

St. Helens School District #502
Board of Directors Special Work Session
January 19, 2014

The St. Helens School District Board of School District #502 convened in a Special Work Session at 1:00 p.m. in the District Office Boardroom of the District, County and State on January 19, 2014.

PRESENT

Those present were:

Marshall Porter, Board Chair
Gordon Jarman, Board Vice Chair
Kelly Smith, Board Member
Raymond Biggs, Board Member
Jeff Howell, Board Member
Mark Davalos, Superintendent
Janine Salisbury, Business Manager
Amanda Stuber, Executive Assistant

CALL TO ORDER

Marshall Porter called the Special Work Session to order at 1:00 p.m. followed by the flag salute.

**AGENDA
APPROVAL**

Ray Biggs entered a motion to approve the agenda. Gordon Jarman seconded. The motion approving the agenda unanimously carried.

**SUPERINTENDENT
AGENDA ITEMS**

Superintendent Davalos opened his portion of the meeting with explaining his intent for the Special Work Session as a venue for lengthy superintendent and board member discussion about future challenges and opportunities they will face in supporting the District's vision and mission. Superintendent Davalos also commented on board member community/political involvement and the coming budget process. In the area of community/political involvement, Superintendent Davalos asked board members to keep what is best for students in mind when subjected to community push and pull about SHSD business. In the area of budget, Superintendent Davalos discussed his budget process, previous budget processes and class size relation to the budget. Superintendent Davalos closed his opening comments with a request for a healthy process through board uniformity and support when he presents the proposed budget to them for adoption.

Mr. Jarman expressed appreciation for Superintendent Davalos' comments then explained that, as an elected official with education knowledge, will continue to present tough questions about money management and why things went they went the last couple of years. Superintendent Davalos explained he was open to hearing his concerns, especially with a small audience in attendance. Mr. Jarman explained he was unsure about making some of his comments public and public record. Mr. Jarman did however reference staff hires and dismissals, money, and salary increases some staff received while teachers took cuts and asked why some of the things occurred when teachers were told there is no money. Regarding class size, Mr. Jarman explained that when teachers choose to take salary increases when funds are tight it causes staff reductions and class size increases.

Marshall Porter and Superintendent Davalos acknowledged Carol Dowsett, SHMS Principal, for voluntarily attending the meeting on a non-contract day.

Mr. Howell questioned board decisions that let teachers make decisions such as salary increases that will negatively affect class size. Mr. Howell also expressed a desire for happy staff and the need for staff to receive some type of salary increase, but questioned when to draw a line when contract decisions hinder the best ability for student learning.

Kellie Smith questioned when districts receive funding to cover enrollment increases. Superintendent Davalos explained funding information to address her question will come later in the meeting and explained that L&C and McBride had the option to blend classrooms to address enrollment at certain grade levels but they choose not to do so.

Superintendent Davalos emphasized the need for clear budget priorities and reminded the board to consider what will need reduced or eliminated in the budget to cover additions and monetary contract negotiated items during the budget and contract negotiations process.

Mr. Howell expressed desire for board unity, decision-making that is best for students, and contacting district office leadership directly if there is problem with that person or a decision they made. Mr. Howell also repeated a request for school board training then entered a motion for School Board Executive Assistant Amanda Stuber to schedule a school board training session on roles and responsibilities, etc. Kellie Smith seconded. The motion unanimously carried. Proposed dates for training include February 19 or March 12.

District Mission & Goals

Superintendent Davalos brought attention to the SHSD Mission and Goals and Strategic Plan that expires June 2014, and explained the process for a new five year Strategic Plan will begin after a facilitator is secure. The board was asked to consider areas to address in a new Strategic Plan. The process for developing a new plan will begin in the early spring.

2014-15 Budget Priorities

To start 2014-15 budget priority discussion Superintendent Davalos presented six areas for board consideration. These areas included class size, budget reduction days, programs, facility need, administration and Columbia City School.

Class Size: Superintendent Davalos provided explanation of his staffing process that involves staffing allocations based on enrollment distribution assigned to and shared with administrative and school staff accordingly. The process does not follow the “whoever speaks the loudest” deliberation but does consider student achievement and support-based need. Points the board was asked to consider included need for adjustment associated with student enrollment loss, teacher reduction or addition impact to class size, maintaining small classes at MS and HS increases size of other classes (average is across the building), defining class size by one classroom example is wrong, and schools can adjust class size within their building.

