



**AUGUST 29, 2007
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
BOARD GOVERNANCE
FACILITATOR: CATHY TOLDI
ADOPTED MINUTES**

**District Office - Boardroom
292 Green Valley Road
Watsonville, CA 95076**

1.0 CLOSED SESSION OPENING CEREMONY IN OPEN SESSION – 5:45 PM

1.1 Call to Order

Vice President/Clerk Turley called the meeting of the Board to order at 5:50 pm at 292 Green Valley Road, Watsonville, CA.

1.2 Public comments on closed session agenda.

None.

2.0 CLOSED SESSION

2.1 Selection of Deputy Superintendent

3.0 OPENING CEREMONY – SPECIAL BOARD MEETING – IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION

3.1 Pledge of Allegiance

led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3.2 Welcome by Board President

Trustees Leslie De Rose, Sandra Nichols, Karen Osmundson, Kim Turley, Libby Wilson, Willie Yahiro, and President Doug Keegan were present.

President Keegan welcomed everyone to this meeting, welcomed Cathy ToTrustee De Rosei to facilitate this Governance session.

4.0 APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Trustee Wilson moved to approve the agenda; trustee Turley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5.0 BOARD GOVERNANCE

5.1 OPENING COMMENTS

• **Welcome and review agenda — President Doug Keegan**

President Keegan noted he was excited to have this session take place.

• **The purpose of this study session is to discuss how to best put the board’s approved Governance Standards into action.**

Cathy Toldi explained that process for establishing priority issues to discuss tonight. There are two sections which will be discussed, the governance standards which were approved by the board.

5.2 ESTABLISH PRIORITY GOVERNANCE ISSUES TO DISCUSS THIS EVENING

The Board was guided by the following directions from facilitator Toldi, and asked them to begin thinking about answers to the questions below:

- We will divide our time this evening into two sessions. During the first session, trustees will have a chance to discuss governance standards listed under Board Bylaws section

9005(a). During the second session, trustees will discuss standards listed under 9005(b). Each trustee will indicate their top three priority standards to discuss in each session.

- Please note: trustees are not being asked to indicate which standards they think are most important; rather, the question is: *which standards do you think are most important to discuss tonight?* For example:
 - Do you anticipate any challenges in putting a given standard into action? If so, how might those challenges be addressed?
 - Are there any of these standards which are unclear? If so, what needs to be clarified?

5.3 **SESSION #1: DISCUSS BOARD BYLAW 9005(a)**

“The Board of Education believes that its primary responsibility is to act in the best interests of every student in the district. The Board also has major commitments to parents/guardians, all members of the community, employees, the State of California, laws pertaining to public education, and established policies of the district. To maximize Board effectiveness and public confidence in district governance, Board members are expected to govern responsibly and hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical conduct.”

The eight approved standards are as follows, with the pre-text of “The Board expects its members to work with each other and the Superintendent to ensure that a high-quality education is provided to each student. Each individual Board member shall...”:

1. **Keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus**
2. **Value, support and advocate for public education**
3. **Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents and the community**
4. **Act with dignity, and understand the implications of demeanor and behavior**
5. **Keep confidential matters confidential**
6. **Participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader**
7. **Understand the distinctions between Board and staff roles, and refrain from performing management functions that are the responsibility of the Superintendent and staff**
8. **Understand that authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individuals**

Once Board members had an opportunity to label the most important to discuss, they got into deep discussions about them and commented their thoughts about each of them:

#3 Recognize and respect differences of perspective and style on the Board and among staff, students, parents and the community

TRUSTEE DE ROSE: public should know that opinions from the public are respected, although sometimes we may not view things the same way.

TRUSTEE OSMUNDSON: perhaps president Keegan can reassure the public that their opinions are important and respected.

TRUSTEE NICHOLS: behavior that may show respect includes facial expression and body language; perhaps taking notes while the speaker is giving their comments; that would make the public feel empowered.

