



HIGLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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May 10, 2023 - Board Meeting Agenda Questions & Responses

Board Members-Please let the Board President know if you wish to move a consent agenda item to an action item for discussion prior to the start of the board meeting.

Please note that we have had a request to move consent agenda item 6.5 to an action item for discussion. Therefore, consent agenda numbering has been updated to reflect the move. Thus, please reference agenda item titles for clarity on answers to questions provided below.

Question Regarding the May 3rd Governing Board Retreat:

What was the cost to have Chris Thomas come present/speak to us?

Legal services, such as those offered at the Governing Board Retreat, are covered under the prepaid legal premium the district pays with its annual property casualty insurance coverage to the Trust. Premiums are adjusted annually based on use of services.

May 10th Questions

6.3 Do we have any exit surveys or further details on any of these terminations and resignations? There are 61 staff members on this list. What are the reasons for each person listed? We had 22 in April. I believe it is extremely important to know why.

Here are the general reasons for leaving: many do not provide a reason, others state family, medical, retirement, relocation, staying home with children, different career path, taking a break, and pursuing other opportunities.

6.4 Why are they leaving and what is the fee?

Of the three employees two are leaving due to being offered positions at a higher level (promotions).

The other employee is leaving to care for a family member.

The fee that would be waived is \$500.00 per person.

6.5

Can you please tell me what the expenses are on Sheet1 starting on Row 2352? Are they supposed to be part of the entire report?

Sheet 1 contains previously approved vouchers. When we export to excel we filter down to the vouchers that are current.

I'd like to have a discussion on the following items which were listed in the expenses-**6.5**. Can they be listed separately?

BrainPop This is not on any agenda item as this was on a previously approved voucher.

Renaissance-Nearpods, Fastbridge Renaissance is on the consent agenda. Due to your request, we will move this to Action for discussion and a roll call vote.

Teachtown This is not on any agenda item as this was on a previously approved voucher.

Why can't we discuss voucher items? If we are having to approve those expenses, we should be able to have a discussion.

The line items that are questioned are not on the current vouchers set for approval. When preparing the excel spreadsheet it requires editing to show current vouchers. The previously approved vouchers were inadvertently left on the excel sheet. We provide the vouchers in excel format for board members to review. The vouchers the public see are the current, unapproved vouchers. The Open Meeting Law requires that the agenda list "the specific matters to be discussed, considered or decided at the meeting" and that the Board "may discuss, consider or make decisions only on matters listed on the agenda and other matters related thereto." To discuss vouchers that are not on the current agenda would be a violation of open meeting law.

6.5 & 6.21 95 Phonics-I'd love to get an analysis of this program. Have we looked into other programs such as Spaulding?

95% Core Phonics: Outlined in the ESSER III spending plan was the purchase and systemic implementation of a research-based phonics program that meets the requirements of Move-On-When-Reading (MOWR) for the state of Arizona. After doing research on different phonics programs and taking into consideration costs, ease of implementation, and effectiveness, 95% Core Phonics was selected. This school year we fully implemented 95% Core Phonics into all our kindergarten through third grade classrooms districtwide. Teachers are now able to provide systematic phonics instruction to students every day.

Here is some feedback from two of our sites:

- "95% Core Phonics has made a tremendous impact on our campus. Our students and teachers have a deeper understanding of phonemic awareness, the phonics continuum, encoding, decoding, and more. This program is explicit and sequential, providing multisensory activities proven to help students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The 95% Core unit assessments have given teachers the opportunity to analyze student progress and intervene appropriately when necessary. We have noticed a marked difference in our intervention program, which is also supported by 95% group resources, and the marriage of the two has been extraordinarily successful for our campus."
- "95 Core Phonics has drastically improved our students' decoding abilities. They love making sense of the patterns. They get very excited when they master a phonics skill. They are guessing less, and their accuracy is improving because they know how to decode. We have also seen an improvement in their ability to spell because we are explicitly and systematically teaching it now."

Yes, we are familiar with Spaulding as it is used at our traditional academy, HTA.

Item 6.9 Student Activities Report

Is there supposed to be a negative value for Chaparral?

Chaparral is not negative. Sossaman does have a negative revenue which is due to revenue in the month of March being deposited to the wrong fund. Finance corrected the issue and moved the revenue to the correct fund which is why it is showing negative for the month of March.

