

SALINE AREA SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION RETREAT

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Tuesday, January 15, 2008
5:30 PM

The Special Board of Education Retreat Meeting of the Saline Area School District was held on Tuesday, January 15, 2008, in the Board Room at Historic Union School.

Board Members Present: Trudy Driscoll, David Friese, Paul Hynek, Bari Livsey, David Medley, Lisa Slawson, and Kim Van Hoek

Central Administrators Present: Interim Superintendent Scot Graden, Assistant Superintendent Rosen-Leacher, and Assistant Superintendent Wall (in part)

Others Present: Doug Bacon, Eric Diroff, Jean Durst, Neal Elyakin, Sean Enright, Jody Gielinski, Julie Harsh, Tim Heim, Steve Laatsch, Sheila Light, Cyndi McLennan (in part), David Raft, Mandy Rucky, Les Sharon, Jesse Stevenson, Michelle Szczechowicz, Rob White (in part), and Ben Williams

Assistant Superintendent Rosen-Leacher began the meeting with the results of an earlier survey given to the Board Members and Administrators to determine which of the following three categories they fell into:

Conserver
Originator
Pragmatist

The individuals then broke up into small groups by category to answer the following questions:

What is your gut reaction when you are informed about a change?

Conserver – Why?

Originator – Yes and Why Not?

Pragmatist – Why?

The next question was: What would other groups think about how you accept change?

Conservers - They are too methodical and a bit boring

Originators – Others would think that they are reckless, look forward to change, and act too quickly

Pragmatist - They believe that they are right.

How should others approach the different styles in an attempt to promote change in a positive way?

Conservers – Provide them with a well orchestrated plan, expected outcome, and timeline

Originators – Make them a part of it and make them think it was their idea

Pragmatists – Sell it

It was generally accepted that in order to promote a positive experience to change we must be cognizant of how other people perceive change and help guide them in ways that take that into consideration.

UPDATING POLICY MANUAL

Interim Superintendent Graden announced that the Board has approved updating the Policy Manual. The first meeting of the committee will be held on Thursday, January 17, 2008, at 5:30 PM in the Superintendent's Office at Union School. Board Trustee Paul Hynek will be the Chairman of this Committee. Other Board Members include: Trudy Driscoll, David Friese, and Lisa Slawson.

He also indicated that we will be revising all sections of the policy manual as well as the administrative regulations. It will be a very large undertaking blending the current policy manual with the proposed MASB changes and in order to succeed it must have administrative input. He encouraged the administrators if they have specific policies that they are interested in to talk to the policy committee and make them aware. Since there is a quorum of Board Members these will all be open meetings.

One of the key improvements will be that the Policy Manual will be online and will be made available to the public on our website.

PROGRESS TOWARD GOALS

Board President Slawson spoke about how the Board does a self assessment at this time of year and they discuss how they feel that they are doing with their goals.

Enhance Cohesiveness with Saline Area Schools Community

Board President Slawson spoke about the difficult time our school district suffered in the early fall. She felt that progress was being made in bringing everyone back to the table. She felt that engaging administrators, union representatives, and staff helps to make everyone more cohesive.

Board Trustee Livsey inquired about ideas on how the Board can continue towards that goal with both the internal community and the external community.

Board Trustee Friese felt that there has been a change of personality of the board; it is far more relaxed than when he started. He felt that the Board was very approachable and a cohesive body.

Board Trustee Van Hoek began a discussion on the way that the Board Meetings are conducted and whether they tend to put people off. She felt that possibly if public comments could be addressed in the administrative section of the meeting perhaps that might be helpful. Board Trustee Livsey agreed that perhaps it would be helpful and people's comments would be acknowledged.

Tim Heim commented that he likes the idea of responding to questions brought to the Board. He felt that there is a warmth now among the Board and that you can speak freely in this room. There is a great camaraderie among the group.

Review Superintendent Evaluation Process

The review of the Superintendent Evaluation Process is currently being conducted as part of the Policy Manual Revision.