TRUSTEE TURLEY: when she has an opportunity to comment on a public topic, I can just acknowledge what has been said. She felt she could improve in this area as well. It is important to agree to disagree, take personal attacks out of discussion. I feel that there are some topics that almost become a “religion” in that there is just one-side, all or nothing. I think that hurt us. When you bring

two sides there is a conflict, it is important to realize that an agreement may not be reached. It would be important to speak about why the person feels a certain way.

TRUSTEE OSMUNDSON: making the audience feel well but saying 'thank you' when they are done.

TRUSTEE DE ROSE: some members of the public may not know that we should not have dialogue with them while they give us their opinion. Breaking down points will also be helpful.

TRUSTEE WILSON: finding common ground to work from; listening to the speakers.

PRESIDENT KEEGAN: the idea that we feel safe expressing our opinions and that we feel that we are not going to be attacked, certainly by other members of the board. Maintain courtesy and respect for each other.

TRUSTEE OSMUNDSON: members of the community who have attacked board members, I feel wrong about not having stopped them from doing that.

TRUSTEE YAHIRO: all of us have a different view coming in and hopefully we will be able to tunnel those seven different thoughts into one action. How can we discuss things when we have such different views? That's why it is important for me to understand what lies behind each view.

TRUSTEE NICHOLS: issue of our relationship and the trust between board members. What we say about each other when we talk to reporters, it gets back to us, I'm not talking about an idea or an issue, I am speaking about an unnecessary remark about a trustee which ends up in print, isn't positive to building trust.

TRUSTEE DE ROSE: at my job we give marketing and customer service seminars; there are external customers and internal customers: we are not only working for the people who come into your business but also with people within the organization. We should give each other and the public good customer service.

#1 Keep learning and achievement for all students as the primary focus

TRUSTEE WILSON: it is important to remember that we are in this board for the student and their achievement. We as a board need to be supportive towards our superintendent and our staff; they are the ones who drive what students receive.

PRESIDENT KEEGAN: this standard is important because if you follow the standard, you are not distracted by other things that are swirling around as part of the job. There are times when issues such as district/union relations, etc., come up and I think that it is important to not see that issue as important on its own but to see it how it is important relating it to student achievement and learning. Less significance should be given to issues that are far from this particular issue of student achievement. We cannot go wrong if we focus on that goal.

TRUSTEE TURLEY: this question for me should be a reflective thought in any decision that we make. Sometimes it gets difficult, but it is best to always come back to this standard. I need to model this behavior; I want the community and staff etc. to see that. It is easy to eliminate politics this way as well. It takes the personal things out of all dealings; it is just about children. When we do come to an agreement, it means that we don't go out and sabotage, that is not really what would help keep the focus on students.

TRUSTEE DE ROSE: agree with trustee Turley; one of the best pieces of advice I got was to find what your core values are and that has made this job a lot more easier.

#8 Understand that authority rests with the Board as a whole and not with individuals

TRUSTEE YAHIRO: the essence of being on the board, we have a function we follow to guide people when they ask about things that require a process and it is important to get them in that direction. Trying to get a seven vote would mean that we all have the authority as a whole.

TRUSTEE DE ROSE: it means that we are a team; when we make a decision, it is done as a board. No one person has the power to make decisions on their own.

TRUSTEE WILSON: as a board we are working together as a goal. We need to do that or we will fail.

TRUSTEE NICHOLS: issue of attempting to get a 7-0 vote. I agree that a unanimous vote is very powerful, and in attempting to get that vote, compromise is necessary, from both sides, the majority and the minority. There are some issues that some board members for various reasons may not be able to compromise in. Recalls one person out of 650 in congress who voted no on an issue regarding the war and that no vote should be respected, not chastised.

TRUSTEE TURLEY: I would agree with trustee Nichols. There is nothing wrong with voting no or yes and being the minority. However, I think that the media and other groups have made it an issue when it is not a 7-0 vote. I would be very concerned if we voted 7-0 in every issue; it is how we handle the situation when we vote; when the board has made a decision, that decision is the authority on that particular item. Not everyone has to like it but it is important to respect it. It is the same thing that is going on in the schools with their staff. Things have changed so much and some staff are not willing to support the change. That behavior starts here, we set the pace. We are like a family, if we are dysfunctional, the children will be dysfunctional.

