



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

Board of Education

RACINE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

WORK SESSION

Dennis Wiser, President

Pamala Handrow, Clerk

Racine, Wisconsin

February 11, 2014

A Special Board meeting of the Board of Education of the Racine Unified School District of Racine County, Wisconsin was called to order at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, February 11, 2014, with the following members present: Christopher J. Eperjesy, Michael Frontier, Pamala Handrow, Melvin Hargrove, Julie L. McKenna, Don J. Nielsen, Wally Rendón and Dennis Wiser. Absent: Kim Plache.

Also present: Deb Winking and Tony Rollins, Consultants, Panasonic Foundation; and Darlene Gallup, Executive Assistant.

The purpose of the meeting was a work session. No action was taken by the Board.

The purpose of the work session was to work with the Panasonic Foundation consultants to review and learn the concepts of the theory of Adaptive Leadership as it applies to the board's work.

What is the board's work in a time of significant change?

Dr. Winking shared information regarding what administration has been doing in learning about changes and adaptive vs. technical work. Dr. Rollins read an excerpt from the book, "Leadership on the Line" showing an example of the difference between technical and adaptive work. In order to meet the North Star, RUSD employees have had to make changes which can result in a feeling of loss on the way to a new desired future. Tonight's session was meant to teach the board how to observe and deal with the experiences of adaptive change.

Technical vs. Adaptive Leadership

The differences between technical and adaptive changes were discussed. Technical ones are those for which the necessary work is already known. Adaptive ones are those things that lie beneath the surface, have unforeseen circumstances, require changing attitudes and beliefs and often deal with emotional aspects. Adaptive problem solutions come from the authentic engagement with the people involved.

The board discussed examples of adaptive and technical problems being dealt with in the district including the budget which is technical but decisions about the budget are adaptive. You can fix the budget, but the decisions may affect people's jobs, work resources, having to do things differently, etc.

Dr. Winking and Dr. Rollins provided information about how the board can participate in good adaptive leadership using the same kind of knowledge being shared with the district's administration and members of the Guiding Coalition such as open communication, inclusion of all stakeholders in decisions, collaboration, trust, and respect for peoples' perspectives. It is also important to have a common language between all parties.

Dr. Winking and Dr. Rollins shared information about the four ways people respond to adaptive change and loss – marginalization, diversion, attack and seduction. These are explained in detail in the book, “Leadership on the Line,” which board members were asked to read, especially Chapters 1 and 2. The board worked on what these four responses look like and ways to respond to them as a leader without compromising the goals and vision of the North Star.

The View from the Balcony

Board members shared in an exercise through use of a metaphor called “Stepping out on to the Balcony,” which deals with being involved and having the right views and perspectives of situations.

Homework assignment: Practicing stepping out on to the Balcony between now and the March 25th retreat.

Dr. Rollins and Dr. Winking asked board members to practice “stepping out on the balcony,” between now and the next Leadership work session on March 25 and be prepared to share their experiences then.

Checkout and Adjourn

Board members provided brief comments about the evening’s work and the tools of adaptive leadership.

The session ended at 8:25 p.m.