



Sonoita Elementary School District #25

Elgin School

23 Elgin Road

Elgin, Arizona 85611

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Christopher Bonn Ed.D, Superintendent

Melissa Paul, Administrative Secretary

SONOITA GOVERNING BOARD STUDY SESSION
Monday March 12, 2018 @ 4:00 PM
ELGIN SCHOOL CONFERENCE ROOM, ELGIN SCHOOL

SPECIAL GOVERNING BOARD MEETING
Monday March 12, 2018 @ 5:00 PM

MINUTES

Board Attendance:

Mike Sweedo, Board President
Sharon McCully, Clerk
Manager
Kelly Bostock, Member
Ginny Cosbey, Member
Ian Tomlinson, Member

District Attendance:

Dr. Chris Bonn, Superintendent
Isela Reyes, Business

4:00 PM- Mike Sweedo called the study session to order at 4:00 pm.

STUDY SESSION ~ Governing Board and Site Base Council review of Community and Student survey results.

Mr. Porter- reported there were 3 separate surveys, 4 & 5th grade, 6-8th grade, and Parent/Community/Staff. Participation numbers were similar to prior years. There were a couple of comments with students “not being nice” to each other in the 4-5-grade survey. The greatest concerns in the 6-8-grade survey were students (21/29) students feel worried outside of school. Ian asked what steps are taken to address these concerns. Dr. Bonn commented those concerns are passed on to the middle school counselor. (25/29) of the 6-8th grade students felt their teachers are respectful.

This year there were NO student lunch complaints.

Bus safety is an improvement from prior years. Dr. Bonn commented it may be the result of the installation of cameras on all Elgin School buses.

The Parent/Community/Staff survey showed the biggest issue was in contacting the superintendent.

Ms. Swift commented that this survey is very helpful to the teachers. They use it to collaborate and bring positive reinforcement and implement character counts and kindness in the classroom.

Ms. Pierce commented on possibly changing the language of the survey.

Mrs. Titche stated that there was a lot of good information and comments and that it should *all* be looked at.

Mrs. Lyman stated that more kids are commenting on the surveys.

Dr. Bonn stated that these are used as teachable moments and we are trying to model behaviors and reward positive things.

Mike Sweedo adjourned the study session at 4:19pm

OPENING – 5:00 pm –

A. Call to Order -Mike Sweedo called the special board meeting to order at 5:00 pm

- Pledge of Allegiance – All in attendance stood and pledged allegiance to The Flag of The United States of America.
- Adoption of the Agenda – Mike Sweedo motioned to adopt the Special meeting agenda. 2nd by Sharon McCully. Motion carried 5-0

INFORMATION ITEMS – Mike Sweedo stated it was the intention of The Board to do what’s best for the kids in considering the proposed budgets, cuts, etc

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B. PUBLIC COMMENT

~ Nate Porter, read a letter on behalf of Anna Coleman. Mrs. Coleman highlighted the benefits of art education and how it allows for growth and language developments. Art carries over to other areas and promotes forward thinking and strengthens problem solving and critical thinking. Children who participate in art education are more likely to be successful in math and science. She asked The Board to consider these points while making a decision.

~ Megan Titcher, pointed out to The Board that the prior agenda items regarding reduction in force and moving 5th grade to middle school had been tabled.

~ David Daffern, said Elgin School was awesome, however he disapproved with the lack of communication regarding the reduction in force. He noted that moving 5th grade to the middle school was the only option that was presented and that was not what was stated on the letter that went out to the community and staff. He also mentioned the letter stated this option had not been approved by The Board however it was sent like it was a done deal. He also commented on the Student Achievement Coach position and how this position is not present in other small schools.

~Lynne Daffern, stated this was not about people but positions, but it is very emotional. She was concerned and bothered of how poorly the communication was handled. She was very upset on how her name was on a community letter that stated she was being fired. She was not ok with this. She stated that the principal and the student achievement coach came in at separate times to “check” on her. She told them she was ok when she was asked how she was doing, but by the end of a 30-minute visit and then an hour and a half visit she did not feel Ok any longer. She stated that she felt badgered. She asked The Board to please make the right decision so that we can get back to doing what supports teaching kids.

~ Ann Brusca, stated that she was speaking *her* own truth. She has worked for lots of principals and ADE; she stated Dr. Bonn has been the most supportive to her. She also commented on how the student achievement coach has been very supportive and the amount of professionalism and respect is outstanding.

~ Lori Reynolds, parent of 2 sons at Elgin School, 1 in kinder and 1 in 2nd, expressed her concern with the \$150,000.00 deficit. She stated the school was admin heavy and how eliminating one position could make such a difference. She recommended cutting back on the administration instead.