TRUSTEE YAHIRO: I don't have a problem with people who come up to the podium and have a passion and criticize the board if the focus is academic achievement. I do have a problem with people who use our students for their own political advantage.

TRUSTEE NICHOLS: I feel that I need to respond to some of the things that trustee Turley has said; I have been in the position of being on the minority. The press does have the right to print the minority opinion. I don't think that in this board there is any criticism by the minority in print; I don't think that happens in this board.

TRUSTEE TURLEY: mentioned a recent article on the Sentinel which referenced the hiring of the Deputy Superintendent because the Interim Superintendent is only 60% when that has never been the case.

TRUSTEE NICHOLS: she too mentioned the article and read it; she noted that the reference to hiring a deputy superintendent is historical; it wasn't about a statement that I made to the reporter.

TRUSTEE OSMUNDSON: as an individual in the minority, I try to express my view as best I can in terms of why I feel a certain way, so I understand that when I do lose, I go along with the decision made by the board.

PRESIDENT KEEGAN: this discussion raised an important issue; we probably should not judge each other or assess how well we are working with each other through the prism of media report. We have to rise above that and not use the newspaper as the ultimate determining factor of the board problems. Our actual interactions have been less harmful to our relationship than the media reports. One way we can do that is by increasing communication by board members that doesn't violate the Brown Act. This would make board members feel safe. Don't judge a board member by what we read in the newspaper.

TRUSTEE YAHIRO: someone said that this was a team; sometimes in teams, one tends to blame others for negative outcomes and that is something that tears up a team. Team members have to learn how to suppress their own feelings for the sake of the team.

The board took a short break.

BREAK: 20 MINUTES

After the break, the Board continued discussion on the following Board Bylaw:

5.4 SESSION #2: DISCUSS BOARD BYLAW 9005(b)

“ Board members also shall assume collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture. To operate effectively, the Board shall have a unity of purpose and...”

- 1. Keep the district focused on learning and achievement for all students**
- 2. Communicate a common vision**
- 3. Operate openly, with trust and integrity**
- 4. Govern in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect**
- 5. Govern with Board-adopted policies and procedures**
- 6. Take collective responsibility for the Board’s performance and allow for request of a governance meeting by any member of the Board should one be merited, in conjunction with the Superintendent’s evaluation**
- 7. Periodically evaluate its own effectiveness**
- 8. Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations**

Following are the comments and thoughts the Board made regarding the top prioritized items.

#3 Operate openly, with trust and integrity

PRESIDENT KEEGAN: the earlier discussion really touched on trust as being vitally important for us to be able to function as a board.

TRUSTEE DE ROSE: from a community point, we have to appear trustworthy; how we behave in public sets the tone on how we are viewed by the public.

PRESIDENT KEEGAN: agree with that. I am often offended by the fact that some people believe we are not transparent or that we have hidden agendas. We have to work hard to change that perception. One of the ways that I hope to do that is by the decisions we make. If they are consistent with the statements that we make, that may help.

TRUSTEE OSMUNDSON: these three things are important to me: openness, trust and integrity.

TRUSTEE WILSON: we have been working on being transparent with the community. There are certain community members that accuse us of not being so and we are inviting them to be part of some of decisions where that would be appropriate.

TRUSTEE NICHOLS: wondering if the word “trust” in the statement means trustworthy vs. trusting others.

TRUSTEE OSMUNDSON: both meanings should be part of how we operate.

TRUSTEE TURLEY: to me it would be that when someone says something, they will follow through and the other piece would around confidentiality, and that we can get to a place when we can get to have conversations, openly. It is unfortunate that we don’t have that environment in this board yet. It can be easy to pin issues on other people and realize with some self-reflection, there is room for me to grow. This is the way for things to change; we have to start from within.

