

# CHURCHILL COUNTY BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

Fallon, Nevada

## REGULAR MEETING

December 15, 2016

### CALL TO ORDER

President Hendrix called to order the regular meeting of the Churchill County School District Board of Trustees at 7:00 p.m. at the Churchill County School District Administration Office, 690 South Maine Street, Fallon, Nevada.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Trustee Koenig led the pledge of allegiance.

### VERIFICATION OF POSTING OF AGENDA

President Hendrix confirmed the posting of the agenda, pursuant to NRS.

### ROLL CALL

#### Trustees Present

Trustee Clay Hendrix, President  
Trustee Greg Koenig, Vice President  
Trustee Carmen Schank, Clerk  
Trustee Matt Hyde, Acting Clerk  
Trustee Rich Gent  
Trustee Tricia Strasdin  
Trustee Kathryn Whitaker

#### Others Present

Dr. Sandra Sheldon, Superintendent  
Sharla Hales, District Counsel  
Phyllis Dowd, Director of Business Services  
Kimi Melendy, Director of Educational Services  
Brian Byrd, Director of Maintenance  
Debra Shyne, Secretary  
*(Interested Staff/Community Members per Attached List)*

### REVIEW AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

President Hendrix stated that the District published the Rio Vista Grazing lease, but the leasing of the property was inadvertently left off the agenda. President Hendrix requested those audience members present for that agenda item meet with Sharla Hales, legal counsel, as the agenda item will be placed on a special board meeting agenda on Wednesday, December 21.

The agenda was adopted under unanimous consent.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

David W. Carter introduced himself to the Board and public as a member of District II of the State of Nevada Education Board. Mr. Carter plans to attend board meetings once every six months in all eleven districts in District II to hear concerns from school districts.

Nathan Waite, teacher on special assignment, reflected back on the year and thanked the Board and Dr. Sheldon for their leaderships of the District. He commented about the building upgrades, the new gym and music room, and that staff has had many opportunities to learn and grow professionally.

## **RECOGNITION**

### **A. The Board will recognize Trustee Koenig’s 12 years of service to the Churchill County School District.**

President Hendrix recognized Debra Shyne on behalf of the school board and the Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB) for her efforts in support of the Board of Trustees.

President Hendrix recognized Trustee Greg Koenig for his twelve years of service as a Trustee of the District. President Hendrix stated that Trustee Koenig knows more about the interworking of school districts and politics as anyone in the State of Nevada and is a great policy leader. Trustee Koenig has been dedicated, missing only three meetings during his tenure. President Hendrix presented a plaque to Trustee Koenig.

Trustee Gent stated that he considers Trustee Koenig a shipmate and presented him with a Boatswain’s pipe for navigating the ship called the “School District.”

Sharla Hales, legal counsel, voiced her appreciation for Trustee Koenig commenting on his work for students in the State of Nevada and his work with the NASB.

*[The Board took a break to recognize Trustee Koenig with cake from 7:15 until 7:25 p.m.]*

## **SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE**

### **A. Update regarding District-related matters**

Dr. Sheldon publicly thanked Mr. Pranav Morar, the General Manager for the Comfort Inn, as he generously donated \$5,000 to go towards the balances on students’ lunch accounts. This money covers accounts of Free and Reduced Lunch students with negative balances and others who, with the economic downturn, have been struggling financially.

Dr. Sheldon congratulated the Board for receiving the Nevada Association of School Boards Local Governance Team of the Year award for the State of Nevada.

## **BUSINESS SERVICES UPDATE**

### **A. Update regarding general business items**

Phyllis Dowd had nothing to report.

## **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES UPDATE**

### **A. The latest Student Enrollment Data will be provided to the Board of Trustees (written report provided)**

There were no questions.

## **UPCOMING BOARD EVENTS**

### **A. Saturday-Sunday-Monday, March 25-27, 2017, National School Board Association’s 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, Denver, Colorado**

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **A. Approval of Recommended Personnel Action (Attachment A)**

### **B. Approval of Vouchers**

- C. Approval of November, 2016 Payroll
- D. Approval of November 15, 2016, Regular Board Meeting Minutes
- E. Approval of Transportation Lease Agreement with Parks & Recreation for the 2017 Ski Program
- F. Approval to receive six 2002 Thomas 90 passenger school buses form Clark County School District at no charge
- G. Approval of Student 16-43 for Exemption from Receiving Immunizations based on Religious Reasons (NRS 392.435)
- H. Approval of Revised Board Calendar
- I. Review of Policy 6163.0 – Title VII – Impact Aid – American Indian Policies and Procedures – No Changes
  - 1. Review of Changes to Regulation 6163.0 – Procedure for Implementation of Title VIII – Impact Aid – American Indian Policies, Regulations, and Procedures
  - 2. Review of Changes to Regulation 6163.1 – Procedures for Implementation of Title VII – American Indian Policies, Regulations, and Procedures.
- J. Approval of New Policy 5107.0 – Participation in Churchill County High School National Honor Society (students) – Second Reading
  - 1. Review of Regulation 5107.0 – Participation in Churchill County High School National Honor Society
- K. Approval of New Policy 5134.0 – Guest Speakers (Students) – Second Reading
  - 1. Review of Regulation 5134.0 – Procedures for the Utilization of Guest Speakers in the Churchill County School District
- L. Approval of New Policy 5139.0 – Student Social Activities (Students) – Second Reading
  - 1. Review of Regulation 5139.0 (renamed from 5137.0) – Student Social Activities
- M. Approval of modifications to Policy 5144.1 – Transportation (Students) – Second Reading

Trustee Strasdin requested Item “G” pulled from the consent agenda.

Trustee Gent made a motion, seconded by Trustee Strasdin, **to approve the Consent Agenda Action Items A-F and H-M, as provided.** There were no public comments. The motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Koenig made a motion, seconded by Trustee Hyde, **to approve Consent Agenda Item G.** Trustee Strasdin disclosed that she is related to a student associated with Item G and will abstain from the vote. There were no public comments. The motion passed; Trustee Strasdin abstained.