Item 6.13 Approval of Contract for Administrative Hearing

Is this a new statute or something new that we must abide by? Is this a new cost to the district?

This is not a new statute or cost to the district. Please see below.

6.13 Contract for Administrative Hearing

Can you please explain why this contract is necessary and what is the cost to the district annually?

When the district receives a state complaint it is assigned to an Administrative Law Judge at the Office of Administrative Hearings to oversee the due process proceedings. While most, if not all, complaints reach a settlement agreement prior to going to a hearing, there are still costs associated with the initial phases of the due process proceedings. The cost to the district annually cannot be determined, as it is based upon each unique situation.

15-766 - Evaluation of child for placement in special education program; due process hearing procedures (azleg.gov)

11-952.01 - Public agency pooling of property, fidelity, liability, workers' compensation, life, health, accident and disability coverage; exemptions; board of trustees; contract; termination; audit; insolvency; definition (azleg.gov)

6.14 ASBA Policy Services Renewal

Based on the # of students, this is costing the district 5,136.00/annually.

This should never be automatically renewed and should be looked at on an annual basis vs 4 years. If in the future, the district decides to not partner with ASBA, it will cost the district money.

We inquired about a year-to-year contract and ASBA does not offer that option.

1. Looks like we missed the free month (1-month free if executed and returned to ASBA by May 1, 2023)

This was brought to the board as soon as we could.

2. Do all neighboring school districts use ASBA services?
 - Queen Creek uses The Trust Policy Program for their policy subscription services (per their website)

No.

3. What percent of their services do we use and how often?

We use the resources as needed.

4. Can we receive a break down of number of times (and cost) that the district used ASBA for "policy amendment assistance" or to ensure we are in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations versus using a lawyer...over the past several years?

We use all of the policy advisories as they are published and we reach out if we have questions or need additional guidance. The specific time has not been tracked.

- Per the attached ASBA document: "...Although ASBA Amendment Assistance and Policy Information "will not constitute legal advice."
 - If their advice does not constitute legal advice, then how are their services more beneficial than having a lawyer review policy?

Policy advisories and legal advice are two separate things. Thus, it is appropriate to keep both services.

5. Have you researched other companies that provide policy services?

Yes. See additional information below.

- a. If so, how are they comparable?

ASBA provides access to BoardDocs.

- b. I ask these questions because, until recently, I was not aware that other companies also provide these services.

We are aware of both ASBA and The Trust Model Policy, and at this time we will use both policy advisories as resources to update our policies in BoardDocs.

6.15 Vendor Cooperation-Where is this extra money coming from?

This board agenda item is not asking for extra money, it is recommending the increase to previously approved vendor spend limits.

6.16 Play it Safe Playgrounds is procured under 1GPA 23-07P-08, does that mean there's a big cost savings? For Coronado it says Fund 304, what about Cortina?

Utilizing cooperative contracts such as 1GPA do have added discounts for school districts and provide set terms for government agencies.

Both playground renovations are being funded by the Arizona Child Care Stabilization Grant (fund 304).

Items 6.16 and 6.17 Playgrounds

The installation costs for rubber turf, rubber pieces, and sand are high! Wowza.

We agree with your sentiment.

Items 6.18 IGA Greater Phoenix Educational Management Council

Intergovernmental agreement between Greater Phoenix Educational Management Council and AZ Educational Management Council and Higley Unified School District #60 for the fiscal years 2023 – 2028 - Is there a cost associated with this and why is the agreement necessary?

1. What is the cost to the district for this membership and/or involvement?

Cost is determined by the size of the district. Higley is in tier 5:

Tier 5 – Enrollment (10,001, - 20,000) ADM = \$9,579. The fee schedule has been added to the consent agenda.

2. The language is very broad as to what exactly this membership provides. Is there a brochure or resources that can provide more information on the benefits of this membership. (It is interesting that Mesa USD, Queen Creek USD, and Gilbert PS does not have a membership.)
 - I looked them up online and their website does not provide anything about pricing or any more detailed information about services.

We belong to this group so that our district leaders have access to all the information and resources that are available to school leaders in Arizona. The purpose of this group is to share knowledge and expertise and collaborate on how to best share resources when possible.

