the schools either lost only one star, stayed the same, or gained one star. The data specific to elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools was reviewed.

Trustee Nicolet asked how much attendance was weighted as part of the star ratings and if chronic absenteeism was a factor. Dr. Davidson indicated attendance was weighted at 10% for elementary, middle, and high schools. Chronic absenteeism did have an impact on student performance and achievement.

President Smith requested additional information on the movement of 4- and 5-star schools and the number of 1-star schools throughout the state. Mr. Ernst mentioned in the 2018-19 School Year approximately 40% of Nevada schools were 1- and 2-star schools. For the 2022-23 School Year, approximately 55% of Nevada schools were 1- and 2-star schools.

President Smith wondered how chronic absenteeism was defined. Dr. Davidson noted a student was considered chronically absent if they missed 10% of the school days in a year, which equaled 18 days per school year or about 2 days per month. Additional information was presented on the wrap around services the schools worked to provide students who were experiencing chronic absenteeism, so the students and their families had the supports needed to reengage and come back to class. She noted a larger presentation on absenteeism would be provided to the Board at a future meeting.

President Smith called attention to the issue of Nevada students taking the ACT before they had been exposed to some of the curriculum. She supported the intent behind universal testing but was concerned with students being tested on material they had not been exposed to. She also understood Nevada had a different score requirement than other states in terms of what was considered proficient. Dr. Davidson mentioned the scoring benchmarks were lowered in Nevada because the state understood there were issues with when the test was administered. Additional information on the universal ACT testing in Nevada was provided and the improvement of ACT scores for many students between junior and senior years.

President Smith appreciated the larger numbers of students completing Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate, Dual Credit, and other opportunities. She requested additional information on how the district had removed barriers so more students were able to participate in the programs. Dr. Davidson explained some of the

ways the district had removed barriers, including covering the testing fees for students and eliminating prerequisites.

Trustee Westlake wondered if the district could introduce some of the content and concepts students had not been exposed to for the ACT in 10<sup>th</sup> grade so they would be somewhat prepared. Dr. Davidson indicated if students were behind in algebra as freshmen, which the district knew was a pinch point for many, then they would be behind for the ACT.

*President Smith recessed the meeting for 20 minutes.*

Dr. Seng-Dao Keo, Deputy Superintendent, and Dr. Troy Parks, Chief Academic Officer, continued with the presentation with the actions and strategies the district was engaging in to improve student outcomes. The actions and strategies linked to the four pillars of the strategic plan were reviewed. The pillars provided the framework for what adults would do for all students to achieve academic excellence. The actions and strategies were based on data and evidence of their effectiveness.

Trustee Mayberry inquired about the ability of teachers to be creative in their teaching methods. He was concerned because he had heard from some teachers that they were not allowed to use creativity to teach the standards. Dr. Parks and Dr. Kep mentioned the district was required to teach to the Nevada Academic Content Standards (NACS). The new model the district was moving towards in terms of instruction was for the district to set the expectation for what high quality instruction looked like and it was up to the teachers to determine how to get to that point based on their expertise which allowed for greater creativity.

President Smith provided her positive experience reviewing the iReady data with her child.

Trustee Nicolet requested additional information on the liaison network teams. Dr. Keo explained how the foundational systems were being put in place within the Office of Talent with the talent partner positions. Once complete, the talent partners would work with specific associate chiefs on the recruitment and retention needs at specific schools.

Trustee Westlake indicated she was interested in seeing additional educational opportunities for parents so they had the ability to use the information and data to help their children, especially with iReady. Dr. Parks remarked the Office of Teaching, Leading, and Learning had set an expectation early in the year that parents would be provided the appropriate information related to tools, such as iReady, so they understood what the information and data meant and how it could be used to improve student learning. Dr. Sandy Aird, Director of Assessment, provided additional



information on what would be provided to elementary schools so they could provide testing information to parents in a clear and understandable manner.

Dr. Mike Paul, Associate Chief, and Dr. Pelletier reviewed how the actions and strategies presented had been implemented at Alice Maxwell Elementary School and their experience as an iReady pilot program school. The number of students reading at or above grade level had nearly tripled between November 2022 and May 2023 based on iReady data. The school also had the highest English Language Arts (ELA) growth among multilingual learners, the 6<sup>th</sup> highest performance of students moving towards proficiency, and almost double the percentage of multilingual learners exiting services.

Trustee Church spoke to his concerns regarding the information presented. He felt all indicators showed the state and district were moving in the wrong direction and the pandemic should not be used as an excuse because the data was poor prior to COVID. He believed there was a nexus between the dismal data and the high rate of chronic absenteeism, use of restorative credits for students who failed courses, and restorative justice practices. He stressed that the district had to deal with the violence and discipline problems in the schools before academic achievement would improve. He was not interested in waiting 3 to 5 years before seeing improvement and felt action could be taken immediately to see improvement.

Trustee Rodriguez countered that the district had been implementing strategies to address the concerns raised by Trustee Church, including budgeting for eight new School Police Officers.

Trustee Mayberry agreed with Trustee Rodriguez's comments. He cautioned on how Trustees characterized the district because every other school district in the country was having similar challenges. He would prefer all Trustees work to lift up the moral of students and staff and not use what was occurring as part of the political battleground. He believed everyone was aware of where the challenges were, but knew steps were being taken to address them.

Trustee Westlake agreed with the alarming nature of the data. She would like to see a greater commitment from the state and federal governments related to many of the challenges occurring in the schools because what happened in the schools was a microcosm of what was occurring in society.

## **4. Reports**

### **4.01 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

Student Representative Arabelle Deason reported on activities related to the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council.

#### **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**

Nichelle Hull spoke to the shop lifting problems occurring in grocery stores near high schools and felt it was important for the parents to take greater responsibility for what was occurring. She would like to see the strategies used at Alice Maxwell Elementary School used at other schools so they could see the same improvements. She expressed frustration over the comments against Trustee Church because there were many in the community who believed he was stating the obvious. She hoped the Trustees would speak out against recent legislation passed in California.

Roger Edwards expressed his appreciation for the agenda item on quality of education. He urged the Board to bring back the public comment period at the beginning of the meetings to allow more members of the public to attend the meetings and have their voices heard. He would like to see a greater emphasis on addressing the challenges of chronic absenteeism because he believed student achievement would not improve unless students were in class. He was also interested in seeing students repeat grades as needed and expanding the number of instructional hours in the school day.

Gary Schmidt was a 50-year resident of Washoe County and had a degree in economics and computer science. He added that he was a self-taught expert on the Open Meeting Law and the Public Records Act in Nevada. He expressed his support for adding an initial public comment period at the beginning of meetings and that he was developing a coalition to lobby the Nevada Legislature to require general public comment periods at the beginning and end of meetings, along with all action items on an agenda. He stated he would be using the egregious abuses of the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees as an example of why such legislation was needed. He mentioned he supported Trustee Westlake's thought that what was occurring in the schools was a microcosm of what was occurring in society, blaming such ills on President Biden. He expressed his displeasure with how the agenda was laid out and recommended numerous changes.

#### **5.02 NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT**

The next Regular Meeting would take place on Tuesday, October 24, 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 6:22 p.m.

---

**Elizabeth Smith, President**

---

**Joseph Rodriguez, Clerk**