

**MINUTES OF THE MARCH 12, 2019  
REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

March 12, 2019

**1. Opening Items**

**1.01 CALL TO ORDER**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 2:01 p.m. at the Washoe County School District's Central Administration Building, 425 East Ninth Street, Reno, Nevada.

**1.02 ROLL CALL**

President Katy Simon Holland and Board Members Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Scott Kelley, Ellen Minetto, and Malena Raymond were present. Board Member Angela Taylor was absent from the meeting. Student Representative Anonti Ali was not present at the time of roll call. Superintendent Traci Davis, Deputy Superintendent Kristen McNeill, Chief of Staff David Lasic, and staff were also present.

**1.03 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Lonnie Feemster led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1.04 PUBLIC COMMENT**

President Simon Holland clarified the article in the *Reno Gazette-Journal* included incorrect information related to Board Policy 7505, District Vehicles, and a correction had been published by the paper online. The article stated the Policy would allow take-home vehicles; however, the proposed revision to the Policy would eliminate the use of take-home vehicles and clarify that the use of any District vehicle would be for approved District business only.

Lonnie Feemster, NAACP, expressed concern over recent interviews and information in the media related to the salary of Superintendent Davis. He had determined the information and statements made amounted to the fact that Superintendent Davis was being paid less than prior superintendent who were white and/or male because of her race and gender. As the leader of the NAACP and long-time advocate for civil rights, he was concerned that a black woman was now making less than others who previously held the position and noted that the appearance was that the District and community valued Superintendent Davis less because of her race and gender. He hoped the information

being shared on various social media sites was incorrect and that the District would work to correct the misinformation being spread.

George Hardaway came to the area over 50 years ago for college and remained to work in the Washoe County School District after receiving his degree. He stated that after leaving the District, he continued to work with children, especially in lower socio-economic areas of Washoe County. He noted that when he first began in the District, there was a lot of disparity and gender bias occurring and he was concerned those biases were continuing. He had worked with seven superintendents in the District and claimed not one was scrutinized or criticized the way Superintendent Davis had been. He urged the Board to provide Superintendent Davis the support she deserved because she had worked to increase the graduation rate to the highest point ever in Washoe County.

Darla Lee expressed concern over the student data mining that occurred with third party education technology (ed tech) vendors. She hoped the Board and District would educate the parents on what was occurring and allow them to decide if they wanted their children to use technology in the schools because many parents were unaware of the risks.

Trina Olsen stated she was not present to talk about her individual issues and concerns with her employment in the District, but to comment on the larger, systemic problems that had created a toxic employment environment. She asked the Board to help fix the problems that were occurring because she believed the environment had been created by the practices of the District's Administration which fostered an environment of fear. She claimed employees at all levels were afraid of being blacklisted, receiving disciplinary letters, and being retaliated against because they asked questions, filed complaints, or raised concerns. She added that employee complaints were not fairly or consistently addressed and sometimes ignored, employees were placed on administrative leave without guidelines, then forced with financial ruin if they decided to fight allegations. She stated the administration counted on employees not willing to suffer financial risk to continue to fight allegations. She noted employees believed they could not trust the process, which made them unwilling to report wrong-doings and that was a large part of the morale crisis the District was facing. She urged the Board to investigate the concerns because they were the oversight of the administration and enforcers of Board Policies. She informed the Board she would be submitting a whistleblower retaliation complaint to formerly report her concerns and what she believed were violations of Nevada Revised Statutes.

Lauren Ford stated she was present to address the false allegations that had been made against her in the media while she was the principal of Procter R. Hug High School. She stated for the record that she had never given drugs to students and no evidence of her doing so had ever been found through investigations. She indicated she had worked closely with both the Washoe County School District Police and Reno Police Departments to ensure Hug High School was a safe environment for all students, even receiving an

official commendation from the Reno Chief of Police. While she was principal of Hug High School, she worked to increase graduation rates from 47% to 84% over 6 years, with the rate never decreasing while she was principal. She had worked hard to address inequities in her school and provided all students the due process rights they deserved when accused of wrong doing. She understood the need for collaboration and communication with families because she believed it impossible to address the needs of the students without learning about their lives outside of the school building. She was frustrated and saddened that a disgruntled employee would make false allegations against her to the media for personal gain. She requested Superintendent Davis launch a full investigation into the allegations and for the findings to be made public so the community would know the truth.

Superintendent Traci Davis asked if there was a process that had to be followed to allow the findings to be made public if she agreed to conduct an investigation. Neil Rombardo, Chief General Counsel, stated the District would treat the request as a public complaint; however, since the Office of the General Counsel participated in the prior investigation, he believed it would be more appropriate to hire an outside attorney to conduct the investigation. Board Policy 9165, Legal Counsel, did allow for an outside attorney to be hired and the costs reported to the Board. Additionally, since Ms. Ford had requested the findings be made public, she effectively waived her confidentiality and the report could be released.

President Simon Holland wondered if there were Open Meeting Law concerns regarding the discussion. Mr. Rombardo stated the Open Meeting Law controlled what the Board heard and acted on in meetings. The Board had not participated in the conversation and were not being asked to discuss or act on the possible investigation, as that was a decision of the Superintendent.

Pam Calhoun was a retired math teacher who had worked for Ms. Ford for over 10 years. She expressed shock and outrage at the allegations regarding Ms. Ford that had been in the media. She indicated she had worked with Ms. Olsen at Procter R. Hug High School and believed her to be a "weak" administrator who had many school employees express concerns to other administrators regarding her conduct and performance. She provided examples of the concerns she had witnessed and instances when she believe Ms. Olsen had disrespected her in front of other employees and parents because she had complained about an action Ms. Olsen had taken that impacted her classroom environment. She noted that Ms. Ford, on the other hand, had always been respectful and used her authority to help others and provided additional examples of disagreements she and Ms. Ford had while she was the association representative at the school and the amicable agreements they were able to come to.

President Simon Holland discouraged those providing public comment from casting personal aspersions against others. While it was not prohibited speech and the public

was free to provide their remarks, she hoped the comments would remain professional and civil.

Tristan McElhany stated he had also worked closely for Ms. Ford for close to 15 years and he had never see Ms. Ford do anything to compromise student safety and welfare. He knew Ms. Ford to hold people accountable for their actions and someone who strove to ensure all students felt they were part of a safe and respectful learning environment. He noted when he heard the allegations of Ms. Ford returning drugs to a student, he was shocked because it went against everything he knew about her character and ethics.

Rhonda Clark was the principal at High Desert Montessori Charter School and praised Ms. Ford for her mentorship and leadership she had provided throughout her years as principal of Procter R. Hug High School. She and Ms. Olsen had started their tenures at Hug High School at the same time, but it was clear to her based on the accusations in the media that they had very different experiences. She wondered if part of the problem was related to what she felt was a long-standing tradition in the Washoe County School District of bashing the students and administration at Hug High School because of the student demographics of the school. Unlike what had been reported in the media, she saw many students overcome adversity that others could never imagine to earn their diploma and she wondered if Ms. Ford was being used as a scapegoat for the personal failings of others. She shared experiences of trying to work collaboratively with Ms. Olsen, only to be dismissed by her.

Tierney Cahill was the principal at Alice Maxwell Elementary School and had Ms. Ford as her Area Superintendent for 2 years. She believed Ms. Ford to be a tremendous asset for the District and someone who cared deeply about the success of all students. She had witnessed Ms. Ford in meetings, listening to teachers, parents, students, and others in the individual school communities. She always felt supported by Ms. Ford when she had concerns and regularly turned to her for guidance. She was disheartened by the media reports and their fueling of bad behavior without regard for the truth. She urged the Board to support the Leadership Team of the District in countering false accusations and that violated other employee rights for a personal vendetta.

Brett Olsen was the spouse of Ms. Olsen. He expressed frustration in what was occurring and the amount of money they had to spend fighting broken policies and procedures. He was saddened that the public was so divided on the issue when they should be focused on improving the morale for all employees in the District. He would like to see true change occur in the District and believed that change could only occur if it started from the top. He provided examples of what he felt were violations of his wife's due process rights, intended to force them into an unjust agreement by dragging the process out longer than the policies and procedures called for. He noted the third-party arbitrator had ruled against the District, yet no one in the Administration would still admit mistakes

related to his wife's complaint. He urged the Board to correct the systemic issues, so the same thing did not happen with another employee.

Keith Roberts was an English teacher at Procter R. Hug High School for over 20 years. He had worked with seven different principals throughout his tenure, but none provide him more mentorship and support than Ms. Ford. He recalled that when Ms. Ford first became principal, he was outspoken in his disagreement to some of the changes she was proposing. In response to his concerns, Ms. Ford made him a department lead in the school because she placed value on honesty and speaking out when someone disagreed with her. He had always felt valued, not just as an employee, but also as a colleague. He was proud of the culture and climate Ms. Ford established at Hug High School and informed the Board that when she left, many students were upset because she would no longer be their principal.

Dr. Susan Frank was the principal at Sarah Winnemucca Elementary School. She commended Ms. Ford's leadership as Area Superintendent for her schools. She always felt appreciated and supported when she contacted Ms. Ford to have conversations regarding behavioral concerns of students and the additional support many required, even prior to Ms. Ford becoming an Area Superintendent. She knew Ms. Ford to be a thoughtful listener, gifted mentor, problem solver, and a fountain of knowledge and research to base her advice and ideas on.

Jeff Redmond was a retired sergeant from the District's School Police Department. During his tenure, he worked closely with Ms. Ford and knew she was never afraid to call to request advice and assistance from School Police. He believed her to strongly support a safe and drug-free environment in her schools for both students and staff. He regularly witnessed Ms. Ford work directly with students, providing fair and consistent follow-through and accountability for their actions, including students influenced by gang members in the community, students influenced by illegal drugs, and students involved in physical altercations on campus. He found it extremely difficult to believe the media reports that Ms. Ford had intentionally covered up criminal acts by students but had no personal knowledge of the incident or had ever worked with the employee who made the allegations. He informed the Board he had seen students interact with Ms. Ford and many of them thanking her for being such a positive influence in their lives.

Janet Roberts was a parent and employee at Procter R. Hug High School. As an employee for Ms. Ford, she always felt supported and encouraged to pursue continuing education and professional development to gain experience for leadership roles. As the parent of a student at Hug High School, she knew Ms. Ford to foster a sense of well-being in her students and encourage them in ways parents were unable to.

Mary Caraway was an administrative assistant at Procter R. Hug High School and spoke in support of Ms. Ford. She chose to work at Hug High School because it was considered

an at-risk school and wanted to help with the challenges the students faced. She would watch Ms. Ford bring students into the main office to help work through the challenges they were facing. Some of the students would remain in the office most of the school day, but by the time she watched them leave the students would feel better about themselves and respected as people because of the encouragement and support Ms. Ford and the staff fostered in them. She was saddened that Ms. Ford and her family were being attacked by the media and some members of the community.

Carly Lott worked as a counselor at Procter R. Hug High School for 5 years. She primarily worked with seniors during her time at Hug High School, so she did work closely with Ms. Ford to ensure seniors had access to the resources and supports needed to graduate. She knew Ms. Ford to be supportive and encourage employees to take on leadership roles and provide new ideas. Ms. Ford would also hold people accountable when necessary since she was the leader in the school. She mentioned that graduation rates did not raise themselves but were the product of a strong leadership team who encouraged and supported the students and staff at the schools.

Jonna AuCoin became a principal in 2007 and worked closely with Ms. Ford. She and Ms. Ford worked with the same community so it was natural for her to seek out advice from Ms. Ford. Ms. Ford had taught her to focus on what was best for the students and would regularly remind her that "if it was right for the child, it was the right decision." When Ms. Ford became principal of Procter R. Hug High School, she continued to reach out for advice on how to align resources from elementary school to high school to better support the needs of the community. The support continued when Ms. Ford became an Area Superintendent. Even though the conversations on school improvement were not always comfortable, through the support and guidance of Ms. Ford she was able to work with her staff to help the students at Dorothy Lemelson Elementary School show the most growth in Washoe County on the Nevada School Performance Framework during the 2017-18 School Year.

