



MINUTES

Las Cruces Public Schools Board of Education Board Retreat

Monday, December 9, 2013 • 9:00 a.m.
Professional Development Center

In attendance: Dr. Connie Phillips, President
Sra. Maria Flores, Vice President
Mr. Chuck Davis, Secretary
Mrs. Barbara Hall, Member
Dr. Bonnie Votaw, Member

Superintendent Stan Rounds was also in attendance.

The meeting began at 9:05 a.m. with Dr. Votaw facilitating the meeting.

The outcomes identified for the retreat, was for the board to gain a clearer understanding of the PED's graduation requirements; student assessment and teacher evaluation components; local control for school boards; and statewide efforts to mitigate compounding initiatives from the PED and to determine effective and beneficial policies and actions to address these issues.

Purpose of Retreat: To discover how to be effective within the current situation and to develop a course of action that will benefit our students, our teachers and district.

I. Information Sharing: Administration

A. Testing and assessment of students (what's the difference?)

Superintendent Rounds discussed with the board the annual assessment schedule by grade prepared by Tracie O'Hara. How deeply do you go and how does it impact the act of teaching asked Superintendent Rounds.

Tracie O'Hara, Director of Assessment and Research Development, reviewed the assessment schedule with the board and discussed the major tests required by the state of New Mexico. Discovery testing in reading and math began in grades K-3.

Superintendent Rounds discussed with the board end of course exams vs. NMSBA testing. Are students required to take end of course exams or NMSBA testing? Without passing each section of the NMSBA, students cannot graduate. End of course exams and NMSBA testing play into two parts: 1) Graduation of students; and 2) Protocol for teacher evaluation. Dr. Votaw asked if LCPS has a policy regarding end of course exams or NMSBA testing? Dr. Sanchez responded yes. Dr. Sanchez stated that state law requires graduation by end of course exams and Dr. Phillips added that students also took the teacher's end of course exam, which meant some students ended up taking two exams in various classes. Dr. Sanchez also stated a student is not required to take an end of course exam, if they passed all sections of the NMSBA (demonstrated competency).

Dr. Connie Phillips asked if the state is requiring end of course exams for evaluation purposes. The end of course exams issues are: what's in the test, rapidity of roll-out, cross referenced requirements, alignment of curriculum and exam, validity of test items and concurrent testing.

Sra. Flores shared her concern regarding high school seniors and stated 150 students from MHS will not graduate due to the new testing requirement by NMSBA stating that "freshman have time, but we need to focus on seniors". Mr. Davis asked how students did regarding state end of course exams vs. teacher end of course exams. Teachers did not cover state end of course exams, as they were not aware of the information covered. Dr. Sanchez responded that teachers are being brought in to develop the state end of course exam in using common core standards. A concern is validity of the state's exams, said Superintendent Rounds. Teachers and parents did not know the content.

PARCC is still going to be assessed and is continually changing. Dr. Sanchez stated that across the state, students are taking sections of the PARCC. Evaluators are using that to evaluate the premier of its launch. He also stated no validity tests have been done on the state tests. The interim assessments are developed by instructional specialists to help inform instruction through the pacing guides. They are to be used in the PLCs as a true informative assessment.

Sra. Flores stated her concern that teachers are too busy giving tests and do not have time to enter report cards into Synergy. She also shared her concern in regards to the validity of the tests being given at the kindergarten level and the effect on language barriers.

Dr. Votaw asked if there a system in place regarding getting information back to the teachers regarding problems with the interims? Mrs. Andrea Fletcher, Associate Superintendent of Turnaround Initiatives responded that the schools' ISS has been gathering information and providing that feedback to the teachers. Lydia Polanco, Director of Elementary Education, has scheduled a discussion with discovery and kindergarten teachers for January 7, 2014 to look at content, quality, measures of academic progress and LEXIA (used in JUMP). The teachers will be the reviewers and make a recommendation on an assessment for kindergarteners.

Sra. Flores stated she does not want the children going through the testing process. She is receiving calls from parents that children are crying. She thinks CFAs are working.

Ms. O'Hara continued to review the assessment schedule in regards to the testing in grades K-8 and high school students stating a block testing schedule is more compact and teachers will use end of course exams as their own or give their own exam. Students take end of course exams and can bank the score to use after taking the NMSBA test, if scores are needed.

B. Graduation requirements; status of our students

Superintendent Rounds discussed graduation requirements of current seniors. 180-200 students at each high school will not graduate due to new graduation requirements. He also stated that a few students at APECHS slotted for graduation in December 2013 with an Associate's Degree, will not be eligible to receive the state's high school diploma due to the state's new graduation requirements.

