

Board Study Session (Tuesday, August 27, 2013)

Generated by Shelley R Shelton on Tuesday, August 27, 2013

Members present

Michelle Kaufusi, Julie Rash, Vance Checketts, Marsha Judkins, Jim Pettersson, Shannon Poulsen
Member Steven Staples excused

Staff members present

Superintendent Keith Rittel; Assistant Superintendent Ray Morgan; Business Administrator Kerry Smith; Exec. Director of Human Resources Melissa Frost; Exec. Director of Student Services Gary Wilson; Exec. Director of Elementary Education Gaye Gibbs; Exec. Assistant Shelley R. Shelton

Meeting called to order at 7:38 AM

A. 7:30 a.m. Study Session

Procedural: 1: Welcome: President Michelle Kaufusi

2. Roll Call

3. 7:35 - 8:15 Risk Management Safety Report

Executive Director of Student Services Gary Wilson led the discussion, indicating there was a security assessment conducted on five randomly selected schools last year by Risk Management.

The arrival of Member Marsha Judkins was noted at 7:41 a.m.

The goal of the security assessment was to look at both strengths and weaknesses. There is no perfect solution, but if we can work to deter potential perpetrators so the proper reaction can come from law enforcement agencies, lives can be saved.

Strengths:

- The district has a strong security base; each school surveyed had some type of security in place.
- Emergency plans are well written and follow the suggested federal template.
- Annual security plan reviews are conducted at the building/facility level.
- School Resource Officers and trackers are employed by the school district.
- All administrators and support staff interviewed were excited and open to improvements in security and safety.
- Individual schools had exemplary programs and ideas in place to support security and safety.

Concerns:

- There is not a common or consistent level voice at the district level to the individual schools.
- Staff lanyard and identifying badges are inconsistently worn at the district and building level.
- Visitor badges are inconsistently worn at the district and building level.
- Many facility designs do not allow for direct eye contact of people entering the building.
- Door locks and the ability to lock doors quickly are an issue at most of our facilities.
- Camera systems were in some cases non-existent, not functional or under-serving the needs of the facility.
- Outdoor lighting in some cases was not working and was not well maintained.
- Some facilities did not have a designated "person in charge" if the principal was away from the building.
- Some of our current emergency plan designs are in need of updating to be current with today's understandings of preparedness.
- Training needs to be developed both internally and externally that discusses security and ways to implement better procedures.

District Level Next Steps:

1. A district level Security and Safety Committee, comprised of key district staff, a school resource officer, principals, will immediately be established. School PTA / community council representatives could also be included to provide perspectives for their own schools. The primary functions of this committee will be as follows:
 - To devote two hours every other week to studying issues and ideas that will improve the safety and security of the Provo City School District.
 - To review and propose potential trainings around safety and security.
 - To review or create policies and procedures (or guidelines) that support the security and safety of students, staff and community.
 - To recommend upgrades and potential purchases to support the security and safety of our facilities.
2. Gary Wilson, Executive Director of Student Services, will be designated as the district level contact for all security and safety issues. Cathy Bledsoe will be designated as his replacement if he is away from the district.
3. Buildings that were randomly chosen to be part of the assessment will receive their individual assessment results in the near future.

In response to board members' questions / comments, the following additional information was provided:

- During the August 16 training, in regards to student safety, teachers were instructed that daily attendance is to be taken in every class, every day (secondary), and at least twice daily and reported to the office (elementary). Times have been designated on ParentLink for attendance calls to go out; schools will be required to use ParentLink. Four fire drills, three lockdown drills, and one earthquake duck-and-cover drill will be run by every school each year. School administrators are to designate one unusually timed drill. Gary Wilson and Cathy Bledsoe will monitor monthly for compliance.
- Students need to automatically know what to do in the event of a fire or other emergency if teachers are not present, such as during recess. That happens only with frequent drills.
- There is a lack of policy currently regarding student safety and emergency procedures. The committee will work on formulating both school safety (including bullying) policies and procedures. Gary and his staff will work on the Safe Schools Handbook, incorporating it into policy.
- Concern was expressed about asking principals to devote an additional 2 hours to committee work, given their busy schedules.
- The duration of the committee cannot be predicted at this point and will depend on the variety of needs to be met; it could conceivably function for a year or two. Once the foundational needs are met, meetings could eventually taper off to once a month rather than twice monthly.
- It was recommended security cameras be installed on all buses as a deterrent to bullying.
- The committee will address and update the current emergency plan.
- Every school not included in the Risk Management assessment will have a safety assessment conducted by the security committee for that school.
- Risk Management is compiling safety and security "best practice" recommendations that the district will incorporate in all new construction projects.
- The committee could explore active shooter training for all district staff.