Margaret Martini urged the Board and District to educate parents on the dangers of free ed tech vendors and allow the families to decide if they want to use the programs. She was concerned about the data breaches that had occurred to companies or the sale of companies, such as Edmodo, where student data was now in unknown hands. She claimed the Federal Bureau of Investigation had released a statement warning parents and school districts about the dangers of the free vendors and even though the District had been receiving information from Protect Nevada Children for years, no information was being provided to the parents.

President Simon Holland stated the District had previously made public statements regarding breaches of ed tech vendors and conducted security assessments of the District's systems. The District did comply with federal laws surrounding student

information and additional information could be obtained by parents through Parent University.

Val White expressed frustration, as a retired teacher, that the Board repeatedly told the community the children were their number one priority while employing a superintendent who bragged about a graduation rate that was meaningless since around 70% of students from the District did not qualify for college-level classes and Nevada schools continually ranked at the bottom of national education lists. She also referenced the social and emotional learning program and progressive discipline plans that had been shown by national researches to be failing programs. Additionally, the students in the District reported the programs were also a waste of time and the consequences for poor behavior were non-existent and they felt less safe in school than ever before. It was discouraging for members of the community to see the Board revise the results of an independent evaluation related to superintendent performance from unsatisfactory and ignore the community's calling and petitions to remove Superintendent Davis. She believed the Board had the obligation to remove the Superintendent and members of the Leadership Team who agreed with her or face the continued deterioration of the schools in the District.

President Simon Holland noted a recent report from *The New York Times* reported results from the National Center for Education Statistics that the Washoe County School District ranked in the top 18% of school districts nationally and students in the District performed better, on average, on grade-level proficiency exams than the rest of students in Nevada, California, Oregon, and other Western States.

Paul White remarked that eight coaches from the National Football League had been fired after the past season, not because of their age or color of skin, but because they had losing records. He likened the job of a superintendent to that of a coach and if the records continued to show losses, then the individual should be fired. He believed since the current Superintendent continued to show poor performance year after year, based on the results of an independent evaluation, the Board should stop covering and hiding the results but fire the Superintendent.

Steve Dolan urged the Board to protect student information and data from third party vendors. He felt the harm to the students would not be seen for years to come, but that when the students went to apply for colleges and jobs, the community would realize they should have been listening to people like Mr. John Eppolito and Protect Nevada Children. He hoped the Board would provide a way for parents to opt-out of having their children use the technology and educate the parents on what was happening to their children's personal information.

Emmie (no last name provided) was a student at Incline Middle School. She stated that she had to write an argumentative letter for her English class and wrote about how the

Incline schools should be allowed to become a series of charter schools sponsored by the District instead of being part of the Washoe County School District. When her principal announced Superintendent Davis would be visiting the school one day, she printed her paper and hoped to give it to the Superintendent. She was able to present it to Superintendent Davis, but claimed that when Superintendent Davis read the title, she was dismissed by being told she was "a little girl" and the paper handed back to her without the Superintendent reading it. She stated she was very hurt by the actions and comments because she had worked hard on the paper. She added that the actions of Superintendent Davis showed her true character and that she did not care about all students.

Nicolle Larson was a retired teacher and parent in the District. She was frustrated with the increasing class sizes in the District, especially at the Incline schools. She felt the increases to class sizes were negatively impacting the climate of the District and the Board should act to reserve what was occurring. She believed the District continually changed how teachers were allocated based on the number of students because the Incline schools continued to lose teachers each year.

Dr. Rose Kane was an administrator in the District and spoke in support of Ms. Ford. She stated Ms. Ford understood the needs of the students, parents, and administrators in the schools. She claimed Ms. Ford had always shown integrity in her positions and was able to communicate with others how to provide the support and needs of students and their families. She was proud to have Ms. Ford as an Area Superintendent.

Doug Taylor had worked in the District for 23 years and was the current vice principal of Greenbrae Elementary School. He noted Greenbrae was recently highlighted in the local media because of a book program that had recently been adopted and that it was because of the leadership and support of Ms. Ford the school was able to implement the program. He was honored to work with Ms. Ford and looked forward to working with her for many years to come.

John Eppolito expressed frustration and disappointment with the Board and District for the lack of transparency in regards to ed tech vendors because they were jeopardizing the futures of all 64,000 students. He presented information he had gathered from numerous sources that spoke about how the free ed tech vendors were not actually free and that they received their "payment" from selling student information and data to others, which included information such as behavior, mindset, and attitude. He indicated the "harmless games" students were encouraged to play collected information on the students and were then amassed into profiles the vendors would sell to other companies.

Carole Fineberg pleaded with the Board to listen to Mr. Eppolito and let parents know what was occurring with student information and data.

Sam Shoalroy was a new principal in the District and had only worked with Ms. Ford for a few months; however, he was impressed with the welcoming and supportive atmosphere he had received from her. He spoke about how she worked with him as a professional to correct mistakes he had made as a new principal and provide suggestions and advice on how to ensure the mistakes did not happen again. He appreciated the support and encouragement he had received.

*Student Representative Anonti Ali arrived at the meeting at 3:20 p.m.*

Ann Marie Dickson had been an employee of the District for over 20 years and spoke in support of Ms. Ford. As a peer, she had known Ms. Ford to be a strong advocate for the students and families of her schools, especially in terms of student safety. As a supervisor, she noted Ms. Ford had supported decisions she had made and continued to challenge her to do better for the students, staff, and families in the District.

George Hemminger spoke in support of the Board and District providing additional protections and information to parents and students related to ed tech vendors.

Veronica Cortes had worked in the schools as a part of Nutrition Services for 20 years. She invited the Trustees to her school to see how cuts to the District budget impacted the schools. She explained that proposed cuts to departments, such as Housekeeping, always sounded like a good idea because those departments did not impact learning; however, she knew the impact to the buildings and employees that cuts to other departments had made and that they did impact the students and the learning environment. She stated she would always hear from the Board during public forums that they appreciated the work she did in the schools, but it was always employees, such as herself, that felt impacts to budget cuts first and that she was part of the group of employees that could least afford additional cuts to their pay checks.

Amy Wright was the principal at Agnes Risley Elementary School. Ms. Ford had been her Area Superintendent for the past 2 years and she had experienced first hand the dedication Ms. Ford had to the students and staff of the District. She knew Ms. Ford made herself available whenever principals had questions or concerns and that Ms. Ford inspired others to do their best and improve practices to better service the students. She believed how Ms. Ford had been portrayed in the media over the past few days was unfair and not the colleague she had come to know.

Jen Griffin expressed frustration in the processes of the District as a parent who had recently moved to the area. She believed the staff members at the individual schools were able to do amazing things for children with fewer and fewer resources. She noted that whenever resources were cut from school districts, it was almost always the under-represented students impacted the most: namely students of color, those who did not speak English as their first language, economically disadvantaged students, and special

education students. From her perspective, the Board and District as a whole, were spending more and more money on arbitrations, performance evaluations that were ignored or changed, or decisions that were never approved such as Digital Days. Her concerns with Superintendent Davis and her leadership were not about the color of her skin, but about the inequities in the schools and morale than continued to sink lower and lower each year. She urged the Board to look at how money was being wasted and improve the District.

David Carter, District 2 Representative, Nevada Board of Education, stated he had concerns with the amount the Washoe County School District had paid the prior superintendent, current superintendent, and 22 other administrators in the District. He believed the District was overpaying administrators based on how the Clark County School District paid their administrators, which, for him, was upsetting because the tax bases were not the same. He affirmed that if there were any administrators in the Washoe County School District receiving a comparable salary to Clark County School District administrators, then they were being paid too much.

President Simon Holland stated the Washoe County School District had recently reviewed the salary of the Superintendent of Schools and the amount was a median of salaries for superintendents of school districts of similar size, not based on what other superintendents in Nevada received.

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

### **5.07 PRESENTATION ON WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT'S LANGUAGE LEARNING PROGRAMS, INCLUDING SEAL OF BI-LITERACY, WORLD LANGUAGE, AND DUAL LANGUAGE/TWO-WAY IMMERSION PROGRAMMING**

Catherine Waugh, Galena High School senior, stated she had recently passed the test to receive the Seal of Biliteracy on her diploma. She stated foreign languages had been important to her throughout high school and the opportunity to obtain the Seal of Biliteracy was extremely important for her because she was able to apply what she had learned in foreign language classes to other academic areas. She supported the District's world language programming and hoped more students learned of the opportunities biliteracy provided.

Debra Biersdorff, Chief Academic Officer, thanked Ms. Waugh for providing a student perspective on the importance of language in the schools. She had asked Ms. Waugh to speak to the Trustees so they would hear how the students themselves felt about the opportunities and importance of world language programming in the District.

Kindra Fox, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, began the presentation for the Board with an explanation of the Seal of Biliteracy students could receive from the State. Students had to average a 2.0 grade point in all English Language Arts classes in high school and demonstrate proficiency in another language through the Advance Placement (AP) or other state approved exam. Students were not required to take a world language to graduate with a standard diploma, so students either took the additional classes as electives to receive an Honors Diploma or the Seal of Biliteracy. Additionally, students who spoke a language other than English as their native language could take the exams and receive the Seal of Biliteracy if they were able to demonstrate proficiency in their native language. It was important to note that the Seal of Biliteracy was not only affixed to a student's diploma, but also added to the official transcript from the District, and students were able to earn a Seal of Biliteracy for each language they could demonstrate proficiency in. She provided information on the various languages available in the schools for students. The schools were really the driving force on the languages they offered and based on the interests and needs of the individual schools. For example, Arabic was taught at Earl Wooster High School as part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, American Sign Language offered at North Valleys High School, and Paiute at Edward C. Reed and Spanish Springs High Schools.

Trustee Raymond asked if students were able to receive a Seal of Biliteracy in Paiute. Ms. Fox indicated that they were not able to at the present time because there was not a state approved exam; however, the District was working with the state to develop an exam to show proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening of the Paiute language.

Ms. Fox continued with the presentation. World languages were typically provided to students once they entered high school. The District's educational model for middle school allowed the schools to provide electives for the students based on the requests and needs of the students. Since there were only so many electives middle schools could offer, world language classes were not always at the top of the list. The District continued to look at how to increase opportunities for students, especially those students who's native language was not English, such as Spanish Literacy.

Janeen Kelly, Director of English Language Development, presented information on the Two-Way Immersion (TWI), or Dual Language, programs in the District. The dual language programs allowed students to simultaneously learn a new language, while becoming literate in their native language. The District conducted the program at Jessie Beck Elementary School, Donner Springs Elementary School, and Mount Rose Elementary School. The dual language programming began in kindergarten and continued through a student's time at one of the three schools. The District worked to have 50% of the students in the programs as native English speakers and the other 50% as non-native English speakers.

Trustee Raymond wondered if the District provided an English Learner (EL) teacher allocation at the schools with dual language programming. Ms. Kelly mentioned that ideally an EL teacher would not be required since the EL services were being provided through the dual language program. She noted an EL teacher allocation was provided at Donner Springs Elementary School for students not enrolled in the dual language program. Both Jessie Beck and Mount Rose Elementary Schools had an EL site facilitator on site to build capacity for all teachers and grade levels since they had more students involved in the dual language programs. Ms. Biersdorff added the District did not require students who were enrolled at the stated elementary schools to participate in the dual language program, but it was an option available to them if the families were interested.

Trustee Raymond asked if there were plans to continue the dual language programming into some middle schools for students at Donner Springs and Jessie Beck Elementary Schools. She was not as concerned about Mount Rose Elementary School since the school did house students through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Ms. Fox indicated the District was looking at options for providing Spanish Literacy in middle school or a modified Advanced Placement (AP) class.