Dr. Sanchez stated we are currently at 100 students at each high school that will not meet graduation requirements. The Superintendent will allow the schools to determine the process they want to put into place for graduation. Every student in jeopardy of not meeting the state's

graduation requirements will be notified and parents will meet with administrators at the high school level by December 15th. The parents and the student will be advised of what the student is missing and given guidance on what to do next. Sra. Flores asked what if parents do not step up? Dr. Sanchez stated students will be pulled in and counseled on the process. Dr. Sanchez also stated the board can develop a policy process surrounding graduation requirements. The board agreed and a policy will be brought forward before the board for approval at the January 21, 2014 regular board meeting. Sra. Flores stated she will provide the Santa Fe model for the board's review in developing their own.

Dr. Votaw suggested writing a board policy and indicated that Truth or Consequences has prepared a good base model regarding local control that board could use. Dr. Votaw also asked how we can reassure teachers that we have something in the works? Superintendent Rounds indicated that he is working on a process to provide information to teachers by meeting with principals, by using webinars (experiment) and eventually to all LCPS community (trial). Dr. Votaw suggested filtering information to parents through the IPE program and Sra. Flores suggested through the Superintendent's radio address.

C. *Teacher evaluation*

Teacher observation instrument: Dr. Votaw briefly discussed the analog devised by Charlotte Danielson. The booklet was provided to the board. Superintendent Rounds stated it is a tool well developed and principals are training to use it. He also stated that the ability to attain a job with the district and retain it lies with him not in the teacher evaluation tool.

Mr. Chuck Davis questioned the components of the evaluation tool. Dr. Votaw stated the board should include language in a policy invoking local control in terms of teacher evaluation on their performance within our district. Mrs. Barbara Hall agreed that the Superintendent is the bottom line. Teachers are stating they cannot do it anymore and kids are falling apart at the seams. Superintendent Rounds stated the board sets policy surrounding the teacher evaluation tool; that the bottom line is his using the local control prerogative. The board has substantial leverage to say the state process is not defined. We have completed the first round of teacher evaluations, and teachers are concerned how attendance affects their evaluation. Sra. Flores stated that high rated teachers are now being rated a lot lower. Dr. Elizabeth Marrufo, Associate Superintendent of Human Resource Development, reiterated that the first round of assessments has concluded and we are able to look at the district's areas of need. The human resource development will help teachers through this process and offer support sessions for teachers to help them get to the next level beginning in January, 2014.

Superintendent Rounds stated that until a professional growth plan is given to a teacher, the teacher is not at risk of losing his/her teaching position. We, as a district, do not want to terminate teachers, we want to help them learn and understand the process to succeed. Teachers are evaluated twice per school year. Once a teacher meets exemplary status, they are evaluated every two years.

D. *NMSBA Resolutions*

Dr. Bonnie Votaw provided a list of resolutions discussed and passed at the NMSBA Conference held December 6-7, 2013. There were 11 resolutions passed surrounding funding sufficiency, teacher evaluation deferment and reduce assessment. The T or C resolution has to do with local control of high school graduation requirements and testing. The Santa Fe resolution model surrounds a call of action regarding legal action if funding in education is not received. The Floyd resolution asks to defer for one year the long term sustainability of

effective measures in regards to teacher evaluations and supports local school boards. The resolution also asks for regional or local training of school staff.

E. Pending legal actions across the state

Karen Robles, Special Assistant to the Superintendent, stated that the LESC will be meeting in January, 2014. Proposed legislation will be discussed at that time as a precursor to what may occur in Santa Fe at the legislative session. LESC is supportive of our board and the board's concerns in regards to local rules to be established by boards and graduation requirements. Mrs. Robles urged the board and members of the retreat to continue to contact our legislators to make sure they understand the concerns. She also stated that Senators Soles, McMillan, Cote, Cotter, and Sapien are all on board and that she sees a lot of opportunity for the District.

F. Pending legislative actions

Discussed in concurrence with *Pending Legal Actions Across the State* above. There were no further comments.

G. Review of board goals for the year, especially student success goal

Dr. Votaw stated that student success drives decisions, budget and evaluations.

H. Review of previous board dialogue regarding potential legal action related to sufficiency of public school funding

Superintendent Rounds suggested waiting until after the legislative session, before discussing any potential legal action pending results of the legislative session.

Items to be added to the March board retreat agenda:

- 1) Review of December 9, 2014 board retreat actions, and 2) review dialogue regarding lawsuit surrounding educational funding.

