

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

**Thursday, July 16, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER** – The Dolores School Board meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm on July 16, 2021.

**ROLL CALL** – Members present were: Maegan Crowley; Casey McClellan; Kay Phelps; Lenetta Shull; Clay Tallmadge. **QUORUM** was present.

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA (DSD Policy BEDB)**

A motion was made by Casey McClellan and seconded by Lenetta Shull to approve the agenda.

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

**Motion Passed.**

**III. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT INTERVIEWS**

**A. 1:00-1:45 p.m. - Alesa Reed**

*Alesa Reed was present in person for the interview.*

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

**A1.** Has a conglomerate of leadership styles- lead first with heart, in building up others, encouraging, and caring for others; lead with head- having vision, setting goals, thinking in terms of what is best for community, make decisions that have to be made; lead with hands- invite and collaborate with others, help staff with developing sustainable practices; lead by examples.

Decisions that must be made quickly- usually health or safety related- ensure that plans are in place; decisions that take time- consult with team to make best decision.

Evaluating effectiveness- surveys, assessment, gather data on decisions after they've been made to ensure they are working.

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

**A2.** Curriculum development- began with co-writing literacy grant; researched program, state requirements; implemented program, did a lot of data diving to determine effectiveness. Trained with staff on curriculum assessment and auditing.

Core Knowledge program recently implemented- involved as mentioned previously in ensuring its effectiveness.

Met with and was trained by Susie Townsend to develop curriculum teams during the first year developing ELA, was able to take over responsibility during second year developing math curriculum, worked this year on social studies.

Manages all assessments for the district, provides the board with district data; invested in helping individual teachers and building level leadership to look at data and figure out how to use it to address gaps.

**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.** Doesn't have experience building a full district budget, but has experience building budget- i.e. for literacy grant. This grant involves on a small scale what a district budget would include- including salaries, materials, etc., staying inside state guidelines, reporting how funds were used. Believes that it is important to stay as close to budget as possible, knowing that things come up, but that we are responsible for adhering to budget that was approved.

**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.** Business is educating students- that is why all are here; distraction by a negative relationship has a negative effect on district; believes it's important therefore to build that relationship. Taking turns leading, trusting, supporting, respecting, and defending one another within and beyond the room; asking questions; developing shared values, adhering to mission and vision. Evaluator once told her a talent was bringing people together; builds strong relationship and then gets on with business of helping kids.

**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.** Experience was first with policy; was district secretary and secretary to the Board years ago- was involved with interpreting, researching, presenting policy to the Board, offering suggestions. Also has experience with acts such as the READ Act- has worked on ensuring that the district is adhering to READ Act since it was passed.

Also involved in evaluation system- district is using Master Teacher rather than RANDA, but the district is still required to meet state expectations; has worked to bring district evaluation system in line with state requirements.

Also has experience working with BOCES and SPED teachers to ensure that district is meeting needs as required by law.

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

**A6.** Yes, approaching the position differently is very important- the district has gone through a lot of change in the past few years, because of the pandemic and leadership changes; a leader that came in and tried to make major changes immediately as an interim leader would fatigue the staff- does not want to do that. Focus would be more subtle changes, looking to improve how the district uses data, which would build on work that has been done, would result in changes that are sustainable over time, and would not disrupt.

**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.** In training this past year, has been strongly encouraged to do equity audits; would encourage district to continue work on equity audits and use data to address issues that the data revealed.

Universal instruction has to be strong in every classroom; differentiation is important- some teachers can differentiate naturally, but for others it can be a very difficult thing. Believes that it is important to train on differentiation. Would provide teachers with tools they could immediately use.

Looks at interventions- push ins, pull outs, one on one, assess what is working and provide training to improve.

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

**A8.** Involved in deficit planning on the other end of the table. Was not aware that her position was only one year, had been promised to another teacher if they desired. Knows from experience how difficult receiving that news can be.

Second example: Negative Factor came down from state- superintendent handled it in the same way she would: at the time knew what was happening, gathered staff and let them know exactly what was happening, and asked staff what they thought; asked for ongoing input on how to handle it. Impacted positions, programs, salaries.

**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.** Return to previous question about building relationship- would hope that the relationship was strong enough that this would not happen; when relationships are built and there is trust and respect, that sort of “gotcha” scenario would not occur; listen to community, take surveys, take data; have the humility to accept if the Board or the town are not ready for an idea.

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

**A10.** During time as secretary, had an issue with a superintendent; met with the Board regarding concerns; met with attorney, prepared statements for the community that were vetted and guided by attorney. Another example- had an issue at elementary regarding Special Education law, and met with attorney and leadership to resolve that.

