

School District U-46
Elgin, Illinois

February 28, 2017

The Special Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 6:10 p.m. at the Educational Services Center, 355 East Chicago Street, Elgin, Illinois. The following Board members answered roll call: Phil Costello, Traci O'Neal Ellis, Cody Holt, Sue Kerr, Veronica Noland, Jeanette Ward, and Donna Smith.

Mrs. Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Comments from the Audience
There were no comments from the audience.
2. Illinois Association of School Boards Workshop with the Board of Education
 - A. Illinois Association of School Boards Workshop with the Board of Education - Managing an Effective Meeting
The Board of Education was joined by Ms. Laura Martinez and Ms. Barbara Toney both Directors of Field Services with Illinois Association of School Boards, as they conducted a Board of Education workshop on Managing an Effective Meeting.

Ms. Martinez reviewed the ground rules for the program which are:

- The program belongs to you, and its success rests largely with you. You will likely get out of it what you put into it;
- Give freely of your experience, but do not dominate the discussion;
- Share all relevant information;
- Only one person at a time. Avoid private conversations while someone else is speaking;
- Listen alertly to the discussion;
- Be patient with other members;
- Appreciate the other person's point of view;
- Respect each other's point of view.

Ms. Toney stated that the objectives for the meeting are:

- Learn about effective meetings, the benefits of effective meetings and consequences of not being effective;
- Consider and clarify board roles and responsibilities;
- Discuss working relationships as individuals and as a corporate board;
- Understand areas of possible conflict;
- Identify next steps and board development efforts.

Agenda

- Establishing a context and expectations
 - How we are going to work together

- Overview of agenda
- The Incident
 - An exercise in decision-making
- Our legacy as a Board
 - What do we want the community to say about this board in 2020
 - Follow-up questions
- Effective meetings
 - What research shows
 - Individual and Board accountability
 - Areas of possible conflict
- Next steps
 - Identify areas for board improvement
- Reflection on the workshop
 - What one thing will I take away from our workshop

The Incident

The Board participated in the exercise, The Incident. After scoring the questions/statements the Board discussed their responses. The take-away of the exercise is that context matters and be careful of making assumptions.

Mr. Costello stated that the Board is better informed when it works together.

Ms. Toney stated that she learned from the exercise that there is shared leadership on the Board with good dialogue. Ms. Toney also learned that Board members are respectful of individual responses.

The Legacy

Ms. Martinez reviewed this exercise for the Board raising the following question:

“What would you want the community to say about this Board in 2020?”

As a result the Board developed the following list:

- It is evident that students are their first priority;
- Despite differences the Board worked together to implement full-day kindergarten, expand dual language, increase transparency, model respectful discourse for our youth;
- Lowered the property tax bill;
- Instituted unbiased curriculum and re-instituted classical education;
- Despite many differences the Board was able to keep the District moving forward;
- Improved the District academically, fiscally and culturally;
- Deliberated issues brought before the Board based solely on facts and strategic priorities;
- Retained the best CEO in this District. Mr. Sanders is deeply invested and broadly malleable to move this complex District forward cohesively by focusing on all children.

Ms. Martinez stated that with other Boards of Education the responses in this category tend to fall in three areas: student achievement/learning, fiscal responsibility and transparency and working with the community. Ms. Martinez feels that the Board's responses are typical of other Boards of Education.

Ms. Toney added that the District is very transparent and makes sure the community is aware of what goes on with the Board. Mr. Costello feels there is a large percentage of the U-46 community that is not aware of the Board's actions. Ms. Toney added that it is not just the decisions it is how you get to the decisions that affect the U-46 community.

—break—

Effective Meetings

Ms. Toney reviewed the PowerPoint on effective meetings.

Districts with negative relationships, poor communication and a lack of trust among the Board and Superintendent also had lower student achievement outcomes.

Ms. Toney said community confidence will be higher in districts with a functional Board. If the community feels the Board is not having productive conversations before the public meeting this could erode the community's confidence.

Ms. Toney added that dysfunction in the Board room can put the district at risk for educational and financial harm with lower student performance, lower property values and higher crime.

Ms. Toney stated that individual accountability is based on how the Board responds to an event. The Board needs to consider how it responds to each event.

Response Factor Disciplines:

- Press pause
- Get your mind right
- Step up
- Adjust and adapt
- Make a difference
- Build skills

Three impediments of change are:

- Power of impulse
- Old habits
- Challenge of difficult events – when you cannot control what is happening, challenge yourself to control the way you respond to what is happening.

Trust

Researchers found dramatic growth in student achievement coinciding with periods of high trust between the superintendent and the board. Ms. Toney restated that trust is linked to higher student achievement—what you do impacts student growth.

Communication Style Questionnaire

The Board worked on an activity to determine what type of communicator they are. Ms. Toney reviewed the results.

A = Assertive; C = Cooperative; T = Task; P = People

A/P = Appreciation for people

C/P = Get along well with people – this is 50% of the population

A/T = Want to get the job done

C/T = Want to get the job done right

The majority of the Board falls in the A/T group. Ms. Toney asked what was learned by this exercise. Mrs. Ward said the exercise was helpful giving insight into other communication styles. Mr. Sanders stated that the terms in the exercise are strengths and he hopes other Board members view the communication styles positively.

Opinions

Mrs. Toney referred back to the PowerPoint on Effective Meetings. It is not about being right or wrong—it is about seeing things differently. Opinions are based on four key concepts, they are:

- Liberty – freedom, choice, opportunity
- Prosperity – economy, efficiency, standard of living
- Community – safety, security, quality of life
- Equality – justice, fairness, tolerance

Role

Mrs. Toney indicated there are two roles a Board can be – legislative or governance. This Board is a governance Board. There are also two views when making a decision – trustee or delegate.

The roles of the Board are: mission, vision, goals and policies

The roles of the Superintendent are: objectives, action plans and procedures

Mrs. Toney also provided the Board with *Eight Characteristics of Effective School Boards: At a Glance* and encouraged the Board to review this information. Mrs. Toney added that the eight characteristics mirror the IASB foundational principles. Mrs. Toney added that effective Boards of Education have board agreements—which this Board has in place and are included in the packet.

Mrs. Toney specifically referred to Foundational Principle #6 – The Board Takes Responsibility for Itself. That is, Board members have the right to their opinion. You have an obligation to express your opinion and need to respect the opinions of others. Additionally, you need to respect the decision of the majority, you do not need to agree.

Mrs. Toney added that the Board of Education has a Code of Conduct which it needs to follow.

Mrs. Toney applauded the Board for conducting this workshop to learn how to better work together as a team.

3. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Noland, second by Mrs. Ward, to adjourn the special Board meeting of February 28, 2017, at 8:45 p.m. Upon roll call, yes votes: Mr. Costello, Mrs. O'Neal Ellis, Mr. Holt, Ms. Kerr, Ms. Noland, Mrs. Ward, and Mrs. Smith. No votes: 0. The motion carried by a vote of 7-0.

Approved this 24th day of April, 2017



President



Secretary