Cut Days: Cut day history with outcome included -3 days in 2011-2012 combined with teaching and administrative staff reductions, elimination of MS sports, and 50% elimination of extra duty contracts; -8 days in 2012-2013 which resulted in Kindergarten and HS not meeting state required instructional hours and staff pay decreases after several years of no step or COLA; and -1 day in 2013-2014 after the board took action to return days and add two teachers and IAs. The 1 day reduction and staff additions resulted in good class sizes K-6 but reduced reserves and reduced the ending fund balance. At this time, the cost of one day equals \$87,000; two days equal \$174,000; three days equal \$261,000; and four days equal \$348,000.

Superintendent Davalos cautioned against cutting days if the board gives salary increases, as this is a wash. He recommended starting with returning a full calendar before salary increases.

Program Analysis

The most noticeable saving options of non-required program costs reviewed by Superintendent Davalos included:

Elementary counseling (2 FTE) = <\$150,000>

Elementary music (2 FTE) = <\$150,000>

MS/HS Music & Choir (2 FTE plus transportation & equipment) = \$160,000

MS Sports = <\$35,000 after net user fees and excluding football)

HS Sports (reduction) = <\$varies>

CTE programs (3 FTE) = <\$225,000>

Secretarial positions (combined reductions equaling 2 FTE) = \$70,000

Kellie Smith questioned the MS sports budget amount and referenced the \$14,000 covered by the district. Superintendent Davalos explained the \$14,000 was a onetime cost to the district and he could not see returning the program then turning around and taking it away. Janine Salisbury added that she used the amounts received from Mark Janke. The MS sports amount is also dependent on coaching stipends and inclusion or exclusion of football, which SHMS administration is in favor of not returning the football program to the MS.

Mr. Howell asked if there was a noticeable difference in the school since returning athletics. Principal Dowsett explained there has been a reduction in after school boredom lingering and a variety of positive changes. Principal Dowsett also spoke in favor of keeping football with St. Helens Youth Football and complemented the organization on their work.

Mr. Porter questioned how to word staff reductions as provided. Superintendent Davalos recommended "staff reductions related to non-instructional learning".

Capital Projects Fund

Superintendent Davalos explained the Capital Projects Fund was originally created to account for general obligation funds when bond projects were active. Maintenance of the fund for capital projects has continued through general fund transfers and construction excise tax deposits. The district has a five-year capital projects plan built on the assumption of spending \$220,000 per year from the fund. The plan requires an annual general fund transfer of at least \$100,000, and the newly established Facilities Committee will ensure transparency in capital projects spending.

Kellie Smith explained the Facilities Committee recently met and is not in favor of the SHHS parking lot paving project and, after a tour of the high school, Jared Plahn agreed. Therefore, paving the HS parking lot will be postponed and replaced with other maintenance projects at the high school such as painting the outside of the school.

Administration

Prior to sharing administrative staff reduction options, Superintendent Davalos acknowledged increasing the Business Manager position to a twelve-month position and the Curriculum Director to full time with one-time ESD and Title dollars. Administrative staff reduction options included replacing three assistant principals with deans and elimination of one central office director.

Kellie Smith questioned duties of the Curriculum Director position. Superintendent Davalos provided a brief review of the position duties. Principal Dowsett explained the Curriculum Director as “the go to person” for everything.

Columbia City School

Superintendent Davalos reported the District is paying \$200,000 per year on a loan for Columbia City School and the district could lose the required replacement cost insurance coverage next year, which is a violation of the obligation bonds. To prevent the loss, Superintendent Davalos recommended reoccupying the school by re-assigning students and staff through a no cost model.

Mr. Biggs questioned what this meant for next year and if moving to a new insurance company would have the same outcome. Mrs. Salisbury explained the insurance loss would occur July 1, 2015. Moving to a new insurance company is not an option since the district would only qualify for cash value coverage on the building due to non-occupancy. The board discussed various options to occupy Columbia City School and when the option of moving district office staff to the building came about, Janine Salisbury expressed opposition to the option.

Prior to Superintendent Davalos resuming presentation of his recommendation to reoccupying CC school he explained that he accepts the STEM Magnet School at CCS not going forward at this time, and is confident STEM will occur within the schools anyways. Superintendent Davalos recommendation included shifting McBride 6th grade with McBride attendance area 7th and 8th grade students to Columbia City School to create a 6-8 middle school. Lewis & Clark would also become a K-5 with Lewis & Clark attendance area 6th, 7th and 8th grade students attending SHMS.