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

**A11.** Have passed coursework through Fort Lewis College, and have taken the PRAXIS test in Educational Leadership and Supervision; transcripts are in transit; have everything ready for application for principal licensure. Will have principal licensure in 6-8 weeks. Have signed up for superintendent PRAXIS. Would potentially take an administrative program in the future.

Flexible- comfortable with and has experience in stepping in to fill roles as needed. Has had experience in the past year in taking on superintendent duties. Is committed to continuing work with the Core Knowledge curriculum. Has not been a superintendent but has 30 years of experience in district, knows district and vision and strategic plan, does not see taking step into superintendent role as an impassable hurdle. Can provide a smooth transition for the district. Not afraid to ask for help, confident in ability to do this job.

**Q12. Do you have any questions for the Board?**

**A12.** No questions.

**B. 1:50 - 2:35 - Dr. James "Reece" Blincoe**

*Dr. Blincoe was present in person for the interview.*

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

**A1.** Believes that a good leader has a full toolbag of styles; times when decisiveness is required, and times when it's appropriate to take time and ponder a decision; in dealing with campus leadership and sometimes with teachers: better job they are doing, more hands off I will be; more issues there are, the more he will intervene

Leadership: team leader- enthusiasm; instructional leader- exemplify good instruction, review data, ensure students are doing well; cultural leader- symbolic resources, traditions, need to uphold those traditions; strategic leader- develop vision and goals as a district, make sure that goals are accomplished; managerial leader- have to be out and about, visiting with departments, schools, etc; human resource leader- hiring, firing, mentoring, putting on professional development; community leader- be out in community, work with chamber of commerce, city management, anyone else in the community committed to providing better schools- for example, health dept; political leader- work with and stay in touch with city, county, state, and federal politicians, let them know what is and is not working for us in education.

In constant evaluation of decisions- make decisions with a clear head; will admit when a decision didn't work.

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

**A2.** Extensive experience- helped to develop a lot of the curriculum at Brownwood, made substantial gains in curriculum dev. as well as assessments; curriculum should match standards set by state, assessment should match curriculum and learning standards- should be aligned. Has a lot of experience building curriculum; visited curriculum manager today, learned about the purchase of new curriculum, would be eager to jump in and learn how that is going.

Not a fan of one-time assessments as only assessment- everyone has bad days; am a fan of NWEA assessments- only way to truly assess students is a growth model. Allows students to retake if they had a bad day, develop a good idea throughout the year of how students are doing. Started using NWEA in Brownwood, and district loved it; unfortunate that states haven't shifted to this model rather than only one-time end-of-year assessments.

**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.** As superintendent has built a sustainable balanced budget for 11 years. Funding can vary, based on grants and things that are not controllable, but a lot of funds and expenditure needs are fairly set- start from there and build the budget; start with the fundamentals and then add in additional needs, for ex. bus, as possible.

Has seen Dolores' budget for this year and think it looks good; knows that mill levy is coming up for renewal, and understands the process that will need to be undergone to address that.

**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.** As superintendent, is expert in school business; have training and experience in varied areas of school business- job is to bring things to the board, give recommendations and perspective from professional educator's point of view; the Board are professional members of community, with expertise re: the community- can give perspective from the community that the superintendent may not know. Through that communication of perspectives, team can work together to make the right decision.

Districts get into trouble if the Board tries to micromanage members of the district, and when the Superintendent doesn't listen to the Board.

**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.** Last two years, was professor at a small private school in NM; student base was from all over the US- taught school law courses based on laws that every state has, instead of just focusing on a particular state. Has good general understanding, and would not struggle to adapt to particular CO state laws.

Examples: had an employee that was dismissed, who believed that she was let go because of race; the district had to prove that she was let go because of failure to perform job.

Has also had to deal with law when selling bonds.

First position as a superintendent was in a district extremely similar to Dolores- lawyer budget was 35k; larger district he worked in had a law budget of only 5k- never got sued. Smaller districts tend to get targeted more. Have dealt with litigation regarding special education issues, terminations, bonds, etc.

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

**A6.** Yes, but it depends- great question, hard to answer. In the short term interim position, the job is to hold the wheel straight and sign documents; this is not the space to go in and make big changes; the long term interim position is more like full-time superintendent, but is not setting long term visions and goals.

Was watching the Board meeting at which the interim superintendent advisory committee presented their preferences and criteria to the Board- spoke to the criteria of being local and therefore locally invested, and the criteria of having worked in various positions in education (elementary, middle, and high). Interested in being here long term; believes it would be difficult to find someone who has worked at all of those levels, but superintendent experience does

Interested at this point in applying for the full time position, but would revisit in January- if at that time the Board and he both wanted it, he would apply, and if not, would help the district in the search process. Would therefore approach it as somewhere in the middle- not just hold the wheel, but not approach it as

**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.** Heart is to ensure that all students' needs are met. 45% FRL students in Dolores; to do this, have to do the impossible- good instructors have to meet the needs of ALL students- won't settle for anything less. We can't treat students of any ethnicity, lifestyle, or background any differently. Superintendent must work with teachers, with curriculum and instruction specialists, to ensure all needs are met. Shared personal experience- grew up in rural area, first in family to go to college; could easily have been left behind; want to ensure all students have needs met.

