

**MINUTES OF THE MAY 21, 2021
WORK SESSION OF THE
WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

May 21, 2021

1. Opening Items

1.01 CALL TO ORDER

The work session of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 9:06 a.m. at the Nugget Casino Resort, Sierra Room 5; 1100 Nugget Avenue; Sparks, Nevada.

1.02 ROLL CALL

President Angela Taylor and Board Members Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Jeff Church, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, and Kurt Thigpen were present. Superintendent Kristen McNeill and staff were also present.

1.03 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vangie Russell, Project Manager, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.04 PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul White expressed concern about the District continually requesting more funding for the schools when at least nine states funded school at rates less than Nevada but performed better. He felt the District should contact the other states to determine what they were doing and how the District could adopt their strategies. He provided examples of how he believed the District could save over \$50 million annually, such as privatization of certain services like police and maintenance.

Linda Park mentioned she was a former school board member from outside Nevada. She believed the current systems the Board was following was not working and she urged the Board to look at alternatives. She expressed concern that the Board had already approved spending \$5 million for a social justice curriculum that parents and the community did not agree with.

1.05 ACTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA

It was moved by Trustee Thigpen and seconded by Trustee Caudill that **the Board of Trustees approves the agenda as presented.** The result of the vote was

Unanimous: (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Jeff Church, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

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

2.01 PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO REVISE AND UPDATE THE DISTRICT STRATEGIC PLAN: ENVISION 2020 AND BRIDGE PLAN INCLUDING POSSIBLE OUTREACH EFFORTS FOR STAFF AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT. THE DISCUSSION WILL HAVE A FOCUS ON PRIORITIES RELATIVE TO MOVING FROM "RESPONSE TO RECOVERY" DUE TO THE PANDEMIC TO INCLUDE ACADEMIC RECOVERY AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION INCLUDING A POSSIBLE 2-YEAR DOCUMENT. A TIMELINE TO DEVELOP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES BASED ON CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING/RE-ENGAGEMENT; ACADEMIC RECOVERY/ACCELERATED LEARNING; AND MOVING TO THE COLLEGE/CAREER READINESS PATHWAY/PROMISE OF A GRADUATE WILL BE PRESENTED

Dr. Laura Davidson, Director of Research and Evaluation, and Jennifer Harris, Program Evaluator, began the presentation with results from a strategic plan and budget survey. The intent of the survey was to identify the priorities of students, staff, families, and community members moving into the next couple of years, especially related to federal stimulus and relief funding. Information on the demographics of respondents was reviewed. Based on survey results, increasing instructional staff in the schools was the highest priority for additional funding, followed by providing additional supports for students struggling academically and increasing education technology for students and staff. The lowest priority was improving COVID mitigation strategies. The results were broken down broken down by respondent group. Additional information on specific strategies that could be used to address priorities was presented.

Trustee Caudill mentioned he had heard from a number of principals that having a dedicated substitute for their schools was a large benefit because it provided additional opportunities and support. He wondered if having that long-term substitute was reflected in any of the survey data. Ms. Harris indicated there was anecdotal information included in the open comment sections. While there were not a lot of comments related to long-term substitutes, there were numerous comments regarding the inclusion of additional classroom aides and assistance and the benefit they provided. Emily Ellison, Chief Human Resources Officer, added that she had received positive feedback on the site substitutes but the survey did not really focus on that aspect. She was looking at including "allocated" substitutes for some schools over the next school year.

President Taylor remarked that she had also heard positive feedback because it allowed a substitute to be integrated into the school culture and there were fewer behavioral concerns with students because they knew the substitute. The Trustees conducted additional discussion on the benefits of site substitutes and long-term substitutes in the schools and how it was able to expand the number of candidates interested in the Alternative Route to Licensure (ARL) Program.

Trustee Church commented that in terms of teacher recruitment, anything and everything should be on the table. He felt that the District could look at what other government agencies did, such as hiring additional teachers, because there were always people who were out for whatever reason. He did not believe there should be a focus on increased compensation since there were other improvements the District could consider.

Trustee Thigpen noted that it would also be important for the Board and District to consider how to increase the number of mental health professionals in the schools. The students had been through a lot over the past year and would need additional supports to get them through the trauma.

Superintendent McNeill stated the presentation was intended to provide information on what the priorities of the District should be over the next few years in terms of recovery from the pandemic. In terms of funding, the survey was geared more towards federal stimulus dollars and what the different demographic groups would like to see that money allocated towards.

Trustee Church wondered if the information from the survey was that the District needed additional funding or if the District should "live within their means." Dr. Davidson cautioned there was not a specific question related additional funding versus current funding levels from the state. Staff would review the open-ended questions to determine if there were any comments related to the question prior to the upcoming budget work session.

Trustee Caudill highlighted that some of the supports the respondents were in favor of would cost money, such as smaller class sizes and increased mental health supports. While there would be a lot of support for providing such opportunities in the community, at some point the federal dollars would run out and the District would need to determine where the continued funding of the programming would come from.

President Taylor recessed the meeting for 10 minutes.

Superintendent McNeill moved the presentation to the new strategic plan. Based on everything the District and students had gone through, the District was proposing a 2-year strategic plan, *Response to Recovery*. Background on the development of

strategic plans in the District was reviewed and included information on the Bridge Plan, which was intended to act as a bridge between *Envision WCSD 2020* and approval of a new strategic plan. The District wanted to ensure the Board and community continued to be provided with the measurable outcomes throughout the year and would continue to bring back information over the course of the school year. Staff was not recommending changes to the Vision and Mission previously adopted by the Board of Trustees, but there were recommended updates to the Core Beliefs. The changes to the Core Beliefs were directly related to the Response to Recovery, including updates to language and integration of social and emotional learning (SEL).

