

Douglas County School District
Regular Meeting
Kingsbury Middle School
Stateline, Nevada
Tuesday, November 8, 2005
3:30 p.m.

Minutes Approved
December 13, 2005

MINUTES

Present were:

Trustees:

Sharla Hales, President
Connie Wennhold, Vice President
Teri Jamin, Clerk
John Louritt, Member
Cynthia Trigg, Member

Personnel:

John Soderman, Superintendent
Rick Kester, Director of Business Services
Rich Alexander, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Nancy Bryant, Assistant Superintendent, Education Services

Others Present:

Bob Cox, Legal Counsel

It is noted that this meeting was not recorded due to the unavailability of recording equipment.

1. Call to Order

Mrs. Hales called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

- A. Mr. Kester led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- B. Mr. Louritt made a motion to adopt the agenda, seconded by Ms. Trigg.

Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6/0.

Mrs. Hales announced that Board Member Ron Beck had resigned.

2. Board Training

Mrs. Trigg led a Board training titled "Why We Need to Change Our High Schools." She began by stating the definition of "change" as being a positive, not negative word and that it was not to be feared. Mrs. Trigg made known that many websites are available where educators and business people talk about changes that can be instituted in high schools. She referenced a

website that had PowerPoint presentations available to download and articles that had been published in the *American School Board Journal* which spoke of dramatic changes in America's high schools. Her research cited efforts to improve 11th and 12th grade curriculum to be more rigorous, applying math and science to classes such as music, wood shop, and vocational classes, focusing on reading/language arts as core curriculum, and incorporating small school communities within large schools as potential directions for planning ahead.

3. Consent Items (Action)

Mrs. Wennhold made a motion to approve the following consent items, seconded by Mr. Louritt:

- A. Approve the Minutes of the Regular Board meeting held on October 11, 2005.
- B. Approve personnel actions described in Personnel Report No. 05-11.
- C. Approve payments contained in Voucher No. 1065 for 2005-2006.
- D. Excuse from compulsory attendance the students described in the Home School Report for November 2005.
- E. Approve the final corrective action implemented by the Director of Special Services for the AB 280 incident.
- F. Approve Board Policies 332 and 425, "Early Retirement Incentive Plan."
- G. Accept the proposal of Solari and Sturmer, LLC/Freeman Williams, LLP for the District's Independent financial audit for the 2005-2006, 2006-07 and 2007-08 financial audits.

Mrs. Hales asked for any discussion or public comment on the Consent agenda.

Motion carried by a unanimous vote.

4. Administrative Reports and Program Reviews

4-A. Principal's Report (Kingsbury Middle School)

Mrs. Hales welcomed Dan Wold, Kingsbury Middle School principal. Mr. Wold reported that student scores overall are high. Eighth grade writing scores are currently their lowest, but are still, are 20% above benchmarks. He shared a baseball story and related it to the efforts underway, noting that although they are currently excited about their scores, they are not quitting efforts to strive for continuing improvement. He reported that math computation by comparison was a low area and that KMS is shooting to go from 66% to 69%. In reading their goal is to go from 63% to 66% proficient with the State proficiency rate being 43%. KMS is continuing the Drop and Read program in all classrooms, 20 minutes a day. One goal is to implement a non-fiction reading program outside of regular language arts classes. Mr. Wold noted concern that every teacher is not trained as a reading teacher. He will work towards reading training through PDC for parents and staff.

In regards to math scores, Mr. Wold stated teachers are spending the first part of class drilling

computation skills for daily practice and that the top students in the class are competing against the principal. They are continuing the Math Adventures program, where students below grade level are assigned an elective to provide additional math support.

Board members expressed appreciation for the reading strategies being implemented for teachers and volunteers.

Mr. Wold introduced counselor, Carly Strauss, and special education teacher, Kimberly Anderson, who presented a synopsis of an Asset Building presentation they had given in Dallas, Texas the week prior. Their presentation reviewed the fact that KMS is a high achieving school, discussed how office referrals decreased from 281 to 36, how they trained staff to start, and had an end result of teachers believing in the philosophy of building assets for students.

Ms. Strauss noted the heart of their presentation was bright ideas brought forth through assets integrated into curriculum and that a student survey determined students believed the concept, also. They reviewed statistics from the recent student survey which indicated 100% validation of a positive climate through Asset Building.

They also noted that Asset Building was promoted through a bulletin board produced by students, for students. Various reward systems were currently in place, and an asset web page where students can discuss assets they desire or would like to see in others is available.

Board members congratulated KMS for their positive influence on both the students and parents, noting such events as Math Literacy Night and Career Day.

