

**MINUTES OF THE JUNE 20, 2023
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

June 20, 2023

1. Opening Items

1.01 CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 9:04 a.m. in the Board Room of the Central Administration Building, located at 425 East Ninth Street in Reno, Nevada.

1.02 ROLL CALL

President Beth Smith and Board Members Jeff Church, Diane Nicolet, Joe Rodriguez, and Colleen Westlake were present. Board Members Adam Mayberry and Alex Woodley were not present at the time of roll call. Superintendent Susan Enfield and staff were also present.

1.03 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Thomas Alsbury led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

2.01 PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND REVIEW OF THE WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF TRUSTEES BALANCED GOVERNANCE SELF-ASSESSMENT, FACILITATED BY DR. THOMAS ALSBURY, INCLUDING A REVIEW OF AREAS OF GROWTH, OPPORTUNITY, AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TRUSTEES

Dr. Thomas Alsbury, Balanced Governance Solutions, reviewed the comprehensive self-evaluation of the Board of Trustees. The three frameworks the Trustees were evaluated themselves on were Governance Standards and Indicators, Individual Trustee Practices, and Board Meeting Practices. The strengths, developing areas, and recommendations for each of the frameworks were provided. Background information on the evaluation process and the qualities of high performing boards was explained to show where the Washoe County School District Board of Trustees stood in comparison to high performing boards.

Trustee Woodley arrived at the meeting at 9:16 a.m.

Dr. Alsbury continued with the presentation on the executive summary of the Board of Trustees' self-evaluation. In terms of Board meeting practices, some strengths included the average meeting time and number of topics per meeting. Areas of improvement were the amount of time spent on agenda items related to direct student learning and use of shared voice so no one Trustee dominated discussions during meetings. The Trustees were reminded many of the recommendations for their own improvement were based on standards already included in the Board's governance policies.

The Trustees discussed the importance of bonding and bridging language, as well as the impacts of anti-bonding and anti-bridging language. Highly effective boards focused on bonding comments and not polarizing remarks. Dr. Alsbury explained how small, seemingly innocuous statements, such as "I agree with," could become dangerous and limit diverse viewpoints because others could pile on to such comments. Bridging comments were intended to bring in everyone in the community and not focus on specific groups or individuals because that could also be polarizing. It was important to focus on common interests.

Dr. Alsbury moved to the strengths, developing areas, and recommendations for the Board related to Balanced Governance Standards. Since this was a self-evaluation, the strengths, developing areas, and improvement areas were based on what the Board felt they needed to improve on, which included accountability and use of data for continuous improvement related to the progress monitoring of strategic goals focused on student learning. A discussion occurred on the approval of the new strategic plan and how the reporting of the goals would occur during the 2023-24 School Year, such as providing a mid-year check on the metrics under the strategic plan goals and aligning the school presentations to strategic plan goals so the Board could see how the work of the schools was tied to the strategic plan.

The Trustees requested information on how highly effective boards dealt with the pulling of items off of consent agendas and if Trustees should create their own standards as to which items they would pull no matter what. Dr. Alsbury indicated the topic was related to Balanced Governance Standard 3.08, Trustee Dialogue and Collaboration. Recommendations included the Trustees speaking for the whole in terms of constituents and not specific individuals or groups, providing questions to Superintendent prior to the meetings to make the meeting more efficient, and "picking battles" in terms of pulling items related to ideological differences and not because of disagreement or dislike of certain legal requirements or established processes/procedures. It was ineffective for Trustees to set a standard for which items they would pull on a regular basis because that became polarizing and was not focused on building or improving. It was critical for Trustees to be strategic in what and how they pulled agenda items from a consent agenda to ensure their constituents were heard.

Dr. Alsbury moved the discussion to review the recommendation related to cultural responsiveness and potential changes to how the District would evaluate programs and policies. The strengths, developing areas, and improvement recommendations related to Individual Trustee Practices were presented. He focused on role orientation and advocacy focus, which were the areas the Trustees believed additional development was needed. He concluded the presentation with information on areas where there was a large difference in how the individual Trustees ranked themselves so the Board could have a larger discussion in the future on those specific areas.

Trustee Mayberry arrived at the meeting at 10:25 a.m.