Trustee Minetto requested clarification on the Core Beliefs and if aspects related to recovery would be revisited in 2 years. Superintendent McNeill stated that was correct. Staff and the Board would begin the discussion on the development of a new, comprehensive strategic plan at the start of the 2022-23 School Year.

Trustee Church expressed concern about incorporating SEL into the Core Beliefs because of the ties to social justice. Superintendent McNeill explained SEL and social justice were not the same. The Washoe County School District had been a social and emotion learning school district for many years and had worked with the Nevada Department of Education on the state standards related to SEL. Dr. Paul LaMarca, Chief Strategies Officer, provided background information on the development of SEL in the District, which began in 2010 when the District was approached by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) to take part of the development of SEL programming. The programming was focused on the five tenets: self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, relationship building, and self-management. Through CASEL, the District provided curriculum for both elementary and secondary levels. SEL work was more related to equity work and Tier 1 practices of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) the District used to build a climate that was optimal to student learning. SEL was sometimes connected to character building, but there was no focus on morals with SEL.

Trustee Church felt the information provided sounded great, but was concerned about a connection to social justice and the community thinking there was a connection. Dr. LaMarca indicated there was a connection in that there was a connection with equitable practices. Part of relationship building and social awareness was learning about other people and who they were, which was the link between SEL and social justice.

Trustee Caudill wondered what the state requirements for SEL were in K-12 education. Dr. LaMarca explained there were numerous connections to bullying prevention within SEL and how students were treated. The state standards surrounding SEL were modeled after what the District had adopted in their work with CASEL. The state did not dictate the number of minutes school spend providing SEL programming but did provide requirements surrounding safe and respectful learning environments. The

District did not tell teachers how to provide SEL programming or the number of minutes to be used each day for SEL. The hope was that the programming would be provided throughout the instructional day and incorporated into different lessons as part of highly-effective instructional practices.

Trustee Minetto added, as someone who taught SEL practices, that the lessons provided opportunities for both students and teachers to stop and take a minute when they were frustrated. She appreciated the programming and urged the Trustees to support the inclusion in the Core Beliefs.

Trustee Church read from some of the proposed social justice lessons the District was considering. He asked if the proposed lessons were included as part of SEL. Dr. LaMarca indicated the information provided by Trustee Church was part of the proposed supplemental curriculum developed by Benchmark for K-5 English Language Arts (ELA). Those lessons were not associated with the SEL programming.

President Taylor remarked that it was important to ensure the definitions and information provided to the Trustees were associated with what was occurring in the Washoe County School District. She appreciated the Trustees were conducting their own research into topics, but it was also critical to understand what the meaning of terms was within the District and not what something meant somewhere else.

It was moved by Trustee Thigpen and seconded by Trustee Minetto that **the Board of Trustees approves updates to Core Beliefs as recommended.**

President Taylor opened the motion for discussion.

Trustee Church stated he was not comfortable voting for the motion without a definition of SEL.

The result of the vote was 6-1: (Yea: Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen. Nay: Jeff Church.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

Superintendent McNeill continued with the presentation. District staff had adopted their own guiding principles to ensure they remained focused when making decisions. The guiding principles were the same as they had been throughout the pandemic, with an added bullet point to continue to provide safe, in-person instruction. Staff was not recommending any changes to the current, overarching goals of the strategic plan. The objectives and initiatives were how the work occurred related to the goals. Staff was proposing a change from "initiative" to "measurable outcome," which they believed was more reflective of the work occurring. The discussion moved to Goal 1, Academic Growth.

Dr. Davidson began the presentation on proposed revisions to the Objectives and Measurable Outcomes related to Goal 1. Because of everything school districts had gone through over the past year, the recommendation was to re-establish baselines based on current data. The proposed changes to Objective 1.1 was to add language focusing on academic recovery for all students. Baselines would need to be re-set for all measurable outcomes under Objective 1.1 and the current Initiative 1.1.5 would be removed.

Trustee Caudill wondered if a 3% gain across all areas was realistic or if it was too low. Dr. Davidson mentioned the District typically saw about a 2% growth in the 3 year average related to many of the current metrics. A 3% goal would be a stretch, but it was a goal that could be attainable.

Trustee Caudill appreciated the intent but would prefer the District challenge themselves and not provide a "safe number" that was easily achieved. He believed it was more important to aim high and miss than to not challenge yourself. Dr. Davidson cautioned that some measures had remained fairly flat over the past few years, so 3% would be a stretch for the District. She understood the desire to set higher targets but was concerned that if the target was too high, then the District could wind up further behind in subsequent years. In terms of reaching targets, the District also set sub-targets for different population groups. The 3% represented an average, so there were some population groups that would need to increase more than the 3% if the entire District were to reach the average.

Trustee Church asked if language should be added to the measurable outcome on graduation rates that the standards would not change. He had heard from constituents that the District could meet any graduation rate they wanted if the District lowered the standards. Dr. Davidson explained if the students met the requirements for a standard diploma then they would graduate and that schools were constantly challenging students to meet more rigorous standards for honors, advanced, or college and career readiness diplomas.