Trustee Raymond inquired as to any budgetary savings the District saw at the three schools because of the dual language programs. Dr. Troy Parks, Lead Area Superintendent, mentioned the District worked with the individual principals to try to ensure the programs were at least budget neutral. Principals worked with families to make sure the programs remained full, but there were families who would opt out as their child progressed through grade levels. It was important there was not a large imbalance of class sizes because students were leaving the dual language classroom to enter a general education classroom.

Trustee Caudill asked if there were options for students who were interested in taking a world language program that was not offered at their zoned high school. Ms. Fox stated the District did have various options available to students and the students would need to work with their counselors. She mentioned her daughter was interested in American Sign Language, but the classes were not offered at her zoned school so she enrolled in a dual credit program at Truckee Meadows Community College.

## **1. Opening Items**

### **1.05 ACTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA**

It was moved by Trustee Kelley and seconded by Trustee Raymond that **the Board of Trustees approves the agenda as presented.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Scott Kelley, Ellen Minetto, and Malena Raymond.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

## 2. Consent Agenda Items

President Simon Holland requested Consent Agenda Item 2.04, Possible action to provide final approval to the proposed revision of Board Policy 7505, District Vehicles (formerly entitled, "Use of District Vehicles"), which includes language related to the use and maintenance of District-owned vehicles to include school buses, and the proposed deletion of Board Policy 7510, School Bus Replacement, which becomes redundant, be pulled for additional discussion.

Trustee Caudill requested Consent Agenda Item 2.20, Possible action to approve the appointment of Sara Kiser in the Parent/Guardian Category of the Sexuality, Health and Responsibility Education (S.H.A.R.E.) Advisory Committee for the completion of the current term ending June 30, 2019, be pulled for additional discussion.

President Simon Holland opened the meeting to public comment.

John Eppolito expressed concern about Consent Agenda Item 2.06, Possible Action to provide final approval to the proposed revision of Board Policy 7620, Records Management, which revised language related to the process of document retention and destruction when those documents are not student records. He claimed he had been asking the Board and District for months if student data was ever deleted, especially data held by Infinite Campus, but had never gotten a straight answer. He felt that since the District would not provide the answer to if the information was deleted that they were not being transparent and information on students would be stored forever.

President Simon Holland requested a response from staff on the information retained by Infinite Campus. David Lasic, Chief of Staff, stated the state controlled the information and data contained in the Infinite Campus system. The District had been in communication with the state regarding the matter, but had not come to a final decision on when they would delete the information. The District was allowed to delete certain information from a student's file 6 years after they graduated. He cautioned that the revisions to Board Policy 7620 were not related to student information, but rather to the District's business information, such as data related to payroll and other business items.

It was moved by Trustee Caudill and seconded by Trustee Minetto that **the Board of Trustees approves Consent Agenda Items 2.02 through 2.03 and 2.05 through 2.19**. The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Scott Kelley, Ellen Minetto, and Malena Raymond.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

- 2.02 The Board of Trustees provided final approval to the proposed revision of Board Policy 5105, Student Uniforms – Adoption of a Site-Based Policy.

- 2.03 The Board of Trustees provided final approval to the proposed adoption of Board Policy 6525, Gifted and Talented Education.
- 2.05 The Board of Trustees provided final approval to the proposed revision of Board Policy 9210, Equity and Diversity.
- 2.06 The Board of Trustees provided final approval to the proposed adoption of Board Policy 7620, Records Management.
- 2.07 The Board of Trustees accepted the Initial Follow-up of the Nutrition Services – Unpaid Balances and Community Eligibility Audit, as recommended by the Audit Committee.
- 2.08 The Board of Trustees accepted the Annual Follow-up of the Property Control Audit, as recommended by the Audit Committee.
- 2.09 The Board of Trustees accepted the Internal Audit Department’s Annual Self-Assessment, as recommended by the Audit Committee.
- 2.10 The Board of Trustees approved the use of the Association of Local Government Auditors’ peer review services for the next external quality assessment review of the Internal Audit Department, as recommended by the Audit Committee.
- 2.11 The Board of Trustees approved the approximate cost of \$111,223.04 for the renewal of the Follett Destiny School Library and Textbook Management System for one year.
- 2.12 The Board of Trustees approved the Agreement for Professional Independent Cost Estimating Services to O’Connor Construction Management Incorporated for cost estimating services for a new high school at Wildcreek in the amount of \$170,000.
- 2.13 The Board of Trustees approved the change order for professional consultant services to NOVA Geotechnical and Inspection Services for Materials Testing and Special Inspection for Desert Skies Middle School in the amount of \$49,783.00.
- 2.14 The Board of Trustees accepted the “Budget Transfer Report” and provided authorization to include budget transfers between functions or programs for a total amount of \$1,127.87 for the period February 1, 2019 through February 28, 2019 in the official Board minutes, as required by Nevada Revised Statute 354.598005.

- 2.15 The Board of Trustees approved the award of bid for Certain Musical Instruments, Bid #059-08-02-19, to Absolute Music in the estimated amount of \$637.92, Alamo Music Center in the estimated amount of \$18,669.00, B&H Photo Video in the estimated amount of \$12,041.80, Bell Flower Music in the estimated amount of \$5,640.00, Décor Music Inc. in the estimated amount of \$21,479.40, Midwest Musical Imports in the estimated amount of \$57,376.00, Music & Arts Center in the estimated amount of \$151,849.00, Percussion Source in the estimated amount of \$16,209.19, Peripole Inc. in the estimated amount of \$472.95, Shar Products Company in the estimated amount of \$136,040.00, Taylor Music in the estimated amount of \$129,957.88 and Washington Music Center in the estimated amount \$87,953.24, for a total of \$638,326.38 for a term of two (2) years beginning March 13, 2019 and ending March 12, 2021.
- 2.16 The Board of Trustees declared the items identified in Attachment A, as surplus property so they may be disposed of in accordance with the Statutes of the State of Nevada.
- 2.17 The Board of Trustees awarded Bid #18140B, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Upgrades at Robert McQueen High School, to Bruce Purves Construction, Inc. for \$916,229.
- 2.18 The Board of Trustees approved the annual Maintenance Agreement with Canon Solutions of America, Inc. for four (4) black and white copiers in the estimated amount of \$195,000 beginning April 1, 2019 and ending March 31, 2020, and approved the annual Maintenance Agreement with Canon Solutions of America, Inc. for two (2) color copiers beginning April 1, 2019 and ending March 31, 2020, in the estimated amount of \$72,000 for a total estimated annual cost of \$267,000.
- 2.19 The Board of Trustees approved the membership of Tom Marshall and Danny Kitts for an additional term of service on the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trustees Committee for terms ending December 31, 2020.
- 2.04 **POSSIBLE ACTION TO PROVIDE FINAL APPROVAL TO THE PROPOSED REVISION OF BOARD POLICY 7505, DISTRICT VEHICLES (FORMERLY ENTITLED, "USE OF DISTRICT VEHICLES"), WHICH INCLUDES LANGUAGE RELATED TO THE USE AND MAINTENANCE OF DISTRICT-OWNED VEHICLES TO INCLUDE SCHOOL BUSES, AND THE PROPOSED DELETION OF BOARD POLICY 7510, SCHOOL BUS REPLACEMENT, WHICH BECOMES REDUNDANT**

President Simon Holland stated she had requested the item be pulled to provide additional clarification that the District would be eliminating the assignment of take-home vehicles for employees. An amended version of the revised Policy had been provided to the Trustees and community to include a stronger statement regarding the purpose of District vehicles were for the performance of District business only.

David Lasic, Chief of Staff, added the revisions to the Policy were first presented on February 26, 2019. At the February meeting, staff and the Board publicly stated the District would be eliminating take-home vehicles. The statement had also been made by the Chief Financial Officer during budget work sessions. The elimination of take-home vehicles was made at the request of the Trustees and would impact about 30 vehicles that would now be repurposed or sold through surplus property.

Superintendent Davis agreed with the remarks of President Simon Holland and Mr. Lasic. She was frustrated with the article published by the *Reno Gazette-Journal* since multiple discussions regarding the elimination of take-home vehicles had occurred since September 2018.

It was moved by Trustee Caudill and seconded by Trustee Minetto that **the Board of Trustees provides final approval to the proposed revision of Board Policy 7505, District Vehicles (formerly "Use of District Vehicles), with the addition of the word "only" to section 1(a), and the proposed deletion of Board Policy 7510, School Bus Replacement.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Scott Kelley, Ellen Minetto, and Malena Raymond.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

**2.20 POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF SARA KISER IN THE PARENT/GUARDIAN CATEGORY OF THE SEXUALITY, HEALTH AND RESPONSIBILITY EDUCATION (S.H.A.R.E.) ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE CURRENT TERM ENDING JUNE 30, 2019**

Trustee Caudill mentioned he had been contacted by some members of the community regarding the agenda item because of some confusion regarding when applications were due and the process of filling a vacancy on the Committee. His understanding of the situation was that the vacancy had occurred between the final meeting of the 2017-18 School Year and the first meeting of the 2018-19 School Year, but the Board was only now, in March 2019, being asking to fill the vacant seat. Additionally, when he first took office in January 2019, he was asked by a member of the community about the vacancy and informed by staff that the application period had closed in December 2018, but the staff report indicated applications received after August 2018 were not considered. He expressed concern with the confusion surrounding the process because it was not transparent to the Board or the community, especially for a committee the public was extremely interested in at the present time. Debra Biersdorff, Chief Academic Officer,

admitted that the Office of Academics had not done an adequate job related to interviewing applicants and filling of the vacant seat on the Committee. The problems had been corrected and interviews were conducted to fill the parent/guardian seat on the Committee. She noted the District reviewed many applications and there were a few people who were not invited to an interview because they did not meet the qualifications for the seat.

President Simon Holland asked if a closing date for applications was included when the District advertised for the position. Ms. Biersdorff mentioned that she believed there had been but would double check.

Trustee Caudill remarked that he did not have concerns with the individual recommended for the seat, but was concerned about the process because there was a lot of confusion in the community and people had applied for the seat not knowing when the application period had closed. He would be much more comfortable if the item were tabled to allow those who had applied through the end of February 2019 to be considered because of the confusion.

Superintendent Davis requested clarification from staff on the normal process for application periods. David Lasic, Chief of Staff, stated the process for all Board committees was to have the application process open for 30 days, with the closing date specified on the website. His recollection was that the process established by the Board Services Department was followed and a closing date in August 2018 included on the initial posting.

President Simon Holland indicated it would have been preferable for the Board to act soon after the original application period had closed. She was uncomfortable considering applications that had been received after the deadline because there would be people who were interested in the seat, but did not apply because the application deadline had closed.

Trustee Caudill remarked there was confusion on the closing date of the application period, with August and December dates being provided. While he could understand not considering applications received after December, he would still like clarification on which date was used.

President Simon Holland recommended holding consideration of the item to allow staff to provide the additional information.

*President Simon Holland recessed the meeting for 20 minutes.*

### **3. Legislative Items**

**3.01 PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO PROVIDE DIRECTION RELATED TO CURRENT AND PROPOSED LEGISLATION DURING THE 2019 NEVADA LEGISLATIVE SESSION BASED ON THE APPROVED 2019 WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM, TO INCLUDE BUT NOT LIMITED TO SUPPORT OF WHOLE AND STABLE EDUCATION FUNDING, IMPROVING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO RELEVANT AND RIGOROUS EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS, AND PROVIDING A SAFE AND RESPECTFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

Superintendent Davis mentioned Lindsay Anderson, Director of Government Affairs, was in Carson City meeting with legislators and unable to be at the present meeting. She provided a brief update on what was occurring during the Nevada Legislative Session, deadline dates that were coming soon, and the meetings school districts had been having with legislators regarding possible changes to how school districts in Nevada were funded by the state through the Distributive School Account (DSA).

**4. Budget Items**

**4.01 UPDATE AND DISCUSSION OF THE 2019-20 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET AND POSSIBLE ACTION FOR THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES TO PROVIDE DIRECTION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUDGET**

Mark Mathers, Chief Financial Officer, provided an overview of the presentation for the Trustees, which was to present options for the Board to consider that would reduce the structural deficit but have a minimal to moderate impact on District departments. It would be important to remember the District did not have all information related to the budget for the next fiscal year because the Legislature had not made any decisions at the present time so there remained a lot of unknown factors.