II. Board Planning and Development

1. Proposed resolution to our legislatures to delay full implementation of teacher evaluation for one year

Superintendent Rounds stated the issue as being how much local control can you really have? A district court ruled on local control giving the Secretary of Education power over all local school districts. Dr. Sanchez provided research to the board regarding local control. He researched the state constitution, and gave a backdrop within Chapter 22 of the New Mexico State Statutes which outlines the Secretary of Education, Boards of Education and Superintendent duties. Pursuant to the guidelines, a Superintendent can request waivers with approval of the board in regards to local control and must be approved by the Secretary of Education. There is a concern of the district court ruling giving all the power to one person.

Sra. Maria Flores asked what the timeline is to ask for waiver. Superintendent Rounds responded before the legislative session and stated that a waiver request is currently being drafted regarding PE credits to be used to meet graduation requirements.

Dr. Bonnie Votaw asked if waivers could be applied for in regards to end of course exams. Superintendent Rounds suggested a policy on the banking of end of course exams. Parents can opt their high school student(s) out of NMSBA testing; but students will not receive diploma, they will receive a GED. The NMSBA is taken once, but each part must be passed. NMSBA is mandated to be administered every two years. Regulation states students can take each portion up to 3 times. A high school student only has to pass the NMSBA once.

2. *Graduation requirements*

The board discussed and came to a consensus on the following:

- 1) Proposed waiver of PE credit –December 10, 2013;
- 2) LCPS Alternate Demonstration Competency Policy – to be discussed at the December 10, 2013 regular board meeting and for approval by board at Jan 21, 2014 regular board meeting;
- 3) Resolution regarding local control - Dr. Sanchez to draft resolution based on T or C model, and policy for approval at January 21, 2014 regular board meeting; waiver request by February/March 2014;
- 4) Policy regarding banking of end of course exams - 1) draft waiver and 2) policy - introduce first reading and approval January 21, 2014;
- 5) NMSBA is taken 2 times per year – draft policy to clarify if testing passed once; student may opt-out of taking any further NMSBA testing other than to measure student growth – procedural guidance. If listed in state statute, it will need to be a policy; not a waiver – March/April 2014; and
- 6) Remove student penalty for testing for purposes of teacher evaluation or school grade – March/April 2014.

NOTE: For the January 21, 2014 regular board meeting agenda, a motion will need to be made to waive the rule to approve first reading and approval of waivers or policies.

Mr. Chuck Davis suggested disseminating the information discussed at the board’s retreat to the community. Superintendent Rounds responded with the possibility of using the webinar.

3. *Testing and assessment schedule; costs; attitudes; policy review; potential actions*

Policy ILBB is in place regarding different types of testing, etc. The board will review the policy for changes by April/May 2014.

Teacher Evaluation – Floyd model Resolution; local process; Mr. Chuck Davis to draft a resolution delaying system for one year – draft form to LESC January 15, 2014; to board for approval Jan 21, 2014. Superintendent Rounds recommended using the Charlotte Danielson draft for teacher evaluations this year.

President Phillips disbursed a computation of percentage of instructional time used for required assessments which was drafted by Dr. Sanchez for the board’s review.

Jo Galvan, Leslie Cervantes and Dr. Steven Sanchez are to draft a statement regarding the board’s positions discussed in the retreat for the board’s review prior to the action taken at the January 21, 2014 regular board meeting.

III. *OTHER*

1. *Great conversations at remaining high schools*

Sra. Maria Flores stated great conversations with students were held at Centennial High School and Oate High School which were attended both by her and Dr. Phillips. Student reviews were given to Leslie Cervantes. Dr. Phillips stated there was a lot of participation by the students and she and Sra. Flores just listened to the students. Sra. Flores stated that Randy Harris leads the great conversations. She invited the rest of the board members to participate in the upcoming great conversations to be held at Las Cruces High School and

other schools. Sra. Flores asked for a way to compensate Mr. Randy Harris for his time and stated that she and Terry Dean discussed possibly submitting a RFP.

Board members agreed to attend the following upcoming great conversations:
Mrs. Barbara Hall and Dr. Bonnie Votaw – Mayfield High School;
Mr. Chuck Davis and Mrs. Barbara Hall – Las Cruces High School;
Mrs. Barbara Hall and Dr. Bonnie Votaw –Rio Grande Preparatory Institute;
Sra. Maria Flores and Dr. Bonnie Votaw – Early College High School; and
Sra. Maria Flores and Mr. Chuck Davis- Crossroads

The Retreat adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Board President

Board Secretary

Minutes taken by Tina Gonzalez.