



## Board of Education

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

### WORK SESSION MINUTES

Robert Wittke, Jr., President

Dennis Wiser, Vice President

Racine, Wisconsin

November 27, 2017

On Monday, November 27, 2017, the Board of Education of the Racine Unified School District of Racine County, Wisconsin, called to order a Board Work Session at 6:09 p.m. Board members participated in a tour and dinner at Park High School prior to the work session.

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

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

#### Welcome

Mr. Wittke welcomed everyone to the work session and provided opening comments regarding the evening’s work session and the need for candid discussion.

#### What is Working Well and What Could Be Better?

Mr. Cheesebrow facilitated a discussion of what has worked well thus far and what could be better. Mr. Cheesebrow also shared the following diagram on the Education Leadership System:



During this discussion, the following points were made:

- High dissonance versus low dissonance districts
  - High dissonance districts are where adults create the drama/noise/division.
  - Low dissonance districts do the opposite; they are below the radar and focus on getting the work done.
  - High dissonance districts generally do not improve student learning, only the low dissonance districts generally do.
- In order to operate with excellence in governance, management, and consultation, everyone must understand their roles and responsibilities, and operate in a relationship of partnership. These relationships are what holds the system together. If you do not have functional relationships, the system does not work well.
- Utilization of a Board Governance Toolbox
  - Included in the toolbox are the following:
    - District Policies (OE and B/SR)
    - District Strategic Plan
    - Guiding Change Documents
    - Robert's Rules
    - Partnership & Trust
  - Using the toolbox as a filter is a starting point.
  - If you do not communicate or have ongoing discussions with the Superintendent, you will not be able to build a relationship of trust.
- The role of the Board is not to act as a predictive quality assurance organization, but to focus on the goals and expectations of the District utilizing monitoring reports. The Board's major focus should be on student achievement.
- The District has had and is currently experiencing the results of excellence in management, but the Board needs to recognize, respect, and acknowledge that as it will create the conditions for excellence in governance.

Discussion on ideas to improve practices and increase trust and partnership between the Board and administration the following ideas were shared:

- Presume positive intent without defensiveness
- Assess and refine if needed the Board committee structure
- Regular Board member/Superintendent meetings
- Using the Board Governance Toolbox
- Relevant and focused work session presentations without unnecessary information
- Use of a Board meeting feedback sheet/protocol
- Superintendent weekly updates
- Build trust through the use of structure, protocols and processes (Robert's Rules, policies, etc.)

Mr. Cheesebrow suggested using these ideas for 90 days (until February 27, 2018). Perhaps the Executive Committee can look further into and determine which practices should be implemented by the Board. He encouraged the Board pull out the policies or Guiding Change documents related to any information that is presented; keeping these tools available for reference. Mr. Cheesebrow also encouraged the Board to be more consistent and disciplined in using these tools as well as Robert's Rules. He also reiterated the importance of talking with one another and with the Superintendent.

One of the roles of the Superintendent is to provide the Board with recommendations. The question that the Board should ask of the recommendation is "Does the proposal achieve our goals? Does it meet the results or policies?"

### **Public Engagement Framework**

Mr. Cheesebrow facilitated a brief discussion on public engagement using the IAP2 framework.

Highlights from the discussion include:

- The role of public input at Board business meetings; it is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public. Public input at a business meeting is a subset of public engagement.
- Public engagement is what are the specific strategies that you are asking the district to engage in; most of the time it is administration developing processes of public engagement.
- The IAP2 framework has five levels of public participation, which are inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower. Each of these strategies has a promise to the public. This framework can be used internally as well.
- Consideration that the Board open up for public input at the end of a work session, but the comments must be confined to what was discussed at the session. This would allow for the public to give feedback on what was just discussed.
- Because the district does not have a robust public engagement, the Board is using public input as the only means for engagement, which is a poor substitute. The Board is better off in taking the time to develop public engagement strategy where public input would be a part of the repertoire.

At the next session, the Board can assess how well this is going. Questions that Mr. Cheesebrow will ask: Is the Board building trust in partnership?; Are you more effective?; Are you operating closer to your B/SR policies?

### **Adjourn**

The session ended at 8:58 p.m.