## **REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS**

Trustee Schank reported on progress made at the Policy Committee. Trustee Schank reported that she has changes to Policy 5134.0, Guest Speakers, and she would like to take that back to the Committee. Trustee Schank reported on her attendance at Northside Early Learning Center’s Family Literacy Night.

Trustee Koenig commented that this year was the first time in his tenure that the School Board was recognized by NASB. For many of those years the Board was an example of a dysfunctional board. Trustee Koenig stated that the Board deserves this award.

Trustee Whitaker reported on her attendance at Lahontan’s Winter Fest fundraiser, which was well attended by students and families. Trustee Whitaker reported that there were several staff members from administration and teachers at the last Policy Committee meeting working

together to develop policy. Trustee Whitaker reported that several CCSD students recently participated in the Fallon City Ballet of the Nutcracker and they did a fantastic job.

Trustee Hyde reported on the Earl Wilkins Memorial Wrestling Tournament where he heard many comments from people about the quality of the new gym; a nice asset to this District.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. For Discussion and Possible Action: Review and possible approval of the Athletic Exit Interview form to be given to athletes and parents upon completion of sports seasons.**

Trustee Strasdin worked with Sharla Hales on the Athletic Exit Interview form. Ms. Hales stated that everyone agrees that the sports program is one of the strengths of the District as it is great for kids and great for the community. In the past, there have been complaints about some aspects of the program. Complaints take resources to deal with whether they are trivial and whether they have grounds or not. The Board was seeking something that might be more proactive that might be able to fine tune problems before they become bigger problems and give school sites the chance to address those problems. The online survey would provide a voice for parents and students. A draft version of the survey is in BoardBook. Some of the complaints have centered on respectful treatment of others, so there is one question in each of the surveys regarding that.

Ms. Hales stated that CCHS would email the link to the survey to parents and students. The survey would take ten minutes to complete, and will be automatically tallied. Trustee Strasdin worked with Brad Daum and Kevin Lords to arrive at the first version and then the survey was fine-tuned. It is not appropriate for the Board to get the minute details as that would be micro managing, but it is good for principals at schools to get all of the information. These surveys are anonymous. The Board would get a compilation seasonally. Then, if Board members get complaints or questions, they can talk to Dr. Sheldon to get more information. This would provide another data point for Brad Daum and principals to use to assess the program. If administrators see a trend, then they could address the issue.

Trustee Strasdin stated that it was discussed to not send the survey the day after the final game of the season, but rather give it a couple of weeks to let emotions settle so students and parents will give an accurate survey. This could be a pilot program for a year.

Ms. Hales stated that school sites would send out the emails and Debra Shyne would compile the results. President Hendrix suggested that staff create a regulation in support of this process so that the survey is administered the same.

Trustee Hyde asked Mr. Daum and Mr. Lords if the survey would be a useful asset. Principal Lords stated that his main concern is the anonymity of the survey. Mr. Lords feels that if parents or students have a big concern that they should contact administration right away, not wait until after the season. The data would be nice for Mr. Daum to have when he meets with coaches. Mr. Daum agreed stating that anything that is proactive and transparent and will help the athletic department improve with each sport is important to him. Mr. Daum also voiced concern was that the survey should not be a gripe session and person taking the survey should put their name on it and talk to him, which would also enhance communication.

Trustee Strasdin made a ***motion to approve an Athletic Exit Interview to be given to athletes and parents upon completion of sports seasons, and to pilot the program for one year.*** The motion was seconded Trustee Whitaker. There were no public comments. The motion passed unanimously.

## **POLICIES – First Reading – For Discussion Only**

### **A. Policy 8340.0 – Meetings (Internal Board Operations)**

#### *1. Regulation 8340.0 – Agenda Setting*

Dr. Sheldon reported that that changes to are primarily clerical, but also changes Board meeting day from Thursday to Wednesday and inserts the current format of the agenda.

### **B. Policy 3240.0 – Acceptance of Gifts (Students)**

Dr. Sheldon reported that this policy states that gifts, including monetary, materials, or equipment with a value of \$5,000 or greater would be subject to Board approval. Some people have kind hearts and want to donate to the School District, but in some cases, like equipment, the cost to the District may be more than the value of the gift. This gives the Board an opportunity to determine if there will be additional costs associated with the gift.

### **C. Policy 5137.1 – Electronic Resources and Internet Safety (Students)**

#### *1. Regulation 4137.1 – Electronic Resources and Internet Safety*

Dr. Sheldon reported that Dan Slentz, Nate Waite, and Kimi Melendy, all on the Technology subcommittee, reviewed the policy and regulation.

### **D. Policy 5244.1 – Graduation Policy (Students)**

#### *1. Regulation 5244.1 – Graduation Requirements – Churchill County High School*

Dr. Sheldon explained changes to the policy and regulation. Mr. Lords and Ms. Melendy were present at the Policy Committee to explain changes. Trustee Whitaker stated that there were many changes to this policy and regulation and Debra Shyne did an exceptional job on the edits. Trustee Schank stated that if at the end of the year students have not met the requirements, they do not get to graduate.

### **E. Policy 5600.0 – Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect (Students)**

#### *1. Regulation 5600.0 – Protocol in Suspected Cases of Child Abuse or Neglect – Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse or Neglect*

Changes are mostly clerical. Sharla Hales, legal counsel, reviewed the policy and regulation.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. For Discussion and Possible Action: Presentation, Discussion, and Possible Action to approve the FY 2016-17 Amended Budget.**

Phyllis Dowd commented that it was a pleasure to revise the current year budget because it did not come with the mindset that the District has to cut something to make it to the end of the year. The beginning fund balances were updated in the amended budget. On June 1, after the budget was submitted, the Department of Education informed the District that the per-pupil rate was lowered \$69, so the amended budget reflects that change. On page 7 of

the budget, there is a reduction in the state revenue of \$264,000 based on student count projections. The District received seven additional class size reduction positions, but this money (\$320,000) will go back to the State at the end of the year as the District was unsuccessful in recruiting new teachers. Ms. Dowd reported that the Adult Education budget on page 27 shows expenses of adult education split between the General Fund and Adult Education to cover the portion of distance education students that the adult education staff is handling. There is still \$100,000 in the Contingency Fund. Budget Committee meetings will start in January.

