

**MINUTES OF THE MAY 25, 2021  
WORK SESSION OF THE  
WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

May 25, 2021

**1. Opening Items**

**1.01 CALL TO ORDER**

The work session of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 12:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the Central Administration Building, located at 425 East Ninth Street; Reno, Nevada.

**1.02 ROLL CALL**

President Angela Taylor and Board Members Jacqueline Calvert, Andrew Caudill, Jeff Church, Ellen Minetto, and Diane Nicolet were present. Board Member Kurt Thigpen was not present at the time of roll call. Superintendent Kristen McNeill and staff were also present.

**1.03 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mark Mathers, Chief Financial Officer, led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1.04 PUBLIC COMMENT**

Richard Davis was a resident of Sparks. He mentioned he and his wife had significant concerns over the proposed social justice curriculum. He stated they found the information divisive, confusing, and was not age appropriate. He expressed concern over social justice in general since he did not believe it was consistent with the justice system that was outlined in the United States Constitution and laws. He believed social justice standards were based on people's opinions and not law.

**1.05 ACTION TO ADOPT THE AGENDA**

It was moved by Trustee Caudill and seconded by Trustee Minetto 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, and Angela Taylor.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

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

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**2.01 APPROVAL FOR THE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND (ESSER II) UNDER THE CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE AND RELIEF SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS (CRRSA) ACT FOR \$34,386,079**

Lauren Ohlin, Director of Grants, provided a presentation on the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II) grant application. Information on the amount of funding received by Nevada and the amount the Washoe County School District would receive was explained. The District would receive about \$34.4 million and all funds had to be expended by September 30, 2023. Allowable expenditures were reviewed and included addressing learning loss, school facilities repairs and improvements, addressing the unique needs of special populations, coordinating efforts to prevent and respond to COVID-19, and other areas related the response and recovery from the pandemic.

President Taylor requested clarification on what indirect costs were allowed under the grant. Ms. Ohlin explained indirect costs were the overhead costs of administering the grant by the District. Activities such as hiring additional personnel and payroll were considered indirect costs. Generally indirect costs were about 3.3% of a grant

Trustee Minetto wondered what would happen to the employees after the grant expired in 2023. Ms. Ohlin noted those hired specific to the grant were hired as limited term employees.

Superintendent McNeill added there were some new positions added to the District related to the grant, such as the project manager, that were recommended by The Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS) because the level funding was so high. It was critical to ensure the funding was appropriately spent and accounted for because there would be a lot of scrutiny around the funds. Additionally, the District was only allowed to include indirect costs on federal grants, not state or private foundation grants.

Trustee Church asked for additional information on the Children in Transition (CIT) liaison. Ms. Ohlin mentioned the liaisons were part of the McKinney-Vento Act and located in six different areas of the community. The liaisons worked to ensure homeless students had access to resources to promote academic achievement and success, such as transportation to school, basic necessities, and payment of fees.

Trustee Church wondered if field trips were included as part of summer learning programming and allowable under the grant. Ms. Ohlin explained field trips were included as part of summer school funding.

Trustee Caudill expressed concern over the proposed funding for the building learning facilitators and trainers because he was hearing from the teachers that they needed

more teachers, not people in the buildings to train teachers. Ms. Ohlin indicated the amount did not translate into a larger number of full-time employees. Most of the funding included in maintaining operations would be added to the District's Allocation Bank, which would allow schools to roll up site allocations as needed. Superintendent McNeill added the building learning facilitators would transition from specifically working under Read by Grade 3 and be able to assist in other subject areas and more grade levels. The intent was to allow schools to retain positions if their enrollment decreased.

Trustee Caudill asked if a principal would be able to flex the position so they could keep an assistant principal instead. Superintendent McNeill commented that the positions for the Allocation Bank were specific to certified teachers, but there were other considerations in terms of enrollment and administrative positions.

*Trustee Kurt Thigpen was present at the meeting through video conference at 12:29 p.m.*

It was moved by Trustee Nicolet and seconded by Trustee Caudill that **the Board of Trustees approves the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II) under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) Act for \$34,386,079.** 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.