President Taylor mentioned the District did not set the standards for graduation since those were set by the state. For example, the state removed the requirement for the high school proficiency exam and moved to end of course exams instead.

Trustee Nicolet wondered if the proposed goals would help increase the District's standing nationally because she was concerned about the academic proficiency of graduates and their standing against other students. Dr. Davidson indicated everyone in the District wanted to see an increase in proficiency across the all subjects. She knew it was demoralizing to see the ELA numbers remain flat, even with the additional

funding from the Read by Grade 3 program. The 3% was a challenge for the District and would show sizable growth in proficiency.

Superintendent McNeill added a lot of the national rankings did show Nevada towards the lower end of the list; however, it was important to remember those rankings were for the entire state, not just the Washoe County School District. There were over 13,000 school districts across the United States so if the District were 48th, then the District would be doing extremely well. Most of the national rankings and metrics also relied heavily on per pupil funding in terms of rankings and Nevada did rank very low in terms of per pupil funding. Dr. LaMarca added if the District were to make 3% annual gains, they would be considered one of the best nationally.

President Taylor appreciated the clarification. It was important for both the Board and community to have an understanding of both what the metrics were and what they meant. There was a difference between the state and the District. The intent behind the objectives in the strategic plan were to look at ways the District could improve their numbers, with the how seen in the measurable outcomes. She added that it was important to report back on a regular basis so if there were areas of concern, they could be addressed sooner, rather than later.

Trustee Caudill thanked staff for the information since it was also important to understand context. He noted that part of that 3% growth included growth for different populations, so he would like to ensure that the goal was to have all populations increase proficiency levels because that would increase the proficiency for the entire District. He wondered how often students were assessed for proficiency and felt if there were challenges in the higher grades, then the focus should be on the early grades because if students were proficient early, they would be more likely to keep that proficiency.

Trustee Church remarked that the data did show the District was doing poorly, aside from the state rankings. While the information showed the District was doing better than the state, the District was still underperforming. His understanding was the per pupil funding placed Nevada at 45th or even up to 33rd depending on the site. He believed the District had a lot of room for improvement and work needed to be done.

Superintendent McNeill noted the Washoe County School District was a continuous improvement school district and that had been the philosophy for a number of years. She was proud of the improvements that had occurred since she became superintendent because growth had occurred, not only in terms of academics, but other areas as well. The students and staff had been through a lot over the past year and everyone understood improvement would be needed across the entire District. The intent of *Response to Recovery* was to determine some of the area where improvement needed to occur and provide the focus on those areas.

Trustee Jacqueline Calvert left the meeting at 11:06 a.m.

Dr. LaMarca presented Objective 1.2, which was specific to increasing outcomes for certain student populations and narrowing the achievement gaps. After the baseline data was set, specific targets for each group would be set.

Trustee Nicolet expressed concern over the measurable outcomes associated with the objective because there was so much information and data tied to the objective. She wondered if the data should be split out more, especially related to directing resources. Dr. LaMarca mentioned that how the information would be reported would provide more context on the data. The District would not include a list of the individual resources that were provided to specific groups, but there were leading indicators the individual departments used that could provide additional context and how departments contributed to the measurable outcome. Many of the leading indicators were included as part of the conversations as successes and barriers to achieving targets.

Trustee Caudill asked how proficiency rates impacted achievement gaps. Dr. Davidson noted they were tied. Objective 1.1 were rates for the entire District, while Objective 1.2 were the rates for specific populations of students. The goal was to raise everyone, but raise some groups faster.

President Taylor added that one of the reasons the equity work in the District was so important was because some student populations required additional supports to reach the targets. The discussion continued regarding the additional supports some groups required and how the focus should not only be on students who were underperforming or not meeting the targets, but include resources for high-achieving and general education students as well because they were also experiencing the impacts of COVID.

Dr. Troy Parks, Chief Academic Officer, reviewed the new Objective 1.3, which was related to the Promise of a Graduate work and improving the entire pre-K-12 pathway to ensure college and career readiness.

Trustee Caudill expressed frustration over the continued focus on college readiness since not all students would go on to college. He was interested in seeing the District put in place an assessment related to career readiness as well as college readiness. Debra Biersdorff, Deputy Superintendent, noted the ACT did have options that would allow the District to assess career readiness, but those options were not included as part of the general ACT all juniors were required to take.

Trustee Nicolet asked what the measurable outcomes would be for grades pre-K through grade 7 in terms of how the college and career pathway was aligned for younger students. Dr. Parks remarked that the focus would be related to the

proficiency rates from the prior objectives. The goal would be to show continued growth through proficiency rates beginning in pre-K through graduation.

Trustee Caudill wondered what the District was doing in middle school in terms of providing access to career readiness information and opportunities available in the high schools. Dr. Parks explained some of the opportunities available to middle school students currently and future programming that encouraged career readiness. The Career and Technical Education (CTE)/Signature Academies Department also hosted informational nights at the middle schools so students were aware of the options and how to apply to the programs. Ms. Biersdorff added the recent re-authorization of the federal Perkins Grant had a focus on career readiness opportunities in both high schools and in middle schools.

Joe Ernst, Co-Lead Area Superintendent, presented Objective 1.4, which was a new objective to implement a sustained distance learning model for students who performed better in an online environment. The measurable outcomes were similar to other objectives under Goal 1, but specific to students enrolled at North Star Online School.