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

**A8.** There were tough years in Texas in which he had to deal with deficits. Approached it by:  
-Getting rid of a position through attrition is the best way to approach, if possible- not rehiring for a vacant position  
-Getting rid of all travel, extras, supplies  
-if salaries or raises are cut, they have to be across the board- superintendent on down

**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.** A lot of times, if you have something you think is best for the community, school, and students, the community may be ignorant of the situation- if that's the case, the first step is to educate the community, ensure that all understand exactly why you think this is best for students and community. Gave example of the situation that Dolores went through a few years ago regarding building a new facility. From an outsider's perspective, a new facility is best for the students. In addition to safety concerns, flood concerns, etc., of current facilities, updated facilities = better student outcomes; he did his dissertation on this topic. Seemed that the community wasn't sure of this, and that it was a tough situation. If that comes back up, or anything like that, we'd need to get on a selling campaign to help the community understand and get on board.

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

**A10.** Last year at Brownwood, worked out an agreement for the Board to buy out his contract. Worked extensively with lawyers throughout that process. Talked about difficulty working with the board president that did not like him and stated that his goal was "to run him off." Wanted to make sure this was addressed head on, since it would come up in background research. During the time he was having difficulty with that board member, the school district won 'best school' award- only 3 schools in the state received that award.

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

**A11.** None

**Q12. Do you have any questions for the Board?**



A12. Asked about the timeframe for the hiring process, negotiations. Stated that he would be asking for a \$100,000 salary- no insurance, no stipends, etc.

### **C. 2:50 - 3:35 - Robert "Rob" Stannard**

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

**A1.** Predominately laissez-faire- give people clear instructions, then expect them to complete them. Best role model was his great-aunt, who ran a large printing business from the 1920s-1960s; even her most direct, terse orders sounded like polite requests- has always worked for that. Leans toward quieter, servant-style leadership, but is flexible based on needs. Leadership is based on relationship- believes that a leader has to know all people on the team, especially direct reports, and should never ask people to do things they would not do themselves. Goal-oriented, based on feedback loop; try things, test them, improve them, implement them again, etc. Knowing team means knowing how certain people need to be told things- some communicate best in writing, verbally, etc.; when something goes wrong, need to communicate about it, ask why it went wrong, etc. Leadership is something that has to be studied. Running a large factory is remarkably similar to running a school district.

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

**A2.** Curriculum development is one of the great issues of our time. Example from math: had to transition from hard to soft. Big believer in rote learning, which went out a generation ago; nothing wrong with learning time tables, learning parts of speech, nuts and bolts.

In mathematics, has successfully implemented some of the harder curricula; in Singapore for example, math curriculum goes as fast as students are able, and is not tied to grade levels. In language, phonics is backed by data. Has a lot of experience implementing reading programs- reading is the most important building block. Has experience working with the Core Knowledge curriculum, which he believes is the second best curriculum out there, and is very successful.

**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.** Yes- has had a lot of this experience in business. Industry acquired smaller businesses and had to turn them around.

Has this experience in school districts as well. In Yuma, district was nearing turn-around status, needed to deal with very low reading and math levels, and also with a brand new building that was falling apart- leaking roof, etc. Fought with contractors and found ways to move classes around to address issues and to get the district back on their feet financially. Believes it is very important to always have a grant-writing function- write grants for short, middle, and long term. Know the budget well, every bit of it, hands on, and know what can be updated, streamlined; tend budget like a garden- constantly work reserves.

**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.** Governance is a key issue in school districts. Has a model that he's had since industry- two columns: things that are primarily the responsibility of the superintendent and their team, and things that are primarily the responsibility of the Board. Also use the aspen model: superintendent is there to manage, while the board is there to govern- to take public input, be drivers of strategy, etc.

The Superintendent's first job is to go over these two columns with the Board, and establish clear boundaries and who is responsible for what. There is no profit in conflict, and conflict comes from not having the same playbook.

**Q5. Describe your level of familiarity with Colorado School Laws. Describe two situations, without disclosing confidential information, where you needed to refer to school law in helping you with an important decision.**

**A5.** Has had problems with the admission both of ELL and special education students; has worked with lawyers to use law in defense of students in those situations. Another example- if there have been issues of violence, drugs etc- knowing school law very clearly so that in those situations school law is not violated. For example, not allowing a police officer to talk to a student alone, because that is against school law- important to know such things- so that you aren't later called out for violating school law.