Trustee Schank made a motion ***to accept the amended budget as is***. Trustee Gent seconded the motion. There were no public comments. The motion passed unanimously.

**B. For Discussion and Possible Action: Approval to allocate \$20,000 from the Capital Projects Fund in order to complete the construction of the Baseball Building that will house cages at CCHS Athletic Complex.**

Brian Byrd reported that he has worked with Mr. deBraga and Mr. Munoz regarding the batting cages that the Board previously approved. Their work should be acknowledged, as they have been very responsible and effective. There are five or six items where the District can help Mr. deBraga and Mr. Munoz. Mr. Byrd stated that \$15,239.82 is what the group came up with to complete the batting cages, but Mr. Byrd would like to bump that number to \$20,000, allocated out of the Capital Projects Fund, in case there are unforeseen conditions that change the scope of work.

President Hendrix asked for a list of items. Mr. Byrd stated miscellaneous form boards for concrete, \$4,900 for insulation, \$1,500 for lock doors and windows, \$700 for a rollup door, \$5,000 for an electrical package, some interior framing of a wall for the storage and office area. There will not be any heating or cooling of the facility and no domestic water.

Trustee Koenig asked the amount in Capital Projects Fund. Ms. Dowd stated \$1,158,000 at the end of this fiscal year, including the expenditure that Mr. Byrd is requesting.

President Hendrix questioned whether it was wise to not including heating or cooling. Mr. Byrd stated that he could provide evaporative coolers for the summer at a cost of \$1,500 to \$2,000. Trustee Hyde voiced concern for heat. Trustee Hyde asked if there was enough power for heat. Mr. Byrd stated that he has not researched that aspect yet. Dr. Sheldon stated that the Board could make a motion for up to \$25,000 and if that number is exceeded then staff would come back to the Board.

President Koenig asked Ms. Hales if \$30,000 would fit into the agenda item. Ms. Hales stated that she was comfortable with that number.

Trustee Koenig made a motion, seconded by Trustee Hyde, ***to allocate up to \$30,000 from the Capital Projects Fund to complete the construction of the baseball building, to include heating.*** Public Comment: Mr. deBraga voiced appreciation for the assistance from the Board.

President Hendrix stated that this is a good example of why we have good governance, good employees, and people that care. The Board appreciates the dedication for the kids.

The motion passed unanimously.

**C. For Discussion and Possible Action: Approval of Change Order to Ferguson Construction in the amount of \$8,973.75 related to additional costs associated with the Music Room Addition.**

Brian Byrd requested an additional \$8,973.75 for unforeseen conditions found during the construction process, as outlined in the memo in BoardBook.

Trustee Gent made a motion, seconded by Trustee Whitaker, ***to approve the Change Order to Ferguson Construction in the amount of \$8,973.75 related to additional costs associated with the Music Room Addition.***

Dr. Sheldon commended Brian Byrd as being the Construction Manager for this project, which saved the District thousands of dollars. Students will be in the building on January 11. Dr. Sheldon stated that if the Board wishes, they could tour the music room prior to the next Board meeting on January 11.

There were no public comments. The motion passed unanimously.

**D. For Discussion Only: Report regarding the hiring process for coaches and how coaches hire their staff and process in place for evaluation.**

Mr. Daum read the report provided in BoardBook regarding the hiring and evaluation process for coaches.

Trustee Schank asked what the initial concern was for bringing this before the Board. Dr. Sheldon stated that there was some misinformation in the District and at a Board meeting Coach Smith requested clarification regarding the hiring process.

Trustee Hyde stated that there was rumor that there would be a hiring committee and head coaches would not be able to pick their own assistant coaches. This was brought forward to dispel that rumor.

Trustee Whitaker suggested Mr. Daum keep this report on file should he be asked about the hiring process in the future.

**E. For Discussion and Possible Action: Evaluation of Superintendent.**

*[The Board took a break from 8:30 to 8:39.]*

President Hendrix stated that the Superintendent's evaluation is a requirement every year. Regulation 2120 is the Superintendent's job description and Policy 2121 is the evaluation form. President Hendrix explained the evaluation form. The Superintendent is rated in four categories: Excellent, Satisfactory, Needs Improvement, or Unsatisfactory. A numerical value of 4, 3, 2, or 1, respectively, is assigned to those categories to obtain an average. The evaluation form was emailed to Board members and forms were returned to Debra Shyne to compile the scores. For the 2016-2017 school year, Dr. Sheldon scored 68 Excellent, 51 Satisfactory, and 7 Needs Improvement ratings. In 2015-2016 Dr. Sheldon scored 64 Excellent, and 59 Satisfactory, and 3 Needs Improvement ratings. Dr. Sheldon's first year in the District she had 51 Excellent, 43 Satisfactory, and 11 Needs Improvement ratings. Her score for the first year was 3.38, her score last year was 3.48, and her score this is an average of 3.48. Her scores are consistent. President Hendrix requested Board members provide their evaluation of the Superintendent.

Trustee Koenig stated that when we look at Dr. Sheldon and evaluating her performance we have to look at the letter the unions submitted with a vote of no confidence. Trustee Koenig stated that he does not think the unions did their homework very well. In the opening paragraph they stated that they have always had a great relationship between administration and teachers. There has not been one single year when the unions have gotten along with the Superintendent. There is an accusation of hiring the Superintendent's daughter as a Community Involvement person. Dr. Sheldon didn't have anything to do with that process except that she had a daughter. She was not on the interview committee. They made a recommendation. The Superintendent does not do any hiring; that is done by the Board. Her name was brought forward as being recommended by the committee and the Board approved her. Dr. Sheldon was accused of being irresponsible because she had an outside investigator investigate a citizen's concern. The Board decided to hire an outside investigator, not Dr. Sheldon. The unions need to look at what the Superintendent's role is and what her responsibilities are before they blame her for following the directions of the Board.

