

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF SALT LAKE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board Business Meeting
and Closed Executive Session

August 6, 2013

The Board of Education of Salt Lake City School District met in a Board Business Meeting and Closed Executive Session at 5:35 p.m. on Tuesday, August 6, 2013, in the Board Room of the Administration Building, 440 East 100 South, Salt Lake City, Utah.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: President Kristi Swett, Vice President Heather Bennett, J. Michael Clára, Rosemary Emery, Dr. Douglas Nelson, Tiffany Sandberg, and Laurel H. Young.

Members Excused: Lavenita Vaitai, Student Member.

Also Present: Superintendent McKell Withers; Janet Roberts, Business Administrator; Patrick Garcia, Associate Superintendent School Support; Craig Ruesch, Interim Executive Director Human Resources; Jo Ellen Shaeffer, Director of Performance & Accountability; Logan Hall, Administrator on Special Assignment Human Resources; John Robson, the board's legal counsel from Fabian & Clendenin (arriving at 7:45 p.m.); Mike Harmon, representing the Salt Lake Teachers Association, Sharon Grey, President, Salt Lake Educational Office Personnel Association; Jason Olsen, Public Information Officer; Ray Parker, *Salt Lake Tribune*; Allison Sisam, Business Administration Office; and others in the audience.

In accordance with the agenda prepared for the Board Business Meeting of August 6, 2013, four motions were made including a motion to adopt a tax rate of .006651, which includes an increase to the Board Local Levy. Items are reported as listed in the agenda and not necessarily in the order they were considered.

The meeting was called to order by President Swett, who presided.

1. CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 5:35 p.m. a motion was made, after which members excused the audience and remained in the board room:

*(1) That the board meet in Closed Executive Session to consider litigation, negotiations, property, and personnel items.

** (Young and Sandberg)

Present for Closed Session were Kristi Swett, Heather Bennett, J. Michael Clára, Rosemary Emery, Dr. Douglas Nelson, Tiffany Sandberg, Laurel H. Young, McKell Withers, and Janet Roberts.

Board members adjourned from the Closed Executive Session at 6:30 p.m. and returned to the Board Business Meeting at 6:35 p.m.

VOTE RECORD	AYE	NAY	ABSENT
BENNETT	X		
CLÁRA	1, 2, & 4	3	
EMERY	X		
NELSON	X		
SWETT	X		
SANDBERG	X		
YOUNG	X		
A Absent	Ab Abstention	F Failed	
N "No" Vote	NA No Action	T Tabled	
W Withdrawn	*Unanimous Approval		
**Members Making Motion			

2. BOARD BUSINESS MEETING

- President Swett welcomed everyone in the audience. She recognized the presence of Mike Harmon, representing the Salt Lake Teachers Association and Sharon Grey, President, Salt Lake Educational Office Personnel Association.
- Craig Ruesch led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- President Swett introduced Logan Hall, Administrator on Special Assignment in the Human Resources Department, and Board Member Young introduced Justin Anderson, history teacher at Northwest Middle School.

A. CONSENT AGENDA

*(2) Approval was given to two items included in the Consent Agenda, Item #A2, Human Resourced Department Report, was moved to the Action Agenda. These items are listed below.

** (Young and Emery)

1. The Purchasing/Accounting Report, included a breakdown of items costing over and under \$50,000, increases to existing purchase orders, and a payment voucher report that includes travel and professional expenditures.
2. The Human Resources Department Report was moved to the Action Agenda.
3. Minutes of the Board Annual Planning Session held July 9, 2013.

B. REQUESTS TO SPEAK

1. Neil Cotter and Chris Davison, West High School Community Council members, addressed the board regarding West High School's Passing Times and a Comparison of Prior Years Schedules. Mr. Cotter told board members a survey was sent to teachers, administration, students, and parents to obtain feedback on the old versus new schedules. 437 participants returned the survey. A handout was distributed, a copy of which has been added to the official minutes. He briefly reported the results of the survey as outlined in the handout. Mr. Davison spoke to the board on the study that was done to see how long it takes to go from

class to class. He said problem routes were identified, routes were printed, and parents came to walk the routes with students. Locker stops were included and parents and students walked the routes from class to class. The average pass time was 4 to 5 minutes, with some routes taking longer. He said pass time for the old schedule was 7 minutes, 5 minutes for the new schedule, and following the study would now be six minutes. Mr. Cotter said additional information is available at the website listed on the handout.

C. TRUTH IN TAXATION HEARING

At precisely 7:00 p.m. President Swett opened the Truth in Taxation Hearing. She thanked those in the audience who were present for the Hearing.