~Brent Bowdon, expressed support of Dr. Bonn. He commented on the number of superintendents that have gone thru this school, and Dr. Bonn has done a lot of wonderful things. He asked The Board to look at the “overall” track record and to think twice before you make your decision.

~Whitney Marshall, expressed support for Mrs. Mott and commented how her son would not be where he is now had it not been for Mrs. Mott. She stated that the school will have a hard time replacing her and it would hurt students if she were let go. She works wonders with her students.

~ Lorinda Pierce, spoke about the A+ visit and how well it went. She also commented on the importance of integrating Art with curriculum. She spoke about Mr. Harper’s positive energy and Mr. G’s ability as the math teacher. He’s the best hands down. She stated it would be a terrible mistake if any of these positions were to be removed. She also replied to a prior comment regarding the student achievement coach position in small rural schools and stated there are a minimum of 10 small rural school that have this position.

~ BJ Hintsala, parent of 2 students one of which has very special needs, was in support of Mrs. Mott she stated if Mrs. Mott left she was not putting her child in school. She also stated 5th graders are not mentally ready to go into middle school. Kids are supposed to be first.

~ Midge Cole, thanked The Board for serving and allowing her to speak. She stated she has been volunteering in the community for 27 years and thinks the staff is excellent. She is disappointed to see the image of the school slipping and seeing low morale. She stated more kids are now going to Montessori she asked The Board to look at the per-pupil costs and take into account a large population is on fixed incomes. She asked The Board to look at creative ways to attract quality teachers, to bet on teachers and not administration. She believes the school is admin heavy. She asked The Board not to cut 5th grade or any teaching positions.

~ Linda Anderson, she spoke in support of Dr. Bonn and commented on how he did a special job with her son Luke. She stated he has respect from all the children and doesn’t want to see him go or any of the teachers. She commented on the importance of Art & Music.

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~ Stephanie Hubbell, commented on how the teachers here make Elgin special, and stated that most of the kids here do not go home to play video games, they are involved in 4-H and have animals and chores to do. The parents like that the staff and teachers here know and understand that. She stated that if you start taking away these things you would loose kids. She stated how her daughter now in high school, received a lot of help from Mr. G. She asked The Board to find budget cuts elsewhere.

ACTION ITEMS

C. DISCUSS / ACTION TO APPROVE - Superintendent's Contingency reduction in force plan.- Mike Sweedo motioned to discuss. – Dr. Bonn presented a slide that showed 5 contingency plans. He commented on the changes to funding from 100th day to real time. He explained how the budget is set. He gave a breakdown of why and how the projected FY18/19 budget will need to be set and recapture \$150,000. Dr. Bonn stated Property Tax Oversight Commission has capped our tax rate for 2018. Dr. Bonn discussed the matrix used for Reductions in Force (RIF). First would be attrition. Second would be retirees. Finally a matrix would be used and the lowest score would be let go. He stated other areas you have to consider for example Title I, you need a certified person in that position. Dr. Bonn went thru each scenario of the contingency plan and explained the pros and cons for each. He then recommend scenario A. and sustain the art, pe, middle school math, and student achievement coach positions.

Sharon McCully asked what additional support would be given to the 5th grade when moved. Dr. Bonn said the student achievement coach would be available to the middle teachers for support. Ian Tomlinson asked what about the kids, what support mechanism will be offered to them? Dr. Bonn said there was not a plan in place yet, but we do have a counselor available on staff for them.

Ginny Cosbey said we would need to help those kids emotionally and socially. Help them transition and get along. And also support the middle school teachers. Kelly Bostock commented that it didn't look like there was a solid plan yet, but should come up with one. She also asked how Dr. Bonn was going to address the parent concerns. Dr. Bonn replied he would address that at the parent meeting. He stated the transition should be fine; they already interact with each other in sports even the 4th grade can participate in middle school sports.

Dr. Bonn stated this is a difficult and emotional decision. In a small school where you have only one teacher per grade level, but you can't talk about people only positions.

~ Mike Sweedo motioned to convene into executive session at 6:00pm 2nd by Ian Tomlinson. Motion carried 5-0.

~ Mike Sweedo motioned to return to regular session at 6:17 pm 2nd by Sharon McCully. Motion carried 5-0.

Ian Tomlinson moved to approve recommended contingency plan, which would:

- Move 5th grade into middle school
- Shift 5th grade Teacher into 3rd grade
- Move 3rd grade teacher into 2nd grade (early childhood certified)
- Move 2nd grade teacher into 1st grade (early childhood certified)
- Rehire custodian, grounds at \$13.00/hr.
- Retain \$15,000.00 for incidentals (e.g. Plumber, locksmith, welder, water testing, etc.)
- Move Title I to Student Achievement Coach, reclassify the position and increase by \$5,000.
- Only reduction in force is retiree teacher. A.R.S 38-766.01, returned retiree teachers do not have tenure or a right to reemployment.
- Middle school would be able to assume 5th grade, all teachers are certified to teach 5th graders.
- All middle school teachers are content area specialist
- All middle school teachers could assume an 80-minute period and still retain an hour of common planning and preparation.

