

**MINUTES OF PUBLIC MEETING OF THE  
GOVERNING BOARD OF  
HIGLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 60**

**REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2015**

District Office Governing Board Room  
2935 S. Recker Road, Gilbert, Arizona 85295

**WORK STUDY**

The work study began at 5:20 p.m. Present were: Venessa Whitener, President; Kristina Reese, Vice President; Russell Little, Member; Greg Wojtovich, Member; Mike Thomason, Ed.D, Superintendent; Steve Nance, Ph.D., Assistant Superintendent; Shannon Duus, Director of Finance; and Cindy Walker, Board Secretary. Russell Little, Member, arrived at 5:37 p.m.

**A. Proposed Accelerated Learning Program at Bridges Elementary School**

Sheryl Rednor, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, introduced Josh Costelnock, Elementary Math Coach. She presented a slide show on a proposed learning program within the school designed to meet the needs of high achieving, highly motivated students. The program would begin in classrooms for grades 3-6 in 2016-17. It will provide a strong foundation in the College and Career Readiness standards with a focus on reading, writing and math. Students can attain the highest possible competence level through rigorous project-based academic instruction and expectations to include a positive can do attitude, student accountability and a passion for learning at an accelerated pace. They discussed the criteria for entrance. Teacher input will be included. Currently, there are about 1,100 students eligible.

In Fall 2015, curriculum specialists, gifted teachers, principals and district administrators met to discuss need for high achieving students. They visited three model schools in neighboring districts and brought a committee together made up of a MS teacher, community members and parents to discuss next steps. The Math curriculum is developed from the sixth grade forward. In grade 3, it is a more accelerated pace to help students catch up. Transportation would be provided with the students' home school as their bus stops, at a cost of \$101.25 per day, for an annual expense of \$18,225. These figures include all necessary expenditures.

Currently, the district is collecting Bridges enrollment data through HUSD website. Administration is building a rigorous curriculum and teacher support that aligns with AZ standards and the vision of program. Training is provided for 50+ teachers in Gifted Provisional Endorsement. We are finalizing the program enrollment process. There is a student input form to gather more supporting data. The next steps include marketing the specialized program at Bridges Elementary School to determine interest. A budget decision regarding transportation is needed. Staff will develop a FAQ page. Enrollment and registration is underway. The starting principal has led meetings for neighborhood school and specialized programs.

Discussion followed on the benefit to parents and students of participating in the program. It is for students who are developmentally ready for this curriculum. It will be offered to students in and out of our district. The Bridges Elementary would also provide the typical classroom curriculum for students not participating in the accelerated program. Until enrollment in the program is established,

it will be a challenge. Dr. Nance said this is in addition to the gifted program that the district would like to reestablish in our schools. It is a more accelerated and more compact program than the gifted program. Mrs. Reese and Mr. Wojtovich expressed concern in providing transportation for open enrollment students. Administration asked for direction on marketing from the board. Dr. Thomason expects relief from the state as Governor Ducey is finalizing the lawsuit settlement to districts. These funds would ease transportation needs. Communication has not gone out to parents regarding this.

### **B. Budget**

Dr. Thomason reviewed the estimated use of M&O Override. For FY16, in addition to the \$8,121,679.00 approved override funding, there is an expected \$1M M&O increase due to growth. Growth is at 300 students across the district and growth is expected to continue. Budget reductions for 2016-17 included the \$1.8M final phase out of the 2008 Override; \$450K from one-time money from Funds 515 and 520; litigation recover/impact fees in the amount of \$180K, and estimated health insurance premium increase for the year of \$500K. This will leave a balance of just over \$6M for FY16 from the approved override and growth income. Potential new expenditures were discussed. These included teacher and staff salary increases, class size reductions, opening the new elementary school, removing the furlough days was covered in this year's budget, gifted and special education programs, HS athletic directors and guidance clerks, arts and athletic stipends (tax credit donations were needed to pay the coaches in the past), maintaining CTE programs (this budget cut will be coming back to the program), a Maintenance and Facilities Manager, lunch monitors (starting with some this year), reinstate MS/HS substitute teachers, media assistance, custodians (to reduce high turnover), and 2 HS guidance counselors (to reduce caseloads).

Mr. Wojtovich asked Dr. Nance to present on the Media Assistants in January. Dr. Thomason showed a letter he will send to staff and stakeholders in the district asking them to complete the Budget Priorities Survey that will be sent to them. Administration will use the survey as a tool to gather input. The letter will be sent to the principals to have teachers send it to their students' parents. It will also be put on the website to gather community input. Mrs. Reese asked if we could reach out to people who may not have students in the district. Dr. Thomason said we will look into other opportunities such as notifying homeowner associations to include the survey on their websites.

In the January Work Study, we will provide a chart of proposed class sizes and teachers needed. Dr. Nance will present on the libraries and media centers at the next board meeting in January.