Begin a Major Revision of Policy Manual

A Policy Committee has been established to review and revise our Policy Manual as noted previously.

Continuing Education for the Board of Education

Five Board Members as well as Interim Superintendent Graden and Assistant Superintendent Rosen-Leacher are attending the MASB Winter Conference to be held in Lansing on January 25 and 26. Board President Slawson indicated that she, David Friese, and David Medley were very close to becoming Certified Board Members. Trudy Driscoll will be attending and taking more senior classes. She felt that it is very important for the Board to take these classes to ensure that they become the best Board Members to the community as possible.

Discussion

Heritage Principal, Steve Laatsch mentioned that he felt that one of the goals of the School Board should be to bring the idea of accountability to the schools. Student achievement should be the Number 1 goal. Another goal could be to promote and show evidence toward student achievement. He also stated that the Board needs to hold the administrators accountable as well.

Board President Slawson and Board Trustee Livsey spoke about the many discussions that the Board had on this subject when preparing their goals. They struggled with how to

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measure this goal. Board President Slawson indicated that under the current Policy Manual it is a Superintendent's Goal but that after the policy revision that could change.

Interim Superintendent Graden talked about possibly having a retreat in the summer in order to have the Board as well as the Administrators be a part of the goal setting process and both groups could set their goals in conjunction with each other. Board President Slawson thought that this would be a very beneficial idea. Assistant Superintendent Rosen-Leacher said that it could be part of the August Meeting.

Harvest Principal, Les Sharon told the group that in his old school district they had a board member assigned to each school improvement team. This way the Board had a great idea of what is going on in each building and could report back the other Board Members at the Board Meetings.

High School Administrator, Jean Durst stated that she felt that the more opportunity the Board has to work with the Administrators the better off the district will be. She felt that last fall there was a disconnect to the Board and if they would have had a forum like this the Board would have a better sense of the state of the district. She talked about how last year she personally needed help from the Board and didn't know how to go about asking for it. Continuing the dialogue between the two groups is crucial.

Pleasant Ridge Principal, Sheila Light said that in the past it has been difficult to approach Board Members. She thought that if the Administrators had a better understanding of what issues the Board was dealing with they could provide support.

BOARD CANDIDATES/ELECTION

Board President Slawson announced that the School Board election will be held May 6th. She indicated that her term is up and she will be seeking re-election. Board Trustee Van Hoek's term is also up and she will not be seeking re-election. Board Vice President, Trudy Driscoll announced that the deadline for applications is February 13th and if anyone knew of any potential candidates please pass the information on.

CURRICULAR VISION/ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Interim Superintendent Graden spoke to the group about the collection and analyzing of data which has become even more critical to our success. If you look at the reporting of data five years ago at the ISD and state level there were 25-30 fields of demographic information and that has grown to well over 125 fields currently. Sean Enright has been asked to prepare some piloting on how we are going to improve instruction.

Assistant Superintendent Rosen-Leacher spoke about the fact that we need to remember that there are a whole lot of things that we do very well here in Saline. We need to concentrate on improving programs and services for our students especially with the new graduation requirements.

We need to focus on the assessment for learning not of learning. Measuring student's growth on standards in small increments to help the teachers know where the students are

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right now. It there is an area where they are struggling we can help them today and they can be successful tomorrow.

SALINE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT'S BUDGET AMENDMENT – Assistant Superintendent Wall

Assistant Superintendent Wall gave a presentation to the group on the amended budget discussion and economic forecast.

The next meeting of the Budget Committee will be held on January 29. The members of the Board on the Budget Committee are Board Trustees Livsey, Medley, and Van Hoek.

Board President Slawson thanked everyone for coming and said that the meeting was very beneficial for the Board and they hope to continue to have these forums and retreats.

She also thanked Julie Harsh and the Food Services Department for preparing the dinner enjoyed by everyone.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Hynek, Secretary

By: Patti Waltz, Recording Secretary