Following discussion, Board members expressed their support for the formation of the Security and Safety Committee.

4. 8:15 - 8:45 Next Steps: Bond Planning

The meeting with Superintendent Rittel, Business Administrator Kerry Smith and Steve Sandberg, legal counsel for BYU, was to explore next steps regarding a potential property exchange between the district and BYU. Mr. Sandberg will confer with BYU and LDS Church administration to determine the level of interest and to move forward with an appraisal process to determine the value of the district property under consideration. The district shared the report from FFKR with Mr. Sandberg on the costs to make the Locust Lane property buildable. MR. Sandberg is also studying the report from the Facilities Advisory Committee. It will take at least four weeks for Steve to come back with a firm idea of where they want to go. The Oct. 8 board meeting is a target date for a board discussion and decision regarding sharing information on the cost of the bond and potential projects with the community.

President Kaufusi reviewed aspects of the joint meeting with the city council for those board members who were unable to attend. She indicated she made it clear to the council that the district intends to bond in 2014. The city council appeared to be supportive and gave the board some tips on getting the bond passed. Supt. Rittel stated the district has been assertive in expecting an endorsement for the bond from the city council and mayor.

Supt. Rittel reviewed the timeline for proceeding on the bond from Zions Bank, as well as the district site inventory. Following the presentation, Business Administrator Kerry Smith stated the district is recommending setting some funds aside to purchase property that may become available in the future.

In response to board member questions the following information was shared:

- If the public authorizes \$90 million in bonds, the district could issue all \$90 million at once; Kerry does not recommend that approach due to the tax burden on homeowners. He would recommend issuing \$60 million for three years until the current bond expires.
- The district would like to develop its own set of maintenance materials for a district-wide standard.
- Portables may be needed to house students during elementary school construction. Soils testing is currently being done at Rock Canyon, Provo, Provost and Edgemont.
- The district recommends the board decide on a bond amount and a proposed list of projects, get committee feedback, finalize the list, begin bond campaign.
- Recommendations with numbers based on latest information from the district will be presented during the Sept. 27 board retreat.
- Supt. Rittel stated that while there is a "warm receptiveness" on the part of BYU, the district and BYU are both willing to "move on" in the event the proposal is not financially beneficial.

5. 8:45 - 9:00 STEM Discussion

Member Vance Checketts opened the discussion emphasizing the need for STEM education district-wide and pointing to the major shortage of STEM-educated graduates for the work force. He sought clarification on the district's connection with state STEM initiatives.

Science / CTE Specialist Jared Ferguson indicated the district looked at STEM schools back east but there wasn't a clear model to follow. The definition of STEM is evolving; the district has received grant money from the state. All secondary schools are participating. There is a very large USTAR grant with several teachers participating. The business community has the impression the district isn't doing anything with STEM. Jared invited business leaders to view programs in the secondary schools. Westridge has the leading STEM program in the state; there is a robotics program in the secondary schools. BYU Engineering helps with the elementary robotics program.

Director of Mathematics Ron Twitchell reported he has been trying to define what STEM is. Several hands-on activities have been held for teachers to teach practical applications. He has been working with secondary CTE math and science courses, combining engineering and scientific methods. It involves new approaches to mathematics instruction. While the definition isn't firm yet, the vision is. USTAR has paid for the robotics programs.

Supt. Rittel and Mr. Ferguson will work together to compile a report of STEM programs in the district for the board.

B. Adjourn

1. Motion to Adjourn

I move we adjourn the study session and move into executive session for the purpose of discussing personnel.

Motion by Marsha Judkins, second by Jim Pettersson.
Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Aye: Michelle Kaufusi, Julie Rash, Vance Checketts, Marsha Judkins, Jim Pettersson, Shannon Poulsen

The study session was adjourned at 9:04 a.m. and the board moved into executive session.