

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING/BOARD RETREAT  
OF THE GOVERNING BOARD  
SCOTTSDALE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 48**

August 15, 2008

A Special Meeting/Board Retreat of the Governing Board of the Scottsdale Unified School District, #48, Maricopa County, was called to order at 8:30 AM, at the Scottsdale Unified School District Education Center Board Room, 3811 North 44<sup>th</sup> Street, Phoenix, Arizona. Ms. Beckvar called upon Mrs. Petersen to lead the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Members in attendance were Karen Beckvar, President; Dr. Eric Meyer, Clerk; Molly Holzer; Jennifer Petersen; and Dieter Schaefer. Superintendent John M. Baracy was also present. A quorum was present.

Ms. Beckvar began the meeting with a discussion on Board Self-Evaluation. The Board reviewed the results of their 360 Evaluation. There were a few issues that Ms. Beckvar would like to address. She asked Board Members how could they do things better and how can they, as an organizational team, be more effective. Ms. Beckvar stated that she felt there were some operating agreements the Board could establish that would make things clearer in terms of what its expectations are for each other and for the Administration as a team.

•Board Self-Evaluation

When a Board Member has requested an Agenda item, that item has been placed on an Agenda as quickly as it could. For the most part, when questions arise, Board Members have been giving Administration a “heads up.” Notification has also been given to Administration when a Consent item needs to be discussed separately so that item could then be placed on the Agenda as an Action item. Ms. Beckvar would like to propose as a team, if it is agreed, that when Board Members find mistakes on the Agenda they notify Administration about the mistake prior to the meeting to allow Administration to make the correction also prior to the meeting, or at least to bring it to the Board President’s attention to be announced before Agenda approval is voted upon. Board Members agreed to the proposal.

•Agenda Items

Another potential issue is to make sure that the Board’s directions to the Superintendent are clearer. Ms. Beckvar stated that this Board’s strength is that they try to work towards a consensus before they take a vote or put a motion on the table. Mrs. Holzer and Mrs. Petersen stated they applaud Ms. Beckvar in her efforts on this issue. Dr. Meyer stated that one thing the public doesn’t understand is that they think Board Members have been discussing a certain issue with each other prior to the meeting. In reality, Board Members cannot discuss issues with each other and further, they don’t receive information on any Agenda item until ten days prior to a meeting. Dr. Meyer suggested adding a statement similar to the Public Comment Statement that would educate the public that the Open Meeting Law requires Board Members to not discuss anything prior to a meeting. At a meeting, it may seem like Board Members are dragging the issue out, but that meeting is the only time they can discuss an item with fellow Board Members. Mr. Schaefer agreed and suggested that the media could perhaps write an article on what Board formalities are and what Open Meeting Laws must be followed.

•Directions to the Superintendent

Ms. Beckvar stated that she has had requests from the community to put updates on Board events in school newspapers once a month. Mrs. Petersen added that those updates should also be sent to PTO presidents for their communications to parents. It

was suggested that Mrs. Como, Board Secretary, include PTO presidents when Board Spotlights are electronically sent after a Board Meeting and also to add a link to *Community Connection*.

Ms. Beckvar stated that the Board should celebrate that they treat each other and staff very well at meetings and have very respectful conversations at the Board table.

The Board discussed receiving information electronically, as well as the District providing computers for Board Members. Training would be given to Board Members on the use of laptop computers that they would use at Board Meetings and be able to access *Boardbook*. *Boardbook* is the program currently being used for Board Agendas. This would be a cost-saving in that Agendas and any data sent to the Board would not have to be printed and delivered to Board Members. It was suggested training to begin after January when a new Board would be seated. In the meantime, Mrs. Como would still provide copies of documents and advise the Board Members if any information sent electronically would also be provided at the Board Meeting. Dr. Meyer suggested that a review of all the information given to the Board in their packets each week should be part of the training so that unnecessary data could be eliminated. Mrs. Cavanagh and Mrs. Como will develop a list of the information sent to the Board and review what could be provided quarterly, semi-annually, or even be eliminated.