Janet Roberts provided board members with a Tax Rate Discussion presentation. A copy has been added to the official minutes. In the presentation, she noted the board had approved a budget at the June 4 Business Meeting that included a proposed tax increase, requiring the board to hold a Truth in Taxation Hearing. The increase was to maintain existing programs, cover the increase in costs required by the Utah Retirement System, and provide a 1% cost of living increase to employees. She said when the final tax figures were received from the County, the certified tax rate was a little higher than anticipated. She said the assessed value in the city increased and the adjustment for the county-wide equalization was higher than anticipated, resulting in the proposed increase being \$3.25 million instead of \$3.6 million. She noted both the City and the County are proposing tax increases and will be holding Truth in Taxation hearings in the next few days. She provided examples of property tax notices throughout the district. The examples included changes in assessed value, and the impact of the proposed tax increase. For the benefit of those present, she said if a property owner experiences a large increase in assessed value, there is an appeals process they can follow with the County Assessor. In closing, she told the board in order to collect enough taxes to meet the needs of the budget approved by the board they would need to approve a tax rate of .006651.

Following the presentation, President Swett invited anyone in the audience who would like to speak to the board on the proposed tax increase to come forward.

1. Public Comment on Proposed Tax Rate.

- a. A patron, who would not provide her name or address, addressed the board. She asked a number of questions including: would the board vote on the increase tonight, what options citizens have who do not want the increase, and what programs would the increase allow to be maintained? President Swett briefly reviewed the timeline and process the board follows in developing the district's budget. She told her the board will hear public comments at all business meetings, how patrons can find out about board meetings and what will be on the agendas, and where patrons can go to view the district's budget online. The patron said she is not supportive of the increase.
- b. Neil Cotter, 1213 Browning Avenue, addressed the board on the proposed tax increase. He asked what percent of the increase was a result of increased student enrollment. Superintendent Withers said the district's enrollment is relatively constant. Board members responded to Mr. Cotter by talking about the changing needs of district

students, legislative mandates given without any funds to implement them, the issue of having to spread money further across the state with the district's enrollment remaining consistent, and that no increase in funding was given to programs that are not part of the WPU. Mr. Cotter said he understood the board's position better and is slightly in favor of the increase.

- c. Joan Lothrop, 1056 West 600 North, addressed the board on the proposed tax increase. She is concerned about being taxed out of her home, noting it is not just the school district asking for an increase, but the City and County as well. She said something has to give and she is against the tax increase.
- d. Meela Stokes, 2785 South 1000 East, addressed the board on the proposed tax increase. She said she had an appraisal of her property done and could not reconcile the assessed value on her property tax notice with her appraisal. Ms. Roberts noted the district does not determine the assessed value. She asked Ms. Stokes to see her after the hearing and she would give her the phone number and address of the office where she can appeal her assessed valuation.
- e. Gerald Burgosh, 1962 Scenic Drive, addressed the board. He said his purpose in coming tonight was to learn about the process. He said he served on the East Bench Community Council for many years and knows how much time is involved, and he thanked the board members for their service. He noted he had talked with Ms. Roberts earlier and thanked her for the information on where to appeal his assessed valuation. He said at this time he is abstaining in terms of support for the tax increase.

At 7:32 p.m. President Swett closed the Public Comment of the Truth in Taxation Hearing.

D. SPECIAL ACTION ITEM

1. Proposed Property Tax Rate.

*(3) I move that the board approve the adoption of a tax rate of .006651 for the Fiscal Year 2013-14, which includes an increase to the Board Local Levy. Approval was given to the motion on a vote of 6 to 1, with Mr. Clára voting "No".

**(Sandberg and Emery)

Prior to voting on the motion, Board Member Clára distributed a copy of an Open Letter he had written to District 2 Neighbors, Glendale Community, and Poplar Grove Community re: Truth in Taxation. A copy of the letter has been added to the official minutes. He said he is opposed to the tax increase for the same reasons he was opposed to approving the budget in June and does not see the justification of raising the taxes of his neighbors. Board member Young called for the Question. Mr. Clára expressed displeasure that discussion would not be allowed to continue and his frustration that stopping discussion does not lead to transparency.

E. REPORTS

1. Utah Comprehensive Accountability System (UCAS) and School Grading. JoEllen Shaeffer told the board UCAS should make it so administrators can see data immediately. She noted the State Office was running late getting districts their SERF files (electronic files used to create individual school reports), and said she would like to come in September and provide the board with a demonstration on how UCAS works.

Ms. Shaeffer provided the board with a presentation on School Grading. A copy of the presentation has been added to the official minutes. She began with a brief history of State Accountability Models. She said in 2011, after Utah passed SB59 School Grading System, a group of stakeholders were brought together to develop a model, the result of which was UCAS. Under UCAS schools are given a point value and not a letter grade. Then in 2013 the Legislature passed SB271 School Grading Amendments, which goes back to assigning letter grades. She said SB271 does not replace UCAS so there would be two grading systems in place. She provided an explanation of how both grading systems work and the differences between the two. She told board members those supporting SB271 include Parents for Choice and Charter Schools, those opposed include the Utah State Board of Education, Utah State Office of Education, Utah School Boards Association, Utah School Superintendents Association, UEA, Utah PTA, and other education stakeholders. She also highlighted a few key reasons those groups do not support SB271. She distributed a handout with an example of USOE Student Growth Model and Salt Lake City School District Student Growth Model. She noted they are a close match, said there are a few differences, and noted the state has a much larger data set. A copy has been added to the official minutes. She said in the beginning teachers were a little nervous, now she receives calls from teachers who are able to see the progress of their students and understand the fairness. She said it is very valuable data and it is important to take care to ensure the data is not misused.

