

WORK SESSION MINUTES

A Work Session of the Springfield School District No. 19 Board of Education was held on January 25, 2021. In order to comply with the Governor's executive orders, the Board conducted this meeting by video conference only. The public was invited to watch or listen to the board meeting via Zoom Webinar or Zoom Phone. Information for participating was shared with the public on the district website and news media outlets.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Board Chair Zach Bessett called the Springfield Board of Education virtual work session to order at 5:10 p.m.

Chair Bessett thanked all those in the community who took the time to email the board to share their views on children returning to in-person instruction. He said he valued all their opinions and appreciated hearing all the different perspectives. He added that every board member had been a teacher at one time and could empathize with the concerns being shared by some staff. He concluded by saying that the board supports the decisions and direction the District is moving to return students to the classroom.

Attendance

Board Members attending the Zoom webinar included Board Chair Zach Bessett, Board Vice Chair Naomi Raven, Lisa Barrager, Dr. Emilio Hernandez, and Todd Mann.

District staff and community members identified included Superintendent Todd Hamilton, David Collins, Brett Yancey, Judy Bowden, Vincent Adams, Jonathan Gault, Greg Howells, Becky Dopps, Mindy Williamsen, Ali Vaughan, Adam Fine, Melissa Ferris, Brian Megert, Jeff Michna, Kayla Lewis, Mr. Roberts, Ashley Stolk, Karen Babcock, Alicia Johnson, Robert Monroe, Michelle Fleming, Kelsey T., Treva Thompson, Mary Harwood, Mitchell Naylor, S Lohr, Jim Crist, Mindy LeRoux, Maria Sayre-Heiss, Misty Acker, Audrey Henthorne, Emily Johnson, Jenny Orlandini, Jane Schneider, Garrett Gilchrist, April Paulson, Amber McCullers, Heidi Larson, Katie Palermo, Kara Minchin, Meyana Dummer, Colin Lyons, Dustin Reese, Lisa Dillon, Lisa Robbins, Shana McOmie, Sarah Calvez, Gina Gervase, Jennifer Shelton, Daniel Courtney, Joanna Guhit, Michael McGraw, Nicole Norris, Whitney McKinley, Moriah Shanahan, Audrey Davids, Michelle Fleming, Franchesca Sandoval, Michelle Olinger, Becca Long, Matthew Brandt, Jennifer Gonzales, Brian Martin, Burdy Smith Angie Lamie, Cheri Westerkamp, Alison Hintz, Troy Thorsby, Jen McCulley, Rachael Overall, Tanya Martin, Megan Helwig, Nicki Gorham, Leah Price, Kristen Noor, Trudy Waddell, Ginger Latta, Sierra Cochrane, Michele Reiersgaard, Tara Sloan, Amber, Adrienne Pierce, Lucille, Kerri Dawson, Erin Allman, Veronica Cheek, Jennifer Guiley, Staci Holt, Larry Walker, Jake Beckwith, Brandi Paquette, Holly Reposo, Carolyn Hoshaw, Tiffany Brown, Sarah Knudsen, CB, Heather St. Louis, Cassandra Moorhead, Stacy Dilworth, KM, Emma Routley from The Chronicle and Lydia Dysart, minutes recorder. There were also community members who attended using Zoom Phone, so their names were not available.

2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Chair Zach Bessett called for a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

MOTION: Ms. Barrager moved and seconded by Vice Chair Raven to approve the agenda as presented.

Chair Bessett called for a roll call vote. Chair Bessett asked each board member to indicate if they supported the motion to approve the Agenda as presented: Ms. Raven – aye, Ms. Barrager – aye, Dr. Hernandez – aye, Mr. Mann – aye and Mr. Bessett – aye.

Motion passed, 5:0.

3. OREGON SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATION TRAINING

Chair Bessett introduced Vincent Adams from Oregon School Boards who last worked with the board's training on October 26, 2020.