Trustee Caudill recalled the District would be opening additional hubs in some schools for North Star students. He asked how the hubs would support the measurable outcomes in Objective 1.4. Mr. Ernst commented that the hubs provided additional access for students to receive direct teacher support and interact with more students on a daily basis.

Trustee Church wondered if the District had the ability to move a student from North Star to their zoned school for in-person learning if the student was failing. Mr. Ernst explained the process for students enrolling in North Star did include information for families on what was needed from both the student and the family for the student to be successful in an on-line learning environment. If students were not as successful as the District or family wanted, interventions would be provided as needed to work with the student so they could be successful at North Star. The District would always work with families as needed to move students to the most appropriate learning environment, but the District could not force a family to move their students.

Ms. Biersdorff provided information on the new Objective 1.5, which was the design and implementation of the District's Promise of a Graduate.

It was moved by Trustee Nicolet and seconded by Trustee Caudill that **the Board of Trustees approves Goal 1 and corresponding Objectives and Measurable Outcomes as presented.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Andrew Caudill, Jeff Church, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

Emily Ellison, Chief Human Resources Officer, presented the objectives and measurable outcomes related to Goal 2, Highly Effective Personnel. The updates primarily included changes to some of the language in the objectives and new measurable outcomes associated with the objectives; though staff proposed the inclusion of two new objectives related to employee benefits programs and succession planning. She noted that while Human Resources was primarily responsible for the measurable outcomes, the work in other areas of the District also impacted the data, especially in terms of employee retention. The intent of many of the proposed changes was to provide a more accurate narrative on what was occurring within the District in terms of hiring and retaining employees.

Trustee Caudill requested clarification on why the metrics related to the Alternative Route to Licensure (ARL) program was specific to special education candidates and not overall candidates. Ms. Ellison explained the District's ARL program was focused on hard to fill positions. It was important to ensure there was a balance between the number of candidates in the program and the number of open positions. Special education was an area of substantial need in the District so that was the current focus.

President Taylor asked if there were ways the District could look at the diversity of the candidates interested in the leadership pathway opportunities. Ms. Ellison mentioned it could be looked at, but it would be important to ensure the information was not used as part of any hiring decision. She would have to determine the most appropriate way to report the information.

Trustee Caudill inquired if there was a way to send staff information on leadership pathway opportunities early. Such as sending a survey out to employees annually to determine if they were even interested in moving into leadership positions. Ms. Ellison provided information on some ways the Human Resources Department was considering promoting the programs.

It was moved by Trustee Caudill and seconded by Trustee Thigpen that **the Board of Trustees approves Goal 2 and corresponding Objectives and Measurable Outcomes as discussed.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Andrew Caudill, Jeff Church, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

President Taylor recessed the meeting for 40 minutes.

Michele Anderson, Chief Communications and Community Engagement Officer, began the presentation on Goal 3, Family and Community Engagement. Many of the Objectives under Goal 3 had been revised. Objective 3.1, Strengthen inclusive two-way communication and community engagement in order to foster authentic relationships and recover trust. The intent of the changes was to make the Objective more

descriptive and inclusive of what the District had been able to accomplish throughout the past year, then ensure the accomplishments were put out to the community through various means.

Dr. LaMarca provided information on the proposed changes to Objective 3.2, Build and expand meaningful partnerships between the District and families with a focus on student learning. While there were not a lot of changes to the Objective and measurable outcomes, it would be important to reestablish baselines to account for the differences in how the District and families connected. Objective 3.4 was new and focused on increasing family-school partnerships.

Ms. Anderson presented Objective 3.5, Increase confidence in and sustain support for District schools as THE preferred choice among families. It was important the community knew about all the services public education provided versus what other education options provided, such as transportation. The District was looking at how better to market the schools, especially to families who were new to the area and interested in learning about the neighborhood school.

Trustee Church expressed concern over the District utilizing funds for marketing purposed for the District. Ms. Anderson noted the Office of Communications and Community Engagement did budget for marketing purposes. No one in the District viewed the students as dollar figures, but there were financial considerations and it was critical public school districts work to retain the students they had and recruit new students. The District had used funds to market North Star Online School in the past. The District would also utilize "free" media in terms of positive news stories.

Trustee Church remarked that he was still uncomfortable marketing the District to families who were making the choice of where to education their children. He was skeptical about what could be done since enrollment had decreased, even though the population had increased in Washoe County. Ms. Anderson mentioned that a previous school district she had worked for created welcome packets for families that were place available at new housing developments to provide information on the area schools and programming.

Superintendent McNeill commented that she understood the concerns raised by Trustee Church. However, it was also important the District tell their story and why the District was an option families should consider. She believed the District was doing a lot of good, but not all that information got out to the community.

Trustee Thigpen added that the community was probably not aware of all the programming available in the District either. Charter and private schools had their own communication and marketing budgets, so it was important for the District to also provide information, especially to new families.

Trustee Caudill believed it was important for the Board to be part of the marketing efforts and explain how their actions impacted the schools. He would encourage the District also build strong relationships with the realtors in the area because they would be some of the first to provide information to families on not only the District, but the specific schools.

It was moved by Trustee Caudill and seconded by Trustee Nicolet that **the Board of Trustees approves Goal 3 and corresponding Objectives and Measurable Outcomes as discussed.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Andrew Caudill, Jeff Church, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

Mark Mathers, Chief Financial Officer, began the review of Goal 4, Continuous Improvement. The Office of Business and Finance was responsible for Objective 4.1, which there were no changes to, and Objective 4.2, which was related to maximizing federal stimulus funding.