5. Information and Discussion

5-A. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Soderman began by announcing that Janie Gray had resigned as principal from George Whittell High School to pursue family interests and grandchildren. Her resignation is effective June 30, 2006. He then reported to the Board regarding activities of the past month and upcoming District events that might be of interest to them. He mentioned the NASB conference that Board Members recently attended, Communication meetings forthcoming, the Family Involvement Team meeting hosted by Mrs. Bryant, and the monthly Employee Group meeting. Mr. Soderman continued by stating the District Improvement Plan Meeting had been held resulting in two main goals: reading and math. Next, he reported that Dr. Florey discussed student achievement with the Washoe Tribe at the Native American Student Achievement Meeting resulting in a good exchange of information. He reported on Teach for Success activities and encouraged Board members to participate. Mr. Soderman then stated that his evaluation is done twice a year and noted the time of the upcoming meeting. Next, he reviewed the superintendent search forum dates and times. He wrapped up with an explanation of the SB404 Innovation Grant the District is applying for stating that emphasis will be on obtaining money for providing achievement level testing via computers that would provide a variety of reports and results in the period of a day for teachers and students.

Mr. Roman inquired as to the availability of superintendent applications for Board members to review. Mr. Soderman confirmed that the Board would be able to review the applications and that they would be informed of the logistics following the December 1st application cut off.

5-B. NASB Directors Report

Mrs. Hales discussed National Association of School Board's need for hiring. She stated that Norm Scoggins is the new president and that he had a goal of visiting every district in the state. She noted the concerns of adequacy regarding DSA had been brought forth and how the pie is split. Mrs. Hales reported that clearly there are equity problems and that some years ago Mr. Kester aided in fixing the problem, but that it needed to be readdressed. Her concerns were that a huge credit would be given for English language learners, putting DCSD on the short end, and that this might encourage a district against district atmosphere. Mrs. Hales continued by stating that the legislature is required to fund the effort and that a group is meeting to hire consultants. The concern of the association is that they will get side tracked on equity. She commented that she agreed that applying for grant money to obtain instant ALT results was a good idea.

Mrs. Hales noted that the association would be looking closely at DSA and ACR10.

Mr. Roman made a suggestion that NASB might consider hiring a high-powered lobbyist in order that districts don't get short changed next biennium.

Mrs. Hales replied that the plan now is to hire a full time Executive Director and to keep Randy Robinson as a lobbyist.

Mrs. Hales, Mr. Soderman, Mrs. Wennhold, Mr. Louritt and Mrs. Moore presented information they had gained from the recent NASB conference.

The Lighthouse Initiative studied the question of "What do powerful School Boards do?" Mr. Soderman replied that they determine the difference between moving and stuck schools and that districts fall in two categories, those being beliefs and conditions.

Mr. Soderman handed out a test to determine expectations and after administering it, announced that there was no perfect answer. He noted that the results are, what Lighthouse School Boards talk about is what they do and what they believe is what they do. He discussed beliefs of elevating the district to move forward with a clear expectation for student achievement.

Mrs. Wennhold discussed a presentation she attended at NASB regarding virtual high schools with interactive courses, using DVD's and videos. She noted that this had helped resolve scheduling conflicts, offered opportunities for kids with problems to strengthen skills by expanding their school day, and assisted students who had special circumstances such as young mothers, or injured students by allowing course access at night. Mrs. Wennhold reported that students and teachers could interact in the virtual classroom. She also mentioned that programs are in place to help students obtain equipment through grant funding.

Mr. Louritt reported on a session given by a television station news editor, noting comments of how the media determines a story by responses to questions. He spoke of how questions should be answered with expertise and that it was alright to say you don't know, if you don't. It's best not to give long answers, but that one would also want to refrain from giving a "no comment" type answer as it could be interpreted negatively.

Mr. Louritt also stated the Commission on Ethics presented on receiving gifts and services for favors or influence for a particular group or individual cause. Personal gain also was addressed and he noted conflicts of interest and avoidance of these situations for Board members.

Mr. Louritt reported that in a packet of reading material they had received information from American Schools on an inkjet recycling program wherein 55% of funds are put back into schools and the rest deposited into a statewide school fund.

Mrs. Hales mentioned her attendance at the Education Trust Conference and information brought forth from NASB. The bottom line message she informed the Board was college readiness and work-bound readiness and that America is facing a college readiness crisis.

Mrs. Hales presented a PowerPoint presentation that was created for Washoe County School District on the Gateway High School Program. She noted this program is a series of high school classes that prepare students for college that students must take unless their parents get them out. She also reported that the Lighthouse program was discussed including the importance of strong teachers, strong administration, and strong district leadership. Mrs. Hales noted that no prior research was available as to what Board's do to contribute to District's with high success rates.

Mrs. Hales called for a break at 5:30 p.m.