Also requires the ability to stop and ask for legal opinion on a situation, since the line between family and school district responsibilities has shifted so much.

**Q6. Would you approach an interim superintendent position differently than a superintendent**

**position? If so, how?**

**A6.** Would approach interim differently in the following manner: put more emphasis on looking at the governance model and strategic plans and long-term health of the district, and would focus on giving twelve solid months- there'd be a sense of urgency, looking to accomplish particular tasks. In some cases interim status would allow it to be easier to make difficult decisions with clarity.

**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.** We drive toward 100% of all students. Hates the name because it was a good idea that got bad press, but loves the idea of "no child left behind" because we should not be leaving any child behind. Believes there is not a direct connection between poverty and performance, it is a factor but not overwhelming. There are a number of inner city districts and charters that are doing well

Good RTI system is important, and differentiation. Demographics change in this country requires change in tactics and mindset- takes good leadership and teamwork, pernicious positivity- constantly identifying and addressing student needs, communicating about particular student needs.

There's a playbook that works- we don't have to be groundbreaking. There are systems that work.

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

**A8.** As preamble, know every line and number in the budget. Then have everyone in the district understand how dire things can be. If it's shared pain that is being clearly communicated, it's human nature to buy into the plan to get back on track. Make sure all know that there is a clear plan.

**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.** Have a special board meeting, present slides, pictures, financial analysis, etc., and sell the idea, trying to get the school board on board. Then do the same thing with the community in an open forum/town hall. Answer every question, as many times over as needed. If that doesn't work, do it again next year. Has done this to bring about a bilingual curriculum, mill levies, a number of different things. Shared goal should be constant improvement.

**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.** Has worked with lawyers to deal with situations in which HIPAA and FERPA were violated by the Board; has also worked with lawyers and state agencies to deal with a situation in which there were financial malfeasances. Knows law very well, has the ability to bring up and address those issues when they arise.

**Q11. Is there anything you would like to share with the Board?**

**A11.** This is an interesting district- the impression is that it needs a tune-up in its strategic plan, needs someone with a lot of facilities experience to help get new facilities projects in high gear. Should have a governance model that you all like, and that you should have a long-term plan that you're proud of.

That sort of tune-up is an ideal interim situation. Consider this a fascinating interim assignment. Doesn't think he would fit the long term model, but would do well with the interim model.

"Coming out of the pandemic, we need to drink our coffee, eat our wheaties, and RUN." Wants to help the district do that.

**Q12. Do you have any questions for the Board?**

**A12.** Asked about the timeline for the decision.

#### **IV. REPORT ON VETTING PROCESS FOR FINALISTS**

Maegan Crowley clarified that she and Doreen Jones are still working on the vetting process; Dir. Jones has completed the CBI for all candidates, but more vetting will be completed next week. The same 8 questions were used for every reference check. She stated that because of the questions at the last meeting about the legitimacy of using social media as a vetting process, she had followed up with the lawyer, who advised against using social media as part of the process.

#### **V. EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(e) TO DETERMINE POSITIONS IN NEGOTIATION OF A CONTRACT WITH A NEW INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT, INCLUDING DISCUSSION OF NEGOTIATION STRATEGY AND**

**INSTRUCTING NEGOTIATORS, AND AS AUTHORIZED BY C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(b), TO CONFER WITH THE SCHOOL ATTORNEY ABOUT LEGAL ISSUES RELATED TO SUCH CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS**

A motion was made by Clay Tallmadge and seconded by Kay Phelps for the Board to enter into executive session pursuant to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(e) to determine positions in negotiation of a contract with a new interim superintendent, including discussion of negotiation strategy and instructing negotiators, and as authorized by C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(b), to confer with the school district's attorney about legal issues related to such negotiations. The attorney will be present electronically as needed during this executive session.

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

Motion Passed.

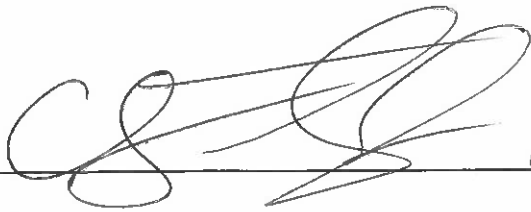
The Board entered into executive session at 3:36pm.

The Board returned from executive session at 5:50pm. The discussion was limited to C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(e) to determine positions in negotiation of a contract with a new interim superintendent, including discussion of negotiation strategy and instructing negotiators, and as authorized by C.R.S. 24-6-402(4)(b), to confer with the school district's attorney about legal issues related to such negotiations. No other discussion was had and no decisions were made.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned by Maegan Crowley at 5:52pm.

  
Board President                      Date      10/14/21

  
Board Secretary                      Date      10-14-21