Mike Schroeder, Budget Director, reminded the Trustees the District departments had provided information on possible reductions at the February 26, 2019 Work Session based on the results of the Priority Based Budgeting (PBB) process. Members of the District's Leadership Team had identified about \$1.4 million in possible reductions that would not have a severe impact on the District achieving strategic goals. He reviewed the list of possible reductions by District Office. The list was high level and had previously been presented by members of the Leadership Team so the current agenda item was an opportunity for the Trustees to have a discussion on the list.

President Simon Holland requested additional information on the warehouse position assigned to the Education Alliance and Teacher's Warehouse. Mr. Mathers explained the recommendation was not to eliminate the warehouse position since it directly supported teachers when they visited the Teacher's Warehouse, but instead shift the position from the District's General Fund to a donation supported position by the Education Alliance.

President Simon Holland asked how staff for the Education Alliance was funded and if there had been conversations with the Education Alliance related to the possible reduction of positions or having donations fund employee positions. Mr. Mathers indicated the four staff members of the Education Alliance were funded from the District's General Fund. Based on received donations he felt there were adequate resources for the Education Alliance to fund the warehouse position and possibly fund a part-time clerical position if the Education Alliance believed it a necessary position. He noted the Education Alliance had separately recommended the reduction of the clerical position.

President Simon Holland mentioned she would rather the recommendation be to reduce the amount of funding the District provided to the Education Alliance and not related to the elimination of specific positions.

Trustee Raymond agreed with President Simon Holland. She felt the Education Alliance was managed by incredible people who would be able to fundraise for the position since their donor base understood the importance of having someone assist the teachers at the Teacher Warehouse.

Trustee Kelley remarked that he would like to see a discussion by the Board when higher level administrative and/or leadership positions were vacant on if the position should be filled. He provided an example of an area superintendent position being advertised because of an upcoming retirement and requested a conversation occur in the future on if the position should be filled. Superintendent Davis noted the District had eliminate one area superintendent position a couple of years ago and if another reduction occurred the District would only have three positions, which would mean they would be responsible for providing support to more schools. Additionally, the District had a review team look at vacant positions on a regular basis to determine if the position was necessary.

President Simon Holland mentioned the Trustees had heard from the community during the budget forums about not reducing services for the Advanced Placement (AP) programming. She noticed an option for the Board to consider was to eliminate the AP stipend teachers received so she wanted to clarify the intent was not to cut the AP program but to see if the teacher stipend related to AP classes should be considered during the bargaining process.

Trustee Caudill remarked it was a difficult decision for him to recommend reducing or eliminating the AP stipends since teachers would put in a lot of extra time to prepare students for the exams.

Trustee Raymond agreed with Trustee Caudill. While she understood the need to look at everything, she knew the District had been working on ensuring equitable access to AP

classes for all students and felt if the stipend were removed many teachers would no longer see an incentive to taking on the additional workload.

President Simon Holland indicated the Trustees had received a lot of parent feedback related to the proposed changes to the School Within A School (SWAS) program at Jerry Whitehead Elementary School. The intent was to review services throughout the District to determine if there were more efficient ways to provide access to high quality Gifted and Talented (GT) programming to all students who qualified and since the SWAS program at Whitehead Elementary School currently served 13 students, determine if there was another site the program could be moved to that would allow more students to participate. She felt that as long as the integrity of the GT programming remained, then she could support possible changes if the changes provided greater efficiency.

Trustee Raymond asked if the proposed change would have an impact to the entire SWAS program. Mr. Mathers explained the District currently had SWAS programs in four elementary schools in the District. If the program at Jerry Whitehead Elementary School were removed, the 13 students currently enrolled would be provided the opportunity to attend a SWAS program at one of the other three schools. At the present time, the District had two teacher allocations for the SWAS program at Whitehead Elementary School so an efficiency would be created in that one teacher allocation would be moved to another school with a larger program population. He added the Office of Academics was considering changes to the program prior to the budget discussion began so the District was already looking for efficiencies.

Trustee Raymond appreciated the comments and that efficiencies to programming were being considered outside of the budgetary process.

Trustee Caudill wondered why the SWAS program at Jerry Whitehead Elementary School would not be able to continue with one teacher allocation so the students would not be forced to change schools to remain in the program. Debra Biersdorff, Chief Academic Officer, explained the SWAS program served students at Whitehead Elementary Schools from grade 3 through grade 6. The District would always try to ensure SWAS students were able to be in class with peer close in age and would have a "banding" of students in the classes, such as grades 3 and 4 together and then grades 5 and 6 together. Since 6<sup>th</sup> grade would be moved to middle school, the District was looking at other options for all SWAS programs and how services would be delivered to students in different grades. The movement would also lower the number of students participating in SWAS for the next school year, so it made even more sense to look at moving the program for greater efficiency.

President Simon Holland requested additional information on the proposed reductions to Education Alliance included under the Office of the Chief of Staff, which did not include the warehouse position previously discussed. David Lasic, Chief of Staff, commented the

Education Alliance consisted of four full-time staff members, including the warehouse position. The reduction to the Department under the Office of the Chief of Staff was not related to the warehouse position but was a reduction to the clerical support position for the Department. The District was looking at ways clerical support could be provided through an internship program.

President Simon Holland asked how much Education Alliance brought in for the schools. Mr. Lasic indicated the largest fundraiser for Education Alliance was the Run for Education, which would bring in \$125,000 - \$150,000 annually to fund physical education programming in the schools. Mr. Mathers added the Teacher's Warehouse typically brought in around \$150,000 in in-kind donations that would also provide resources to schools. In total, around \$300,000 was raised annually by Education Alliance, who also worked with schools and private business on the Partner in Education program.

President Simon Holland remarked that as one Trustee, she could see why the recommendation was to eliminate a clerical position since it did not directly impact the classrooms; whereas the warehouse position could impact a teacher's ability to locate supplies or other resources they might need for the students.

Mr. Mathers continued with the presentation as there were no further questions regarding proposed reductions from Leadership Team offices. The projected fund balance for the General Fund was reviewed. It was difficult for staff to fully predict where the fund balance would end since there a little over 3 months remaining, so the figures were tentative and staff tried to be conservative in their estimates. Based on current information, staff was projecting a better than anticipated fund balance, but due to the on-going structural deficit, the fund balance would continue to decrease from \$35 million to about \$30 million. The projected structural deficit based for Fiscal Year 2020 was \$4.9 million at the present time. It was important for the District to maintain a healthy fund balance so expenses could be paid prior to revenues coming in. For example, the District would typically receive the DSA funding from the state at the end of each month, but had expenses during that month such as payroll. If the transfer from the state came late, the District could be left with a negative cash flow for a short period of time, which could potentially result in the District having to procure a line a credit to ensure all bills were paid on time. The District's ability to issue bonds and receive lower interest rates could be impacted by this as well, leading to less money available for capital projects, such as school construction or repairs.

President Simon Holland mentioned the District would need the per pupil revenue to increase by \$77 to off-set the projected structural deficit of \$4.9 million.

Trustee Caudill requested clarification on how the District would be able to increase the fund balance and if the only way that could occur would be through additional cuts. Mr.

Mathers responded that the only way to increase the fund balance would be with a surplus. At the present time, with a structural deficit, that would not occur and cuts would need to continue in future years to ensure a balanced budget.

President Simon Holland noted the Board and District had been operating that way for a number of years since they were unable to generate new revenue for the General Fund. School districts in Nevada did not have the authority to increase revenues on their own so they were reliant on the legislative process. Costs continued to increase for goods and services, but the District had not received the same increase in revenue to cover the costs so cuts to programs and services had to occur to balance the budget.

Mr. Mathers reviewed the proposal to develop a standardized bell schedule for the schools to allow a savings in the Transportation Department of 10 bus driver positions. Not only would the District be able to eliminate 10 positions, there would not be a reduction in staff at the present time because of the driver shortage. It was important to note that a larger discussion would need to occur related to the creation of a standardized bell schedule for the District and it would not likely be able to occur prior to the start of the 2019-20 School Year, but it was something to keep in mind for the future.

Mr. Lasic added there were currently 31 different start times for 94 schools. Staff had preliminary drafted two options that would continue to be researched prior to being formally presented to the Board and community for consideration. Both options would eliminate around 10 routes, which would result in a savings in the number of drivers required, bus maintenance, and fuel costs. The options were to create standardized time for each level: elementary, middle, and high school. Middle schools would either start at 7:15 (Option A) or 7:30 (Option B); high schools would start at 8:15 (Option A) or 8:30 (Option B); and elementary schools would then start around 9:00 under both options. The impacts would be felt more with the elementary and high schools, so it would be important to include the students, staff, families, and community in the conversations before decisions were made.

Trustee Kelley asked the student representative if she had any initial thoughts on high schools starting 30 – 45 minutes later. Student Representative Ali indicated it would really depend on the individual student on how the later start time would impact them. For example, she currently was enrolled in a zero period, so she would still need to be at the school earlier. She was aware of students who attended the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Earl Wooster High School from Incline and other areas outside of the McCarran Ring, so a later start time would be beneficial for them. She noted that there could be some concern regarding after school activities because a later start time would also mean a later end time which could impact a student's ability to have an after-school job, or participate in athletics, or other activities.

Trustee Caudill wondered when the Board would need to make a final decision on a bell schedule if they wanted a new one in place for the 2019-20 School Year. Rick Martin, Director of Transportation, recommended the sooner the better because, from a transportation standpoint, he would want to ensure everything was in place by the beginning of June.

Trustee Raymond appreciated the conversation and was interested in hearing more about the options in the future. She knew the research showed later start times for high school students were beneficial, but also knew a later start time for elementary school students could be a burden on families. It would be important to learn the impact to staff and families so a decision could be made that would have the least impact on staff and families.

President Simon Holland agreed with Trustee Raymond. She appreciated the creative thinking to look at how bell schedules impacted the budget process and the development of a more effective and efficient process, but also knew the impacts to staff members, students, and families had to be considered before any final decisions were made.

Mr. Mathers continued with a review of possible recommendations the Board would be presented with at a future meeting. The District was looking at all options to provide the Board with choices, such as changes to student athletic fees, facility use fees, pre-K fees, and a few other fees that could be increased to alleviate the strain on the structural deficit. Staff was not prepared to provide additional information related to possible increases to some fees at the present time, but the information and options would be presented to the Board for consideration in the future.

Trustee Kelley wondered, when staff looked at unfilled positions, if teaching positions in the schools were also analyzed. Mr. Mathers indicated all positions were reviewed based on Priority Based Budgeting process, but staff was careful to remain true to the priorities of the Board and look at all other programming and positions before impacts to classrooms.

Trustee Caudill mentioned he would like to see some additional options for consideration because the recommended cuts for quartile 3 and 4 programs at 50% and 100% respectively seemed too extreme. He wondered if an efficiency study would be warranted to look at the operations of programs and determine if there more appropriate methods to save money rather than a straight percentage-based cut.

President Simon Holland remarked that the Board had held previous conversations regarding having an independent third party, such as The Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS), conduct a performance review. Pete Etchart, Chief Operations Officer, provided additional information on the 2013 operational review conducted by CGCS. The District was in the process of reviewing the recommendations to provide an update to the Board. He cautioned that with peer reviews, best practices from various school

districts across the country were used as the standard, so there were always some recommendations that did not apply to every school district and not used.

President Simon Holland asked if staff would be able to review the 50% and 100% reduction recommendations at different amounts that would lead to the \$4.9 million in savings. Mr. Mathers noted if the Board were to approve all recommended reductions, the savings would total about \$18 million. If the Board was interested in looking at other options, staff would have to review the information again. He believed it would be possible to see the savings the Board was looking for, but the information would need to be presented at a future meeting. He added that efficiency options reviewed by CGCS were not always as quantifiable but could result in reductions to service and not monetary reductions. He illustrated the point through the service level of custodians, which were currently operating above the national average in terms of square footage per custodian for school districts of similar size, so any additional reductions to their areas could result in additional square footage to be cleaned and less time to perform the necessary duties.