Jeff Bozzo, Budget Director, explained the first measurable outcome for Objective 4.2 was related to the development of a financial plan based on partial and/or full implementation of the new Pupil Centered Funding Plan. The intent was to ensure the District maintained a structurally balanced budget.

President Taylor highlighted that the District did have a structurally balanced budget and had one for a couple of fiscal years. She expressed frustration over the misinformation in the community that the District was constantly running million dollar deficits when the Board had approved a structurally balanced budget for the past several years.

Lauren Ohlin, Director of Grants, reviewed the remaining measurable outcomes for Objective 4.2 since they were related to federal stimulus grants and compliance. It was important to note the District wanted to ensure there was a sustainable funding source for programming once the federal funding ended so the District would not face a financial "cliff."

President Taylor mentioned she had been asked by a constituent if any of the federal funds came with any requirement that the Washoe County School District teach Critical Race Theory in the classrooms. Ms. Ohlin stated there were no such requirements.

Trustee Caudill appreciated the inclusion of a 4-year financial plan. He believed such a plan would provide helpful information for both the Board and the Nevada Legislature because it would show forward thinking on the part of the District and what they were anticipating down the road. Mr. Mathers explained the document would also include

various scenarios just in case there were changes in the financial picture, as well as provide a roadmap for the District to transition away from federal stimulus monies.

Trustee Church wondered if the Board should incorporate language from policies related to the investigation of any complaints of fraud, waste, and abuse. Mr. Mathers remarked the language was already in policies and a function of the District's Internal Audit Department.

Trustee Caudill felt that policy was a more appropriate place to address fraud, waste, and abuse because it would be tricky to develop any kind of meaningful measurable outcome. He would prefer the policy be strengthened instead.

Pete Etchart, Chief Operations Officer, introduced the remaining objectives for Goal 4, related to Transportation, Nutrition Services, and Facilities Management. Measurable outcomes for Objective 4.3, Transportation: To provide safe and on-time delivery of students while focusing on work force stability; Objective 4.4: Facilities Management: Successful completion of current and planned Major Capital Projects, Facility Critical Repair Projects, and Core School Investment Projects throughout the District; Objective 4.5, Nutrition Services: To provide nutritious meals to our students while focusing on financial recovery and staffing stability through continual assessment of operational processes and strategic investments; and Objective 4.6, Information Technology: To begin implementation of the Strategic Technology Plan.

It was moved by Trustee Thigpen and seconded by Trustee Minetto that **the Board of Trustees approves Goal 4 and corresponding Objectives and Measurable Outcomes as presented.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Andrew Caudill, Jeff Church, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

Dr. LaMarca began the presentation on Goal 5, Safe and Welcoming Schools, Objective 5.1, Provide and continuously improve a climate of belonging and self-worth and justice amongst students, families, staff, and the community that is centered around an inclusive, collaborative, equitable and engaging learning environment by providing equitable practices, strategies, and materials.

Trustee Church requested clarification on Measurable Outcome 5.1.2 regarding disproportionality. He expressed concern the metric assumed the District was disproportional in how they were treating students. Dr. LaMarca explained disproportionality was the difference between the proportion with a particular outcome and the proportion within the population. For example, if 50% of the population were male, then the expectation was that 50% of all suspensions were male; disproportionality would be when 65% of all suspensions were male. Reducing

disproportionality meant that the proportion of a particular outcome would be equal to the proportion of a population.

Trustee Church stated he was uncomfortable with the suggestion that the District would need to suspend more females just so the numbers were equal.

President Taylor cautioned that was not the intention. The intention was for the District to look at principles and practices to ensure those were not leading to the disproportionate outcomes. It was important to note there were not assumptions when it came to disproportionality, but there was a lot of data showing there were disproportionate outcomes.

Trustee Church wondered if the term "reduce" should be changed to analyze since "reduce" assumed the District was doing something wrong. Dr. LaMarca noted the data showed there was disproportionality already occurring within the District. The intent was to look at unintended consequences an action or program might have on certain populations of students.

Trustee Church rejected the implication any staff member within the District was bias in any way. He believed it was important to back staff if they suspended a student based on behavior, no matter their gender or nationality.

President Taylor remarked the data within the District, as well as nationally, showed that black students were disproportionately suspended more than white students over the same infractions. The data showed there was a concern and the District was looking at ways to address that concern through metrics and measurable outcomes, such as the one proposed under 5.1.2. Dr. LaMarca added discipline was one area, but it was important to understand there were other focus areas to review, such as access to Advanced Placement classes, Special Education identification, English Learner identification, and extracurricular participation.

Trustee Nicolet wondered if the Board and District could look at the proposed language and change it from just "reduce" to "analyze for disproportionality." She felt the change could address Trustee Church's concerns regarding staff, while at the same acknowledging there remained areas of concern. Dr. LaMarca mentioned the metric was basically the opposite of the metric related to achievement gaps. Part of the reason the District saw achievement gaps was because different populations had different access the Advanced Placement classes, Special Education services, or instructional time. It was critical students received as much instructional time as possible so they could succeed, but if students were suspended, they were not in the seats to receive the instruction time. The language was the purview of the Board, but it was important that all students had access to high quality instruction and programming if achievement gaps were to close.