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2nd by Sharon McCully. Motion carried 5-0.

D. DISCUSS / ACTION TO APPROVE – (Tabled item from 3/6/18 board meeting). Non-Renewal of Elementary Teacher Retiree Contract. Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-341.03 (A)(1) personnel, the Board may vote to move into executive session to discuss the potential reduction of force (RIF) of a returned retiree teacher, unless the employee wishes to have the matter held in open session. If the employee requests that the matter be discussed in open session, it will be discussed in open session at this point on the agenda. – Mrs. Mott requested item be discussed in open session. Mike Sweedo motioned to approve item D, Sharon McCully asked if Mrs. Mott held any additional credentials. Dr. Bonn said she had been the testing and ELL coordinator before Mrs. Pierce. Ian motioned to approve item D 2nd by Kelly Bostock. Motion carried 5-0.

E. DISCUSS / ACTION TO APPROVE – Non-Renewal of Middle School Teacher Retiree Contract. Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-341.03 (A)(1) personnel, the Board may vote to move into executive session to discuss the potential reduction of force (RIF) of a returned retiree teacher, unless the employee wishes to have the matter held in open session. If the employee requests that the matter be discussed in open session, it will be discussed in open session at this point on the agenda. – Mike Sweedo motioned to approve item E 2nd by Kelly Bostock. Motion Failed. 0-5.

F. DISCUSSION- Non-Renewal of Art Teacher. Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-341.03 (A)(1) personnel, the Board may vote to move into executive session to discuss the potential reduction of force (RIF) of a returned retiree teacher, unless the employee wishes to have the matter held in open session. If the employee requests that the matter be discussed in open session, it will be discussed in open session at this point on the agenda. -Mike Sweedo motioned to approve item F 2nd by Kelly Bostock. Motion Failed. 0-5

G. DISCUSS / ACTION TO APPROVE – Non-Renewal of PE/ Counselor Teacher Contract. Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-341.03 (A)(1) personnel, the Board may vote to move into executive session to discuss the potential reduction of force (RIF) of a returned retiree teacher, unless the employee wishes to have the matter held in open session. If the employee requests that the matter be discussed in open session, it will be discussed in open session at this point on the agenda. - Mike Sweedo motioned to approve item G 2nd by Kelly Bostock. Motion Failed. 0-5.

H. DISCUSS / ACTION TO APPROVE – Non-Renewal of Library/Media Specialist Position. Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-341.03 (A)(1) personnel, the Board may vote to move into executive session to discuss the potential reduction of force (RIF) of a returned retiree teacher, unless the employee wishes to have the matter held in open session. If the employee requests that the matter be discussed in open session, it will be discussed in open session at this point on the agenda. - Mike Sweedo motioned to approve item H 2nd by Ginny Cosbey. Motion Failed. 0-5

I. DISCUSS / ACTION TO APPROVE – Non-Renewal of Student Achievement Coach/Teacher Contract. Pursuant to A.R.S. §38-341.03 (A)(1) personnel, the Board may vote to move into executive session to discuss the potential reduction of force (RIF) of a returned retiree teacher, unless the employee wishes to have the matter held in open session. If the employee requests that the matter be discussed in open session, it will be discussed in open session at this point on the agenda. - Mike Sweedo motioned to approve item I 2nd by Sharon McCully. Motion Failed. 0-5

~ Mike Sweedo motioned to move into executive session at 6:23 pm. 2nd by Ian Tomlinson.

~ Mike Sweedo motioned to return to regular session at 6:44 pm. 2nd by Sharon McCully.

J. DISCUSS / ACTION TO APPROVE- (Tabled item from 3/6/18 Board Meeting). Review and approval of Superintendent contract with legal recommendations. - The Governing Board may vote to convene in Executive Session pursuant to A.R.S § 38-431.03 (A) (1), Employment, unless the employee wishes to have the matter held in open session. If the employee requests that the matter be discussed in open session, it will be discussed in open session at this point on the agenda. – Ian Tomlinson moves to approve superintendent contract 2nd by Ginny Cosbey. Motion Failed. 0-5

CONSENT AGENDA**

N/A.

STUDY ITEMS

N/A.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Non-Tender of Superintendent contract.
2. Issue of Admin leave
3. Request of paid sick leave by Mrs. Mott

ADJOURNMENT

Mike Sweedo Motioned to adjourn the meeting 2nd by Sharon McCully. Meeting was adjourned at 6:47pm.