Ms. Shaeffer continued the presentation with an update on the new State Wide Adaptive Testing. She said UCAS seems like the right framework, but with all new adaptive tests it is still a little premature. Board members and the Superintendent talked about a year's worth of growth, the desire of students and parents to know they are making progress, how a year's worth of growth is determined, and the importance of how a year's worth or growth is established including the use of summative and formative data to measure student progress from the beginning to the end of the year. The question was also raised if a student starts low, is a year's worth of growth good enough? Ms. Shaeffer also cautioned the board that with new tests, and a new core, scores are expected to drop slightly across the state. She also provided an update of the timeline for full implementation of the Adaptive Testing.

President Swett thanked Ms. Shaeffer for the report and said they look forward to continued updates.

F. ACTION AGENDA

Human Resources Department Report, included new contract employment for 71 employees, non-contract to contract employment for two, changes for 28, and releases for four.

*(4) A motion was made that the board approve the Human Resources Department Report.

** (Young and Nelson)

Mr. Clára said the reason he requested the Human Resources Department Report be moved from the Consent Agenda to the Action Agenda was because he questioned why the change from Assistant Principal to Principal at Jackson Elementary School had not been included on the report. Superintendent Withers will confirm the change has not been on the report previously.

G. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. Miscellaneous Updates:

2013-2014 Study Session Topics. Superintendent Withers distributed a Final Draft of the 2013-2014 Study Session Topics and Tentative Schedule. He told board members the sheet had been updated based on discussion at the Board Annual Planning Session held July 9, 2013, and changes made at that meeting are in red. A copy has been added to the official minutes.

School and Teacher Recognitions. Superintendent Withers reported on the "Thank You" celebration held this morning at the Grand America Hotel to publically recognize the winners of the School Progress Awards, which are given to the schools who show the greatest amount of student achievement growth. The three winners were: Mountain View, Title I Elementary School Award; Beacon Heights, Non-Title I Elementary School Award; and Glendale Middle School, Middle School Award. He thanked the Salt Lake Education Foundation and the Grand America Hotel for their sponsorship of the awards program and the board members who had been able to attend the event.

Education Task Force. Superintendent Withers reported the Education Task Force had asked why teachers had not been asked to come speak to the committee so Representative Gibson had invited a team of teachers to come speak at the Education Interim Committee meeting. He said ten teachers had participated, four of which were Salt Lake City School District teachers. He said they represented the district well, were great advocates, and it was great to have teacher voices at the meeting.

Employment Decisions. Superintendent Withers told board members he had asked John Robson to attend the meeting tonight to talk about the role of the board in employment decisions. Mr. Robson said the names Board of Education of Salt Lake City School District and the Salt Lake City School District are often interchangeable. He said the legal entity is the Board of Education which is also the employer. He said every expenditure made by the district must be approved by the board, all employment contracts entered into must be approved by the board, and the board is also responsible for all terminations. He said many districts choose to do that by way of a Human Resources Department Report approved on a Consent Agenda. He said according to State Statute 53A-3-301, the local board appoints a Superintendent who serves as the local school board's chief executive officer, but the school board is the ultimate employer. He said typically there are only two hires the board is

directly involved in, the Superintendent and the Business Administrator, but a board can choose to set up other procedures.

Mr. Clára said he just had concerns over the process, an email had been sent notifying the board of an employment change, and he wanted to know at what point the board would follow the policy and approve the individual's change in employment status. He said if changes are not put on the Consent Agenda the board is not given the opportunity to vote. President Swett said she felt the discussion and clarification had been good. She asked that the issue be researched.

2. Other Superintendent Reports. Board Member Emery reported that Equality Utah would be coming to a future board meeting to recognize the board.

Superintendent Withers reported the next segment of Race-to-the-Top grants are approaching. He said the district needs to look at all the information, determine if we want to go through the process, and if the decision is made to try again this round submit a letter of interest by the August 23.

Superintendent Withers reported the Bully Project is continuing to move forward. He said the "Bully" movie will be shown to all incoming 7th graders. The venue this year will be the City Library. He said the Project will be tracking both chronically absent students and students who have discipline referrals to see if it is having an impact.

Superintendent Withers reported the district will be participating with other districts in the state to spread the word about how important attendance is. He said the past year the district held three "NEST Days" (No Empty Seats Today) and will be continuing that effort again this year.

Superintendent Withers reminded board members of the Utah School Board Association's Delegate Assembly scheduled for Friday and Saturday, August 9 & 10.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Following a motion by Ms. Sandberg, seconded by Ms. Young, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Janet M. Roberts
Business Administrator

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