

**DOLORES SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-4A  
BOARD OF EDUCATION WORK SESSION MINUTES  
DISTRICT BOARD ROOM**

Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Dolores School Board Work Session was called to order at 5:00pm on February 24, 2022.

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

II. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**A motion was made by Clay Tallmadge to approve the agenda.**

The Board discussed that the agenda for a workshop does not need to be approved. Motion was struck by Clay Tallmadge.

Maegan Crowley thanked audience members for attending, and reminded them that the discussion will be between Board members and the Superintendent only, and that feedback or discussion points should be filtered through Dr. Blincoe for the next meeting.

III. **DISCUSSION - DISTRICT SALARY STRUCTURE**

The Board discussed proposed updates to the district's salary structures.

Discussion of Certified Salary Structure

Superintendent Blincoe reminded the Board that salary structure and pay scale are not the same thing. He stated that approving this structure would not do anything for current employees because the salary schedule is only used for determining the starting salary for a new hire. He stated that the administration is also going to ask for additional pay for current certified employees.

Dr. Blincoe stated that currently, an employee can get 3 levels of yearly step raises, based on years in the district (0-10, 10-20, etc.). He is proposing a \$2500 across the board raise for all certified employees.

Finance Director Jones stated that the salary schedule does not apply to an employee once they are hired because the yearly step increase is different based on years of service.

Dr. Blincoe stated that he is proposing that the small step increases for college credit hours (BA +6 credit hours, BA + 9 credit hours, etc.) be removed, because they are not worth it- college credit costs

FAR more than those raises would ever compensate for. He is proposing three levels for the salary structure- BA, MA, PhD- with step increases specified for each of those three levels, but no additional categories for credit hours earned. He stated that he will also be bringing a proposal to the Board for the district to help teachers with BAs pay to get their MAs.

Clay Tallmadge asked whether the 2500 raise would bring current employees to the level that a new teacher would be on coming in on this new salary schedule. He asked why we wouldn't move everyone onto the new salary schedule. Superintendent Blincoe stated that every current employee's salary has been looked at to see the impact and how close this will get them to the new salary scale.

Lenetta Shull asked whether the total increase would be \$308k annually. Superintendent Blincoe stated that this would not be annually- this current plan doesn't guarantee the \$2500 every year.

Clay Tallmadge stated that the increase is really more like an additional \$56k for the \$2500 per employee raise, because the district would be giving \$103k in step raises regardless of whether these changes were made. Lenetta Shull stated that the PERA and medical benefit costs make up the additional funds.

#### Discussion of Classified Salary Structure

The Board and Superintendent discussed the proposed changes to classified salary structure, which includes at least a \$2.50 raise and brings all to at least \$15 an hour if not higher. There are a few salaries that are already currently higher than they would be if they were hired in on the new salary schedule.

Superintendent Blincoe stated that they are considering moving around positions in the district office- no new positions would be created, but are looking at ways to restructure the central office.

#### Discussion of Substitute Pay

Dr. Blincoe stated that the \$2k stipend for current employees will make a huge difference for current employees, but did nothing for substitutes. He asked that the district adopt the proposed increase in pay for substitutes. He explained that comparisons were made with Mancos, Cortez, and other districts. We are currently very low compared to some other districts, such as Cortez, and this proposed increase would make us comparable or ahead of other districts with whom we compete for substitute teachers.

The district started paying teachers for covering classes during their planning periods; that is still occurring but is not as frequent because substitute coverage has been better. This pay increase would help attract more substitutes and remove the burden from teachers.

The district also discussed the option of hiring substitutes as staff. They discussed the need to look at the line item in the budget currently allocated to substitutes, and compare it to needs. Superintendent Blincoe stated that in January the sub line item was increased in case this new rate is adopted.

#### Discussion of Administrative Pay

Superintendent Blincoe presented current step raises and proposed step raises for administrators. The proposed schedule includes 10 steps, which means a \$1500 raise each year.

Maegan Crowley asked how this will correct uneven raises that were given in the past. This would not, because salary schedules would only apply to new hires, and current hires would just get the step increases. Clay Tallmadge asked about the discrepancy between administrative pay at each of the four schools. Superintendent Blincoe stated that this is historically the case in districts because high school principals are believed to have more duties, activities, etc. The Board discussed that this perceived difference in workloads probably doesn't reflect reality for our principals. They discussed looking at evening out those pay scales. Some schools in the area have differentiated salaries for different school levels and others do not.

#### General Discussion of Salary Structure Changes and Potential Impacts

The Board discussed the overall budget impact of all possible changes and increases, which would total \$537,945. They discussed that none of this concerns ESSER funds, which are a totally separate issue. They also discussed that the mill levy funds that currently pay a portion of salaries will expire.

There is legislation being worked on that may make mill levies equal across the state, which will mean more funds for our district, and money from the state will increase next year, but it's not yet known by how much.

New Mexico just approved \$50k, \$60k, and \$70k as steps for their teachers.

Finance Director Jones stated that the last few years have shown an increase in revenues and general fund carryover, due in part to the increase in grant funds.

They discussed historical decreases and increases in the DSD budget, such as the decrease in 2014-2015, which is when the BS Factor was implemented by the state, and the increase in 2019, when the state started paying for kindergarten. They also discussed the historic student and staff counts.

They discussed the fact that district teacher salaries have not at all kept up with local cost of living increases, and that cost of living increases approved in the town reflect this. They discussed the difficulty of making a clear projection of how the proposed increases of roughly \$500k will fit into our budget, given the unknowns about state funding, and looked at how it would compare to average

yearly carryovers over the past 10 years. Last year's carryover was \$588k. They discussed the possibility of talking to the CDE about the proposal, but that that will take quite some time.

They discussed the fact that the potential loss of the mill levy override in the next few years will need to be addressed. They discussed the fact that there are currently millions of dollars in reserves, and that can help in making some of these adjustments. They also discussed that salary increases are crucial in retaining good teachers, which is why many students are in the district in the first place. Teacher retention will help with student retention.

The Board inquired whether the Superintendent had researched whether refinancing the bonds would be a good idea; he informed them that he had, and that his research showed that it would not be worth it to refinance.

#### **IV. CALENDAR PLANNING**

Board workshops will always be the 4th Thursday of each month; the Board discussed having the topics set beforehand. They clarified that while this schedule will help to cover all goals, there will always be space for other topics to be brought by Board members for discussion when needed.

March: operating norms for the School Board

April: A 2022-2023 Budget meeting is needed, either as its own separate meeting or as an additional workshop prior to the regular meeting (preferred). The salary schedule changes will be discussed in March and voted on in April, which would mean that part of the budget would be finalized for a meeting about the budget in April.

May: strategic goals planning / review superintendent evaluation process (may not take as much time, has already been discussed and just needs to be formalized)

June: Board evaluations

*July: no workshop*

#### **V. ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting was adjourned by Maegan Crowley at 6:57 p.m.

