



## Board of Education

Racine Unified School District  
3109 Mt. Pleasant Street, Racine, Wisconsin 53404

### WORK SESSION MINUTES

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Robert Wittke, Jr., President

Dennis Wiser, Vice President

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Racine, Wisconsin

December 4, 2017

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Robert Wittke, Jr., President of the Board of Education of the Racine Unified School District of Racine County, Wisconsin, called to order a Board Work Session at 6:04 p.m. on Monday, December 4, 2017.

The following Board members were present: Michelle Duchow, Michael Frontier, Matthew Hanser, John Heckenlively, Steven Hooper, Julie L. McKenna, Brian O'Connell, Dennis Wiser (arrived at 7:30 p.m.), and Robert Wittke, Jr.

Also present: Lolli Haws, Superintendent; Marc Duff, Chief Financial Officer; Rosalie Daca, Chief Academic Officer; Julie Landry, Chief of Human Capital; Stacy Tapp, Chief of Communications and Family Engagement; Dan Thielen, Chief of Secondary Transformation; Bryan Arnold, Director of Building and Grounds; Keri Hanstedt, Executive Director of Employee Relations; Wendy Rowley, Executive Director of Accountability; and Elizabeth Tobias, Recording Secretary.

#### 1. **RUSD State Report Card**

Mr. Wittke made a few opening comments regarding the great work the District has done to gain 11 points over last year's report card. Dr. Haws and Ms. Rowley presented to the Board information on the state report card including a comparison of scores from last year to this year. The District is only 4 points away from the "Meets Expectations" category, which should be obtainable.

Highlights from the presentation included:

- Last year, the District put in place a plan to address four key areas: improving the testing environment and participation; data quality, attendance, graduation and drop-out rate; resources to improve school results; and instructional strategies for student achievement.
- There was a decrease in the number of schools in "Fails to Meet Expectations" from 11 to 6.
- Ten schools went up ratings (3 schools moved up two categories).
- Increased number of schools in "Exceeds Expectations" from 4 to 6.
- There are four priority areas in the report card: Student Achievement, District Growth, Closing Gaps, and On-Track & Postsecondary Readiness. For Closing Gaps, the District was above the state score. The District was down by 2 points in Student Achievement, but increased in all other areas.
- Graduation rate increased, but the data that is used in the report card includes the previous five years. Unfortunately, it is not reflecting where the District is right now as the report card is averaging the trend back five years.

Discussion and questions:

- How will *My School. My Choice.* effect the scorecard in the future? (*My School. My Choice.* will start to show up in the report card two years from now. The report card you will review next year will be results from what we are doing right now.)
- In the report card, there was a different assessment used for 2014-15 in calculating student achievement.
- How much did the cleaning of data attribute to the 11 points gained in the report card? (That would be hard to say. The cleaning of data plays more into the graduation and attendance data.)
- Discussion on attendance rate versus absenteeism rate.
- What are the 4 year and 6 year cohort graduation rates? (The four year cohort includes those students that graduate within four years. The six year cohort includes special education students as they can receive education until they are 21 years old.)
- Did we get more points for better attendance? (Chronically absent students dropped slightly and remains a concern. We have more students who are missing more than 16% of the time; approximately 29 days absent.)
- With the start of Parent University, is one of its goals to increase attendance? (Not sure if that is one of the highlighted areas, but will suggest for next year.)
- Has attendance at Knapp School improved? (Reminder that the attendance is the percentage of children who attend every day. Absenteeism is the number of children who are out 20-30 days.)
- The schools with Circles of Support, how were the schools identified to participate? (The first school was Dr. Jones where we had a significant school climate issue. Last year we included a few more schools including the middle schools. Those are based on the number of office referrals.)
- In regards to ACT preparation, are we covering more children or reaching more children? (This was a big component of the DPI waiver; the District could not reach every child. There has been pretty good attendance thus far. Now that the students have already taken the ACT practice test, we are predicting the scores will go up.)
- Why does the report card focus on 3<sup>rd</sup> grade? (In English Language Arts, third grade is an indicator of future success in reading. Research states that if you read proficiently in third grade, chances are you will graduate high school. 8<sup>th</sup> grade is the same thing with algebra, it is a predictor of success in high school math.)

**2. Monitoring Section of the School Board's Coherent Governance Policy**

**a. OE-6 (Financial Administration - External)**

Mr. Duff and Ms. Julie Schattner, Director of Finance, presented the OE-6 monitoring report (Financial Administration – External). This OE paraphrases the audit report findings in a summary and understandable format. The report is for July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 following completion of the annual financial audit. The independent audit was performed by Schenck, SC. There were no identified material weaknesses and no internal control findings.

This year's recommendations included the following: develop internal control policies and procedures related to funds and bank accounts at schools; update the processes for recording transactions in the Private Purpose Trust Fund (Fund 72) to better reflect the actual activity; and have the HR, Finance, and Special Education departments work together to enhance controls over the licensing of all staff.

Discussion and questions:

- Could the auditor recommend another district for us to review their processes? (Every district is different. We use the auditor's recommendations as a guideline, but we want to have a gentler approach to making the changes when it comes to the schools.)
- In making changes at the school level, are you piloting the changes first? (Yes, we are piloting the changes at the high school level, which will help to make sure it can be done across the board. We also want to take a look at standardizing how schools charge for programs, classroom fees, etc.)
- We don't want to take anything away from the schools. We want to make the transaction accountable according to state statutes and administrative regulations. The District also adjusted the fee schedule providing more money to the schools so that the schools do not have to focus on fundraising.
- Does this include online fundraising such as Go Fund Me accounts? (There is some freelance fundraising going on. But we have to be careful and thoughtful of how those funds are used for, especially purchases for the classroom.)
- What is typically in Fund 21? (Donations received such as the grants from Project CAPE and donations from PTA's. Ultimately all fundraising should go through Fund 21, but it is a lot of work to implement. We want to make it very clear where the money went and where it came from.)
- Suggest adding a commendation for a job well done to the acceptance of this monitoring report. There was consensus from the Board to include language similar to the following: The Board appreciates a job well done in meeting the standards of the audit.