TRUSTEE YAHIRO: when a parent sends their children to the school, they entrust us with their safety. When we find children at school with a gun and we don't follow our own expulsion rules, we break the trust. So, when we don't follow our own rules, we break the community's trust.

TRUSTEE WILSON: as a board, I tend to be a little bit guarded because of what I say and how that's going to be interpreted. This has to do with trusting the board to know what we really are talking about; it would help to be honest and not feel so guarded for me.

#1 Keep the district focused on learning and achievement for all students

TRUSTEE TURLEY: as a district I feel that we are always focused on student, but I don't feel that we don't have collaboration between schools to help all students in all schools increase achievement.

TRUSTEE WILSON: the board's job is to help the district stay focus in students; one of the ways we can do that is by having measurable gauges. We can support staff in making sure that they are focused and that we give them the tools and support they need.

#7 Periodically evaluate its own effectiveness

TRUSTEE DE ROSE: when I read this, I asked myself, what is periodically, and how do we evaluate ourselves.

TRUSTEE OSMUNDSON: I would like to participate in professional development and commit myself to be an effective leader. I feel that it would be good for me to have more professional development. To evaluate my effectiveness, I would like to be more informed, whether I need to go to more conferences. I don't take initiative in attending events that would give me the opportunity to grow. Perhaps involve the community in evaluating our effectiveness.

TRUSTEE NICHOLS: the process that we have tonight is a way to evaluate ourselves. In my time on the board, I remember a governance session that I believe that was really called a self-evaluation. We prepared with that by filling out self evaluations. We have to identify the issues and work through them.

TRUSTEE TURLEY: I look at this as the board as a whole and what our mission is. Perhaps a pacing calendar would be good to evaluate ourselves, visit goals that we set for ourselves.

PRESIDENT KEEGAN: we went through the process of developing our goals and objectives and we felt good about those. We didn't take the next step to find out how we are doing in implementing those goals. That should be built into the annual review of our goals and objectives.

TRUSTEE YAHIRO: the district's goals are so tight to the superintendent's evaluation, and at the same time we are a team and so it is not only the superintendent's evaluation but it is also the board's. It is all tied together. We have to, as a board, follow our own goals and get the year's evaluation, which was not done in the past couple of years.

TRUSTEE OSMUNDSON: what everyone said is good and we should try to implement the items that were brought up.

TRUSTEE DE ROSE: the CSBA conference is coming up at the end of November and they have a session on self-evaluation. It would be great if all trustees could attend.

TRUSTEE NICHOLS: Regarding the governance workshop I mentioned before, I recall it was specific to district goals and was tied to the superintendent's evaluation.

#8 Ensure opportunities for the diverse range of views in the community to inform Board deliberations

TRUSTEE OSMUNDSON: I appreciate community involvement and it is so important for me to get more parents involved. I would like to think about ways in which we can get more community and parent involvement for a diverse range of views to inform our deliberations. Engaging in more outreach to get more input would be appropriate. I appreciate community views because I get information on the board on many subjects from the staff, but we may miss the views of the community and what they actually think about those issues. When I hear their opinions, it broadens my understanding.

TRUSTEE DE ROSE: one of the ways that we can ensure opportunities are there is with public forums and questionnaires. Not only send them but be sure that it really gets out to everyone, via schools, newspaper notices, etc.

TRUSTEE YAHIRO: September 10 is the first south zone meeting. Maybe we have to go to school sites, zone meetings, site council, that's where the parents are. It is fun to go there and talk with parents about issues that may be on their minds. This is a good way to get out information to parents who may not be able to come to the meetings.

PRESIDENT KEEGAN: it is to our credit that we all have taken on committee involvement and we really as a board do a commendable job in attending the various meetings: DELAC, Migrant Parents, English Language Taskforce, zone meetings, etc. That is one of the ways that we stay informed and we stay in touch with the community and get diverse points of views. I am thinking about the GATE program, a small niche, but attending those meetings gave me a different insight into the work we do.