Superintendent McNeill stated the entire conversation was uncomfortable because disproportionality was a topic no one wanted to admit was occurring, but it was an important conversation because it was critical concerns that did need to be addressed were acknowledged and changes implemented. The District had analyzed the data, which was why a metric surrounding disproportionality was presented for consideration. She, along with all members of the District's Leadership Team, wanted to get to a point where there was no longer a need for the metric because disproportionality no longer existed.

It was moved by Trustee Church and seconded by Trustee Nicolet that **the Board of Trustees amends Measurable Outcome 5.1.2 to read, "Analyze and address the disproportionality measures for suspensions, English Learner identification, Special Education identification/programming, AP/IB and Dual Credit coursework participation, and extracurricular participation."**

President Taylor opened the motion for discussion.

Trustee Thigpen wondered if the new language would affect the intention and outcome of the metric. Dr. LaMarca indicated that, for him, address would mean reduce because he would not want to see any increases in disproportionality rates. If the intent of "address" was to ensure actions were taken to decrease disproportionality, then he would not have a problem with the language.

Trustee Caudill stated it was important to ensure the language was clear because when staff reported back on the metric at a meeting, all Trustees would have to have the same understanding of the metric and if the District met the target or not. He believed the interpretation of "address" was too great and each Trustee could have a different opinion of if the metric was met or not; whereas "reduce" was a definitive metric and would require there to be a reduction of some amount.

President Taylor suggested a friendly amendment of "Analyze and, if necessary, reduce the disproportionality measures."

Trustee Church, as the maker of the motion, and Trustee Nicolet, as the seconder, both accepted the friendly amendment.

The amended motion was that **the Board of Trustees amends Measurable Outcome 5.1.2 to read, "Analyze and, if necessary, reduce the disproportionality measures for suspensions, English Learner identification, Special Education identification/programming, AP/IB and Dual Credit coursework participation, and extracurricular participation.** The result of the

vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Andrew Caudill, Jeff Church, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

Jason Trevino, Chief of School Police, reviewed Objective 5.2, Provide and continuously implement a District-wide comprehensive plan for school safety and crisis response including training, facilities improvements, and the engagement of the community, schools, families, and students. There were no changes to the Objective or the Measurable Outcomes from the Bridge Plan; however, there would likely be changes to the state requirements based on legislation being considered, but most of the proposed changes were driven by recommendations from the Washoe County School District School Police Department to clarify current statutory language and requirements.

Dr. LaMarca presented Objective 5.3, Provide a safe learning environment built upon principles of equity, inclusion and access for all students, staff and school community members. The Measurable Outcomes were reviewed and were related to the number of staff members receiving equity and diversity training and the quarterly reporting of the Equity Action Plan implementation to the Board.

Trustee Caudill requested clarification on 5.3.1 and if the equity and diversity training was already required for staff. Dr. LaMarca mentioned the Equity 101 class was required for all new hires to the District but not existing employees. The intent of the metric was to determine how many existing employees in the District were receiving the training annual because the District had not been tracking that information.

Trustee Caudill wondered why there should be a metric if there was a requirement for employees to receive the training. He understood it would take some time before all employees were trained, but he was unclear of the need for the metric. Superintendent McNeill explained the training was required as part of teacher licensure at the state level, but not for all employee groups. The District was interested in providing the training to all employees; however, there were only so many people in the District who could provide the training and the metric would provide a percentage of current employees who received the training annually. If the Board were interested in seeing a larger percentage of current employees trained on an annual basis, staff would be able to use the metric to show how additional resources could yield greater results. For the first year, the District would need to establish a baseline and then present the Board with the proposed annual increase.

Trustee Minetto asked if the training should be mandatory for all employees at some point. Dr. LaMarca indicated there was literature relative to diversity training that said mandating the training was not optimal. District administration believed and wanted all employees to receive the training, but there were drawbacks to mandating participation for those not interested.

Trustee Church expressed concern over the potential cost of providing the training to all employees since that would include bus drivers, custodians, and office staff. Dr. LaMarca mentioned there was a cost to providing the training to every employee, but it was also important to remember employees, such as bus drivers or office staff, were some of the first and last school employees students would see every day.

Trustee Church asked the trainings were provided in Spanish. Dr. LaMarca noted translation services were provided as requested.

Trustee Church wondered if the trainings were open to the public. Dr. LaMarca remarked that opening the trainings were geared towards the learning environment and if the general public were included, changes to the training would need to be made. He felt the District could do a better job at providing information to the public on what was offered during the trainings so they had the ability to hear what the employees were learning.

Trustee Church asked if the individual Trustees had the opportunity to provide input on the training and make changes if they disagreed with anything that was included.

President Taylor noted the Board had provided input and direction on the Action Plan related to the Anti-Racism Resolution on February 9, 2021. Part of that Action Plan included the Equity and Diversity Trainings. She felt if a member of the Board had a concern regarding the trainings and the information provided in them, the first person they should speak with was the Superintendent. It took two Trustees to place an item on a Board agenda, so if two Trustees requested the information, then a presentation would be provided at a public meeting.

Trustee Church continued to express concern over the trainings, especially the amount of time the trainings took. He requested clarification on what he would be voting on because he did not want there to be any misunderstandings within the community on what he was supporting.