Here is what the website provides about this organization:

Greater Phoenix Educational Management Council (GPEMC)/ Arizona Educational Management Council (AZEMC)

GPEMC has a rich history as one of Arizona's oldest educational organizations. Starting in Phoenix back in 1974, the organization has expanded over the years to include school districts from various parts of Arizona.

In 2020, the organization decided to strategically expand its membership on a limited basis through the GPEMC NEXT! Initiative. At this point the organization added additional members with the goal of bringing in new voices to deepen the conversation through broadened regional representation. Thus, was the beginning of the Arizona Educational Management Council (AZEMC) affiliate, which is operationally combined with the original GPEMC organization. This includes resources for Superintendents, Educational Services and Business officials.

The goal of the GPEMC/AZEMC organization is to increase student academic achievement for all.

Higley district leaders have appreciated being in the know with this group especially during the legislative season. This insight has helped our team know what policies and laws may be changing and may need revision prior to receiving the ASBA policy advisories.

6.19 Intergovernmental Agreement between Arizona Department of Economic Security and Higley Unified 2022-2027

Please explain why this agreement is necessary? What is the cost associated?

The purpose of this agreement is to provide services to facilitate seamless transition of students with disabilities ("Student(s)") from high school to the world of work in order to maximize their employability and integration into the workforce and community. The Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) is between ADES and Higley Unified School District #60, for and on behalf of those high schools and public charter schools within the school district which will provide Transition from School to Work (TSW) services under this Agreement ("participating high schools").

The annual cost is approximately \$57,400 to the district and the \$42,600 is being funded by the Arizona Department of Economic Security. Supporting a percentage of a teacher and two paraprofessionals.

6.20 Box Truck Purchase-Asking for 225k but the total is 156k, why the difference?

Agenda items 6.15 and 6.20 are two different vendors. 6.15 is asking for an increase in vendor spend to San Tan Ford in the amount of \$225,000 (San Tan Ford is utilized for all of our white fleet vehicles). 6.20 is asking for authorization to RWC International for said Box Truck in the amount of \$156,661.85.

Item 7.1 Human Resources - Quarterly ESI Report

1. Thank you for making this an **Information** and **Action Item**. In the past (this year) these updates have been **Information Items** when an increase was not requested, then on March 8th, it was just a **Consent Item** with the request to increase the budget by \$350,000. I appreciated the discussion we were able to have when it was placed on the Consent Agenda. The five Board Members only get to meet once or twice a month to legally discuss items. I appreciate it when we have the time to talk to and listened to each other and hear all perspectives, especially those that come up during the discussion.
2. This item does not mention the \$650,000 increase that is later included in the Action Items (8.3).

These are two separate items; one is for the quarterly report and the other for an increase to the purchase order for the remainder of the fiscal year.

3. In the future, can this report be built to contain consecutive data from each board meeting update? For the four board meetings listed below, three of them had an attachment and the amounts used each time were not clear. This took a lot of time to try to follow, which pulls me from time I could spend on other agenda items. This helps to drive home my point from our retreat on May 3rd. The statement made multiple times regarding board members "needing to be prepared" with all questions prior to the meeting was accusatory and does not accurately represent why sometimes questions are asked...and sometimes for Consent Agenda Items. I want to believe we all arrive at meetings with effort put forth to be as prepared as possible. BUT, for my sake, I try to research information PRIOR to asking questions (the Monday before and during the meetings) so that I do not waste staff time to respond to something I could have discovered myself. As stated above, if some items are not clearly or thoroughly explained, it makes me take more time on those items than others which may lead me to ask questions during the board meetings...even Consent Items.

Thank you for your feedback. We will do our best to accommodate moving forward.

4. To confirm, the district has spent \$677,457.95 just for the 3rd quarter? The reason I ask is below:

- **Per the 11/2/2022 GB Agenda: \$276,193.31 used for the 1st quarter**
 - “For the first quarter of the 2022-2023 school year, HUSD has spent a **total** of \$276,193.31.”

