

OFFICIAL MINUTES

LAKE WASHINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 414

Board of Directors' Special Board Meeting

March 23, 2020

The March 23, 2020 special board meeting was called to order by President Siri Bliesner at 6:00 p.m.

CALL TO ORDER

Members present: Siri Bliesner, Mark Stuart, Chris Carlson, Cassandra Sage, and Eric Laliberte.

ROLL CALL

Present: Superintendent Jane Stavem.

Siri Bliesner noted that tonight's special board meeting is for the selection of a superintendent. She thanked Dr. Stavem for her leadership and supported her decision to resign and leave at the end of June. She will serve as Superintendent of the Sioux Fall School District in order to be nearer to her family.

SELECTION OF SUPERINTENDENT

Siri Bliesner conveyed that it is the board's main responsibility to select a superintendent who, in partnership with the board, is responsible for the operation of the district and to implement the community and board vision of every student being future-ready. Two years ago, the board conducted a superintendent search and evaluated how best to move forward, build stronger partnerships with the community and businesses, and to further the work to ensure equity, opportunity, and inclusion for all students. At that time, the board chose to conduct a national search and actively engage with the community to hear about the strengths and challenges facing the district and what qualities were desired in a superintendent.

With Dr. Stavem's leadership, in collaboration with board, staff, students, and community, the district's Strategic Plan was developed to describe how to elevate our work to accomplish the district's vision and the results that are expected for every student to be future ready. This work has begun under her direction; organizational changes were implemented, a Capital Levy was passed, and investments have been made in key areas. The foundation is in place to make significant progress and continue to build on the work that has been done.

Siri Bliesner continued and stated that a few weeks ago, the world changed dramatically with the Coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic. We and others are experiencing one of the most disruptive times faced by this district and our community. This reality has forced schools to be closed

throughout the State and redefined the role of public schools during this public health crisis. This is not a short-term event and requires partnerships with our community and other local jurisdictions. Staff are working to ensure that basic needs of our students, families, and staff are met. It is a challenging time to navigate.

With the March 6 announcement of Dr. Stavem's resignation, the board proceeded to review the information received during the 2018 national superintendent search process. The board analyzed the current state of the district and priorities going forward, discussed qualities for a superintendent, and options for selecting a superintendent. The board met in executive session on March 17 to evaluate the qualifications of an applicant for public employment

Eric Laliberte moved that the board enter into negotiations to hire Dr. Jon Holmen as superintendent of the Lake Washington School District. Motion seconded by Chris Carlson.

Eric Laliberte related that when the board makes a decision, they ask what is best for students. He felt that the challenges we face as a district over the next six months will be immense and immediate. He felt confident to hire Dr. Holmen who has served as Deputy Superintendent for the last three years in a high-performing school district with over 30,000 students to guide the Lake Washington School District. He is the best choice for our district and a top-level candidate.

Chris Carlson is confident that local, state, and national officials are making the best possible decision as they deal with the COVID 19 crisis. In the midst of this, the board needs to hire a superintendent. This is a critical time for the board to keep the best interest of students at heart. The board cannot pretend the pandemic is not an important factor. The district is grappling with unprecedented school closures and need to ensure staff continue to receive administrative support. We need someone committed to the initiatives established over the last two years. When there is a new superintendent, there is a pause as the superintendent learns the culture and the district. The board conducted a superintendent search two years ago. Dr. Holmen is a finalist in a national superintendent search conducted by

LAKE WASHINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 414
Board of Directors' Study Session
March 23, 2020

another school district. He continued and noted that Dr. Holmen's knowledge of the district would elevate him over other external candidates. Conducting a national search would cost the district two years loss momentum on district initiatives. Under Dr. Stavem's leadership, he has watched Dr. Holmen grow as a leader and feels that he is best qualified superintendent candidate that the board can hire to lead the district.

Cassandra Sage echoed that Dr. Holmen is an integral part of the strategic plan and initiatives and she is confident in his abilities and qualifications to work with the board and community. She looked forward to Dr. Holmen serving as the district's next superintendent.

Mark Stuart agreed with many of the sentiments expressed by board members. He has been contacted by many parents wanting to conduct a national superintendent search. He felt that despite time constraints and the Coronavirus pandemic, a national superintendent search is feasible and noted that another school district's search should not mandate the board's decision.

Cassandra Sage, yes; Eric Laliberte, yes; Mark Stuart, no; Chris Carlson, yes; and Siri Bliesner, yes.

Motion carried.

Siri Bliesner noted that the board will begin contract negotiations with Dr. Holmen.

Eric Laliberte moved to adjourn. Seconded by Chris Carlson. ADJOURNMENT

Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Siri Bliesner, President

Jane Stavem, Superintendent

Diane Jenkins
Recording Secretary