### **C. Board Self-Evaluation**

The board will complete their self-evaluation form and submit to the Superintendent. Two board members can work to decide if they want to keep the same evaluation instrument.

### **D. Board Goals**

The board secretary will schedule a board retreat before the January 13<sup>th</sup> board meeting for the purpose of finalizing their board goals. The survey results will be used in the discussion. Dr. Thomason will send his PowerPoint outlining the board goals.

The work study adjourned at 6:30p.m.

### **REGULAR MEETING**

On the date and at the place above written, the Governing Board, Higley Unified School District No. 60, met in a Regular Board Meeting. Present were: Venessa Whitener, President; Kristina Reese, Vice

President; Russell Little, Member; Greg Wojtovich, Member; Dr. Mike Thomason, Superintendent; Dr. Steve Nance, Assistant Superintendent; Sheila Sorenson, Executive Director of Human Resources; Shannon Duus, Director of Finance; and Cindy Walker, Board Secretary

### **1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

Mrs. Whitener called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

### **2.0 ROLL CALL**

Mr. Little, Mrs. Reese, Mrs. Whitener and Mr. Wojtovich were present.

### **3.0 MOMENT OF SILENCE/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **4.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mrs. Whitener made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Wojtovich seconded. The motion carried 4 to 0.

### **5.0 REQUEST TO SPEAK TO THE GOVERNING BOARD**

- Joe Geusic, citizen, came to follow up on an email to the board to encourage them to continue to lean into our state officials to analyze the data in making educational decisions for students. As an example, he took per pupil funding in 2006 as a benchmark and compared it to 2014 to show funding revenue increased 11.93% for charter schools per student while districts only increased by 1.25%, which starts to show the real story.

Mrs. Whitener emphasized the board members have a goal to get to know local legislators and invite them into the district. It ensures the impact of legislative action is reported to the public as part of their public welfare on behalf of the students.

### **6.0 SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

#### **Awards/Recognitions/Presentations**

- **Points of Pride Monthly Awards**

Finance Department: (Shannon Duus, Director)

- Jefferson Clark, Warehouse Supervisor

Chaparral Elementary School: (Liz Wolfe, Principal, and Kristine Hansen, Asst. Principal)

- Volunteer: Christel Thompson, PTO Board Member, and Kindergarten Academy Assistant
- Teacher: Molly Montoya, Kindergarten Teacher and PTO Liaison
- Student: Dannie Richardson, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade
- Classified Employee: Luz Maria Martinez, Cafeteria Manager

Higley Traditional Academy School: (Caryn Bacon, Principal)

- Classified Employee: Victor Casiano, Lead Custodian and Coach
- Teacher: Barbara Cooley, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade
- Volunteers: Hector, Photographer, and Christine Penunuri, PTO Treasurer
- Student: William Gerald, 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, HTA Ambassador and Student Council Rep

- **Higley High School AFJROTC Drill Team – Grand Champion Award**

Dr. Michael Fowler, Director of Facilities, Operations and Athletics, introduced SMSgt. Danny Alltop, Aerospace Science Instructor/District AFJROTC. The High School Drill Team won the Grand Champion Trophy at the Desert Talon Drill Meet at Hamilton High School in Chandler. He introduced Cadet Aaron Jensen, Drill Team Commander; Jordan Howalt, Vice Drill Team

Commander; Conner McGurran, Commander of the First Year Armed Regulation Drill Team. The HUSD Drill Team placed in all 13 categories winning the following: 1st Place in First Year Armed Inspection; First Year Armed Regulation; 10-Person Unarmed Regulation; 10-Person Armed Regulation; 4-Person Unarmed Exhibition; and First Year Color Guard. They won 2nd Place in First Year Unarmed Inspection; First Year Unarmed Regulation; 10-Person Unarmed Inspection; 10-Person Armed Inspection; and 10-Person Armed Exhibition. They place 3<sup>rd</sup> in 4-Person Armed Exhibition and 10-Person Unarmed Exhibition.

• **Grand Canyon University STEM Principal of the Month Award**

Dr. Bev Hurley, Director of Academic Alliances at Grand Canyon University, and Mr. Ed Boot, Education Market Director for Orcutt Winslow Architecture Planning, presented STEM Principal of the Month Award for December to Nancy Diab-Scott, Principal of Sossaman Middle School. Ms. Diab-Scott was also presented a \$500 gift card to use for her program.

• **Video Presentation – “*Leader in Me*” – San Tan Elementary School**

San Tan Principal Ray Mercado presented a video on the new school wide program “*Leader in Me*”. This is a whole school transformational process that incorporates leadership skills and life skills in the daily language on the campus, both in and out of the classroom. San Tan received a 5-year grant to support the professional development of staff and students in promoting the “*7 Habits of Highly Effective People*” that is embedded within the curriculum and throughout the campus. The process promotes the use of common language by students and staff to incorporate the habit: be proactive; begin with the end in mind; put first things first; think win-win; seek first to understand, and then be understood; synergize; and sharpen the saw.