TRUSTEE TURLEY: the other thing that we have done as a board, like with the hiring of the Deputy Superintendent, we offered vast opportunity for the community to offer their input in terms of developing the profile and in terms of participating in the selection process. This is an example of ways we can reach out to the community and have them be in the process.

#2 Communicate a common vision

TRUSTEE YAHIRO: when I was active in our church, I took a year to find out what our goal was. The common vision of our church was a purpose driven church. When we had any activity, we looked at whether it was part of our purpose, if it wasn't, the activity was rejected. I think with this district, our purpose is academic achievement, and when we have any decision to make, we have to determine how it relates to the purpose. We have all said that tonight in one way or another. We then become a purpose-driven district.

TRUSTEE NICHOLS: I frequently look at the poster on the wall, it is a mission statement, and when I came in as a new trustee, I said to myself, thank goodness I can buy-in to this mission. It has noble academic goals. No one has ever suggested to change the statement, but I think it is because it really reflects the character of this district. It works for students at all levels. It even has the concept of a global society.

5.5 CLOSING COMMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

Cathy Toldi asked the Board to reflect on the following question as they prepared for closing comments: How might what I heard or learned tonight help me as a board member to put these standards into practice?

TRUSTEE OSMUNDSON: I would like to communicate all that we have learned tonight as a common vision and I would like to communicate this vision of what we are trying to do and learn about doing better in all these aspects. I would like to be able to reach out to all members of the community in terms of these issues and try to do these things, this common vision, together.

TRUSTEE DE ROSE: having had this discussion is helpful to keep these standards in mind. If we continue to do this on a regular basis it would help us make decisions with a common goal. Continuing to speak about how we can do better will greatly help the board as a whole.

TRUSTEE WILSON: tonight made me want to be open to diverse ideas, keep focus on common goals, and become more trusting that we are all working on a common vision.

PRESIDENT KEEGAN: tonight's session gave me the opportunity to step back from the normal role; I am willing to commit and work toward strengthening the Board's respect for each other and the community. The decision making effectiveness can be of the highest quality if this happens. I really want to see that we function on a higher level but I think that really requires each of us to make that commitment. I wish to wipe the slate clean and recommit to the respect and the cooperation that we need to share in order to be an effective board. I think it is a great opportunity for us to again make that commitment.

TRUSTEE YAHIRO: I read about this in a book that if I take water and fill up a cup up to the rim and if I try to put more water in it, it will overflow. If I walk into this room with my mind made up, it won't allow me to take in any more ideas; I need to be here with my mind empty; in order for us to have a quality discussion, we have to come in with an open mind.

TRUSTEE TURLEY: I think tonight that I will take, in addition to what president Keegan mentioned, it is really trying to reach out to all board members, focus on what we have in common instead of focusing on what we disagree on and forcing issues to stop there. I walk out with the fact that we all focus on students and their achievement.

TRUSTEE NICHOLS: I heard a lot of optimism expressed by trustees about using a respectful tone and trying to listen to diverse opinions and the summary of the president, and I am glad to know such positive people. I feel that my own message is one that I represent a segment of the population and I say to myself that it is really tough to be part of the minority. Sam Farr said that he had been struggling to go to work up to November when he became part of the majority, because often times he had what he thought were good ideas and they would be shot down because he was part of the minority; now he's part of the majority and it is great to get to work each time. I will hang in there, not take things too personal, stay tough and have a positive attitude.

The Governance Session concluded at 9:04 pm. After this, there were a couple of general announcements made.

6.0 UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS/REMAINING BOARD MEETINGS FOR 2007
All meetings, unless otherwise noted, take place at the District Office Boardroom, 292 Green Valley Road, Watsonville, CA. Closed Session begins at 6:00 pm; Open Session begins at 7:00 pm.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ September 19, 2007▪ September, 26 2007▪ October 10, 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ October 24, 2007▪ November 7, 2007▪ December 5, 2007 (Annual Organization Mtg)
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7.0 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 9:07 pm.

Secretary