•Information Received Electronically

Ms. Beckvar asked what would be some of the goals for the coming years in terms of improving the Board's performance. Mrs. Petersen suggested communication. Mrs. Holzer agreed, stating that she would like to see Board Meetings video-streamed. Ms. Beckvar commented, having sat through meetings that had been televised for many years, that there was a tendency for Board Members to grandstand by making speeches. She felt there should be an agreement between Board Members that, as they move forward and choose to video-stream the meetings, they make a commitment not to indulge in such actions. Such actions made for some very long meetings which became a detriment to the District as a whole. The idea behind video-streaming is to see the entire Board operating, not individual Board Members. She felt there should be a fixed camera focused on the Board as a whole during the entire meeting. Mrs. Holzer added that this Board has been conducting timed meetings, with topics given an estimated time for discussion, so the Board could say they are over the time given for a topic and move on. Ms. Beckvar stated that legally, having a printed Agenda with a specific time allotted to a subject would mean that the Board would have to hear that topic at the time published; but, Mrs. Como can provide a hand-written estimate of time allotted for each item and distribute to Board Members prior to a meeting.

•Goals to Improve Board's Performance

Further discussion ensued regarding better communication between the Board and the community and getting information out to the community at large. Communication could be improved between District departments. Ms. Beckvar stated that she has seen school Websites across the country and SUSD's is by far one of the most extensive in terms of the amount of information that is available through the Website. Mrs. Holzer suggested that information available on SUSD's Website should include class-size ratios, test scores, qualifications for teachers and also should promote SUSD students' SAT and ACT scores. Mrs. Petersen added that the Website should include the highlights of what SUSD has to offer. Mr. Schaefer added that the Website should also stress what SUSD offers that neighboring school districts do not offer. Dr. Meyer stated that the Website should be proactive. Mrs. Cavanagh responded that each school's Website did include a summary of the school but that the Webmaster could develop a template and expand on that summary. *School Fusion* is a new technological tool being used by schools that has helped with increased communication. Mr.

Schaefer suggested that Board Members should participate in outside organizations. Ms. Beckvar responded that, for example, the National School Boards Association has a conference every year, but that no one from SUSD has attended in many years. It is expensive, but there are funds in the budget for Board training. The Board should decide whether or not it would like to send a representative to any of the conferences available for training. Mr. Schaefer responded that there are so many groups in the state that deal with educational issues and that it would be beneficial to get on their mailing lists. He felt that should be a Board goal. Mrs. Cavanagh responded that many of the District's Administrators do participate in many state and national educational groups and do attend their conferences.

Ms. Beckvar recapped the goals the Board would like to work on for the following year:

- Communication
- Mrs. Como to provide an estimate of time allotted for each Agenda item prior to the Board Meeting
- Work to improve customer service
- Increase Board participation in outside organizations
- Improve new Board Member training

The Board discussed the next item on the Agenda, Governing Board Calendar. Ms. Beckvar asked if there were any recurring topics Board Members would like to see discussed in the coming year in addition to Superintendent Evaluation and Auditor Evaluation. District Goals has been shifted to begin discussions in February. Budget discussion will begin in November, after the 40-Day count. At that time, the Budget discussion will be primarily to see where the District stands and if any adjustments need to be made. Mr. Schaefer asked when the Board would do a curriculum review and textbook adoption. Mrs. Cavanagh responded the process had begun the end of last year. The selection committees will begin their discussions this spring. The Board will discuss curriculum in March and textbooks in April. Mrs. Petersen asked when Code of Conduct and course selection will be presented to the Board. Mrs. Cavanagh stated the process for course selection has been streamlined and has been presented to the Board earlier each year. This is now an online, on-going dynamic process which was changed three years ago. The high school and middle school course selection committees started meeting last April and May. The results will be presented to the Board in October or November. The process, because it is online, no longer depends upon a specific print time. Last year, there were very few changes made to the Code of Conduct. This year there are some significant changes that can be brought to the Board in October or November.

Mrs. Holzer's comments were in regard to the Budget. She would like the Board to be notified when there are increases or decreases to student funding that directly impact the students. Ms. Beckvar stated that Dr. Peterson will include that information in Budget discussions.

Ms. Beckvar stated that one other item not on the Board's calendar is the reviewing of how the District did in student achievement the previous year, a "state of the District" annual report. Mrs. Cavanagh stated that that Administration could develop and present to the Board by the end of September, or early October. Dr. Meyer stated that the District's Legislative Goal is something that should be talked about in August.