This program started as a book study and the staff decided that this would be worthwhile to develop the “*Leader in Me*” throughout San Tan Elementary. The ultimate goal of being a leader in the school is for every student and staff member to internalize the 7 habits to be a leader of themselves and then to be a leader of others. The video link is: <https://vimeo.com/148385523>. Mrs. Whitener shared her observations of how much of the program has been implemented in the whole school transformation at San Tan Elementary.

**Upcoming Events:**

- December 21 – January 3 Winter Break
- Wednesday, January 13, 2016 Governing Board Work Study, District Office Board Room, 5:30pm
- Wednesday, January 13, 2016 Governing Board Meeting, District Office Board Room, 6:30pm
- Monday, January 18, 2016 Holiday – Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Wednesday, January 27, 2016 Governing Board Work Study, District Office Board Room, 5:30pm
- Wednesday, January 27, 2016 Governing Board Meeting, District Office Board Room, 6:30pm

Dr. Thomason said we will schedule a board retreat for board goals before the next board meeting on January 13, 2016.

**Board Comments**

- Mrs. Whitener wished all a Happy Holiday on behalf of the board.
- Mr. Wojtovich attended Coronado’s Turkey Trot with Dr. Thomason. He was impressed at all of the community involvement.
- Mrs. Reese attended Cooley M.S. choir and Higley High School band concerts and will attend a Jingle Jog.

## **7.0 CONSENT AGENDA**

Mrs. Whitener made a motion to approve the consent agenda for Items 7.1 to 7.7. Mr. Wojtovich seconded.

The motion carried 3 to 1. Mrs. Reese voted against.

Dr. Nance introduced Sherry Richards, who will be transferred from Power Ranch to become the new principal of Bridges Elementary School.

Mrs. Whitener acknowledged all the donors to the HUSD schools this month.

## **8.0 OLD BUSINESS**

### **9.0 ACTION AND INFORMATION ITEMS**

#### **9.1 Information: Monthly Governing Board Financial Report for November 2015**

Shannon Duus, Director of Finance, presented the monthly financial reports for November 2015. There were no board comments.

#### **9.2 Information: Update on Elementary Early Release Wednesdays**

Dr. Steve Nance, Assistant Superintendent, introduced Dr. Mai-Lon Wong, Coronado Principal, and Liz Wolf, Chaparral Principal, and the collaborative teachers Cyndy Alexander, Maryn Cole, Erin Pillsbury, and Lisa Witt who presented a slide show on the benefit of early release on Wednesdays at the elementary schools. The presentation followed up on the board's decision to implement the weekly early release time for one school year and their request for a report on the effectiveness of this practice. Regardless of budget restraints, they found this is quality planning time has accelerated teacher effectiveness and their ability to meet the needs of each individual student, with minimal impact on the community. The principals have had not negative calls concerning this initiative.

Mrs. Wolf shared the results of the teacher survey, which had been given to the board members. Teachers were overwhelmingly positive in their feedback on professional development and early release Wednesdays. This included regular classroom teachers, special education and specialists. It allows them to collaborate, analyze data and plan lessons at a much higher level. They function as a team, have increased productivity, expand their thinking, and build team morale. They use the time to analyze curriculum, standards, and best practices for positive impact on students. It has been an amazing gift for the school, enabling rigorous, higher level learning to take place. Although period prep time has decreased considerably over the last six years, teachers still have the same amount of time for core subjects with focused instruction for more effective learning.

Kids Club/Community Education provides childcare services as needed including Special Education students. The rates for Wednesday Kids Club will be reduced from \$20/day/child to a more affordable \$10 beginning in January to accommodate early dismissal and staff rate discounts are provided

The common themes of professional development centered on the District's Strategic Anchors of Student Focus, Forward Thinking, and Value People. It included quality planning, data analysis, collaboration, and high morale. They expressed appreciation for this opportunity and asked the board to protect this valued time for planning. When asked about the passage of the override, the teacher survey results of 93% supported the early release Wednesdays, smaller class size, and salary increases. In conclusion, teachers respectfully requested they be allowed to continue the plan for the future.