Human Resources – Educational Services Inc		
PO #		Expenditures
202300264	BLANKET PO FOR DISTRICT WIDE PERMANENT, CERTIFIED, AND CLASSIFIED SUBS	\$276,193.31
Amount Approved		\$1,000,000.00
Total Remaining		\$723,806.69

- **Per the 1/18/2023 GB Agenda: \$380,124.17 used for the 2nd quarter**
 - “For the second quarter of the 2022-2023 school year, HUSD has spent a **total** of \$656,317.48.”
 - $\$656,317.48 - 276,193.31 = \$380,124.17$

Human Resources – Educational Services Inc

PO #		Expenditures
202300264	BLANKET PO FOR DISTRICT WIDE PERMANENT, CERTIFIED, AND CLASSIFIED SUBS	\$656,317.48
Amount Approved		\$1,000,000.00
Total Remaining		\$343,682.60

- **Per the 3/8/2023 GB Agenda: \$127,363.57 used over the 28 days between 1/18/2023 and 2/28/2023**
 - “As of February 28, 2023, HUSD has spent a **total** of \$783,681.05 of the \$1,000,000 allocated.”
 - $\$783,681.05 - \$656,317.48 = \$127,363.57$
 - **No attachment included with the agenda item**
 - Increase of budget to \$1,350,000.00 <approved>

- **Per the 5/10/2023 GB Agenda: \$677,457.95 used over the 25 days between 3/31/2023 and 5/5/2023**
 - “For the third quarter of the 2022-2023 school year, HUSD has spent a **total** of \$677,457.95”
 - **Is \$677,457.95 correct?** Is that the total for just the third quarter?
 - If so, the grand total, per all board agenda items, is: **\$1,461,139.00**
 - **(total of all the blue highlights)**
 - which puts the district over the \$1,350,000 approved limit.
 - The total from the 11/2, 1/18, and 3/8 agendas items is: **\$783,681.05**

- The 5/10 agenda item says a **total of \$1,333,775.43 has been spent this school year**
- $1,333,775.43 - \$783,681.05 = \$550,094.38$
 - **Is \$550,094.38 the correct amount spent from 3/31/2023 for this agenda item?**

3rd Quarter 2023 As of March 31, 2023
Human Resources – Educational Services Inc

PO #		Expenditures
202300264	BLANKET PO FOR DISTRICT WIDE PERMANENT, CERTIFIED, AND CLASSIFIED SUBS	\$1,350,000.00
Amount Spent as of March 31, 2023.		\$ 1,333,775.43
Total Remaining as of March 31, 2023.		\$ 16,224.57

The 1st quarter report is correct, the amount is \$276,193.31

The 2nd quarter reported \$380,124.17 the day the board approved. On the same day invoices were paid in the amount of \$110,509.93.

The February board agenda stated \$783,681.05, this includes the \$110,509.93 plus one additional invoice paid on 2/22/23 of \$16,853.64 = \$783,681.05

The 3rd quarter report has a mistake, the corrected amount is \$574,519.82, the total for the three quarters is \$1,358,200.87.

Regarding agenda item 7.3 Student Dress:

Can you explain the reasoning behind updating the policy that was already in place rather than just adding to it to include religious and tribal exemptions?

The policy that we are bringing for discussion has been reviewed by legal counsel. This item is for discussion only.

The line "Exposes the wearer’s midriff, undergarments, or undergarment areas." My concern is that this verbiage has the potential to disproportionately impact women or individuals who might wear a bra. Given current styles and the potential for dress code policies to impact groups disproportionately, is there differing verbiage available that better ensures all persons are not exposing parts of themselves that should not be exposed in a school, i.e. genitalia and their chests, without creating the potential of harming individuals for wearing a style choices that do not expose themselves or disrupt the learning environment?

We appreciate you sharing your thoughts, the point of having this as a discussion item is to allow for the thoughts and concerns just as you have shared and hear from all Board members.

Item 8.3 Authorization of Expenditure –Increase to Educational Service Inc.

- How many of the absences since January 18th are from teachers that are not returning?
 - I ask for data that far back because there are teachers on the Personnel Action Item listed in the resignation section with end dates of 5/25/2023

Federal and state legislation (Affordable Care Act and Prop 206) ensures that employees are able to use their leave time. Thus, HUSD must allow employees to use their earned and accrued leave time whether they are resigning or staying with HUSD. A report of this detail would take a lot of time and cannot be auto-generated. Since this is a time-consuming request, this would need to be brought to the whole board to determine if the Board would like staff time to be used to create this report.