Trustee Raymond stated that with all the unknowns related to the budget at the present time, she was uncomfortable making any additional recommendations. She appreciated the work done by staff and was comfortable with what had been presented, but did not want to make further reductions until additional information from the Legislature was known or at least staff had a better idea of what could occur.

Trustee Caudill expressed that the information presented was overwhelming and that he would need time to review everything thoroughly; however, he received a lot of questions from constituents regarding the cost of Central Administration so it was important the Trustees be able to communicate how the recommendations were related to central services and not the schools. He would rather the Board act on the information currently available and then go back to make changes once information came in from the state.

President Simon Holland cautioned that it would be difficult for current employees to face the uncertainty of a reduction in force, then to go back change that decision in 3 months when the final numbers from the state were in. The Board was not required to submit the final, balanced budget in April to the state, but the tentative budget. The final budget was not required to be submitted to the state until June, but even then, with the Legislature meeting, the Board would be able to submit an amended budget.

Trustee Kelley agreed with President Simon Holland. He added that items would always come up that were not anticipated, but had to be planned for, such as the Incline property settlement. He believed it would be a good idea to look at other reduction scenarios but was uncomfortable making any final decisions on cuts at the present time.

Trustee Caudill asked if there was a possibility the structural deficit could end up being less than projected for the current fiscal year. Mr. Mathers answered in the affirmative

but was uncomfortable projecting an additional savings at the present time. Additionally, the Government Service Tax could also come in stronger than anticipated so the District could see an increase there as well.

President Simon Holland commented, related to overtime for School Police at District athletic events, that she spoke with Washoe County Sheriff Darin Balaam about the possibility of utilizing their community volunteers to assist at games. Sheriff Balaam had indicated his willingness to explore the option, so it was something the District could consider.

Trustee Kelley asked if the District could partner with the cities and county for snow removal at the schools. Mr. Schroeder indicated the costs associated with snow removal were related to a percentage of the duties of the custodians and maintenance workers at the schools. The District did not have one person conducting snow removal at all locations, but could look at different partnerships that could ease the strain on school site staff.

President Simon Holland noted the agenda item was for the Board to provide direction to staff regarding the budget process. She indicated it appeared the intent of the Trustees was to see a lesser reduction for quartile 3 and 4 programs and that a 5% - 10% reduction to departments should be reviewed.

President Simon Holland opened the meeting to public comment.

Natha Anderson, Washoe Education Association, thanked the Trustees for their thoughtful discussion. She had heard from a number of members that their belief with the recommendations was that the Board was automatically going to accept everything; however, it was clear the Trustees were looking for options and that they were not interested in cutting services at the schools unless there was no other choice. It was important for the Board and District Leadership to understand the Priority Based Budgeting process was new for staff, so there was a lot of confusion. She appreciated the willingness of everyone to help staff understand the process.

Jared Lu was a student in the Gifted and Talented (GT) Institute at Procter R. Hug High School. He expressed concerns regarding the possible elimination of the program within 3 years that he and others in the program had heard about. The understanding from students was that the GT Institute would not be moved to the new Wildcreek area high school when the school opened and felt that would be a detriment to all the students in the District because there were so many interested in GT programming.

Riley Gillis was a student in the District who was in support to the GT programming. He informed the Board that the GT programming was necessary in all schools because it provided students the opportunity to challenge themselves when they were bored in the

general education classrooms. Additionally, general education teachers with GT students in their classes would sometimes be at a loss for what to do when the student finished their work long before others in the class. The GT programming was important and he hoped the Board would continue to provide the opportunities for students to challenge themselves.

Ana Delgadillo was a student in the GT Institute at Procter R. Hug High School. She agreed with her colleagues comments and urged the Board to continue to provide opportunities for GT programming in the schools. She added that it was only at the GT Institute that students were able to take Advanced Placement (AP) classes as freshmen, with many of the students becoming AP Scholars, meaning they passed three AP tests their freshmen year.

Spencer Gillis was a student in the GT Institute at Procter R. Hug High School. He urged the Board to not look at reductions to any GT programming in the District. Students with higher IQs were just as special and in need of appropriate classes as students with lower IQs. The GT Institute was preparing to graduate its' second class during the current school year and already had students offered full scholarships to Princeton University, Rice University, and the United States Military Academy at West Point. The program was successful and one of the biggest reasons for the success, in his opinion, was because of the programs and supports provided to the students prior to entering high school.

Marilyn Bennet was the librarian at Procter R. Hug High School. She hoped the Board would continue to look at the proposed reductions carefully before making any final decisions. The school libraries already had many of their aides and assistants cut completely or their hours greatly reduced so students were already receiving less assistance. She reminded the Trustees that librarians, especially at the high school level, contributed to the education of the students and were certified teachers.

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

**5.01 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO PROVIDE PRELIMINARY APPROVAL TO THE PROPOSED REVISION OF BOARD POLICY 5000, STUDENT RECORDS AND INFORMATION, WHICH REVISES LANGUAGE DEFINING PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION; AND INITIATE THE 13-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD**

**5.02 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO PROVIDE PRELIMINARY APPROVAL TO THE PROPOSED REVISION OF BOARD POLICY 5450, RELEASE OF STUDENTS (FORMERLY BOARD POLICY 5040, RELEASE OF STUDENTS AND STUDENT INFORMATION), WHICH CLARIFIES LANGUAGE REGARDING TO WHOM A STUDENT MAY BE RELEASED**

**DURING THE SCHOOL DAY OR AT A SCHOOL ACTIVITY; AND INITIATE THE 13-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD**

- 5.03 **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO PROVIDE PRELIMINARY APPROVAL TO THE PROPOSED REVISION OF BOARD POLICY 4214, DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE, WHICH ADDRESSES POSSESSION AND/OR USE OF ALCOHOL AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES BY STAFF ON DISTRICT PROPERTY AND/OR WHEN SUPERVISING STUDENTS AT DISTRICT ACTIVITIES; AND INITIATE THE 13-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD**
  
- 5.04 **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO PROVIDE PRELIMINARY APPROVAL TO THE PROPOSED REVISION OF BOARD POLICY 5100, STUDENT BEHAVIOR, WHICH ADDS LANGUAGE RELATED TO EQUITABLE PRACTICES AND POTENTIAL DISPROPORTIONALITY IN STUDENT DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES; AND INITIATE THE 13-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD**
  
- 5.05 **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO PROVIDE PRELIMINARY APPROVAL TO THE PROPOSED REVISION OF BOARD POLICY 6000, SHARED DECISION-MAKING, WHICH SPEAKS TO SEEKING INPUT FROM ADMINISTRATION, STAFF, STUDENTS, AND THE COMMUNITY IN MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS RELATIVE TO SCHOOLS AND THE DISTRICT; AND INITIATE THE 13-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD**
  
- 5.06 **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO PROVIDE PRELIMINARY APPROVAL TO THE PROPOSED REVISION OF BOARD POLICY 9065, BOARD OF TRUSTEES' COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES (FORMERLY "BOARD OF TRUSTEES' TRAVEL AND OTHER EXPENSES"), WHICH ADDRESSES TRUSTEE COMPENSATION AND LIMITS TO EXPENSE BUDGETS FOR TRUSTEES WHOSE TERM ENDS HALFWAY THROUGH A FISCAL YEAR; AND INITIATE THE 13-DAY PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT PERIOD**

President Simon Holland opened Agenda Items 5.01 through 5.06 for consideration in one motion. No changes had been made to any of the policies since the Board Policy Committee.

President Simon Holland opened the meeting to public comment.

Tom Stauss, Washoe Education Association, provided remarks related to Agenda Item 5.03. He requested the Board continue to review the language included in Board Policy

4214, Drug-Free Workplace. He was concerned the language was still overly broad and could have unintended consequences for employees taking prescription medications. Emily Ellison, Chief Human Resources Officer, noted the District had been working with the employee associations on the language for a few months. The intent was not to prohibit employees from taking prescription medications, but to ensure that if a medication could cause impairment that it be taken with enough time to work through the body so the employee did not show up to work impaired. It was important to remember District employees were responsible with the care of students and all necessary precautions be taken to ensure student safety.

It was moved by Trustee Raymond and seconded by Trustee Caudill that **the Board of Trustees provides preliminary approval to Agenda Items 5.01 through 5.06, and initiates the 13-day public review and comment period.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Scott Kelley, Ellen Minetto, and Malena Raymond.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

**5.08 PRESENTATION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE NAMING REQUEST FOR THE NEW JUNIOR RESERVE OFFICERS TRAINING CORPS (JROTC) HEADQUARTERS TO BECOME "CSM ALBIN LEADERSHIP CENTER" IN HONOR OF COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR LEE ALBIN**

Mike Doering, Executive Director, Student Services, explained the Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) for the District was requesting their central offices be renamed in honor of Command Sergeant Major (CSM) Lee Albin, who would be retiring soon. CSM Albin was currently the District's Training and Operations Manager for JROTC and had been instrumental in the success of the current JROTC program in the District.

Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Scott Caldwell, Director, JROTC, provided the Board with a history of CSM Albin's service to the United States and the Washoe County School District. CSM Albin had served as a Combat Medic and Military Police Officer in Germany during the Cold War. He also served as in the Airborne Division of the US Army prior to settling in Washoe County after his retirement from active duty. In Washoe County, he worked closely with the SWAT Team and continued his military service as a member of the Nevada National Guard. He had been with the District's JROTC unit for over 16 years, serving at Procter R. Hug High School and the JROTC central office.

Superintendent Davis thanked CSM Albin for his service and dedication to the students of the Washoe County School District. She fully supported the request and hoped the Board would honor his service.

Trustee Kelley thanked CSM Albin for his service and as a fellow Airborne officer was proud to make the motion.

It was moved by Trustee Kelley and seconded by Trustee Minetto that **the Board of Trustees approves the naming of the new Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) Headquarters as "CSM Albin Leadership Center" in honor of Command Sergeant Major Lee Albin.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Scott Kelley, Ellen Minetto, and Malena Raymond.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

## **2. Consent Agenda Items**

### **2.20 POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT OF SARA KISER IN THE PARENT/GUARDIAN CATEGORY OF THE SEXUALITY, HEALTH AND RESPONSIBILITY EDUCATION (S.H.A.R.E.) ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE CURRENT TERM ENDING JUNE 30, 2019**

President Simon Holland reopened Consent Agenda Item 2.20.

Debra Biersdorff, Chief Academic Officer, explained staff had reviewed the application information further at the request of the Trustees. The correct closing date for applications for the parent/guardian position was August 2018. An incorrect date of December 2018 had been included in an email to some members of the community, which had led to the confusion.

President Simon Holland asked if the incorrect date in the email was sent after the August 2018 deadline. David Lasic, Chief of Staff, stated the email with the December 2018 deadline date was sent in February 2019 and would not have had an impact on the applications received after the start of 2019.

It was moved by Trustee Raymond and seconded by Trustee Calvert that **the Board of Trustees approves the appointment of Sara Kiser as a parent/guardian representative to the Sexuality, Health and Responsibility Advisory Committee for the completion of the current term ending June 30, 2019.** The result of the vote was 5-1: Pass (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Katy Simon Holland, Scott Kelley, Ellen Minetto, and Malena Raymond. Nay: Andrew Caudill.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

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

### **5.09 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF STAFF TO PROVIDE A ONE-TIME INCENTIVE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$250 TO GUEST TEACHERS (SUBSTITUTES) WHO WORK A MINIMUM OF TWENTY-FIVE (25) FULL DAY EQUIVALENT ASSIGNMENTS BETWEEN MARCH 13, 2019 AND JUNE 7, 2019, UP TO A MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF \$182,250 IN INCENTIVES**

Emily Ellison, Chief Human Resources Officer, presented a recommendation to provide a one-time incentive of \$250 to guest/substitute teachers who worked a minimum of 25 full day equivalent assignments from now until the end of the current school year. The Board had previously received a presentation on the shortage of guest teachers in the schools and the problems that was causing in the classrooms. The intent of the incentive was to increase capacity of guest teachers in the District in the short-term. The District was looking at various long-term solutions that would be appropriate, including possible increases to the daily rate of pay and ensuring a welcoming climate and culture for guest teachers in the schools.