Trustee Strasdin and Trustee Whitaker read from written documents (attached).

Trustee Schank reviewed the ratings of each of the 18 categories of the evaluation and commented that Dr. Sheldon received Needs Improvement marks in three areas: Management of Administrative Staff and Principals, Communication and Site Visits, and Treatment of Staff and Employees. Trustee Schank stated that after she read the letter from the unions, visited schools and had conversations with staff, and sent Dr. Sheldon a letter regarding those conversations. The main message that she heard from staff is lack of communication and counseling together as a team and lack of site visits. The Superintendent needs to be visible. Most of the principals said that Dr. Sheldon had visited their school two or three times.

Trustee Gent addressed Dr. Sheldon and stated that much like Trustee Koenig he has been working with Superintendents for the past ten years. Trustee Gent is pleased with Dr. Sheldon's work so far in particular the areas of fiscal efforts, safety, and security. Mr. Gent commented that one area that can be improved on is public relations; one reason why the Board approved a Community Engagement Coordinator. Trustee Gent thanked Dr. Sheldon for her hard work and requested that she keep the District moving forward.

Trustee Hyde thanked Board members for their previous comments. Trustee Hyde stated that he does not deal with rumors and half-truths. He bases his decisions on facts. The fact is that the District is \$2 Million dollars in the black, in large part due to what Dr. Sheldon has done. There are some needs improvement; who doesn't need improvement. Dr. Sheldon will work on those needs improvement areas. Addressing another claim, Trustee Hyde stated that he has never felt bullied by Dr. Sheldon. Dr. Sheldon received a satisfactory evaluation because she did a good job. Trustee Hyde stated that he applauded Dr. Sheldon and what she has done for the District, and hopes that everyone can come together and work together.

President Hendrix stated that unions serve a good purpose and the relationship between the Superintendent and the unions is one of the most important relationships that can exist. The other important relationship is with the Superintendent and the Board of Trustees. The Board put in an extreme amount of effort, blood, sweat, and tears into the evaluation. The

Board did not take it lightly when they listened to the three union representatives speak regarding their letter. The Board took the letter home and took time to read and dissect it. President Hendrix referred to the documents in BoardBook, which were the Board's response to the letter received by the associations.

President Hendrix stated that he adopted everything Trustees said before him and applauded their work. President Hendrix commented about the letter from the associations and voiced surprise that there were not more staff members in the audience as the associations had a 95% vote against the Superintendent. President Hendrix stated that he deals with facts and voiced concern that two members of the association who read the letter at a previous meeting were not in attendance. President Hendrix, Trustee Strasdin, and Trustee Whitaker worked hard to investigate the allegations in the letter. They did not take the allegations lightly. President Hendrix stated that they asked the District and the unions for information. The District provided information and the unions did not want to provide information. President Hendrix stated that he can't evaluate a 95% vote passage rate of disapproval of the Superintendent based on allegation and conjecture. The unions have to show him how they made that 95% vote passage rate. President Hendrix asked for a copy of the motion and what question was put forward to the members of the unions. If unions have a problem with the way Trustees evaluate the Superintendent and the way that the Board handles the Superintendent the unions have to invite the Board in; they can't exclude the Board. President Hendrix stated that he cannot evaluate the Superintendent who is getting great marks based upon secrets. Everyone sitting at the table has a relationship with the School District. Every Board member except for Trustee Gent and Trustee Whitaker graduated from the School District. We have all had kids that have gone through this school. We currently have trustees who have kids who go to this school. We take the education of our children seriously. President Hendrix has a daughter who teachers in the school, trustees have spouses who work at the school, and there are some retired teachers that sit on the Board. Based upon the evaluation given to the Superintendent and the way the Board sees her performance, as a Board, we are unified and stand behind the Superintendent. Dr. Sheldon's evaluation is 3.48, which is a B+. President Hendrix commented that as the District moves forward we can be divided or united. President Hendrix stated that the relationship amongst everyone sitting in the room will go a lot less further if everyone is not on the same page. The Board's support of the Superintendent is extremely clear and there is a consensus that the letter written by the unions criticizing the Superintendent was unsubstantiated. There were no facts. If there were facts, the Board would pay attention to it.

President Hendrix made additional comments regarding the Superintendent evaluation and his experiences with the District. President Hendrix acknowledge a disconnect in math with the middle and high school. President Hendrix stated that he will hold the Superintendent responsible if that disconnect is not fixed.

Trustee Koenig made a motion, seconded by Trustee Whitaker, ***to approve the Superintendent evaluation with a ranking of 3.48 out of 4, which is satisfactory.*** There were no public comments. The motion passed unanimously.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

### **A. The Board will meet in closed session to negotiate revisions to the contract with Dr. Sheldon, Superintendent, pursuant to NRS 288.220.**

At approximately 9:50 p.m. Trustee Hyde made a motion, seconded by Trustee Strasdin, **to go into negotiations regarding Dr. Sheldon's contract pursuant to NRS 288.220.** There were no public comments. The motion passed unanimously.

## **RECONVENE OPEN SESSION**

The meeting reconvened at 11:04 p.m. Trustee Hyde made a motion, seconded by Trustee Gent, **to go back into open session.** There were no public comments. The motion passed unanimously.

**For Discussion and Possible Action: Approval of possible revisions to Dr. Sheldon's Contract, including but not limited to possible extension of the term of the contract, change to salary or benefit, or revision of any of the terms in the contract.**

President Hendrix stated that the Board went through negotiations with Dr. Sheldon and the Board worked very diligently.

Trustee Koenig made a motion **to approve a new contract for Dr. Sheldon with the following modifications:**

- **Section 1, one year roll over extending contract to June 30, 2019;**
- **Section 7, a raise in annual salary to \$138,000 per year, with the understanding and agreement that there will be no more negotiations for salary increase for at least two years;**
- **Section 8, clerical error change paragraph 6 to paragraph 7;**
- **Section 10, change \$40 per day to \$60 per day for unused sick leave;**
- **Section 16, clerical error change paragraph 17 to paragraph 15;**
- **Section 21, Superintendent may attend a maximum of two national conferences per school year with associated expenses paid by the District;**
- **Section 7, changes to Superintendent's contract will take effect January 1, 2017.**

The motion was seconded by Trustee Whitaker.