Mr. Adams guided the board through a discussion about their feelings around equity and inclusion and how that could influence their conversations and work as school board members. He continued to share that the framework for continuing this discussion would be based on a book called Courageous Conversations about Race. Part of this discussion included sharing definitions of race, racism and racist.

- Race – The socially constructed meaning attached to a variety of physical attributes, including but not limited to skin and eye color, hair texture and bone structures of people in the U.S. and elsewhere.
- Racism – Beliefs and enactment of beliefs that one set of characteristics is superior to another set (e.g., white skin, blonde hair, blue eyes are more beautiful than brown skin, brown hair, brown eyes).
- Racist – Behaviors or actions that are based in racism and perpetuate these beliefs intentionally or unconsciously.

Mr. Adams went on to say that when the board is having these difficult conversations, they need to have agreements in place and remember to check in with yourself to see how you are doing:

- Stay engaged in the dialogue
- Speak your truth, not what others want to hear
- You will experience discomfort and a wide range of feelings
- Expect non-closure, this is ongoing work

Next, Mr. Adams shared several sketches designed to underscore the differences between equity, equality and justice. Equality is based on giving everyone the same tools, whereas equity is giving different tools that achieve the same outcome for all. Justice is fixing the system to offer equal access to both tools and opportunities. We need to remember to break down barriers, as well as provide supports.

The Board took a break from 6:20 p.m. until 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Adams asked the Board to share some of their general impressions from their reading from White Fragility by Robin Diangelo:

- Good definitions
- Can be a bit abrasive in spots, but that is part of the learning
- Not a quick, easy read
- Evoked a sense of unease
- Makes you uncomfortable and that is probably the purpose of the book
- Takes you into a place of disequilibrium right at the start of the book
- Be aware of how our individualism creates certain responses in us when it comes to race

Next, he asked how do people receive and spread ideas about race? They included television, other forms of media for representation and portrayals of different races that re-enforced stereotypes. They also said that a lot of what people learned was from their families growing up, what adults around them said and how they acted along with what was taught in school. Our ideas about race grow and evolve as we get older.

Another point was made about manifest destiny, the state history of Oregon and the Oregon Trail and their effect on racism in Oregon.

Mr. Adams offered a preview of work that could continue during the next training in April. He shared a slide which defined the idea of operationalizing equity governance for the Board and how the work could be divided into different chunks of work.

- The five roles of the Board were to:
 - Set clear expectations, learn together as a team, create conditions of success, hold the system accountable, build public will.
- Most of their equity work will be through policy.
 - Operational policies were put together by staff.
 - More routine policy based on what is going on in the world.
 - An example was public health policies that were put in place at the beginning of the pandemic.
 - Transformational policies fundamentally changed how the system worked.
 - Ask the District to do things differently.
 - Using an equity lenses to determine what changes needed to be made.
- Important to include all staff and student voices.
 - Create safe spaces for everyone. It is easier now for community to attend and be involved because they can attend online.
- Create conditions for success.
 - Make space in the budget for these changes.
 - Use curriculum as an equity tool to open more opportunities for students.

Mr. Adams asked the Board what they wanted to work on in their next two training sessions.

- Superintendent Hamilton and the Board said they wanted to continue their book study.
- Learn how to embed this in Board work.
- The Board wanted to review their policy JBB, Educational Equity and policy ACB, All Students Belong.
- Guidance and foundation to welcome the new Equity and Inclusion Coordinator and how the Board could support this person and their work.
- Find ways to include Student V.O.I.C.E. and high school student board representatives at board meetings.

4. NEXT MEETING

The next Board meeting will be held on Monday, February 8, 2021 beginning at 7:00 p.m. The location and format will be determined at a later time.

5. The Board moved into Executive Session (non-public) pursuant to ORS 192.660(2)(d) to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to carry on Labor negotiations.

The Board moved into Executive Session at 7:59 p.m.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The Board members returned from Executive Session at 9:37 p.m.

With no other business, Chair Bessett adjourned the work session at 9:38 p.m.

(Minutes recorded by Lydia Dysart)