

**DOLORES SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-4A
BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
DISTRICT BOARD ROOM**

Thursday, July 15, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER – The Dolores School Board meeting was called to order at 4:01 pm on July 15, 2021.

ROLL CALL – Members present were: Maegan Crowley; Casey McClellan; Kay Phelps (arrived after roll call); Lenetta Shull; Clay Tallmadge. **QUORUM** was present.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (DSD Policy BEDB)

A motion was made by Lenetta Shull and seconded by Clay Tallmadge to approve the agenda.

Votes: Crowley - aye; McClellan - aye; Shull - aye; Tallmadge - aye.

Motion Passed.

III. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT INTERVIEWS

A. 4:00-4:45 p.m. - Todd Gilmore

Todd Gilmore was present for the interview via Zoom.

Q1. Describe your leadership style, the process you use in decision-making, and how you evaluate the effectiveness of your decisions.

A1. School of thought that embraces service leadership; believes that role is facilitator and steward, not dictator; process: making effective decisions over quick decisions; meritocracy based- best idea wins, no matter where it comes from; makes habit of being visible and available for members of school community; communication is important in decision-making, so that even when community members do not agree, they understand the reasoning behind a decision.

Effectiveness of leadership comes from what motivations are; feedback loop important.

Q2. Please share your experience regarding curriculum development and student assessment.

A2. Has been in situations where effectiveness of curriculum was an issue- research-based work on

vertical and horizontal alignment; for example, stepped in in a district where math was struggling and misaligned, helped decide on an engageNY curriculum that helped with alignment and with bringing 21st century learning; CTE- bringing in private sector to help figure out what works best to position students for success in vocations.

Assessments- formative assessments at district level, as well as summative; formative allows for more customization to figure out and address student needs; for summative- have strengths with assessing and using data at district level.

Q3. Dolores being a smaller district, the Superintendent plays a huge hands-on role in building a district budget tied to the district's Strategic Plan, Vision and Mission Statement. Do you have hands-on experience in building a sustainable balanced Budget? If so, explain such experience.

A3. Currently works in a small district where superintendent is expected to have as much expertise in finance and operations as in academics; offers Dolores a revenue-generating approach; starts with zero-based budgeting approach, works up based on what has consensus; revenue-generating approach = exploiting students who recognize they are not necessarily obligated to accept diploma when they have met credits- looking at more of K-14 mindset, creating partnerships affording free college students to low socioeconomic status students in a revenue-positive way.

Comes from private sector, believes in importance of cash flow, and that it sustains organizations in the long run; believes this is a strength that could serve Dolores particularly if the district believes it is struggling with budget.

Q4. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent and the Board of Education in forming an effective leadership team, and how that team best meets the needs of the students.

A4. Knows that the leadership group has to be aligned in how we do business, what business we are in, and mission; governing boards can be used as excellent sounding boards and checks and balances, as voice of community; role of superintendent is to facilitate the dreams, wants, and needs of community; aligned values make decision-making easy, require a lot of dialogue; also views school board almost as justices of the Supreme Court- can express range of opinions that fed into ultimate decisions.

Q5. Describe your level of familiarity with Colorado School Laws. Describe two situations where you needed to refer to school law in helping you with an important decision.

A5. Has never worked in Colorado, so "no" to second half of question. Has appreciation for school law- much of state level law comes from federal school laws; admits that may not know specific

Colorado versions of codes and statutes, but knows them across other states.

Q6. Would you approach an interim superintendent position differently than a superintendent position? If so, how?

A6. What would determine answer is the governing board; cool opportunities afforded by interim position if the governing board wants to take advantage of that; could use almost a management consultant approach, to use this year to work out and align values and direction; board should dictate what the focus of the position should be, rather than interim superintendent dictating path for the year; would like to apply for permanent but would not presume to come out of gate with a permanent mindset and pathway.

Q7. How does a school district meet the needs of all students, yet increase student achievement, and close gaps caused by language and poverty?

A7. By meeting students where they are. Language and poverty part of question: has worked in districts that were 40% native, 30% hispanic and 30% white; what has been successful in closing achievement gaps in those districts is to wear on sleeve how much we are not willing to perpetuate the achievement gaps; listen to tribes, to hispanic communities, to special needs; will openly communicate how those issues will be addressed, and incorporate ongoing feedback to assess how efficacious approaches are; on philosophical level, believes that engaged learners that are able to answer "what did you learn at school" every day is major sign that education is on the right path; possible specifics could be bringing in more electives, finding out what students want to take as electives and then making it the burden of the district to provide those; this creates more engaged learners and helps close achievement gaps, gets parents more involved.