Public Comment: Elena Marsh, Churchill County Educational Association President, commented that her membership is pleased that our District has such strong fiscal ground that it is standing on as indicated by rewarding our Superintendent with a significant increase. Ms. Marsh stated that she is confident that the Board will continue this practice by equally recognizing those who directly influence and teach our students with hard work, personal money, and blood, sweat and tears, which is all of our staff in future negotiations. There were no more comments.

The motion passed 6:1; Trustee Schank opposed.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

## **DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION REGARDING FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS AS REQUESTED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND CLARIFICATION OF REQUESTED AGENDA ITEM**

Trustee Whitaker requested that the Board provide their budget priorities at the next board meeting, with a special emphasis on looking at staff wages.

Trustee Gent requested information on how to improve the distribution of scholarships and financial aid at the high school.

## **SET DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT BOARD "AGENDA SETTING" MEETING**

Agenda setting is scheduled for January 3, 7:00 a.m., attendees Trustees Strasdin, Schank, and Hendrix.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Koenig made a motion, seconded by Trustee Hyde, to adjourn the meeting at approximately 11:14 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board then met in litigation session.

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Carmen Schank, Clerk of the Board

*Prepared by Debra Shyne*

As I developed my evaluation of Dr. Sheldon, I worked on concerns and observations from various sources. I take this evaluation very seriously. One of the sources of concern comes from the letter sent by the Associations. I read the letter multiple times and extracted specific claims that are relevant to the Superintendent's evaluation and could be researched and intelligently responded to.

Curriculum development and input is a major concern. According to the letter, "each meeting is conducted without an agenda being sent out prior to the meeting and without action steps to be followed through with before the next meeting." Perhaps it needs to be said that Curriculum Committees are "Superintendent Committees" - which differ substantially from "Board Committees." Superintendent Committees do not require formal agendas or actions steps. In spite of agendas and action steps not being mandatory, inside Board Book, pages 264 & 265, pages 348-368 and pages 380-461 are examples of agendas and correspondence used for ELA, Science, Math, and Technology Curriculum Committees.

The Association's letter goes on to claim that "District Curriculum Committees are a smoke screen for the school board to make it appear that she is collaborating with building representatives." Being a new Trustee, I made it a priority to research Curriculum development and responsibilities. According to INSTRUCTION policy 6100.0 (which is in Board Book) "Curriculum Development and Instruction Delivery" under "Written Curriculum" it reads: "The Board will direct staff to develop instructional level objectives that will be designed in a spiraling articulated curriculum K-12 based on Nevada State Standards." Under INSTRUCTION REGULATION 6101.0 Section A: Curriculum Development, Subsection 2 (also in Board Book) "The curriculum department will assume responsibility for the development and revision of the curriculum process. The appropriate curriculum committees and selected administrator

and/or teacher advisory groups will serve in an advisory capacity. the Assist. Superintendent of Education Services or designee is responsible for the curriculum of the district."

Lastly, pertaining to Curriculum of the district, I'll refer to AMINISTRATION POLICY 2120.0 (in board book) Section 18 Curriculum/Instruction/Prof. Development Subsection E. "The Superintendent shall be responsible for the methods of curriculum and instruction and shall be knowledgeable about and involved in the instructional program of the schools."

All of that to say, that it is my understanding, that curriculum is developed by the Curriculum Department which is currently, Educational Services. That committees and teachers serve in an advisory capacity - that the Superintendent, with the help of the Director of Education Services are responsible for the methods of curriculum - and that those methods - whether they are new or changed are presented to the board and adopted via school board trustees in accordance to Open Meeting Law. My understanding aligns with INSTRUCTION REGULATION 6101.0 Section C: Curriculum Adoption - "It is the policy of the Churchill County School Board of Trustees that no course of study shall be eliminated or new courses added without the approval of the Superintendent and the Board of Trustees, nor shall any basic alteration or reduction of a course of study be made without such approval."

So in taking the claims of the Associations into consideration while conducting this portion of my evaluation - I do not see Curriculum Committees as smoke screens, I see them serving in an advisory capacity. I commend Dr. Sheldon and designees on the job done so far in the area of curriculum. Churchill County School District is simply not stacking up, the data proves it and I - for one- consider it irresponsible to simply ignore data. Aligning curriculum with the standards and establishing one curriculum across grade levels seems rational, necessary, and appropriate.

THE Associations refer to Section 8 of the Superintendent Evaluation, COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS. As I read through each subsection of that section of the evaluation, I was able to identify compliance in multiple areas. I have inquired and am satisfied that Dr. Sheldon has in fact, and will continue to meet with staff in some of their scheduled staff meetings, attend collaborations, and meet in teacher classrooms. Dr. Sheldon attends many committee meetings and has done multiple classroom walk-throughs. Dr. Sheldon gives notification if she is unable to attend a scheduled meeting. Dr. Sheldon meets twice a month with building administrators, which is a critical piece in the communication process - as seen in PERSONNEL REGULATION 4117.2 Administrator Job Performance Indicators. Under "School Management" Subsection 11 "School Management keeps the Superintendent informed of school activities and problems. Under "Personnel Supervision" Subsection 6 it reads, "Personnel Supervision utilizes staff meetings for informational flow as well as providing growth opportunities for staff members." According to the evaluation, I observe that Dr. Sheldon does in fact communicate with local, state, and federal agencies *especially* in the area of legislative and budget issues. Dr. Sheldon and the Board of Trustees approved a position to specifically establish protocol for communications with students, parents, media and community organizations. I continually receive newsletters, internet presence, and all-calls. On a personal note, I have lived in Fallon my whole life, I consider myself active in the community, and I have to say that I could not - in any way - know the majority of the staff by name. Churchill County School District is a large entity and as much as I enjoy the personal touch just as much as the next person, I would be terrified if my job performance was based on knowing everyone's names.