The Trustees talked about ways to improve working together and how they individually could create a shared understanding of what they needed to work on and how they communicated with each other.

President Smith recessed the meeting for 15 minutes.

2.02 PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO DETERMINE THE GOALS, BASED ON THE APPROVED STRATEGIC PLAN METRICS, FOR DR. SUSAN ENFIELD FOR THE 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR PERFORMANCE EVALUATION, AS PART OF THE CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS

Dr. Thomas Alsbury, Balanced Governance Solutions, explained the agenda item would focus on approval of the performance indicators for the 2023-24 Superintendent Evaluation. The indicators would be based on the four pillars and beam within the new strategic plan. He recommended approval of no more than eight formative and summative indicators for an effective evaluation. Information on the importance of a superintendent focusing on how to achieve the outcomes included in a strategic plan was presented, with clarification on why a new superintendent should focus on the culture of the organization and not necessarily results. The list of proposed indicators was developed in collaboration with Superintendent Enfield. He urged the Board to discuss the indicators important to them to work towards a consensus on the final indicators to be used for the evaluation.

Trustee Westlake expressed an interest in indicator B-3, Expanded opportunities for parents, guardians, and family members to be involved with their child's school. She had seen reduced absenteeism and healthier learning environments when school staff reached out to parents and families.

Trustee Nicolet mentioned indicator A-1, 100% of students learn with high-quality, developmentally appropriate and standards-aligned curriculum, was a heavy lift, but critical for students' future learning.

Trustee Woodley concurred with indicator A-1. He noted that after reviewing all proposed indicators, A-1 was the one he continued to come back to as showing a dedication to standards.

Trustee Church stated he agreed with all indicators under Pillar A because those represented quality of education. He was interested in seeing additional indicators surrounding connections to the business community. He expressed his support for both indicators under the Beam of Safety and Connection and emphasized the focus should be on internal threats as well as external threats.

Trustee Rodriguez remarked that indicator A-1 was important, but he did not believe A-1 could occur without A-2, All teachers have access to professional learning and collaboration time, and A-3, Expanded time and supports for educators to leverage a common district growth measure for grades K-8 to demonstrate how much progress every student makes over the course of a school year. He also agreed it was important to have safety as an indicator and wondered if the Board could amend the proposed indicators, to include the addition of visitors.

President Smith stated the indicators under the Beam could be combined to reflect both students and staff having access to supports for their social, emotional, and physical well-being.

Superintendent Enfield cautioned including visitors within the Beam indicators since those indicators were specific to providing supports, which could not be provided the same way to visitors and volunteers. She believed visitor safety was related to B-1, Parents, families and community members feel welcomed in our schools as key partners in education.

Trustee Westlake spoke of including C-3, Staff receive ongoing support and resources to strengthen hiring, recruitment, and retention. She commented that the District was only as strong as their foundation and the recruitment and retention of educators was crucial to that foundation.

Trustee Nicolet requested clarification on indicator C-3 and how that would look for the different employee groups. Superintendent Enfield provided information on the assessment conducted on the Human Resources Department and how the recommendations for improvement would be operationalized. She added that the reason Pillar C, Commitment to Elevating Educators, was worded as such was because

those working on the development of the strategic plan believed all employees in the District were educators.

Trustee Nicolet spoke to the importance on indicator C-1, 100% of teachers, leaders and staff receive timely focused support aligned to their individual growth areas to meet the specific needs of our diverse students, because it encompassed all District employees.

Trustee Woodley advocated for the inclusion of indicator D-1, School and district teams have access to effective and relevant tools and technology to support teaching, learning and leadership. He felt the indicator was important because it addressed the needs of staff, as well as the needs of students.

Trustees Mayberry and Rodriguez spoke in support of the indicator D-3, Parents and families receive ongoing support and resources to help them monitor their child's academic, social emotional and developmental milestones and needs. They appreciated the inclusion of parents and families since many were unaware of how to get involved and track their children's educational progress.