Also has a lot of experience working with trauma affected communities; social emotional learning is critical in closing achievement gaps.

Q8. Have you ever been involved in deficit planning, including difficult decisions of eliminating staff positions and/or programs? Provide examples.

A8. Yes. One of upsides of not being from CO is having experience working in the 49th state- AZ; even lower funding, more cuts from legislature, forced into district cuts; always tries to do everything possible to avoid cutting positions- schools are not buildings but people, work to make the people the last to be cut.

Example: in 2009, became one of first 20 online schools in AZ- was able to turn around major deficit, was able to bring back people that had to be cut after only a year; having to cut positions is painful

and does not take it lightly.

Q9. You have an idea or goal you would like to accomplish. You know much of the staff is supportive, but suspect the parents/community, and/or the majority of the board, are not. How do you navigate this situation?

A9. Example: four member board, two motions, both deadlocked- one to return to all in-person learning with no masks, 2/2; one to go online, 2/2; superintendent was left to figure out path forward. Worked out compromise by keeping communication and holding in-person learning as highest shared priority, came up with in-person option with strict CDC protocols, community rallied, and district stayed open longer than others in state because community came together.

Q10. Describe situations from the past (without disclosing confidential information) that required meeting with a lawyer and the board to resolve a legal issue.

A10. Was involved in dealing with a situation involving inappropriate sexual conduct of a staff member, with a student; had to work with school lawyer to resolve issue; unfortunate situation that he wishes had not occurred. Worked with county lawyer and with board to resolve.

Q11. What else would you like the Board to know?

A11. Have seen a lot, feel that he brings a lot of diverse skills and strengths to the district; on personal level, have always loved the region, have camped and visited in the area, would love to be in the area; would be interested in staying; believe that continuity does serve student achievement; from due diligence, seems that soft skills are needed to calm some waters, confident in bringing that skill to district; have always left things better than he found them, and because of that have always been asked back, no matter where he's gone

Q12. Do you have any questions for the Board?

A12. What are one or two of the challenges or opportunities that you see before the incoming superintendent, and from your purview, what initial friendly advice would you have for the incoming superintendent to be successful?

- **Lenetta Shull:** have spent a lot of time and money on curriculum- core knowledge sequencing, are you familiar, and if so, what are your thoughts on it?

Yes. We deployed it in a district in OR, it worked well- one of reasons for success was that it helped with continuity, since they had a lot of high turnover with staff; thought it was a good fit for that

district. Also recognized that that district had socioeconomic challenges, only about 50% of graduates college-bound, this curriculum was good fit for needs of that population

- **Kay Phelps:** You mentioned vertical and horizontal alignment- what process would you use to assess how aligned the curriculum is?

Talk to teachers and those on the ground. For ex., for vertical alignment: had 3rd grade teachers come up with 7 things they wished all 2nd grade students could walk in the door being able to do. For horizontal: sounds like some curriculum being deployed is being used for the first time- part of what interim superintendent could do is help with assessing what is and isn't working with new curriculum, getting rid of or adapting what isn't working.

B. 4:50-5:35 p.m. - Dr. Javier Abrego

Dr. Abrego was present for the interview via phone.

Q1. Describe your leadership style, the process you use in decision-making, and how you evaluate the effectiveness of your decisions.

A1. Believes in servant leadership; try to surround self with people who have that same philosophy; understand responsibility for decisions; always seek input from leadership team, and very seldom go in a different direction from leadership team; also look at data to help with decision making

Q2. Please share your experience regarding curriculum development and student assessment.

A2. Started as a coach, worked in elementary, middle, and high school; working on Navajo reservation with very low scores, found curriculum- Beyond Texts (?) that works well in helping teachers teach to standards; has experience with other curricula as well, prefers the Beyond Texts because it has worked well, helped majorly bring up state test scores.

Uses ongoing formative assessments as well as summative test scores, seeking input and feedback.

Q3. Dolores being a smaller district, the Superintendent plays a huge hands-on role in building a district budget tied to the district's Strategic Plan, Vision and Mission Statement. Do you have hands-on experience in building a sustainable balanced budget? If so, explain such experience.

A3. Grand Canyon very small district, primary experience in district in Navajo Nation; works to prioritize, communicate how much funding there is, work together to set priorities and figure out how

to allocate funds; work to get grants, spend grant and state funding first; sought mentorship from finance manager and other districts; leans heavily on finance manager as expert.

Q4. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the superintendent and the Board of Education in forming an effective leadership team, and how that team best meets the needs of the students.