President Simon Holland wondered if staff had spoken with the associations or others regarding the incentive. Ms. Ellison mentioned she had been having conversations with the associations regarding the guest teacher shortage, as well as other job categories, such as bus drivers. The \$250 was based on conversations with experienced guest teachers and guest teachers who worked on a regular basis, as well as conversations with the Business Office. The amount was a \$10 per day increase to those teachers who worked 25 days and was similar to what surrounding school districts offered their guest teachers.

President Simon Holland opened the meeting to public comment.

Tom Stauss, Washoe Education Association, spoke in support of the proposed incentive. Substitute teachers provided an important resource for full-time licensed educators to receive needed professional development and prep periods during the day so increasing the number of substitutes in the pool was a benefit to everyone.

Maria (no last name provided) mentioned she was interested in becoming a substitute teacher and had called the District a number of times to gather additional information on what she needed. She was frustrated that no one had returned her calls so she had to find the information on her own, which was a daunting task.

It was moved by Trustee Calvert and seconded by Trustee Raymond that **the Board of Trustees approves the request to provide a one-time incentive in the amount of \$250 to Guest Teachers (Substitutes) who work a minimum of twenty-five (25) full day equivalent assignments between March 13, 2019 and June 7, 2019, up to a maximum of \$182,250 in incentives.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Scott Kelley, Ellen Minetto, and Malena Raymond.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

5.10 **POSSIBLE ACTION TO AWARD BID #11163a, CONSTRUCTION OF KILEY RANCH (JOHN C BOHACH) ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TO Q & D CONSTRUCTION FOR \$34,990,000**

Adam Searcy, Chief Facilities Management Officer, provided background information on the process leading up to the bid for John C. Bohach Elementary School. The new school would be located next to the new Sky Ranch Middle School and alleviate overcrowding of elementary schools in the Spanish Springs area of Sparks. The design of the school would be similar to the new Nick Poulakidas Elementary School currently under construction in South Reno.

Andrea Sullivan, Director of Procurement and Contracts, reviewed the Request for Bid process used to solicit proposals for the project. Since the District already had the basic design for the building, a more traditional design, bid, build process was being utilized for the project, which entailed the use of one contract instead of multiple contracts. Since the project would be located on the same plot as Sky Ranch Middle School, the District was able to have some of the site prep work, such as mass grading, completed when the work was done for the middle school. The bid for the project was released in January 2019 and open for 6 weeks. The District received 22 formal requests for information and answered about 40 questions to provide additional clarification related to the project. A mandatory pre-bid meeting was conducted and the bid was publicly opened on February 26, 2019. One (1) bid was received from Q&D Construction at \$34.99 million, which was 3.5% over the estimate of \$33.6 million but within the overall estimated cost of the project of \$38.5 million that included permitting, special inspections, construction management fees, and related items. She noted the increase in cost was primarily due to the current labor shortage in the construction industry in the area.

Mr. Searcy concluded the presentation. The intent was to open Bohach Elementary School in time for the start of the 2020-21 School Year. Staff was confident in the recommendation of having Q&D Construction as the contractor for the project since they would be able to bring in their knowledge of constructing the new elementary school design.

Brian Kurnan, Q&D Construction, thanked the Board and District for their dedication and commitment to the students of Washoe County. The staff at Q&D Construction was looking forward to the opportunity to continue their work with the District on the construction of new schools in the area.

Trustee Caudill wondered if additional schools would be needed in the Spanish Springs area because of the uncertainty of new housing developments. Mr. Searcy stated the District was continually monitoring the construction that was occurring and permitting requests for future developments. The District had recently purchased property in the new Stone Brook master-plan community so if the need arose, the District would be prepared to move forward.

It was moved by Trustee Caudill and seconded by Trustee Calvert that **the Board of Trustees awards Bid #11163A, Construction of Kiley Ranch (John C Bohach)**

**Elementary School, to Q & D Construction for \$34,990,000.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: Pass (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Katy Simon Holland, Scott Kelley, Ellen Minetto, and Malena Raymond.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

**5.12 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON THE ACTION PLAN TO IMPROVE EMPLOYEE MORALE DEVELOPED BY SUPERINTENDENT DAVIS AND DISTRICT LEADERSHIP**

Emily Ellison, Chief Human Resources Officer, provided background information on the development of the action plan to improve employee morale Superintendent Davis and members of the Leadership Team had been working on. The intent of the action plan was to be an on-going process and effort to address the concerns expressed by employees during meetings and as part of the Superintendent Evaluation process.

David Lasic, Chief of Staff, reviewed the survey results related to the Superintendent Evaluation process submitted by employees. Members of the Leadership Team had plotted the results and found that the further away from Central Administration that an employee worked, the less satisfied the employee was with the District. Additionally, it was clear from the survey that employees were not feeling valued or part of the decision-making process. It was important to Superintendent Davis and the Leadership Team the concerns were addressed so five areas of focus were developed to begin the process. The first focus area was to address the concerns of certified staff in the District by reaching out to them on topics the District knew would be of major concern and/or importance, such as changes to attendance procedures.

Ms. Ellison explained the second area of focus was to create great collaboration with the employee associations. It was important for collaboration to occur with the associations since they were one of the primary methods employees would hear about changes impacting them. Additionally, the associations were generally the ones to hear about concerns or problems employees were having. The intent was to develop better grassroots communication and collaboration to allow the free flow of information.

Mr. Lasic mentioned the third focus area was improved employee messaging. Many employees, through the survey and feedback provided at meetings, had indicated they did not always hear about the positive things that were occurring in the District, especially related to the Strategic Plan. Superintendent Davis and members of the Leadership Team were interested in finding new ways to get positive results to employees so they could provide that information to students and parents. Some methods of improving the communication were to provide Strategic Plan updates in the Superintendent's Friday Minute and employee newsletters.

Superintendent Davis added the District was also looking for alternative ways to get the information to the employees since not all employees accessed their email on a regular

basis, so they were not reading the Friday Minute. For example, bus drivers and school site nutrition services employees did not always have the time to check their email daily.

Trustee Minetto indicated teachers would not always have time to read a newsletter in the mornings either since they were generally working with the students and families as soon as they got to the building. If staff knew the email was just a newsletter, it could be just scanned for important information and then forgotten since there were parents and students needing their attention. Mr. Lasic thanked Trustee Minetto for the feedback. It was important to understand how teachers and other school site staff organized their day so improvements to the process could be made on how information was delivered to employees.

Mr. Lasic continued with the presentation. The fourth focus area was to have members of the Leadership Team and other high-level central administration staff spend more time in the schools, either as a guest/substitute teacher or shadowing a teacher for a day. He had recently spent a day as a guest teacher in a kindergarten class at Stead Elementary School. It was important central administration staff understood what was occurring in the classrooms and schools so better decisions could be made. Often times, those in central administration had been removed from a school for a few years and needed to see how changes had impacted the sites.

Superintendent Davis indicated she and other administrators were also having lunch with the teachers and staff when they were in the schools to work towards having authentic conversations. Not only were Leadership Team members able to learn more about the individual employees, but the employees were able to learn more about the Leadership Team. For example, Mr. Lasic was able to spend the day as a guest teacher because he had his license, which not many in the District knew. The ultimate goal was to not only spend time in the classrooms, but with all employee groups, so students and parents might see a member of the Leadership Team on a bus one day because they were shadowing the bus driver.

Mr. Lasic reviewed the final focus area with the Board, which was conducting Listen and Learn sessions in the schools with staff. The sessions were different from the conversations Leadership Team members might have during a lunch period and were much more structured so input could be gathered on how central administration could make employees feel more valued and what could be done to make their jobs more effective. The conversations were more structured so Superintendent Davis and the Leadership Team could focus the discussion on issues not related to resources and funding, since those topics were largely out of the District's control. Once the Listen and Learn sessions were complete, the intent was to bring the information back to the Trustees to review opportunities for improvement.

Ms. Ellison noted another challenge mentioned by employees that was out of the District's ability to control was how the District was portrayed in the media and the misinformation or mischaracterization of actions on social media. Many employees would read posts and feel defeated because their actions and work was constantly challenged or criticized. Additionally, when specific individuals were mentioned, other employees could feel vulnerable and afraid they could be next.

Mr. Lasic concluded the presentation. It was important for the Board to remember that their decisions could also impact employee morale and the action plan could not be looked at in a vacuum. For example, to reduce expenses last fiscal year, the Board made the decision to increase class sizes. Those increased class sizes presented additional challenges and stresses for teachers.

Superintendent Davis provided the Board with information and feedback on the Listen and Learn she had recently attended at the Academy of Arts, Careers, and Technology (AACT) High School. She was able to have a great conversation with the staff and discuss some stresses that were impacting morale, such as the number of assessments students were required to take. Through having the dialogue, she was able to learn that not all teachers understood what entity was requiring the assessment and often believed it was the District when it was the state or federal government.

President Simon Holland opened the meeting to public comment.

Natha Anderson, Washoe Education Association (WEA), thanked Superintendent Davis and the Leadership Team for their willingness to work on the challenges associated with employee morale. The WEA knew the task ahead of the central administration was large and it would take time, but it was important to acknowledge the problem so it could be addressed. She agreed there were some challenges the District would not be able to improve and had to rely on others, such as the unfunded mandates placed on the District by the federal and state governments.

President Simon Holland expressed appreciation for the efforts being conducted. The Trustees were very concerned about the employees of the District and wanted to ensure they felt valued, supported, and appreciated. She liked the focus on the plan being employee centered and that employees were included in the conversations. She agreed the process would not be completed over night, but should continue so it became a normal occurrence for employees to have meetings with leadership.

Trustee Caudill remarked that he had conducted a staff meet and greet as well at an elementary school. He knew he would not be able to solve specific problems raised by employees but felt that they appreciated someone taking the time to hear about their concerns.

Trustee Kelley indicated he had been a part of the District on and off for 12 years and had not seen employee morale as low as it was currently. He appreciated the efforts and agreed the meetings needed to be on-going. He wondered if those conducting the meetings could be expanded because there were so many employees in the schools that he was concerned there were not enough Leadership Team members to reach everyone. Additionally, he wondered why it had taken so long for the District to develop the plan since there had been indications in prior years regarding declining morale. Mr. Lasic stated staff was looking at including more Central Administration staff in the meetings, to include department directors, so more opportunities for conversations could occur. The District had been reviewing the data related to employee morale for a few years to determine if the decline was related to a specific event or if there were any trends that were occurring. It was important to note employee morale in school districts was low throughout the United States, especially among teachers, and primarily due to salaries. Ms. Ellison mentioned that District administrators, including principals, had been working on employee morale for a number of years. The action plan was more of a formalized document for activities and programs that had been occurring at individual school sites and other District facilities.

Superintendent Davis reminded the Trustees about prior conversations held during work sessions related to employee morale. The Board, as a group, agreed morale was not the responsibility of one person, but about how all 8,000 employees, Leadership Team members, Board of Trustees, and herself could improve morale. One thing she reminded everyone to do was to take time for themselves. Every employee cared about the work they were doing and pushed themselves to do more, but they all had to ensure their physical, mental, and emotional well-being was healthy. It was not up to an individual employee to do everything, but ensure they were doing the best they could.

Trustee Minetto cautioned about having principals manage morale issues in the schools. Sometimes morale was low in a school because of the principal so she would hate for the employees to think they had no one to talk to about concerns. Mr. Lasic agreed and mentioned that was one of the reasons members of the Leadership Team were going into the schools.