5-C. Special Education Status Report

Jan Keith, Special Services Director, led a PowerPoint presentation on current statistics relating to Special Education students. She began by reviewing State reports gathered from four districts, placements, and how that correlates to achievement. These addressed math and reading. She stated that 1% of our special education population is significantly disabled. She related information to an ID rate dipped below the state average for 04-05. She stated that in the No Child Left Behind environment the exposure to the standard based education environment is invaluable.

The next area addressed by Mrs. Keith was reauthorization. This relates to transitioning out of school and she said there is a big push to see where students end up when they leave school. By age 14, current IEP's have to state what will happen for students, post high school. This was previously not addressed in IDEA, but is in the reauthorization.

Mrs. Keith stated that she conducted a broad-based special education audit in the 04-05 school year. One outcome from the audit is that the majority of adjusted diplomas are now determined as late in the student's career as possible. This allows the District to know students are educated to the maximum extent. She is currently addressing how this transition piece will work and how reports will look.

Next, Mrs. Keith reported on the area of Eligibility. In previous years, eligibility was determined by a cognitive and academic test. With the reauthorization, learning disabled students can potentially be identified through a data-driven evaluation of student responses to scientific research-based interventions or instruction (RTI). This equates to data being gathered in the classroom showing remediation as attempted. She informed the Board that three schools in the district are currently piloting this process. Findings and reports are that instruction in a general education environment had a positive influence for all students. Studies found a definite correlation to students staying in a regular education environment with support and higher academic achievement.

Mrs. Keith wrapped up with a review of changes in procedural safeguards, or the law, with regards

to expulsion Behavior Intervention Plans, Individual Education Plan's and Manifestation hearings.

Public Comment

At 6:30 p.m., Mrs. Hales noted that there were a number of persons signed up for Public Comment and that any concerning the next agenda item of Supervised P.E. would be taken after that presentation.

Chris Craig, a senior varsity basketball player at GWHS, expressed concerns about the basketball schedule and the bus trips that are extensive to get to the games. His view was that he was missing both instructional and homework time. Mrs. Hales noted his questions and comments and let him know that someone in administration would contact him.

6. Items Requiring Discussion and Action (Action)

6-A Supervised Curriculum P.E. (SCPE)

Mrs. Bryant and Ms. Fontana presented the updates to the Board Policy 518 and Administrative Regulation 518(g). They used an overhead designed to produce a useful profile of changes that were being addressed for the Board to refer to.

Mrs. Bryant noted that the issues for discussion were determined in the previous Board Meeting and in a meeting with administrators. She stated the goal was to receive direction for a final reading at the December Board meeting and then reviewed the areas of particular concern.

Mrs. Bryant stated that she had reviewed policies currently existing for both Washoe and Incline School Districts.

Mrs. Bryant and Board members examined the following points:

- ❖ Master schedules/classes to be balanced – student commitment to be by March 15th
- ❖ Policy to begin in 9th Grade – when credit counts
- ❖ Will apply to first and sixth period; class conflicts are apparent at GWHS.
- ❖ Attendance issues relating to excused and not excused absences for time students are out beyond the 6th period and whether or not NIAA rules should apply.
- ❖ Policy was been changed to reflect 60 hours per semesters as previously directed by the Board, noting that 60 hours is required for credit, but 90 hours equates to total class time.
- ❖ Reporting changed from pass/fail to credit in order to be figured into the GPA
- ❖ Syllabus' submitted would be approved by the State superintendent and once approved for an instructor that approval would carry forward.
- ❖ The number of class hours is written as an average of five class hours per week
- ❖ Student participation approval process by administration

- ❖ Which sports are to be included

Mr. Louritt inquired as to the number of students involved.

Mrs. Bryant stated in regards to attendance, competitions would be excused as they are in the NIAA rules.

Mrs. Bryant noted that absences, grades, and credits, would be reviewed with the Board in February of the next school year in an effort to improve the policy if necessary. She said the only change to Policy 504 for review is that SCPE would be considered for credit instead of pass/fail.

Mrs. Hales called for Public Comment on Supervised Curriculum P.E.

Public Comment – SCPE

Mrs. Hales stated that comments were to be kept to three minutes per person and if one was re-emphasizing a point to please do so in one sentence.

Raquel Norton introduced herself as a parent and stated she was involved with the Ski Association. She noted that that her children were A students and that attendance would not affect their grades.

Lee Rix, Jeff Hendricks and Heather Foster, P.E. teachers, approached the Board. They expressed concerns of clarification of which sports would be included. They stated that P.E. should remain as is, citing that class includes teamwork and cooperation as mandated by State standards. Mr. Rix commented the message being sent is of the current P.E. program not being good enough. He preferred to have the policy set for higher level students. Mr. Hendricks commented that the change would set the stage for social segregation of Special Education and Adaptive P.E. students.

Michele Stone brought forth concerns that the Policy would give a bad image to the regular P.E. class. She was concerned this could allow a student to never attend a P.E. class and still receive two credits. She also expressed concerns of who monitors the curriculum and the impact on classes if a high percentage of students participated.