A4. Sees it as a marriage; job is to work with the Board and the community, have shared goals and strategic plan, work together; sees role as acting on directives and goals of the board as they are communicated by working together; prefers to sit down with board president once a week to collaborate and share information; responsibility is to run district, make sure things are running smoothly, by working with leadership team, ensuring student needs are met; doing everything possible to please parents and students. Likes to do a lot of professional development together, using CASB and CDE as resources.

Q5. Describe your level of familiarity with Colorado School Laws. Describe two situations where you needed to refer to school law in helping you with an important decision.

A5. Runs district by policy- policy is like bible; making decisions not because you want to, but based on district policy. Has helped with writing policies in Colorado districts; believes in importance of keeping up with recent changes in state laws and policies, attending conferences to stay informed; believe in professional development for leadership team, so that policies are always followed.

Q6. Would you approach an interim superintendent position differently than a superintendent position? If so, how?

A6. Doesn't think it would be approached that differently, as the requirements of the position are the same; the difference would be that a year is not enough to accomplish major goals, would do whatever was needed to get the district to the next level and serve needs.

Q7. How does a school district meet the needs of all students, yet increase student achievement, and close gaps caused by language and poverty?

A7. All needs must be met; special ed, ELL; instruction must be diversified and catered to meet needs. Almost IEP approach for every student. Loves data- drilling down to individual classroom and individual student level; interventions- before or after school, curricula such as Beyond Texts; believes in reteaching, that students don't learn at the same pace, providing extra intervention and enrichment; believe that data drives closing gaps; all students should be able to be successful, district's job is to figure out how to meet those needs. Gave example from Navajo Nation- extreme poverty, dirt floors, but all students were passing state tests. Believes in individualized education for

every single student.

Q8. Have you ever been involved in deficit planning, including difficult decisions of eliminating staff positions and/or programs? Provide examples.

A8. Worked as principal in a district in Chicago; the steel mills provide a huge amount of funding for schools- one year mills said they had overpaid 25M in taxes and demanded it back. PE, music, and art programs were all cut, he had to be the face of that.

Also dealt with deficit on Navajo reservation- communicated to the whole school community mid-year and presented the problem, asked for help and input in figuring it out. When positions have to be cut, focus on positions that don't affect the classroom directly first.

Q9. You have an idea or goal you would like to accomplish. You know much of the staff is supportive, but suspect the parents/community, and/or the majority of the board, are not. How do you navigate this situation?

A9. We serve the community; parents are very important. Would work to come to some sort of consensus with the staff, looking for compromise if needed; would ultimately go with the Board decision if it came to that, since the Board is the authority.

Q10. Describe situations from the past (without disclosing confidential information) that required meeting with a lawyer and the board to resolve a legal issue.

A10. Custodian was not performing duties, was let go, based on principal's recommendation and video proof; that person sued the district, claiming discrimination. Won, because the district was not discriminating, and because the district had made sure that decision was according to policy before proceeding with it.

Q11. What else would you like the Board to know?

A11. Loves Colorado, and would love to move back; loves working- retired because family encouraged him to, but he misses work; healthy, fishes hikes and bikes, worked 40 years in education. Has been in Dolores and Cortez, would love to live in the area

Q12. Do you have any questions for the Board?

A12.

- How is housing situation in area?

Clay Tallmadge: housing has become difficult in this area as in all mountain areas, but district has so far been successful in finding housing for all staff.

- When will decision be made?

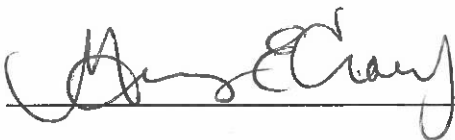
Maegan Crowley: Formal decision will be made next Friday, the 23rd.

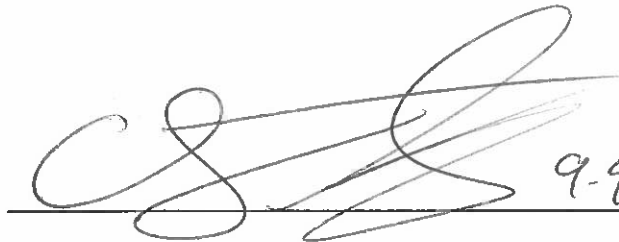
Maegan Crowley: Do you have experience with the Core Knowledge curriculum?

A: no- discussed the need for assessing and adjusting any curriculum

IV. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting was adjourned by Maegan Crowley at 5:38pm.


_____ 9/9/21
Board President Date


_____ 9-9-21
Board Secretary Date