

**MINUTES OF THE JUNE 30, 2014
MEETING OF THE WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES' AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR THE
CREATION OF A BOARD GOVERNANCE MANUAL**

June 30, 2014

1. Opening Items

1.01 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Board of Trustees' Ad Hoc Committee to Develop a Board Handbook was called to order at 9:11 a.m. at the Washoe County School District's Central Administration Building, 425 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada.

1.02 ROLL CALL

Committee Chair Barbara McLaury and Committee Member Howard Rosenberg were present. Committee Member Lisa Ruggerio was not present at the time of roll call. Chief of Staff Kristen McNeill, Chief General Counsel Randy Drake, Trustee David Aiazzi, and staff were also present.

1.03 ACTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA

It was moved by Mr. Rosenberg and seconded by Dr. McLaury that **the Ad Hoc Committee approves the agenda as presented.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Barbara McLaury and Howard Rosenberg.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries

1.04 PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at this time.

2. Discussion, Review and Development of a Board Governance Manual

2.01 DISCUSSION, REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF A BOARD GOVERNANCE MANUAL AND ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

Chair McLaury began the review of the draft Board Governance Manual. The Committee and staff reviewed the language throughout the document to assure it was consistent with current policies, procedures, and the language of other District documents and manuals. For example, using the phrases "faculty and staff" and "students and families" instead of just "staff" or "students." A list of all Board Policies would be included as an appendix.

The leadership philosophy of the Board was reviewed and it was determined changes to the language would need to be made and adopted by the full Board of Trustees. It would be critical the language was easy to understand by those not in the field of education and some phrases would need to be defined. The individual Board members would need to make a commitment to going out into the community to listen to the constituents' concerns and ideas about the District through open forums of communication. The purpose of the Board was to represent the outside interests to the District and the Board needed to be able to communicate within the District to determine what changes would be necessary. Faculty and staff within the District should be encouraged to talk to members of the Board about their concerns as well. The intent of Board Policies was to provide direction to the superintendent and administrative staff on what the Board wanted to accomplish. The process of how the policies were implemented would be left to the discretion of the superintendent.

Committee Member Lisa Ruggerio arrived at the meeting at 9:26 a.m.

The "development of the structure of the Board" language should be moved to the beginning of the appropriate section to assure consistency. The Committee was interested in adding language regarding the leadership of the Board over the superintendent. It was important for the superintendent to communicate with the Board. A discussion was held on where such language would or could be included. Staff commented that additional information on the duties of the Board and the duties of the superintendent was to be included later in the document as well.

Additional information would need to be included on the budget process because one of the primary responsibilities of the Board was to adopt the budget. Language and examples would need to be added regarding managed performance empowerment and the Accountability Policy for the individual schools. A definition of managed performance empowerment should be included so those new to education would have a basic understanding of what was meant. Any information included in the manual that was research based should be cited as well. The Board needed to focus on academic topics in meetings but to be able to do that, concerns on the operational side of the District also needed to be addressed. There was a concern too much time was being spent on the operational issues in meetings; however, a balance was needed because if there were problems on the operational side, the academic side of the District would also have problems.

A discussion was held on how boards, in general, could be effective. Some members of the Committee were interested in adding information to the Governance Manual and possible Orientation Handbook regarding the effectiveness of boards and how the Board of Trustees could be more effective and efficient during their meetings. Disagreements

would occur, but it was important the Board and superintendent presented a united and singular voice after a decision was made so there was no confusion on the part of staff and the community on what would need to occur. A partnership between the Board and superintendent was required and the Governance Manual should reflect that desire. If a partnership was not occurring, then it would be important for the Board and superintendent to address why that was not occurring and determine how to resolve any issues. The responsibility belonged to both the Board and superintendent to assure effective communication occurred. The partnership that needed to be created between the Board and superintendent which required professional development from both parties regarding shared leadership may need to occur.

The Committee held a discussion on the responsibilities and expectations of Board officers and the individual Trustees. There was interest in exploring training for the Board on Robert's Rules of Order and parliamentary procedure. The "flow" of the document would also need to be revised to assure where items were placed made sense in the manual itself. The section outlining how the Board made decisions was reviewed. Part of the purpose of the Manual was to provide an explanation of the reason behind Board Policies which was to assure decisions were made on a consistent and fair basis throughout all schools and administration buildings. The goal was to establish an ideal or model of how the District and schools should operate. Additional language would be added with respect to certain personnel decisions to assure there was communication to the Board. Similar language would also need to be included in sections regarding the Chief General Counsel and Chief Internal Auditor since they were also directly employed by the Board.

A review of the Board goals was conducted. Part of the discussion centered on the importance of policy development and implementation as a Board goal and allowing additional opportunities for team building. It was important for the Board of Trustees, as a whole, to become the best school board possible because that was their commitment to the voters, staff, students, and taxpayers. The Board needed to become as high performing as possible, but there was a question if that should be considered a "goal" for the Board. It was determined that the goals of the Strategic Plan should not be considered Board goals since they were now District goals. A concern was raised about some of the language requiring future members of the Board of Trustees to behave or subscribe to certain ideas and the document needed to be flexible enough to allow for changes to be made. For example, the document should not require members to be advocates of free public education, but rather supporters of free public education as well as other forms of education. It was difficult to develop a "Code of Ethics" for members of the Board when individuals were focused on different things. Some sections were basic and would apply to everyone, such as personal gain, but other areas were grey and could cause problems.

The Committee felt a more in-depth discussion regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Board and superintendent needed to occur. A definition of management oversight was required because not everyone reading the document would understand what was meant. A review of the departmental reporting was required because the question of if every department needed to provide an annual report to the Board should be answered. The Board would have to review the current departmental reporting calendar to determine what they were interested in seeing. Clarification also needed to occur regarding the President as the spokesperson for the Board and who they should or could designate as the spokesperson instead. Additionally, the superintendent's role as a spokesperson needed to be clarified. There was a tradition within the District of having the superintendent as the spokesperson for the District as a whole and the community now expected the superintendent to be the "face" of the District. If the Board of Trustees was interested in changing that, then there could be confusion in the community during a transition away from that tradition.

A discussion was conducted on the development of meeting agendas and how to assure meetings were effective and efficient. Possible changes could include moving the Recognition portion of the meetings to a once a month "celebration." Some members were interested in conducting additional Board meetings at the individual school sites, especially those schools not located in the Reno/Sparks area, such as Natchez and Incline. The Board was interested in seeing staff "tighten" up their presentations as well and not read from the PowerPoint they were presenting.

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 Committee, Chair McLaury declared the meeting adjourned at 11:49 a.m.

Barbara McLaury, Chair