Noel Duffy introduced himself as Director of the Heavenly Ski Foundation and an Australian high school teacher. He stated that the ski program correlates with the school, provides scholarships for those in need, offers dryland, weight training, and noted that in order for students to participate, they would need early release to ski in the daylight. He expressed his belief that the program may help keep students enrolled in the DCSD and keep them from leaving for private schools.

Mr. and Mrs. Crowe stated they would like the program to start at 7th grade and begin with the next semester. They noted the gymnastic programs in Reno require time out of school for participation and that the program does promote a healthy lifestyle and encourages students to believe in themselves. The Crowe's expressed they are most interested in the excused attendance or extra hour being available versus the credit opportunity.

Mrs. Pedrett and Mr. Wold, introduced themselves as principals in the District. They discussed the middle school level and stated the Policy should include a variety of sports, branching out to skate boarders and motocross for credit. Mrs. Pedrett noted that quality teachers and/or coaches could be riffed due to the lowering of numbers of students in classes. She mentioned the option of including such a P.E. program in a PEP plan as an alternative, wherein the teacher of record signs

off for participation.

Mrs. Hales stated that Mrs. Bryant would address the PEP Plan following Mr. Wold's comments.

Mr. Wold cited school climate as a concern. He stated that SCPE was about giving credit to students doing exercise outside of school, but that he believed it did not fit the middle school philosophy, or the transition phase the age group experiences. He concluded that P.E. is part of the building climate and expressed concerns of change in that area.

Mrs. Hales welcomed back Mrs. Bryant and Ms. Fontana. Mrs. Bryant addressed the PEP Plan and invited counsel to enter in to the discussion. She informed the Board the inclusion of sports in a Personal Education Plan had happened in the past, but that laws today do not allow for that. The direction from the State Superintendent was to put in place policies and regulations.

Mr. Soderman and Mr. Cox echoed that the PEP Plan is not the vehicle and reiterated that the Board would need to establish guidelines and parameters.

Ms. Jamin inquired as to independent study as an avenue for SCPE.

Mrs. Bryant and Mr. Cox assured the Board that this was a whole different program and that it doesn't fit this model, one reason being the proposed policy deals with credit.

At 8:10 Mrs. Hales commented that she would work for consensus on the Board.

Board members were impressed with the depth of analysis and discussed the key points. It was decided that 7th and 8th grades would not be included; rules of attendance according to NIAA would be followed (a qualifier for attendance to be developed for extensive absences); credits earned to be 1.5, or three semesters; GPA from previous semester to be used as a qualifier for students and Administrative Regulations would determine sports to be included, not the Board Policy.

Mrs. Trigg made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Wennhold for approval of the second reading, with suggested modifications by the Board, Board Policy 518 and Administrative Regulation 518(g) "Supervised Curriculum in Physical Education."

Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6/0.

7. Correspondence

Mrs. Hales mentioned that a letter was sent to thank George Wennhold for his significant, professional participation in an expulsion hearing recently. Next, she reported receiving a second e-mail from Ray Bacon stating that Mary Pierczynski had asked him to serve on a committee regarding a joint CTE high school.

Mrs. Hales received information from Lisa Voss and is looking into a shortage for a field trip of \$35.00.

Correspondence had been received from Ann Loring in reference to consulting work. Mrs. Hales has spoken with her about a possible Board retreat and having a presenter speak to how this Board could be a Board that makes a difference. Mrs. Hales made the point that

additionally, with a new superintendent being hired, the training could bring excitement, momentum, and positive influence to the meeting.

Mr. Cox commented that Board members could e-mail Mrs. Hales in order to express interest in a Board retreat and that it would not violate the Open Meeting Law.

Mrs. Hales concluded that a half-day of discussion and presentations on becoming an effective Board and a half-day addressing the topic of making high school the best we can, would be desirable for a retreat day.

The Board agreed unanimously. The Board retreat will be placed on a meeting agenda.

8. Possible Agenda Items for Future Board Meetings

After the Board agreed, Mrs. Hales stated that the retreat will be placed on a meeting agenda. Next, it was decided that the replacement of Board member Ron Beck, would be addressed at the January 10, 2006 meeting, and if five applications were received, a Special Meeting would be calendared.

9. Executive Session

There was no executive session.

10. Adjournment

At 9:10 p.m., Mrs. Wennhold made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Trigg.

Motion carried by a unanimous vote of 6/0.

Submitted by:

Carolyn Moore
Secretary to the Superintendent and Board of
Trustees

Approved:

Clerk of the Board

Note: Upon approval by the Board of Trustees in a public meeting, these minutes become the official minutes of the meeting held on the above date. Board minutes are kept on a permanent basis and are available for public review in the office of the Superintendent.