Trustee Raymond agreed that employee morale was also the responsibility of the Trustees. She mentioned that she had recently conducted a school visit at Veterans Memorial Elementary School, but had not met the employee who had provided public comment earlier in the meeting. She realized that she had not asked the principal to meet staff members who were not in the classrooms and that was a mistake. She knew she needed to do better and remember everyone who worked in the schools because they were all important. She also agreed there were Board actions and discussions that impacted morale and the Board should be the ones to own those decisions.

---

**5.11 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON INCLEMENT WEATHER PROTOCOLS TO INCLUDE TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES INCLUDING COMMUNITY AND STAFF NOTIFICATION; AND PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON DIGITAL SCHOOL DAYS REASONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF DIGITAL SCHOOL DAYS VERSUS ADDING ADDITIONAL DAYS TO THE END OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL YEAR**

Dr. Kristen McNeill, Deputy Superintendent, began the presentation on inclement weather protocols and the proposal before the Nevada Legislature to allow for Digital School Days. The following employees were members of the District's Inclement Weather Team: herself; David Lasic, Chief of Staff; Pete Etchart, Chief Operations Officer; Irene Payne, Chief Communications and Community Engagement Officer; and Rick Martin, Director of Transportation. Mr. Martin also worked closely with the National Weather Service in the area and members of his team who would go out during the early mornings to ensure the District would be able to provide transportation to students. It was important to remember the weather could change quickly and different areas of the Truckee Meadows experienced different weather patterns. The District always tried to provide information to parents and families as soon as possible, but sometimes all the information was not available until 3:00 or 4:00 a.m. Once the Team had all the information, they would determine if schools should be closed for the day or if a 2-hour delay was more appropriate; the idea of utilizing a Digital School Day was part of the conversations surrounding if schools should be cancelled. Once the final decision was made, the Communications Department would then initiate ConnectEd phone calls and messages, as well as contact all media partners to ensure the information reached the families as soon as possible. The first ConnectEd message would generally be sent by 5:30 a.m.

President Simon Holland clarified that ConnectEd messages were the phone calls to parents. Dr. McNeill indicated the parent could sign up for a phone call, text message, or email.

David Lasic, Chief of Staff, continued with the presentation. The Inclement Weather Team monitored storms closely because of the unpredictability of Northern Nevada weather. It was important to ensure that not only were students able to get to school safely, but also get home safely. He admitted there were times when the District had been caught off-guard by a storm that was not expected to do much, but had quickly grown or just settled and dumped a lot of snow. Since the first buses left the transportation yards about 5:45 a.m., there were times when students were already in buses when these weather events occurred and the District had to ensure student safety, which could mean the students were taken to their school.

Trustee Kelley asked if there had ever been discussions on having principals be part of the Inclement Weather Team since they might have a better idea of what the weather was like in their specific areas. Mr. Lasic indicated the staff who assisted in evaluating

the roads were based throughout the Truckee Meadows so the District was aware of different conditions in different locations. The District would also receive information from Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County on road conditions and if snow removal had begun. Rick Martin, Director of Transportation, added that he would also speak with members of the District's Facilities Management Grounds Department to see what was happening at the individual school sites, as well as some parents in the less dense areas in the Truckee Meadows, such as Washoe Valley.

President Simon Holland noted that it was not only the transportation of students on buses that were a concern, but the additional traffic on the roads with parents taking their children to school and employees reporting to work. When schools were open, the District had tens of thousands of people on the road going to work and schools, so it was important for the entire community to be mindful of that impact as well. Dr. McNeill expanded the list of those on the road to teen drivers who might not have experience driving in adverse conditions.

Mr. Lasic continued with the presentation. Higher education, charter schools, and private schools would also look to the District to make their decision before announcing their intention to delay or close school so District staff understood the necessity of communicating the information early. However, staff also knew the District could do a better job in communicating what was occurring. Research was being conducted into what other school districts did related to inclement weather and how they communicated the information to parents and families.

Dr. Bryn Lapenta, Director of Student Accounting, presented the information related to the creation and development of Digital School Days. The process began in 2016 when the Nevada Department of Education determined the District would no longer be allowed to use the professional development time on early release days to make up missed school days due to closure. The concern was that the area would see another heavy winter where the schools would need to remain open for a longer time in the summer to make up the days. The example of what occurred in Incline Village in 2013 with schools open until July 3 because of the number of snow days used was provided. The Board, and Nevada Department of Education, had previously approved a temporary education plan (TEP) that allowed students to participate in a kind of independent study/distance education program if they were planning on missing a lot of school for various reasons, such as being out of the area for a period of time during the school year. The program was approved in June 2017 and a pilot program for Digital School Days was implemented for the Incline Village schools for the 2017-18 School Year. The program was deemed a success by many families and school staff because make-up days did not need to be used at the end of the school year, so it was decided the program should be implemented throughout the District.

Trustee Kelley asked if there was data to support the success of the program. He had heard from some parents that it was not a good fit for their children and they would have preferred to use make-up days. Dr. Lapenta acknowledged the positive information she had received was anecdotal from principals, parents, and media reports.

Dr. Lapenta explained the Incline schools had begun referring to the TEP program as "Digital Days" and the name stuck, so she had been surprised when the media began reporting the Nevada Department of Education had no knowledge of the plans. She began meeting with the Department in November to ensure the District was in compliance. At that time, the Department requested the plan be moved from distance education to alternative education in the District because it made more sense. She had multiple conversations with the Department to determine if there was anything else the District needed or should do to ensure the program worked, so when the Department denied the program in January, she was very surprised. With new constitutional officers sworn in and the leadership of the Department of Education changing, she worked with the Interim State Superintendent's Office regarding the implementation of Digital Days but did not hear anything until the District was asked not to have any more after they had previously been utilized. As soon as the District received notification to not conduct Digital School Days, the program was immediately stopped.

President Simon Holland thanked Dr. Lapenta for the information and innovative thinking. She believed it would be important moving forward to ensure the public and Board were well aware of these types of changes that impacted all students and schools in the District.

Trustee Kelley mentioned that the Board did not believe anyone in the District acted with malice and only had good intentions for the students. He also appreciated the innovative thinking because it was a way for students to continue to learn when schools were closed. He would like to see the Board included in future conversations so the challenges and benefits of Digital Days could be discussed with the community.

Trustee Caudill noted there appeared to be confusion on what was approved in 2017. He wondered if staff could provide clarification on what was approved. Dr. Lapenta stated in 2017 the Board of Trustees and Nevada Department of Education approved a temporary education plan (TEP) that could be used for any and all schools in the Washoe County School District due to inclement weather as part of the District's distance education plan. Mr. Lasic added the Nevada Department of Education also had full knowledge when the pilot program was implemented at the schools in Incline Village. The District appreciated the Department's willingness to work together to solve the concerns that had been raised.

Trustee Raymond mentioned when she visited schools at the beginning of the current school year, including her child's school, the school staff was very good at communicating Digital School Days with the parents. Additionally, the teachers provided additional

information during the parent-teacher conference weeks and the parent teacher organizations had been providing information. Parents and families at the schools she visited continually expressed their appreciation for Digital School Days and were extremely concerned about losing them. The parents felt the opportunity to provide some kind of instruction when the schools had to close for the day was much more productive for the students than adding on days at the end of the school year that would be used to watch movies. Community organizations were also excited about the prospect of helping students when schools were closed and partnering with the District to provide additional opportunities. For example, she spoke with KNPB who were interested in changing their programming on Digital School Days to provide educational programming that could be set up in advance for students; such as having all elementary students tune in at 10:00 a.m. to receive their instruction and so on. She hoped the District continued to look for opportunities to improve Digital School Days. Dr. McNeill and Mr. Lasic thanked Trustee Raymond for the feedback. The District had been working with the schools for almost a year to ensure everyone knew the expectations. Dr. Lapenta added that one of the reasons the District was interested in implementing Digital School Days was because of the contingency days that had to be added onto the end of the past few school years. Parents became frustrated at the end of the school years because the days were added on and families were forced to change vacation plans, trips were cancelled, and some families were forced to go to court to rearrange custody agreements because of the added days. Since the contingency days had not been utilized for about 10 years, families no longer remembered or planned for the use of them at the end of each school year.

Mr. Lasic continued with the presentation. District staff met with students, staff, and families after the first Digital School Day process used in the North Valleys because of the need to close the schools in the area due to weather. The intent was to receive feedback on the process and determine improvements. The students' biggest frustration was the need to sign on to multiple internet platforms to access and complete the work. The District had already been planning on implementing a full-service Microsoft platform and the feedback received showed the need to continue to process. Some students and families did not have access to the internet at home so teachers had prepared packets that were handed out at the beginning of the year with assignments to be completed in the event of a Digital School Day. Students were also provided the ability to make up the work as they would be required to do if they had been absent from school.

Dr. McNeill referenced other states utilizing Digital School Days that the District was looking at to improve the process. Indiana was mentioned because of the guidance and supports provided to families and students with individualized education plans (IEPs). The Office of Student Services was reviewing the information to determine if the guidance provided by Indiana would easily translate into the requirements for Nevada and the Washoe County School District.

Trustee Kelley asked if there were ways parents could also be involved in the process. He had spoken with some parents who had expressed their frustration because they were not able to access the assignments or help their children because they did not know enough about the curriculum. Dr. McNeill indicated the District would look for opportunities to include parents, such as creating a virtual classroom where parents and students could work together with a licensed teacher on a lesson.

Trustee Caudill remarked that he would like to see a number of improvements to the process if it continued in the future. He had heard from a number of parents that there were equity issues in the types of assignments given to students at different schools or even different teachers in the same school and packets not being available for days after the closure, so students were not able to complete their work. Dr. McNeill conceded that improvements did need to occur, and it was critical the teachers were comfortable with the process so they could support the students and families.

Mr. Lasic stated that based on various conversations with the Nevada Department of Education, the District was working with legislators to put forward a bill to allow the use of Digital School Days in Nevada to be considered during the current Nevada Legislative Session. Digital School Days were an option all school districts in Nevada could benefit from, as well as the various charter and private schools. It was important to note that the Clark County School Day had to cancel school recently because of a rare snowfall in Las Vegas but Digital School Days could be utilized for other occurrences that required school closures. The District was hopeful the legislation would pass and was interested in collaborating with the Nevada Department of Education to develop standards for curriculum and instruction related to Digital School Days, especially as the standards related to students with disabilities. If Digital School Days were not approved by the Legislature, the District would revert back to holding contingency days at the end of each school year.

President Simon Holland mentioned staff had sent information to the Board regarding employees who had not reported to work because of the Digital School Days and that no employee would go unpaid for those days, just as the students would not be required to make up those days at the end of the year. She requested staff provide information on the record if the hours would need to be made up. Emily Ellison, Chief Human Resources Officer, remarked that there had been a lot of confusion as to whether employees would be required to make up the missed time. A formal communication would be sent to all employees by the end of the week, but she reported that employees would not be required to make up the hours from Digital School Days.

Trustee Minetto thanked staff for the information. As a former teacher, she appreciated the efforts to get rid of contingency days because she knew no school work would occur then anyway. Mr. Lasic informed the Trustees that the District did review the data related to attendance on contingency days and only about 1/3 of students were in class on

contingency days. If the goal was to ensure all students had every opportunity to access the same amount of learning time, then Digital School Days provided more students the ability to learn and grow than contingency days did.

Trustee Kelley wondered if the District should utilize time during the fall and spring breaks as contingency days instead of at the end of the school year. Superintendent Davis stated families still made travel plans during the breaks so holding contingency days during the breaks would not solve that problem and could create additional confusion for families.

Trustee Kelley indicated there were also some families who had a difficult time accessing the internet and certain websites on the Digital School Days. He asked if the District's Print Shop would be able to assist the schools with the printing of packets so the schools did not have to print all of them on their own or if there was something the IT Department could do to help families. Mr. Lasic mentioned the Print Shop had already been assisting the schools with the packets and would continue to do so. The IT Department was also working with the schools through 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning to provide additional information to teachers on the process and suggestions for accessing information when the sites may be busy.