Recap of Goals to Improve Board's Performance

•Governing Board Annual Calendar

"State of District" Annual Report

Mrs. Cavanagh reviewed the eight District Goals and when there would be Board discussion on an annual basis:

1. Improving Student Achievement – October (if data is ready earlier can be presented)
2. Professional Development/Exceptional Customer Service – Twice a year – September/October (report) and February (plan)
3. Improving Employee Relations – Twice a year – September/October (report) and February (plan)
4. Improving the Operations and Effectiveness of the District – February
5. Improving the District’s Technology – February
6. Improving Student Safety and Wellness – December
7. Marketing and Enrollment – Twice a year September/October and February
8. Developing Legislative and Community Initiatives – August

The next item on the Agenda is Submission Policy for Board Agendas. The Board discussed the challenges of preparing the Board Meeting Agendas and the policy calling for information delivered to Board Members ten days prior to a meeting. Administration had requested a seven-day advance policy. It was decided that the policy would remain unchanged at ten days; however, there have been instances when Administration was not able to provide data ten days prior to a meeting and the Board waived the ten-day policy. Administration asked to be able to continue this practice and be granted a waiver in those instances when data would not be available in time. The Board was agreeable to this exception basis. Eventually, when the Board Members fully use the *Boardbook* program, this challenge might resolve itself. Dr. Meyer requested this issue be addressed again when the *Boardbook* program is fully utilized.

Dr. Meyer stated that there is some confusion with the multiple copies the Board receives because of revisions to an Agenda item. Ms. Beckvar suggested issuing notebooks with the final copy of the Agenda to each Board Member that can be recycled for each meeting. One set of final documents can be inserted in the notebook for each meeting and delivered to Board Members the Friday prior to a meeting. If there are any changes made after that delivery, an insert notating the replacement page would be given to Board Members prior to the Board Meeting. Board Members would then leave the notebook with Mrs. Como at the end of the meeting, removing any documentation they wished to keep.

Mrs. Cavanagh asked for clarification. She understands that the policy will remain unchanged; however, if staff really needs extra time to provide data, staff will notify the Board when the information would be sent to them. Ms. Beckvar responded that would be fine. Mrs. Como, in preparing the Board Agenda, would put a “place-holder” in the Agenda to advise the Board that information would be forthcoming and when it could be expected.

Ms. Beckvar introduced the next topic: Video-Streaming from the Ed Center. Ms. Beckvar noted she felt that one of the positives the Board did was to have video-streaming on the meetings regarding facilities. However, the District used a lot of man-hours in setting up the equipment to run at sites other than the Education Center. Ms. Beckvar asked for input on the cost of video-streaming at the Ed Center where equipment is already in place. Ernie Nicely, Executive Director for IT, responded some of the equipment available would have to be replaced. Ms. Beckvar asked about a stationary camera to video-tape the entire meeting in a single view of the Board in its

Recap of District Goals and Timeline for Discussion

•Submission Policy for Board Agenda

•Video-Streaming Board Meetings

entirety, including what would be the back of any speaker at the podium. Mr. Nicely provided a chart outlining the costs for equipment needed. Discussion ensued regarding the equipment necessary, including the purchase of a new server. A new server would enable the ability to “Bookmark” an item, as well as store all Board meetings. There would be no additional man-hour expense to run the program from the Ed Center beyond the cost of the necessary equipment. The cost to set-up an “off-site” Board Meeting would be approximately \$3,500. Also, any equipment purchased for the Ed Center could be moved to another site if the Ed Center was relocated. Mr. Nicely pointed out that the video-streaming is for “real-time” and is sent out live over the Internet. Additional equipment would be needed to produce DVDs that could eventually be sent to Cox Cable for broadcasting the Board Meetings at any time.

Ms. Beckvar recapped. Administration will pursue business partnerships to fund the purchase of the equipment needed, but it is the desire of the Board to try and move forward and have video-streaming from the Ed Center with basically two fixed cameras to show the entire Board and any speakers at the podium. The timeline would be to start as quickly as possible because, as Mrs. Cavanagh pointed out, the Board might want to be able to video-stream community input meetings that might take place in October and November of this year. Dr. Baracy also added that it was Administration’s intent to video-stream the September 16<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting.

•Recap on Video-Streaming

The next discussion regarded the listing of Board Members’ phone numbers on the District Website. After a brief discussion, it was decided that the phone number shown on the Website for each Board Member should be Mrs. Como’s District phone number.

•Board Member Phone Number Listed on Website

Dr. Meyer moved to change Board Member phone numbers listed on the Website to Mrs. Como’s District phone number (480-484-6238). Mr. Schaefer seconded the motion.

Motion #26  
Change Board Member Phone Numbers on District Website

The motion was approved with a vote of 5 – 0.