## **2.02 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION ON THE RESULTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND BUDGET SURVEY FOR THE 2021-22 SCHOOL YEAR**

Dr. Laura Davidson, Director of Research and Evaluation, and Jennifer Harris, Program Evaluator, presentation on the survey results related to the development of a strategic plan and budget for the 2021-22 School Year. The intent of the survey was to determine priorities for both the development of a new strategic plan and budget planning. Responses by students were highlighted to show where they believed the Board and District needed to direct resources over the next few years.

Trustee Church asked if there was information in the survey that would indicate if people were happy or unhappy with the District or if they wanted more funding directed towards education in Nevada. Ms. Harris stated those questions were not asked as part of the survey.

Trustee Calvert remarked that she would get asked by members of the community why it was important to provide social and emotional learning in the schools and why the schools focused on providing various community supports not related to education. Dr. Davidson noted the research surrounding social and emotional learning showed there

was a strong correlation between a student's social and emotional learning and academic achievement. Superintendent McNeill added many families depended on the resources schools were able to provide, such as free lunches and technology assistance. The District was not always able to provide direct assistance, such as rental assistance, but the District was able to connect families with community resources that could provide that assistance.

President Taylor stated if a student did not have a place to live, was hungry, or had other concerns outside of school, it would impact their attendance, concentration ability, and ability to learn. If the supports were not provided to the students and their families, then the students would not reach the academic outcomes the Board, District, and community wanted to see.

**2.03 PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FISCAL YEAR 2021-22 TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR ALL DISTRICT FUNDS; UPDATE ON BUDGET UNCERTAINTIES; CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE DIRECTION TO THE SUPERINTENDENT AND STAFF; AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPROVE THE FISCAL YEAR 2021-22 FINAL BUDGET**

Mark Mathers, Chief Financial Officer, began the presentation on the development of the Fiscal Year 2021-22 budget. As part of the budget process, Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) required a public hearing be held by local governments on the tentative budget previously submitted to the Nevada Department of Taxation. It was important to remember the 2021 Nevada Legislature was still in session and the District would need to file an amended final budget within 30 days of adjournment of the Legislature. The budget was developed based on full implementation of the new Pupil Centered Funding Plan (PCFP). Even through various challenges, the District was able to present a structurally balanced budget for the Board's approval.

Jeff Bozzo, Budget Director, reviewed revenues and expenses to the District's General Fund and all other funds managed by the District. The current final budget was based on fiscal information previously provided by the Legislature and did not include additional resources added over the past week. Based on full implementation of the PCFP, the District saw a reduction in revenue from the state of \$5.7 million, but the District was able to recoup some revenue through different cost savings adjustments to present a structurally balanced budget for approval and maintain a healthy Fund Balance of 8.7% for emergencies.

Trustee Caudill requested clarification the \$7.6 million in local revenue that remained after full implementation of the PCFP. Mr. Bozzo explained the revenue was from indirect cost savings, investment earnings, reimbursements for activities such as field trips, and rental income.

President Taylor asked if the Fund Balance was where the District wanted it to be or if it should be greater than 8.7%. Mr. Bozzo noted Board Policy had the Fund Balance set between 8 to 10%.

Trustee Church wondered if the District was continuing to see enrollment drop. Mr. Bozzo mentioned the decrease since the beginning of the school year was similar to what the District would generally see on an annual basis; however, there was a change in the grade levels where the decreases were occurring from the elementary school level to the secondary school level.

Trustee Caudill asked if the state had ever defined "at-risk students" and what the weighted funding for at-risk students would be moving forward. Mr. Mathers commented that originally "at-risk" equated to students receiving Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL). The Commission on School Funding recommended a different measure based on various factors collected in Infinite Campus. Currently, the Legislature had directed "at-risk" be based on FRL but that the Commission on School Funding should relook at the definition. The concern using FRL was that the federal guidelines did not allow for identification of a student under FRL and the PCFP formula required the funding to follow the student.

President Taylor opened the public hearing on the tentative budget and called for public comment.

There was no public comment at this time.

President Taylor closed the public hearing on the tentative budget.

It was moved by Trustee Caudill and seconded by Trustee Minetto that **the Board of Trustees approves the Final Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22 for the Washoe County School District.** 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.

### **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 1:24 p.m.

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**Angela D. Taylor, President**

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**Ellen Minetto, Clerk**