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Minutes of Governing Board Book Study/Study Session Meeting

Tuesday, May 6, 2025 @ 5:00 pm
Prescott Unified School District Governing Board

A Study Session/Book Study Session Meeting of the Governing Board of Prescott Unified School District was held on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, beginning at 5:00 pm in the Boardroom of the PUSD District Office.

All supporting documents/attachments can be found by visiting our website:

https://www.prescottschools.com/

This meeting was live streamed, and the video recording can be viewed by visiting the following link:

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Board Members present:

Governing Board President, Stan Goligoski
Governing Board Vice President, Jane Robertson
Andy Fraher, Member
Jennifer Bergamini, Member
Brett Mangum, Member

Others present:

Clark Tenney, Superintendent
Brian Moore, Chief Financial Officer
Andy Binder, Assistant Superintendent/Human Resources
Kelsey Secor, Assistant Superintendent/Instruction
Sarah Torres, Administrative Assistant to Superintendent and Governing Board
Karlee Molster, Governing Board Student Representative

Those absent:

Vanessa Ibarra, Governing Board Student Representative

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1. **CALL TO ORDER** - Governing Board President, Stan Goligoski called this meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

2. **STUDY SESSION**

2.A. **Review/Discuss Chapters 7 & 8 of "How Not To Be a Terrible School Board Member" by Richard E. Mayer.**

**Presenter:** Clark Tenney, Superintendent.

Governing Board Member, Brett Mangum, started the Book Study, sharing terrible habit number 7. He noted, this terrible habit was asking for special treatment of a school board member's daughter. She needed to get a certain class, and her father wasn't sure whether she was going to be able to get the class, so he thought about whether to call the counselor or the principal. He ended up calling the principal, who was very busy, and left a meeting to take the board members' phone call. He had a quick conversation with the board member and assured Dad that his daughter was going to get the class she needed. The question was did he act appropriately as a school board member.

Superintendent Tenney noted, one of the questions that comes to mind for me is, is it inappropriate for a parent, regardless of their volunteer roles or their professional roles, to call the school and try to make something work out well for their child.

Jennifer Bergamini noted, I think it is from an aspect of once we became school board members, we were no longer on the same playing field as we were when we were just a parent, so to speak. I think parents still have a very large voice, and I think our teachers do a really good job of that. At least my kids' teachers, I still have two at the high school, do a good job of letting me be a part of things and not making me feel like I can be just because I am a school board member. It can be challenging. I don't ever ask for anything special, and I don't think I did before. I wasn't very good at advocating in those ways, but I think it does make a difference. It's not a hat we can take off and put back on.

Andy Fraher noted, I can speak from personal experience how it impacts some of the volunteer work I do, and people respond maybe more quickly to things because we've got a school board member here doing this. I have to say we need to separate these two things. But also, you have to realize that you can't use that status to ask for special treatment or special favors, and that's a line that you really need to be careful to walk.

Stan Goligoski noted, no matter how we approach it, like in this instance, we're going to put someone in a compromising position, where it could have been a simple conversation, we're still putting them in a situation where they think, I probably need to react because of the school board member. We are all very conscious of that. Having kids in school, it's a difficult position, and I find myself pulling back even more as a parent because I don't want to put anybody in that situation.  I feel like you're going to get an immediate response, and that's not what we're here for.

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Superintendent Tenney noted, I admire what you are all sharing. It is the case that if a board member asks me for something, and if you ask Clark jump, I ask how high. I've never felt like I have been put in a position by any of you where you have asked for something that was tied to your role as a board member, that was out of the ordinary in any way. I've never had to parse my way through the ethics of that. The book is suggesting that you let it play out. You're in a different position now, so the optics of you asking for something are different. I will go back to my initial question: Is it inappropriate for a parent to ask for something for their child at school? I've been a teacher, an administrator, and a superintendent, and I get asked all the time. What I often find myself able to say is I would do this for anybody, but I'll especially do it for you, and find that the first part is genuinely true, I would do this for anybody. I find nothing inappropriate about that, and telling that person that I appreciate you asking me.

One of the suggestions is if you have a partner or a spouse, that person could ask on your behalf, and that softens it and distances it a little bit, as he also pointed out, not everybody sees it that way, so it is something to be mindful of. I don't think it is inappropriate for a parent to ask for anything concerning their child at any point. I would encourage the three of you who are still parents of kids in our district, don't entirely feel like you have to set your parent hats down, you're still parents.

Superintendent Tenney noted, let's talk about terrible habit number eight, disrespect of a fellow board member.

Jane Robertson noted that, in this scenario, it was a confrontation at a school board meeting. At the end of the meeting, a school board member decided she wanted to bring up a topic about girls versus boys and how they are treated in the schools. One board member was tired and wanted to go home, and started rolling his eyes. They got into a verbal confrontation about what you think and what I think. Lots of things were said that shouldn't have been said.

Superintendent Tenney noted, what was the main lesson or takeaway message from this one. According to the author, or on a personal level.

Brett Mangum noted mutual respect for each other.

Superintendent Tenney noted, right, and again, I have to say I really appreciate the dynamics of our board that the mutual respect is evident in the way you interact with each other. This person got a little exasperated, and the other board member called them out on this. I think we are all super careful with our body language and our wording. The recommendation is to thank the board member for bringing up the difficult issue and for saying maybe there is a way we can look at both sides of this in a future board meeting and come up with a real discussion over this issue. I appreciated that they did not recommend just sitting quietly and enduring. There is no room for that either. This was a good reminder for me. The superintendent's takeaway here was that you know, as we start as a board helping to set the tone, I think we had some good training on that, good discussion at our recent retreat, where we touched on some of those things

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**ADJOUNRMENT:** Hearing no objections, Governing Board President, Stan Goligoski adjourned the study session/book study at 5:13 pm and requested a short recess.

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Sarah A. Torres, Governing Board Secretary