It was moved by Trustee Thigpen and seconded by Trustee Nicolet that **the Board of Trustees approves Goal 5 and corresponding Objectives and Measurable Outcomes as amended.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Andrew Caudill, Jeff Church, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

2.02 PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO PROVIDE DIRECTION ON THE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR "THE RESPONSE TO RECOVERY: A 2-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT"

Michele Anderson, Chief Communications and Community Engagement Officer, presented the proposed timeline for the communications and engagement plan of the new 2-year strategic plan, *Response to Recovery*. Input on priorities had been presented earlier in the meeting to the Trustees and staff received feedback on the proposed objectives and measurable outcomes. The next steps would be to publish a draft plan that would be used to gain feedback from community engagement opportunities and then finalize the Plan no later than the June 22, 2021 meeting so it would be in effect for the start of the 2021-22 School Year.

Trustee Thigpen wondered if there was any way to prevent people from outside of Washoe County and the Washoe County School District from influencing the feedback the Board was looking for. He wanted to ensure the Trustees were hearing from members of the community and not people from outside of the area, especially if one of the primary opportunities to provide feedback was through an on-line survey. Dr. Laura Davidson, Director of Research and Evaluation, mentioned most of the surveys sent out by the District were sent to specific email addresses that were already linked to the District in some way. However, if an open link were used for the survey, then there was difficulty in assuring there was no "ballot stuffing." Staff did look for identical responses and if there were a number of responses that were the same and it was clear there was just cutting and pasting, then those responses were removed.

It was moved by Trustee Nicolet and seconded by Trustee Minetto that **the Board of Trustees provides direction on the Communications Plan for "The Response to Recovery: a 2-Year Strategic Plan for the Washoe County School District."** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Andrew Caudill, Jeff Church, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

President Taylor recessed the meeting for 15 minutes.

2.03 DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING THE PROCESS FOR THE ANNUAL CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS INCLUDING BEST PRACTICES IN SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATIONS; TIMELINE; EVALUATION CRITERIA AND FORMAT; AND, THE POSSIBLE USE OF A FACILITATOR FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Emily Ellison, Chief Human Resources Officer, provided an overview of the Superintendent Evaluation process. The intent of the current agenda item was to finalize the framework for the evaluation and the proposed standards to be evaluated on. The decision points the Board would be faced with were determining if an external facilitator should be used for the process, the metrics and inclusion of evidence to be used based on the proposed standards, and any survey data that should be included as

part of the evaluation. The intent was to ensure the evaluation for the Superintendent was consistent with other evaluations used for licensed personnel in the District. The impacts of COVID on the evaluation process and staff recommendations were included as part of the presentation. The proposed timeline for the evaluation was reviewed, understanding the contractual obligation was that the evaluation was to be completed by December 15 of a given year.

President Taylor requested clarification on why the evaluation for the current school year was completed during the subsequent school year. Ms. Ellison explained that not all of the data used as part of the performance evidence was available until October or November.

Ms. Ellison reviewed the decision points the Board would need to act on as part of the evaluation process were the use on an external facilitator, strategic plan metrics, and survey data. Information on why it was considered a best practice to use an external facilitator was provided. She highlighted that, if the Board were to choose to utilize an external facilitator, she would recommend working with Dr. Thomas Alsbury since the evaluation process was closely tied to the board governance work already occurring with Dr. Alsbury.

Dr. Laura Davidson, Director of Research and Development, reminded the Board of the various surveys that had been conducted with students, staff, families, and the community over the past year. The surveys provided valuable information on returning to in-person learning, staff well-being, budget and strategic planning, and school climate. Each survey contained questions that aligned with the leadership standards. None of the surveys previously conducted asked specific questions on superintendent performance so it would be important for the Board to determine if they were interested in seeing an additional survey conducted.

Ms. Ellison presented additional information on the nine leadership standards and the performance evidence, to include survey data, that would be used to show how or if the standards were met. The standards were based on information from various national organizations as best practices and approved by the Board as what they considered important in leading the District. Standard 1 was Strategic District Leadership. Standard 2 was Instructional Leadership. Since Standard 2 included academic measures, the recommendation was to include the measures as part of the evidence, but not to use the measures as a data point due to the continued impacts of the pandemic on instruction and learning.

Trustee Caudill wondered if the Board could consider a measure comparing the District's performance data with other school districts in Nevada. Dr. Davidson remarked that she would not recommend any comparisons at this time because the data was very unreliable. Additionally, since the state was currently conducting student testing, it

would be difficult to develop a measure based on data that already existed since a target was not established before the testing occurred and Superintendent McNeill would not have had the opportunity to take any action on the measurement. In terms of other measurements, the targets had previously been set and the District would be reporting on the data over the next 6 months. The District already knew much of the data would be off target because of the pandemic, which was the reason the recommendation for the new strategic plan was to re-establish baselines and that the academic metrics not be considered as a larger data point as part of the evaluation process, as had previously been considered.

Ms. Ellison continued with a review of the leadership standards: Standard 3 was Systemic Leadership; Standard 4 was Collaborative Leadership; Standard 5 was Professional Ethics; Standard 6 was Organizational Leadership; Standard 7 was Board Communication; Standard 8 was Operational Leadership; and Standard 9 was Fiscal Leadership.

Trustee Caudill felt that under Standard 8 there would be a lot of discussion surrounding COVID and the decision to re-open schools for the 2020-21 School Year. It would be critical to remember that the Board of Trustees made those decisions, not the Superintendent. He expressed concern that any survey data could be skewed because people might not remember that it was the Board that made the decisions. Ms. Ellison noted the recommendations on which survey questions would be used as part of the performance evidence did take into consideration areas that would be specific to the leadership of the Superintendent and not decisions by the Board, such as the implementation of safety measures and protocols or availability and access to information on what was occurring in the schools.