Superintendent Enfield suggested merging indicators D-2, School and district leaders use data and evidence to inform their strategic decision-making, and D-3 because they both pointed directly to indicator A-3. She provided examples of how the District could provide a 1-page, family-focused school improvement plan to show parents and families how the schools used data and evidence, while communicating student progress as an on-going basis. Since the iReady assessment data would only focus on grades K-8, a common growth measure would need to be determined for grades 9-12 so a parent would not be told in May that their child was behind.

Dr. Alsbury reviewed the nine indicators there appeared to be consensus on. The Trustees continued the discussion on whether additional indicators could or should be combined to reach eight indicators. Additional information on why high school was not included as part of indicator A-3 was presented. A conversation on the inclusion or exclusion of indicator A-2 occurred.

President Smith opened the meeting to public comment.

Pablo Nava Duran spoke of the importance of accountability and discipline in schools. He provided examples of different ways parents could be more involved in their children's schools, such as attending parent-teacher nights. He indicated it was important for the individual schools to work on the retention of teachers because he knew of teachers who would leave because of the culture of a school.

Trustee Rodriguez mentioned he would be willing to pull back from including indicator A-2 but requested indicated A-3 be expanded to include grades PreK-12. Superintendent Enfield reiterated the District did not have an appropriate growth measure for high school grades, like they had for grades K-8, at the present time. She offered alternative language that could be included as part of the indicator to move towards the inclusion of a progress measure for grades 9-12. In terms of PreK, the measure was less about growth and more about kindergarten readiness, which was tied to Goal 1, Strong Start for Every Child, of the strategic plan.

President Smith cautioned that while all indicators were important, the Board should not push Superintendent Enfield too much because then the focus would be diluted. Additional opportunities for indicator review or revision would occur in February 2024 when the goals for the 2024-25 School Year were set.

Trustee Mayberry agreed that the goals decided by the Board should be challenging but realistic and attainable.

It was moved by Trustee Woodley and seconded by Trustee Rodriguez that **the Board of Trustees approves the indicators for the 2023-24 School Year Superintendent Evaluation as the following as related to the new strategic plan: Pillar A-1; Pillar A-3, adjusted to include "and explore measures to show grades 9-12 progress;" Pillar B-3; Pillar C-1; Pillar C-3; Pillar D-1; Pillar D-2&3 combined to read "School and district leaders use data and evidence to inform their strategic decision-making and communicate student progress and students and families on an on-going basis;" and Beam 1 and 2 combined.** The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jeff Church, Adam Mayberry, Diane Nicolet, Joe Rodriguez, Beth Smith, Colleen Westlake, and Alex Woodley.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

President Smith recessed the meeting for 25 minutes. Trustee Woodley was not present when the meeting reconvened.

2.03 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION TO PROVIDE TRAINING ON THE SUPERINTENDENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION PROCESS FOR DR. SUSAN ENFIELD FOR THE 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR, SCHEDULED TO OCCUR IN OCTOBER 2023

Dr. Thomas Alsbury, Balanced Governance Solutions, reviewed the previously approved process for the 2022-23 Superintendent Evaluation. The Trustees were reminded that they approved the process and performance indicators in October 2022. The timeline for the evaluation was presented, based on the understanding the public evaluation would occur in October 2023. He walked the Trustees through the steps of the evaluation process.

Trustee Nicolet remarked that prior superintendent evaluations consisted of thousands of pages of evidence to review. She was concerned the Trustees would not have enough time to conduct their portion of the evaluation if they were only provided with a couple of weeks to review. Superintendent Enfield stated she would only identify the most pertinent information towards achieving the goals to provide as evidence. She did not believe it was necessary to present numerous pieces of evidence to show a goal was accomplished when only a couple of documents would be enough.

3. Closing Items

3.01 PUBLIC COMMENT

Jeff Church noted the proposed Sexuality, Health and Responsibility Education (SHARE) curriculum for the 4th and 5th grades was scheduled to come before the Board for consideration in the next month. He mentioned that he was concerned the District was not compliant with the board policy and administrative regulation associated with SHARE, but that he would deal with those concerned through the appropriate in-house channels; however, he requested if the item did need to be pulled from the July agenda, that it occur soon so the community would be aware of the change.

3.02 ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business to come before the members of the Board, President Smith declared the meeting adjourned at 12:47 p.m.

Elizabeth Smith, President

Joseph Rodriguez, Clerk