Kevin Price, Internal Auditor, presented Annual Internal Auditor Goals. Mr. Price presented the current Audit Plan, Mr. Price’s proposed Audit Plan for the 2008-09 school year, and a summary of the Audit Risk Assessment Report. As requested by the Board, Mr. Price requested input from LLT Members, Principals and other Administrators on what they felt were “hot” topics for risk assessment. That list was narrowed down and discussed with the Audit Advisory Council to develop a risk assessment report on topics that were of high exposure to the District and what issues should be concentrated upon. Two of the topics that were identified as priorities were ADM (Average Daily Membership) and Payroll. Mr. Price stated that he would recommend that he complete the audits he has been performing under the current Audit Plan, make his recommendations, let the District respond to those recommendations and make any necessary changes. He would then perform a re-audit the end of this year or early the following year. This is not listed on his new Audit Plan as yet. He is recommending that he add a secondary payroll and fixed asset audit later in the year to assess the changes and/or progress made.

•Annual Internal Auditor Goals

Mr. Price stated that ADM is more important to stay abreast of this year because the State is changing its system, which, in turn, is forcing SUSD to change its system. He has already started doing ADM reviews, monitoring the first 10-day counts and looking for any discrepancies. He has been providing a “warm-body” count to Dr. Baracy, Mrs. Cavanagh, Dr. Peterson, Dr. Allen and Dr. Sitton. The Board would like to receive this data as well. Mr. Price will provide this report to the Board once a week in

Provide “Warm-Body” Count to Board

their Board Packet until it is no longer produced, usually after Day 10. It can be sent electronically. Mr. Price will also provide the ADM report periodically. Mr. Baracy added that Administration believed the ADM count, based on the trends, will be up 1%. He did ask the Board to use caution with that information because this year's Day 4 data was compared to last year's Day 4 data. Last year's Day 4 data has been "cleaned up" so there are differences; but every trend Administration has looked at shows ADM being up. Dr. Baracy stated that he felt the reason ADM is up this year might be due to the state of the economy and that homes have not been selling.

Mr. Price continued reviewing the Audits he has been performing, as listed in his Audit Report. He is continuing to perform Bank Reconciliations and spot audits, two very important issues to the Board and the Audit Advisory Council. Unless the Board directs him otherwise, he will postpone any audit he is performing to address any ADM issue immediately. Ms. Beckvar added that he should also immediately address any investigations that might arise.

Ms. Beckvar asked the Board if they had any questions for Mr. Price, as this was the only opportunity for them to respond to his presentation. Mrs. Petersen stated that she felt Mr. Price's plan was very appropriate. Mr. Schaefer stated that he would like to see more emphasis on Fixed Assets/Inventory Control to ensure assets do not "walk out the door" and that there are adequate controls to safeguard those assets. It is important employees are signing for any equipment they are issued. Supervisors should be held accountable as well. Mr. Schaefer would also like to see more emphasis on Payroll audits to ensure it is in good shape. He stated that he felt a lot of time is spent on ADM reconciliations. This is a system that should be functioning by itself. Ms. Beckvar responded that the problem is that there are different systems at the various school districts and the state; a lot of time is spent reconciling those systems. Mr. Schaefer asked if there wasn't some kind of task force that could address this issue. Ms. Beckvar suggested he meet with Tom Horne, State Superintendent of Schools, as a Board Member. Mr. Schaefer stated he would be happy to do that!

The Board discussed adding a representative from the community to the Audit Advisory Council. Mr. Price has been actively recruiting for such a member who has certain skill-sets related to auditing. Mrs. Petersen noted that the time of the Audit Advisory Council meetings might be an issue. The meetings are held in the afternoon - not a convenient time for business people. Mr. Price responded that he has offered to move the time.

•Audit Advisory Council

As there was no further discussion, Mrs. Petersen moved to approve the Audit Plan as presented by Kevin Price. Mrs. Holzer seconded the motion.

Motion #27  
Approval of Audit Plan as Presented

The motion was approved with a vote of 5 – 0.

At 12:10 PM, Mrs. Petersen moved to adjourn the Special Meeting/Board Retreat. Mr. Schaefer seconded the motion.

Motion #28  
Adjournment

The motion was approved with a vote of 5 – 0.

Dated this 15<sup>th</sup> day of August 2008.

**The Governing Board of the Scottsdale Unified School District #48**

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Karen Beckvar, President

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Eric Meyer, Clerk

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Molly Holzer

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Jennifer Petersen

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Dieter Schaefer