Student Representative Ali expressed concern over having contingency days occur during breaks. High school students were provided opportunities for credit recovery during the breaks and holding contingency days during the same time could limit their ability to make up missing credits prior the graduation. She appreciated the intent behind Digital School Days because it allowed students to continue their learning when classes were cancelled; however, it was important to remember that technology could not take the place of interactive classroom learning especially for students taking advanced classes.

Dr. McNeill mentioned if the legislation did not pass, the District would be working with community businesses and organizations to inform families that contingency days would be added on to the 2019-20 School Year calendar and that they should not make plans for those days because there was no way of knowing when or if they would be needed. She noted the dates for high school graduations would also be pushed out because the District could not schedule graduations for those days either, just in case they were needed.

Trustee Caudill expressed frustration that the Nevada Department of Education was unwilling to allow the District to continue utilizing Digital School Days as a pilot program for the remainder of the current school year. Dr. McNeill remarked the Interim State Superintendent of Schools had expressed an interest in allowing the District to continue to use Digital School Days through the end of the school year; however, after various meetings with the Nevada Office of the Attorney General, it was decided the way Nevada Revised Statutes were written did not allow for the program and the District should work with the Legislature.

Superintendent Davis asked how contingency days impacted graduating seniors, especially if the students were in school until July. Dr. Lapenta stated the District would not be able to send a final transcript to higher education institutions showing that the student had completed high school until the student actually completed the classes and earned their diploma.

Mr. Lasic presented information related to the "regional" approach to cancelling schools the District tried. The District was aware of the frustration many families felt when all schools were cancelled due to weather since one end of the Truckee Meadows could have 3 feet of snow, while there was nothing at the other end. The idea behind the regional approach was to cancel schools impacted by the hazardous conditions and allow those schools who were not impacted to continue their day as planned. The regions were based on information gathered from the Transportation Department to determine which schools were generally impacted as a group when a storm hit. However, the actual practice of only cancelling schools in a certain area was not as successful as the District would have liked. The District heard both positive and negative feedback from families and staff regarding the regional approach. Some families living in unaffected areas appreciated that all schools were not closed; however, there were staff members who lived in the impacted areas who were unable to report to work and transportation was not provided for students who might attend a school outside of that area, such as a student zoned for North Valleys High School might actually attend AACT High School.

Dr. McNeill indicated the District would continue looking at a regional approach to see if there were improvements that could be made, but that would not occur during the current school year.

Trustee Kelley appreciated that staff was willing to continue looking at using a regional approach and were not completely abandoning the concept. He agreed improvements were needed but heard a lot of positive feedback on the intent.

Trustee Caudill remarked that the majority of complaints he received related to the regional approach were from families whose students attend AACT High School since that school remained open. He felt that if the situations with the magnet schools could be worked out, then the regional approach would be a better way to handle inclement weather days. Superintendent Davis mentioned she, along with Trustees Calvert, Simon Holland, and Minetto, had met with students recently at AACT High School. They all appreciated hearing from the students regarding what occurred when the schools in the North Valleys were closed. Principal Josh Reddig worked with the students who lived in the North Valleys area because he also wanted to ensure student safety, but it was problematic to tell some students they did not have to attend school while other were required to. Dr. McNeill added there were also concerns with students in the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at Earl Wooster High School and Innovations High School,

but the principals at the schools did work with students and families. The principals would generally leave the decision up to the families but always tried to ensure the schools were open because they knew there would be students who would find a way to safely get to school.

President Simon Holland also appreciated the innovation and forward thinking to solve problems. She hoped staff would continue to work on the ideas to determine if there were workable solutions for everyone.

President Simon Holland opened the meeting to public comment.

Malia Puchta stated that if the District had provided the information presented on Digital School Days sooner to the public there might not have been the outcry because once she heard the information at the meeting, her opinion of what occurred changed. She suggested that the District consider making at least a 2-hour delay call the night before if they were aware of a storm coming in. While it wasn't the best decision, she felt the District could reassess the situation later and then cancel school in the morning if they needed to. Her problem with the Digital School Days was not that the students were required to complete school work, but that the teachers were only available to assist students for a few hours on those days. Her opinion was that if the students were responsible for completing assignments, then the teachers should be responsible for being available throughout the normal school hours. She was also frustrated with the lessons included in the packets because the packets were sent home in October, so by January and February the students had already moved on. If the District was interested in moving forward with Digital School Days, they needed to ensure the packets contained relevant lessons that aligned to the curriculum the children were learning at that time.

Paul Kiser was the parent of a student at Archie Clayton Middle School. He appreciated the honesty from staff regarding Digital School Days; however, he was concerned the District was still interested in pursuing them because he did not feel the assignments were in line with what the students were currently learning in the classrooms. He had also looked at what other school districts were doing related to similar processes and had found that typically the school districts that had success were very small. The other school districts had also ensured all students had access to high-speed internet. Additionally, his research from a school district in Maryland showed that when there were years of high, unscheduled school closure days, the reading scores of students in grades 3, 5, and 8 dropped on standardized tests; and a school district in Minnesota had also decided to cap the number of digital days they used because there was a concern the students were not receiving in person instruction and that was impacting their performance. He would rather the District look at eliminating the second week of spring break than rely on contingency days.

Pete Etchart read a statement on behalf of Jessica Patterson, who had been present, but had to leave due to the length of the meeting. Ms. Patterson planned to read an essay her 8-year-old son had composed regarding Digital School Days.

"I would rather go school instead of having a digital day. I'd rather go outside today instead of having a digital day. One reason is snow days are for snow, not work. Snow days used to be about going outside, playing with friends and having fun, but now it's just work, work, work. And I'm only eight years old and I should be able to enjoy that while it lasts. My second reason is going to school is way easier because your school supplies are there and not at home. My third reason is my teacher is way better at teaching me than my mom. My fourth reason is the teacher could tell you what to do if you were at school rather than emailing. In conclusion, digital days are a bad idea so we should go back to the good old days and cancel digital days."

#### **5.13 DISCUSSION BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES RELATED TO THE DAYS, TIMES, AND LOCATIONS OF MEETINGS OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

President Simon Holland stated the current agenda item was a request from Trustee Caudill. She asked that he introduce the item for discussion.

Trustee Caudill mentioned he had received a number of comments from members of the community and District staff regarding the start time of Regular Meetings of the Board of Trustees at 2:00 p.m. Many felt that the Board was not interested in hearing from staff or the community because of the early meeting times. He would like to see the start times of meetings moved to 4:00 p.m. to allow more opportunities for staff and the community to attend and provide comments. He understood the concerns of staff related to the day of the week and location of the meetings, but would like to see a change in the start times of the meetings.

President Simon Holland agreed with Trustee Caudill. She felt the 2:00 p.m. start time made it difficult for school site employees to attend and they would appreciate the later start time. She believed it was important to be mindful of the staff members who were required to be present at all meetings, but in her experience, it was rare for meetings to go that long; she stated the current meeting was the longest she had been in since joining the Board. While she agreed in general the meetings should remain at the Central Administration Building, she would like to have more than one occur at another District site each year.

Trustee Kelley agreed that 4:00 p.m. would be a better start time for the meetings to allow more members of the community the opportunity to attend. He would like to see at least two meetings a year occur in South Reno locations. He suggested that some report items could also be moved to Board Policy Committee meetings since those meetings tended to be shorter.

Trustee Caudill added that if the Board knew an item would be of high interest to the public, routine agenda items, such as reports and consent, could be moved around so that the item on interest could be heard later, such as 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.

President Simon Holland commented that the reports use to be agendized towards the beginning of the meetings, but moved to the end because so many people complained about having to listen to the Trustees talk about what events and meetings they had attended.

Trustee Minetto expressed support for the later start time and holding the meetings at different school sites or District facilities.

Trustee Raymond stated she would like to see the Board pilot the 4:00 p.m. start times for a year before completely committing to a permanent change. The Washoe County Commission and local city council all met during the middle of the day and community members would make the choice on if they wanted to attend the meetings or not based on the agenda or if they had a particular concern they wanted to address with the public body. Additionally, while the change in time might benefit one group of employees, there were other employees that would be negatively impacted, including those providing presentations to the Board at a later time. She had recalled sitting through a number of Board meetings that were 6 to 7 hours so starting later would impact that as well. She had also seen school site employees, students, and community members attend the meetings at 2:00 p.m. to speak to issues that were important to them.

Trustee Calvert agreed with Trustee Raymond. She stated people would make the time and adjust their schedules if there was an issue they cared about on the agenda or wanted to inform the Board about a concern. She did not believe starting later would change someone's desire to attend the meetings.

Trustee Kelley also agreed that if someone wanted to attend a meeting of the Board of Trustees because of a specific agenda item or concern they wanted to inform the Board about, they would make the time to do so. He also believed the later start time should be conducted on a trial basis to see if there was an increase in public participation.

President Simon Holland mentioned that the number of people who live-streamed the meetings should also be looked at because people may be more interested in watching the meeting to hear the discussion than actually attending the meeting.

Trustee Caudill acknowledged that people would make the time to attend the meetings if there was an issue important to them, but felt that there was a perception issue as well.

President Simon Holland added that when she was the Washoe County Manager there were always conversations regarding the times of meetings. One solution was to hear agenda items that were of great interest later in the meetings so more people could attend.

President Simon Holland opened the meeting to public comment.

Malia Puchta noted that she would appreciate the meetings beginning later. She would always have to ask her husband to take off early on days she was interested in attending the meetings so he could pick up their daughter from middle school. She agreed that people would show up when they wanted to, but if the meetings were to begin at 4:00 p.m. it would remove one possible barrier.

Natha Anderson, Washoe Education Association, supported a pilot program for the later start time for Board meetings. Many of the building representatives for the associations were interested in attending the meetings, but could not because of the 2:00 p.m. start time. However, she also knew how busy the central office staff was and that they were always willing to place agenda items of interest to employees, such as insurance, later in the meeting or even include in the agenda title the item would not be heard until after 4:00 p.m. She recalled there was a meeting held at Truckee Meadows Community College last year that began at 2:00 p.m. but had an item related to health insurance listed as a 4:00 p.m. start time and the Board had to recess for about an hour before the item could be heard. When the Board came back from recess to hear the time, the only persons in the audience were the employee association representatives.

President Simon Holland thanked everyone for their comments and requested the agenda item return for possible action at a future meeting.

## **6. Reports**

### **6.01 BOARD REPORTS**

Board Members reported on their attendance at District and community activities and shared announcements of dates and times of upcoming events.

### **6.02 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

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

## **7. Closing Items**

### **7.01 FUTURE AGENDA ITEM REQUESTS**

Trustee Caudill requested presentations on the allocation process, the use of educational technology vendors and student data, and that the Board consider conducting work sessions with students from all District high schools to hear from the students.

Trustee Kelley requested additional information on the employee complaint and whistleblower processes.

#### 7.02 PUBLIC COMMENT

Malia Puchta provided additional comments related to the inclement weather presentation. She mentioned that a lot of the negative comments she read on social media regarding the regional school closures that occurred were from teachers who were upset that the schools near them were closed but they still had to report to work. She was discouraged by the comments because she felt everyone else in Washoe County had to report to work that day, whether they worked for the City of Reno or a fast food restaurant. Her husband had to be at work at 5:00 a.m. and if there was snow on the ground, he would make changes to his schedule to leave earlier so he could report to work on time. She could understand not having the students who attended the magnet schools or programs being required to go to school, but the adults should be reporting to work because that was part of being an adult.

#### 7.03 NEXT MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

The next Regular Meeting would take place on Tuesday, April 9, 2019 beginning at 2:00 p.m. in the Board Room at the Central Administration Building.

#### 7.04 ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business to come before the members of the Board, President Simon Holland declared the meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

  
**Katy Simon Holland, President**

  
**Angela D. Taylor, Clerk**