Mr. Wojtovich thanked the teachers and community members for their participation on the survey. He said the college where he works closes on Friday afternoons for professional development and he

understands how important it is. He requested future board discussion on specials. Dr. Wong asked to keep this professional development on early dismissal days adding it should be a part of the way we do business. It has no impact on specials. To keep teachers performing at the top, we need to provide time for professional development. Mrs. Whitener asked about participation in Kids Club on Wednesdays. Dr. Thomason shared that Kids Club has the capacity to add more students at a lesser cost on early dismissal Wednesdays. Mr. Little shared that early collaboration offers enthusiasm for our educators. He asked if grade levels or subject areas at the different schools get to meet together to further the collaboration. He recommended that every other month someone at the district could take the lead role in determining objectives for training by grade level or subject across the district for teachers to meet together. Then as objectives are met using the evidence-based approach to teaching a subject and then look at practice-based evidence to identify what teachers are doing in addition to what is great. It's a full cycle of collaboration. Collaboration is more than just meeting in a room; it must produce something to fully leverage it. He asked the team to think about how that might be implemented. Dr. Wong and Mrs. Wolf appreciated his suggestions. Discussion followed.

### 9.3 Information: AzMERIT Update

Dr. Anna McCauley, Director of Research and Assessment, presented a slide show with charts revealing the result of AzMERIT. HUSD outperformed the state by wide margins, particularly in the lower grades as those students have had more of the Arizona Academic Standards. She reviewed the East Valley district leaders by grade level and content area. We were strongest in early elementary. Higley was highest in fifth grade math and in seventh grade in ELA. HUSD eighth graders did outstanding in Algebra and Geometry. In high school, statewide scoring went lower.

Dr. Nance reviewed the ranking chart. He explained rankings mean very little this year because all we have are passing percentages, which typically is tied to the socio-economics of the community. There was no information included in the rankings about student growth or other data like graduation rates. Rankings change depending on whether you are a unified district or elementary district or listed with all districts in the state which can include both, large and small. Overall, HUSD was eighth highest in Language Arts and ninth highest in Math in terms of passing percentages of students. Looking at only unified school districts, HUSD was number four in Math and five in Language Arts in terms of passing percentages of students. He suggested not using this information for anything more than it is. Some organizations mislead the public with rank order of combined Math and Language Arts percentages. It was disappointing that the state gave districts much less information this year than in the past. Dr. McCauley is working to provide more accurate information on these results. She is meeting with our schools to share more information and made a conscious decision not to compare AIMS to AzMERIT. Only 5% of the schools in the state can say they have 80% or better.

### 9.4 Approve 2015-16 Pay for Performance Plan

According to §ARS 15-977, "A school district governing board must adopt a performance based compensation system at a public hearing to allocate funding from the classroom site fund." The District Meet and Confer team met from September to November to create the attached Performance Pay Plan. Mrs. Whitener moved that the Governing Board approve the 2015-16 Pay for Performance Plan as presented. Mr. Wojtovich seconded. Mr. Little asked if the performance evaluations have taken place to know where teachers will fall for budget impact. Mrs. Sorenson explained the plan spans the school year and the evaluation portion is a summative that happens at the end of the school year with teachers after two formals and two informals. Scoring from the summative and test score data will be used.

The motion carried 4 to 0.

9.5 Second Read and Approve New Regulation JIC-R, Amendments of Policy JK, Repeal of Regulation JK-RB – Use of Restraints and Seclusion

Mrs. Whitener moved that the Governing Board approve new Regulation JIC-R, amendments of Policy JK, Repeal of Regulation JK-RB – Use of Restraints and Seclusion. Mrs. Reese seconded. There were no board comments.  
The motion carried 4 to 0.

9.6 Second Read and Approve Amended Policy DN and New Regulation DN-R – Property Disposition

Mrs. Whitener moved that the Governing Board approve amended Policy DN and New Regulation DN-R – Property Disposition. Mr. Wojtovich seconded. There were no board comments.  
The motion carried 4 to 0.

9.7 Second Read and Approve Amended Policy IHBCA and Regulation IHBCA-R – Pregnant Students

Mrs. Whitener moved that the Governing Board approve amended Policy IHBCA and Regulation IHBCA-R – Pregnant Students. Mr. Little seconded. There were no board comments.  
The motion carried 4 to 0.

9.8 Approve Invoices from Prior Year

Mr. Whitener moved that the Governing Board approve the prior year invoices. Mr. Wojtovich seconded. Five invoices were received in Finance in the current fiscal year for prior year expenses. Ms. Duus confirmed no previous budget revisions are needed.  
The motion carried 4 to 0.

**10.0 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Board retreat for Board Goals (VW/12/9/15)
- Provide a chart of proposed class sizes and teachers needed (VW/12/9/15)
- Present on libraries and media centers at the next board meeting in January (GW/12/9/15)
- At the May board meeting, provide an update from the Superintendent on informal reflections (VW/12/9/15)

**11.0 ADJOURN**

Mrs. Whitener moved to adjourn at 8:26p.m. Mr. Little seconded the motion.  
The motion carried 4 to 0.

Dated this 9<sup>h</sup> day of December, 2015  
Higley Unified School District #60

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Kristina Reese, Board Vice President