### **3. Olympia Brown Demolition Project Update**

Mr. Arnold gave a brief update to the Board on the Olympia Brown property. Thus far, the District has received two proposals on the property. Right now we are evaluating them and giving them to legal counsel for review. The Board can expect a recommendation for the Dec. 18 business meeting.

### **4. Quarterly Contractor Employment Report**

Dr. Haws gave a brief history of how the quarterly contractor employment report originated. In order to get the referendum passed, the Board promised the community it would be transparent in how the monies were spent. At that same time, the Board also wanted reports, on a continuing basis, that would inform them of the efforts to hire locally as well as use minority-owned businesses for any major construction projects. At previous meetings, Ms. Riley would present to the Board a contractor employment report.

This past quarter (September-November), the District hasn't had any major construction projects, therefore, there is no quarterly report. Dr. Haws suggested the quarterly reports on local/minority contractors be discontinued until the District has major work proposed before the Board (for example, a multi-million dollar project).

Discussion and questions:

- Which OE is this report tied to? (OE-3 Facilities).
- Discussion if this could be an annual report to the Board. Previously, goals were met regarding local hiring and minority hiring, but the District did not meet the minority contractor goal.
- Maybe there could be a dollar threshold to determine when a report is required.
- Is there a way to track the contractors that have performed successfully under these programs? (Yes, we include that language in the request for bids, although we do not have a mechanism to verify the information. One of the factors considered is local employment.)

**5. Energy Efficiency Performance Contracts for Mitchell Campus, Fratt Elementary School, and Community Pathways Campus**

**a. Approval of Performance Contractor**

**b. Debt Financing for Projects**

Mr. Arnold presented on the energy efficiency performance contracts for Mitchell campus, Fratt, and the Community Pathways Campus. All of this work will include air conditioning and heating for the buildings. Highlights of the presentation included:

- Community Pathways Campus project will cost approximately \$2,473,000. The recommendation will be to award the project to Johnson Controls. It will include an entirely new heating and cooling system for the campus with the exception of what was done this summer (Turning Point Academy and Virtual School).
- Fratt Elementary, original portion of the building, will cost approximately \$3,831,000. Recommendation of the contract to be awarded to Trane. The system has been endorsed by the District's HVAC team.
- Mitchell K-8 campus project will cost approximately \$8,317,000. This project is similar in scope to the Jerstad-Agerholm project. Recommendation of the contract to be awarded to Trane. This project will include the entire campus.
- Next steps
  - Ask the Board to approve the performance contracts at the Dec. 18 business meeting. The authority by the state to use performance contracts will expire on Dec. 31, 2017.
  - The Board would also need to approve the debt financing as well as approve the energy efficiency levy linked to debt payments for each project. Bond financing will be available. Estimated debt service cost is \$0.11 per \$1,000 on the tax levy.

Discussion and questions:

- Regarding Mitchell campus, it has a steam system now? (It has two portions, one that is all steam and the other is a small section that is hot water. Both will be replaced.) The steam system requires a boiler engineer and a hot water system eliminates that need, correct? (We are not eliminating the need, but rather changing the class of the boiler engineer license.)
- Out of the \$14.6 million, how much is performance? (As long as the overall project has savings to cover the cost.)
- Is there going to be a portion that is not covered by the performance contract? (Right now we are not looking at bringing it in separately – just under the one. Even with adding the cooling component, we are saving enough to cover the entire project.)
- After Jan. 1, the District will lose the ability to do projects that go above the revenue cap. For future construction projects, we would possibly have to go to a referendum. WASB is actively lobbying the state legislature and is hopeful this will come back in the next year.

**6. 2017-18 School Calendar Amendment**

Ms. Daca and Ms. Hanstedt presented to the Board an amendment to the 2017-18 school calendar. Last year, the high school assessment schedule included four days of exams (2 per day) with a two hour early release for each of those days. This year, there are enough minutes in the first semester to repeat the same schedule. However, for the second semester exams, the District does not have enough time. The District is planning to use the inclement weather day (6 hours) built into the formula that is used for the state to account for the number of hours of instruction.

If there is an inclement weather day during the first semester, school will be held on February 19 (Winter Break Day). If there is an inclement weather day after first semester, a make-up day would have to be added on at the end of the school year. This change will be built into the calendar next year. The Board does not need to vote on this change.

Mr. Wiser arrived at 7:30 p.m.

**7. WASB Convention Reminder**

Mr. Wittke reminded the Board that the WASB Convention will be held on January 16-19, 2018. He encouraged the Board to attend. Mr. O'Connell is the WASB delegate and Ms. Duchow is the WASB alternate delegate.

**8. Work Session Recap**

Mr. Wittke provided a brief recap of this evening's work session. The Board will be voting on the energy efficiency performance contracts and the Olympia Brown property at the Dec. 18 business meeting. At the work session with Mr. Cheesebrow, there was some discussion about the utilization of a feedback form. Please send any ideas regarding this form directly to Mr. Wittke.

The session ended at 7:32 p.m.