



## 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

June 7, 2017

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On Wednesday, June 7, 2017, the Board of Education of the Racine Unified School District of Racine County, Wisconsin, called to order a Board Work Session at 5:04 p.m.

The following Board members were present: Michael Frontier, Matthew Hanser, John Heckenlively, Steven Hooper, Julie McKenna, Brian O'Connell, Dennis Wiser, and Robert Wittke, Jr. Absent: Michelle Duchow.

Also present: Dennis Cheesebrow, Founder, TeamWorks International; Eric Gallien, Deputy Superintendent; Lolli Haws, Superintendent; and Elizabeth Tobias, Executive Assistant.

#### Welcome

Mr. Wittke welcomed everyone to the work session and provided opening comments regarding the purpose of Board development on operations and the development of better cohesiveness to elevate the Board's ability to serve the District and community.

#### June 5 Work Session Review

Mr. Cheesebrow facilitated a review of the June 5 Work Session.

#### **Administrative Regulations and Consent Agendas**

- The Board's policy regarding Consent Agenda items is not aligned with the approval process delineated in administrative regulation.
- Practices and management of Consent Agenda, which is typically used for routine items or items required by the state, are for items that are almost entirely management. Be cautious when using Consent Agenda for any other purposes.
- Typically, boards operate with either of the following two patterns in regards to administrative regulations:
  - A regulation does not come back to the Board for approval, or
  - A regulation does come back to the Board under Consent Agenda. The items are approved and rarely pulled for discussion and vote. If an item normally placed under Consent Agenda needs clarification, it will be discussed at a work session so Board members can have a better understanding and are informed.
- Pulling an item under Consent Agenda for individual consideration may be due to a Board member wanting to make the issue into a public hearing, which is in fact not a part of the process. Discussions of such concerns should take place in the work session prior to the

Board business meeting. Board members should not use the pulling of Consent Agenda items to create a discussion for political or special interest group purposes or requests.

- Partnership between the Board and Administration is critical for excellence in governance and management. If the Board has delegated management roles, then allow management the ability to exercise those roles and responsibilities. The Board should hold management accountable through monitoring reports for the results and impact of the regulations and decisions they make. It is not the role of the Board to make a regulation “better” before it is implemented. It is management’s job to make sure the regulation works. A Board which increases its roles and activity in management issues actually lowers accountability of management.

### **Public Engagement Process and Board Member’s Responsibilities**

Sound public engagement practice as part of governance excellence is to forward emails and communication to Board members from staff and public to administration along with Board responses so all forms of public engagement is placed into the public process. If not, Board members are creating a silent feedback/privilege system and are not allowing the feedback to be put into public record or seen by administration.

- Trust and confidence – the Board should operate under the assumption that administration is trying to do what is best in the District’s interest.
- From a Board’s perspective, do not try to take dissonance out of the public engagement processes or feedback. Do not try to make it so no one is upset. Allow the process to work; allow the difference in opinions to come out. The Board’s job is to figure out in the midst of all the differences, what is in the District’s best interest. High dissonance districts do not improve student learning nor address the gap; at the end of the day the data does not change.
- If there is a public process, please make it transparent. Board members should also contribute to the process by making sure that anything emailed to the Board is directed to the process. This way any staff or community member will know, if they email a Board member directly, it will make it to the process.
- In the process, you cannot manage someone else’s anxiety (real or unreal). Anytime there is change, there is dissonance in the system. Rather than trying to eliminate it, the system might be healthier by allowing it; through hearing the dissonance a better design/decision may be made.

### **Guiding Change Processes**

Mr. Cheesebrow facilitated a walk-through of what the process might look like in utilizing the Guiding Change document and process. During the discussion, the following points were made:

- Overview of the process – what are the results that you seek and what should not happen? In the document, the Board is describing the “what,” not the “how.” The Board is asking administration for a proposal of the “how.” The Board would receive a proposal and discuss in a work session. The key governance question asked is, “Does this proposal achieve our ends/results and avoid the unacceptable means?” If it does, the Board will generally agree. Inside the guiding change process, the Board provides informal consultation/feedback to administration. The administration will come back with the best possible design. The work of the Board is to not try to eliminate all future possible problems. If there are problems with implementation, it will be refined and made better.
- For internal and external decision making processes to develop proposal for “How”, the IAP-2 Spectrum (International Association of Public Participation) would be a good foundation – clarifies language, strategies and promises as well as assists with consistency. This approach can also be contained in either policy or regulation.

- When the proposal is presented, the Board interprets the product with the Guiding Change document and asks, “Does it achieve our results?” Have a discussion with administration and raise questions. Then the question during the Work Session is, “Is the Board ready to take action?”
- The Board builds accountability into the Operational Expectations and monitoring reports. If the Board wants accountability, then there should be transparency; these two go hand-in-hand. When there is feedback and transparency, trust in the system goes up.
- The Board operates under the assumption that management will refine implementation, if necessary.
- Guiding Change process sequence for review of proposed “How”:
  - Do you as a board member understand what is presented?
  - Does it fit? Does it reside within the Guiding Change document or not?
  - If it does, approve it and move forward.
  - Hold administration accountable for a well-done implementation. If refinement and improvement is necessary, the Board will be informed.
- The District improves through implementation and refinement rather than through delay and risk avoidance.

### **Board Committee Structure**

Mr. Cheesebrow facilitated a continued discussion on the Board committee structure, including utilizing a Committee of the Whole or developing a mixed design of committees. Highlights from the discussion include:

- A blend of Committee of the Board (COB) and standing Committees may serve the District well
  - Long-Range Facilities and Finance, and Legislative Agenda/Public Engagement would fall under the COB; would probably add work sessions every other month (4-5 times per year)
  - Governance would be a standing committee
  - No longer having an Audit Committee; would move that to being a function of the Board
- When a majority of the Board is interested in knowing about an important issue or key area of development such as Facilities and Long-Range Finances, it is in the best interest to present the information to the COB
- Since the Board’s committees sunset every year, it allows the Board to have this discussion every year. What should we have as a committee and what should be done as a whole?
- If a Board member has been deeply engaged in an issue/proposal and it comes forward to the Board for a vote, the Board member should recuse themselves.

### **Adjourn**

The session ended at 8:53 p.m.