On the topic of recruitment, the letter from the Associations reads, "Dr. Sheldon has not taken on the responsibility of recruiting to fill teaching positions in the district." In Board Book,

pages 283-284 are evidence of recruiting attempts initiated by Dr. Sheldon. Dr. Sheldon has directed HR to have ongoing notification to universities, CCSD has a web presence in search for teachers, and Dr. Sheldon is lining out job fairs for this Spring. It is no secret that Nevada has a teaching shortage, numerous articles have been written on the subject in recent years, and even Governor Sandoval implemented an emergency regulation in an attempt to alleviate the shortage. Dr. Sheldon and Phyllis sought and received permission from the Board and the State to hire back retired educators to fill teaching positions without the retirees getting penalized for working. In light of these circumstances, I consider Dr. Sheldon's responsibility for recruiting to be acceptable.

Continuing on, the Associations write "The shortage in substitutes creates serious problems in the classrooms..." The Superintendent, along with the Board recognizes the problem and agree with the Associations. As I consider her evaluation, I note that under the suggestion of Dr. Sheldon, we've raised substitute pay and have established web presence in search of subs. It only makes sense that when the state is experiencing a teaching shortage, that we would experience a substitute teaching shortage, as well. As a side note, we may want to agendize this concern for another meeting this shortage of substitutes may be an excellent opportunity for the Associations and the Superintendent to work together in search of solutions.

The Associations claim that "Dr. Sheldon has hampered good community relations." The Association's letter specifically mentions graduation, bus scheduling and traffic control as things that have suffered. Section 8 of the evaluation specifically refers to public relations. It mentions "local, state and federal government agencies," and "students, parents, media and community organizations." Although not specifically stated, I read the evaluation to require the Superintendent maintain good relations with these entities. Currently, Dr. Sheldon has represented the

district at many community events. Some of those events include Rotary, Churchill County Business Council Breakfasts, Community Coalition Meetings, NAS Fallon Meetings with Commanders, Recently, she held a town-hall meeting at NAS Fallon for parents of military students, Chamber of Commerce Banquets, Economic Development Forums, Christmas Tree Lightings, Sorority Craft fairs, Parks and Rec fundraisers. She meets regularly with the Churchill County Sheriff's Department and Fallon Police Department to coordinate security and safety issues. Dr. Sheldon has worked with the Mayor and County Administrator on projects for the district. She has also testified before City Council and has presented to the County Commissioners. Dr. Sheldon also works Juvenile Probation, Churchill County Sheriff's Office, Fallon Police Department and Nevada Social Services through the Discipline and Attendance Committee. The City of Fallon continues to help with the graduation ceremony and the City of Fallon provides traffic control before and after school. The District also has a good relationship with NDOT and the County as we continue to work with them regarding traffic on Highway 95, Sheckler Road and Merton Drive.

It is my opinion that Dr. Sheldon is maintaining good human relationships with the general public.

INTERNAL BOARD OPERATIONS Policy 8200.0 states "To be effective, an individual trustee: Understands the distinctions between Board and Staff roles – The Board's Job is to ensure accountability – Effective Boards maintain accountability for student learning by adopting the district curriculum and monitoring student progress. Hire and support the superintendent so that the vision, goals and policies of the district can be implemented."

Evaluations are an important part of maintaining accountability. And according to policy, supporting the superintendent is necessary in order to implement the district's vision, goals and policies.

According to the Associations letter, “Churchill County School District has always been a strong district, one where decisions were made on a collaborative basis with the best interest of our students in mind, [that] in the past three years we have experienced a dramatic shift...Increasingly over the past few years we have had concerns regarding Dr. Sheldon’s leadership specifically regarding trust, decision making, communication, and her lack of respect for staff...our district has had the lowest morale amongst employees that it has ever had....”

The claims of the associations are certainly disheartening, but the most concerning for me is that the claims allude to a better time in the district when input, collaboration, chain of command, and communication were thoroughly intact, morale was high, and teachers were content. I’ve lived here my entire life and that has simply not been the case. Worse than that is the fact that Nevada, including Churchill County, is almost dead last on the national level. Whatever has been happening is absolutely not working. I am not suggesting that collaboration and communication are not important. The evaluation refers to it in several capacities. I am suggesting that all too often in education, that it is quite easy to point a finger, and in Churchill County it is usually directed at the Superintendent. Dr. Sheldon has been critical in leading our district out of financial ruin, critical in developing a strong working relationship with your board, and has begun interpreting the data and righting the course of mix-matched curriculums that fail to meet state standards and have resulted in extremely low test scores and a growing drop-out rate. Her focus is exactly where it needs to be. I have witnessed gains, I recognize her continuing efforts, and I have been present numerous times as Dr. Sheldon sings the praises of a hard-working groups of teachers, administrators, classified personnel and directors. A public evaluative process would be welcomed by very few, I see the results of Dr. Sheldon’s

evaluation as an accurate and promising picture for Churchill  
County School District.

Trustee Tricia Strasdin

The three associations in Churchill County School district read a letter at the November board meeting that stated, "In the past three years we have experienced a dramatic shift in the vision and direction of our school district."

I agree wholeheartedly with that statement. Prior to three years ago, there was no district vision, an insolvent budget, and no solid district curriculum plan, but because of Dr. Sheldon's leadership, the district has a vision, a solvent budget, and the beginnings of a solid curriculum plan. Dr. Sheldon's evaluation provides expectations none of the least of which have to do with the general efficiency of the school system, professional development, curriculum, and increased academic rigor.

As I have spent hours researching for my evaluation of Dr. Sheldon, I have discovered that Dr. Sheldon, in spite of the critics, backlash, and naysayers, has maintained a steady focus on moving Churchill County School District in the direction it needs to be moving to help our students succeed. The adage, "If you always do what you've always done, then you'll always get what you've always got." is apropos. If we want to go back to the outdated vision, then we are doing a huge disservice to our students. As a trustee of this district, I am not going to sit in meeting after meeting and make decisions that allow the status quo to happen because the results of the past speak very clearly, and we are failing our students.

