

Eau Claire School Board Retreat Minutes
Wednesday, September 8, 2021, 6:00 p.m.
ECASD Administration Building
Generated by Meta Miske

Members present

Lori Bica, Joshua Clements, Aaron Harder, Marquell Johnson, Phil Lyons, Tim Nordin, Erica Zerr

CONVENE

President Nordin called the retreat to order at 6:03 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was offered. Board Secretary Meta Miske confirmed the meeting had been properly noticed in compliance with the Open Meeting Law. A roll call was conducted to verify attendance. Dinner and social time began.

WORK SESSION

Discussion with Executive Team on Governance Model

President Nordin reconvened the group at 6:35 p.m. He indicated the Board would like feedback from the Executive Team regarding the new governance model, how it has changed their work, what is working for them, and if they have concerns.

The following feedback was shared:

- Looking forward to the focus being on results, to know what the target is and how it will be measured, to focus on expectations and results district-wide.
- Would like to have a District goal to align expectations for all buildings; principals tend to focus on what the Board focuses on, so as the Board's focus shifts to results, that will gradually shift the principals' focus.
- It's nice to know what's coming (annual work calendar) so the District can be more systemic in its work.
- This year is about getting the District's baseline and setting goals; it's a lot of up-front work but will help the District reach the desired outcomes in the long term.
- It's a challenge to navigate and determine what should still go to the Board and what is now District work, as well as how information should go to the Board so it is informative and efficient.
- Once Exec Team starts to hear principals refer to specific Board policies, Exec Team will know they have made expectations clear and are working toward the target
- Will work to look farther out on Board agendas and be prepared farther in advance for meetings.
- The new process for revising District policies is streamlined, and the new Board policies serve as a guidepost for updating and aligning District policies.
- One challenge is determining how to present information and data in a meaningful way for the Board to review and set goals; there is so much data to choose from.
- It was suggested to individually review sample monitoring reports from other districts to help Board members get an idea what to ask for and Exec Team have an idea of what to present to help calibrate expectations.
- Over time as the District presents and the Board responds, Administration will gain a better understanding of what the Board is looking for and it will be easier to prepare.
- The shifting of the release of the Board packet from the Friday before a meeting to the Tuesday before the meeting has been positive; Board members have to adjust their plans for reviewing but it allows them time to ask questions and Exec Team to respond in a meaningful way before the meeting.
- It was suggested that when a Board member asks a question, if Superintendent Johnson thinks it would be beneficial for the whole Board to know the answer, he could share the information with everyone.
- The Board discussed having a theme or a story go along with the data to keep it engaging and meaningful; reference to the Early Learning data presentation from the summer and how it told a story.
- Exec Team was asked to provide more information in the executive summary to help guide the Board through their data review and what they should be looking for.

- It was suggested that presentations be high level and slides not be read but rather presented in a way that provides professional insights.
- Discussion occurred about wanting to be forthright with the good, the bad, and the ugly with the data, even when it's uncomfortable in the public light, to acknowledge where the District needs to improve and celebrate successes.

Board Discussion on Governance Policy Changes

President Nordin posed a question about how the Board should change its policies when it needs to, where will the drafting of revisions occur, and how will that be shared with the Board for consideration. He presented four potential options and welcomed discussion and additional options.

A lengthy discussion occurred around the committee option, the pros and cons of committees, and how committee work fits in with the governance model. Various proposals were offered and discussed about where policy revision drafting could occur efficiently using a committee of the whole if a smaller committee is not the appropriate mechanism.

A consensus was reached that the Board would schedule a policy work session on quarterly basis and could be cancelled if no policy work was needed. If urgent work arises, additional work sessions could be scheduled. After revisions are drafted at a work session, they will be presented at a Board meeting for approval.

A proposed revision to B/SR-5 Superintendent Accountability was discussed. Commissioner Bica proposed striking item 6a of the policy as the data is all available in the monitoring reports and would result in a great deal of work to summarize. Discussion ensued. It was agreed to strike item 6a. A revised draft of the policy will be on the September 20 Board Consent Agenda.

The Governance Model Case Study and Role Play was delayed for a possible future work session or retreat.

ADJOURN

President Nordin adjourned the meeting at 8:38 p.m.