To achieve the middle school concept at CC at no cost, staffing change options included:

- assigning principal from current central office administration FTE,
- assigning secretary from HS/MS/ES allocations,
- assigning counselor from .5 HS/.5 MS position,
- assigning library FTE from all four schools to create a .5 position,
- assigning custodial time from current FTE by space and enrollment,

- teachers following students, and
- spreading and sharing electives by enrollment and schedule.

To achieve the middle school concept at CC with a savings, staffing changes could include the above items and:

- replacing elementary APs with deans <\$40-\$50K>,
- replacing elementary and HS APs with deans <\$60-\$75K>, or
- remove elementary/MS & HS APs and deans and replace only HS AP with a dean <\$300K>.

Superintendent Davalos also explained Columbia City 6th through 8th grade resident students would be optioned either middle school, and bus routes would obviously need redesigned.

Kellie Smith commented on inequity issues between L&C and McBride that would carry over with McBride students going to the more attractive building. Superintendent Davalos acknowledged some of the differences that came from different building level decisions, and agreed to put additional resources at L&C if the board supports it. Mrs. Smith strongly advocated for CC resident students to attend CC school if it is a middle school. Janine Salisbury added that SHMS improvements such as new lockers and removal of the portables are under review. Janine also explained Superintendent Davalos' proposed model would make room for the upcoming full-day kindergarten.

Mr. Porter recommended holding public meetings for input on the option and expressed preference to move the current Columbia City resident attendance boundary from L&C to McBride. Moving the attendance boundary to McBride would keep Columbia City students together K-8.

Mr. Biggs was not in favor of moving Columbia City students from their Lewis & Clark friends in 6th grade. Mr. Biggs' preference was to move Lewis & Clark students to Columbia City School for a Lewis & Clark Middle School and move McBride students to SHMS.

Mr. Jarman and Mr. Howell were both in favor of Superintendent Davalos' recommendation. Each acknowledged behavioral issues associated with the middle school grades and anticipated lower behavior issues with smaller middle school populations. Lower behavior issues would mean a reduced need for counselor services and administrative staff could focus attention in other areas.

Mr. Porter commented on the STEM shift from elementary to middle and high school, which was not the original proposal the board received. Mr. Porter explained how STEM at the elementary level could help with 3rd grade Math struggles.

Online Learning & Home Teaching Connections

On-line learning and home teaching student numbers provided by Superintendent Davalos include 87 students enrolled in online charter schools and 112 students registered for homeschooling with NWRESA. General fund ADM for each of those students is \$6,500 per student. To recoup some of the ADM funding for charter and

home school students and to serve the families, Superintendent Davalos presented a recommendation to develop and implement SHSD programs such as St. Helens Online Academy, St. Helens Home Teaching Support Center, and a high school program.

The Board was in favor of the recommendation. Superintendent Davalos will continue to research options and provide more information at a later meeting.

Mr. Porter asked what entails developing a plan for St. Helens School District students to graduate high school with an associate degree. Superintendent Davalos explained he is exploring the option with PCC and SHHS Principal BG Aguirre.

SCHOOL BOARD AGENDA ITEMS

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Classified and Licensed Appreciation Week

Marshall Porter requested board member input on staff appreciation and announced classified staff appreciation week is the week of March 3rd and teacher appreciation week is the week of May 5th. Mr. Porter recommended a late luncheon with prizes under chairs or something similar on the early release day in each recognition window. The board was in favor of a late luncheon at one location.

Gordon Jarman referenced the "Apple Award" the district use to award to staff. Amanda Stuber announced she still has the information, and will provide it for review and possible resurrection of the award.

Budget Committee Interview Questions

The board reviewed interview questions for budget committee applicant interviewing. The board was in favor of the question and determined that Jeff Howell will ask question 1, Marshall Porter will ask question 2, Gordon Jarman will ask question 3, Ray Biggs will ask question 4, and Kellie Smith will ask question 5.

It was also explained that, as of the day of the meeting, no budget committee applications were received for interviewing at the January 22nd meeting. Gordon Jarman entered a motion to extend the application window. Ray Biggs seconded. The motion unanimously carried. Interviews will be at the February 12th meeting.

Evaluation of the Superintendent

The board received a copy of the superintendent contract and evaluation samples, and Mr. Porter requested information on how to evaluate goal performance on goals not yet completed.

Adjournment

The January 19, 2013 Special Work Session adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

ADJOURN

Board Chair

Superintendent