The recent Smarter Balanced test scores speak very plainly to this problem of thinking we don't need to course correct. Only 45% of our third through eighth graders are proficient in English Language Arts and just 27% are proficient in math. Both of those scores are below the state average and below the averages in both Washoe and Clark Counties. For those who will excuse away the abysmal scores by stating the SBAC is a new test and teachers and students need time to learn how it works, are wrong. The scores mirror what our MAPs scores have been showing us for years. Our disservice to students in all levels gives us the result of a bleak graduation rate. A graduation rate where only 75% of our students are graduating is absolutely unacceptable. Why are we okay with this poor performance? Why do we keep kicking against the pricks while ignoring the people who should matter most to all us? If we continue to do as we've done in the years prior to Dr. Sheldon's hiring, then we are sticking our heads in the sand and saying we're fine with less than half of our students reading and writing at a proficient level and less than a third who can do basic math. We're fine with a quarter of our students not graduating.

Nobody in this district should be okay with these outcomes. Instead, we hear complaints because Dr. Sheldon has higher expectations. I am not okay with the district's performance and neither is Dr. Sheldon. She is actually the one who IS doing something about it and she firmly believes that we can do better by utilizing effective professional development, in-class coaching, and a stronger, unified curriculum. But doing better requires breaking old, ineffective habits and long-held, outdated district cultural beliefs that are harmful to the success of our students. Doing better requires a superintendent who has a vision, expects improvement and believes we can improve.

According to the Superintendent's Evaluation Form, Policy 2120.0, section 7a. "The Superintendent shall: Be responsible for the dissemination of all general orders adopted by the Board relating to all school employees and is charged with the enforcement of policies, regulations and decisions of the Board."

There have been several allegations that Dr. Sheldon is not doing her job, but the claims blame Dr. Sheldon for action in which she was directed by the board to make. Decisions regarding curriculum, reorganizations, jobs, recruitment, and fiscal responsibility all relied on board vote for direction and action. Dr. Sheldon is simply doing the job we, as a board, have asked her to do.

In sections 17 and 18 of the evaluation which both deal with academic progress and growth, school improvement, curriculum, and professional development, Dr. Sheldon received all excellents and satisfactories.

The superintendent evaluation district Policy 2121.0, section 17a.states: "The superintendent shall be responsible for the general efficiency of the school system, for the development of the teaching staff and for the academic growth and welfare of pupils; be responsible for the methods of curriculum, instruction, professional development, assessment, data analysis and management used by teachers and principals, and shall have the authority to hold such meetings of teachers and principals as he/she deems necessary, and shall require attendance at such meetings."

One expressed concern was that the Read Well intervention program was selected without any teacher or principal input. According to district policy 6100, under regulation 6101.0, curriculum development is the responsibility of the district and "appropriate curriculum committees and selected administrator and/or teacher advisory groups will serve in an advisory capacity." In other words, the superintendent is not *required* to have teacher or principal input. Teacher and principal input is only advisory. When Dr. Sheldon arrived three years ago, about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of our third grade students were reading below grade level. The district had no significant, consistent reading curriculum and there was a sense of urgency to do something about it.

Because Dr. Sheldon had successful experiences with Read Well as an intervention program in the previous two districts in which she worked (one with a high level of poverty and second language learners), she implemented the program in our district. Dr. Sheldon witnessed the success of the program, when used with fidelity, and she knew that if used correctly in our district, we could provide much needed support to students to help them with their reading proficiency. We can spend a lot of time bemoaning the implementation of the intervention, but the cold, hard facts are that our students are not reading at grade level. How can we excuse what was being used previously if reading scores were so low? We cannot! It takes time and a lot of effort to learn, integrate, and become masters of a new program, but that is what is required if we are to help our students!

Dr. Sheldon came with firsthand experience from a district that saw results in schools with similar make-up to ours. That first hand experience is far more valuable than a committee selecting a text from a publisher who had the best sales technique. Dr. Sheldon's decision to implement Read Well was well within the bounds of board-driven policy and she acted because she wants students to be able to read.

Policy 2121.0 section 5a. states, "The Superintendent shall recommend the number and type of positions needed for the effective operation of the school district." Section 1e. also states: "The Superintendent shall actively seek public input on budget reductions for programs which will directly impact students." Dr. Sheldon received excellent and satisfactory ratings in both of these areas. The claim is made Dr. Sheldon reorganized or tried to reorganize administration in the schools for two years in a row without due process. I would like to speak about the reorganization of administration when the schools were reconfigured to grade level schools. In early 2015, Dr. Sheldon and Ms. Dowd introduced to the district budget committee, of which I was a parent member at the time, four options to reconfigure schools in order to save a substantial amount of money. In the minutes of the budget committee's February 10, 2015 meeting, Ms. Dowd stated that Option 2, which is our current configuration, would eliminate a principal position. The minutes also show that Mr. Keith Boone, president of the administrators association moved to make a recommendation to the board to approve Option 2, the one which eliminated the principal position. It was overwhelmingly approved with one "no" vote and one abstention. The board held extra public meetings for discussion. On February 17 and 19, and on March 12 and 26, the reconfiguration options were agendaized and discussed by the superintendent, board, staff, and the public. In the March 26 meeting, Mr. Boone again expressed his support for the grade level option. There is ample evidence of due process and the practice of following correct policies and procedures by Dr. Sheldon during this reorganization of administration. The action was never grieved.

Policy 2121.0, Superintendent's Evaluation Form, section 8a. States: "The Superintendent shall establish protocol and measures for communication with students, parents, media, and community organizations. . . ." A lack of communication is another stated concern. I will somewhat agree, and our evaluation tool shows communication could be improved.