Ms. Ellison presented the three recommendations for the Board to consider at the current meeting: evaluation facilitator, strategic plan metrics, and survey data, which would include direction on possible staff and community surveys.

Trustee Church wondered what the cost of a facilitator would be to the District.

President Taylor remarked that since the Board had not made a decision on using a facilitator, they would not have an estimate as to cost; however, she would be in support of utilizing a facilitator since it was awkward for staff to be responsible for conducting the Superintendent evaluation which could be seen as a conflict. Since she had been a member of the Board, an external facilitator had always been used to assist in conducting the evaluation. Staff had provided a recommendation to use Dr. Thomas Alsbury since the Board had worked with him in the past for governance trainings. Ms. Ellison mentioned the reason Dr. Alsbury was recommended was because he already knew the Board and District.

Trustee Caudill agreed that the use of an external facilitator was appropriate and since the Board already knew Dr. Alsbury, he would be a better fit than someone who did not know the District or Board.

Trustee Minetto asked if staff could provide a ballpark figure. Ms. Ellison noted the District had not used Dr. Alsbury for a Superintendent Evaluation previously so it was difficult to say what his fee would be. Prior evaluations were much more in-depth in terms of the scope of work so the costs should be less than prior years.

It was moved by Trustee Thigpen and seconded by Trustee Caudill that **the Board of Trustees approves, in conjunction with the District and Trustees' current Board Governance work, the use of Dr. Alsbury as an external facilitator, in collaboration with Human Resources and the Office of Accountability, for the Superintendent evaluation process, pending approval of a contract and scope of work by the Board of Trustees.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Andrew Caudill, Jeff Church, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

Trustee Jeff Church left the meeting at 4:03 p.m.

It was moved by Trustee Caudill and seconded by Trustee Nicolet that **the Board of Trustees approves the recommended metrics and approves their inclusion as performance evidence within each Superintendent evaluation standard.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Andrew Caudill, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

It was moved by Trustee Nicolet and seconded by Trustee Minetto that **the Board of Trustees approves the recommended survey data and approves their inclusion as performance evidence within each Superintendent evaluation standard.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Andrew Caudill, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

Ms. Ellison mentioned during the previous evaluation, the Board approved the use of a survey specific to the performance of the Superintendent which was sent to community stakeholders and a random sample of staff. If the Board were interested in conducting a similar survey, staff would need direction on the approximate number of staff they would like to see invited to participate.

Dr. Davidson added last year 11 community stakeholders were invited to participate and the District heard back from 9 of them. The questions on the survey were related to each of the leadership standards. An employee survey was not issued. If the Board were interested in conducting an employee survey, she recommended a smaller,

random sample since employees had been participating in various surveys over the past year.

President Taylor remarked she would be interested in hearing from staff and would like staff at all levels of the organization be provided the opportunity to participate. She did not believe the survey needed to go out to all employees but wanted to see appropriate representation from all employee groups and school levels. She felt it was also important to hear from the community; however, due to the complexity of the standards, it was important to have those community stakeholders with an understanding of the standards participate.

Trustee Caudill expressed concern over selecting certain employees and also certain community groups or stakeholders since it could appear the District was "cherry-picking" who took the survey. He would prefer any employee survey used go out to all staff. He believed there were also concerns with sending the survey out to select community members and stakeholders. He did not want the perception the ability to participate was based on someone's status in the community. It was important people trust the information from the survey.

Superintendent McNeill suggested a percentage of each employee groups could be utilized.

Trustee Nicolet mentioned she could agree to utilizing a percentage of each employee group or classification. She wondered if the Board could request community members who would be interested in participating in such a survey put their names into a pool and then select a random percentage from that group.

President Taylor felt asking for volunteers to participate could taint the results because the sample would not be truly random.

Dr. Davidson suggested families could be surveyed since they had not been surveyed in a couple of years regarding superintendent performance. The challenge would be that families did not generally have a lot of interaction with the superintendent specifically. The community had been part of the prior year's survey so it might not be crucial to include them for the current evaluation.

Trustee Caudill remarked that the Board and District already had a lot of data from the community on other surveys, so he could support not conducting a specific community survey. Most of the survey data was also compiled during specific events and provided a better snapshot of the thoughts of the community. He would prefer to have all staff be at least invited to participate in a survey.

It was moved by Trustee Nicolet and seconded by Trustee Thigpen that **the Board of Trustees directs the Superintendent to work with the Board President and the Office of Accountability to identify a random 1/3 of each employee group to participate in a Superintendent evaluation survey with results to be included as performance evidence within the 2020-21 School Year Superintendent evaluation.** The result of the vote was 3-2: (Yea: Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen. Nay: Andrew Caudill and Ellen Minetto.) Final Resolution: Motion Fails.

It was moved by Trustee Caudill and seconded by Trustee Minetto that **the Board of Trustees directs the Superintendent to work with the Board President and the Office of Accountability to invite all staff to participate in a Superintendent evaluation survey with results to be included as performance evidence within the 2020-21 School Year Superintendent evaluation.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Andrew Caudill, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Angela Taylor, and Kurt Thigpen.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

3. Closing Items

3.01 PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment at this time.

3.02 ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business to come before the members of the Board, President Taylor declared the meeting adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Angela D. Taylor, President

Ellen Minetto, Clerk