When I first became a board member, in my first meeting with Dr. Sheldon I also spoke with her about the need to improve public relations with parents and the community. I reiterated that belief on more than one occasion. Dr. Sheldon also recognized the need. Regarding "reorganization" again, let me reiterate, Policy 2121.0 states, "The Superintendent shall recommend the number and type of positions needed for the effective operation of the school district." This fall, in order to improve communication and engagement with parents and the community, Dr. Sheldon presented a proposal to the board to change the job description and responsibilities of a job that was already in the Educational Services office but was recently open because of a job transfer. The old job dealt with some parent involvement, but the new job would add more parent engagement responsibilities and include additional responsibilities for community engagement and public relations as well. The board knew we needed to make improvements in

communication so the board discussed the creation of the new job title and duties at our September 22, 2016 meeting. The position of Parent and Community Engagement Coordinator was approved unanimously with NO public comment.

The position was created to help improve communication. The position was not introduced or created to hire Dr. Sheldon's family member. Dr. Sheldon did not hire her. In fact, when Dr. Sheldon found out her daughter applied for the position after it opened, she sent an email to the board to disclose her daughter's intention. The email is submitted in board book on page 371. The hiring followed the hiring protocol practiced by the district. Under the direction of the Education Services director, who has direct oversight over the new position, a hiring committee was formed, eight people applied for the position. After screening the eight candidates, **only three met the screen criteria** and they were called for interviews. One of the three candidates declined the interview because the candidate did not want to work full-time. When the new Parent and Community Engagement Coordinator was placed on Consent Agenda for hiring approval by the board on October 27th, Dr. Sheldon disclosed publicly that her daughter was being recommended for hire. Again, there was NO public comment. Upon further review, district counsel determined there is no state nepotism law; furthermore, the district has no policy regarding the hiring of family members. If we did, more than 50 employees in the district could not have been hired. Dr. Sheldon was within her right to recommend a position needed for the effective operation of the district.

Another accusation regarding employment is that there is a conflict of interest because Dr. Sheldon acts as the human resources director and the superintendent. **Policy 2121.0 states, "The superintendent shall follow board policy and regulations concerning the complaint process."** The master agreements clearly outline the procedures required for grievances. All grievances first go to the supervisor of the grievant. In other words, if a teacher has a grievance against his or her principal, the grievance would start with the principal. The same claim of conflict of interest therefore resides with the grievance process at the teacher/principal level. Dr. Sheldon follows the master agreement. If a grievance is filed against Dr. Sheldon and is not resolved with her per the Master Agreement, the board then hears the grievance. And we have heard grievances.

The Superintendent's Evaluation Form Policy 2121.0's first section reviews Dr. Sheldon's financial responsibility to the district. There is accusation that Dr. Sheldon has shown fiscal irresponsibility. Nothing, I repeat nothing, could be further from the truth. On page 267 of the board book you can see the financial health of the district for the last five years. When Dr. Sheldon arrived at the district, the district had its largest ever deficit spending of 2.9 million that required the use of fund balance. In her first year here, Dr. Sheldon guided the district to cut that deficit spending of the fund balance to 1.5 million. In 2015 the deficit spending dropped to \$27,000. In 2016, the district had no deficit spending—the first time in five years—which increased the fund balance by 2.1 million dollars. There has been a positive change of more than 3 million dollars since her tenure. I sat on the budget committee as a parent and attended as a board member. I witnessed Dr. Sheldon's guidance and clear direction. Without that guidance

and leadership, and without the wise and difficult voting decisions of the board, we would not have a positive balance today.

One claim of financial irresponsibility is that she recommended a director receive an almost 30% raise. The raise was 23% and was made to make his salary match the salary of the next lowest paid director in the district. He is now getting paid the same amount as someone who is much younger and with far less experience. There was also an issue of a civil rights violation that had to be considered. The recommendation for the raise originally came before the board on August 27, 2015. Several board members, including me, were concerned about the raise at that time. At the June 23, 2016 board meeting, Dr. Sheldon again recommended the raise. Because the district was in a far more financially sound position, the board approved the raise. The amount of the raise, \$12,000, accounts for .0003% of the total 2016 budget. Repeat, .0003%. Dr. Sheldon was not financially irresponsible in recommending the raise.

Lastly, according to the evaluation, Section 1f states, **“The Superintendent shall secure funding through grants and other means.”** The accusation has been made that Dr. Sheldon has not actively applied for grants, especially to the highest amount available. In fact, the accusation is that “there is no comparison to the amount of grants received under previous leadership compared to current practice.” This accusation is correct, there IS no comparison to the amount of grant funding we now receive compared to previous leadership. On page 270 of the board book, a grant report shows that during previous leadership in 2013, the district was awarded \$2,186,000 in grant monies. In 2016 that amount INCREASED by \$1.6 million to \$3,845,000. If divided per student based on the attendance reports for 2013 and 2017, in 2013, the district received under \$900 per student, whereas now we are receiving more than \$1100 per student.

The reference to not applying for the largest amount available completely ignores grant stipulations. Grant money is not free money. Every grant, including the Read by 3 and CTE grants require a large amount of work from teachers outside of the regular classroom requirements. There are required professional development classes and monthly literacy nights, to name a couple. Dr. Sheldon is very aware that if the district applied for more money, there would be more requirements for teachers. Therefore, whenever a grant is considered or being written, the district pays attention to the commitments it would require and seeks to strike a balance between what the district needs to help students succeed and what would be asking too much of staff to meet the minimum requirements of the grant. Dr. Sheldon has succeeded in securing grants and most assuredly lead the district out of veritable financial ruin. The district is in a healthy financial state because of her leadership.

All employees of Churchill County School District receive evaluations. Dr. Sheldon received a score of 3.48 on her evaluation. If all staff scored at least a 3.48 on their evaluations, we would be thrilled with the hard work, effort, and skill exhibited by the employees. Can there be improvement? As with all employees, yes, but we now have a healthy budget, a district vision, and plans for a solid curriculum because of Dr. Sheldon. Dr. Sheldon is working hard to help our

district focus on what matters most, the academic success of our students, and I support her in her efforts in making that happen.

~Kathryn Whitaker