

WICKENBURG UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 9  
BOARD STUDY SESSION MINUTES  
December 10, 2015

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Joe Maglio, President, Mr. Curtis Arnett, Member, Ms. Amy Brown, Member, Ms. Sandee Gill, Member, Mr. Daniel Scott, Member

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Dr. Howard Carlson, Lynn Greene, Carissa Hershkowitz, Rose Garcia, Coleen Peterson, Sheri Canham, Carson Miller, Randy Jo Bowser, Yucari Torres, Patty Jares

The Study Session began at 5:52 PM.

Hassayampa Elementary School - School Improvement Plan

Hassayampa Elementary School Improvement Plan includes strategies for improvement in the four key areas of School Culture, Curriculum and Academics, Parent and Community Involvement, and Professional Development and Leadership Capacity Building.

Ms. Hershkowitz spoke of the 21st Century Community Learning Center (21CCLC) Grant, commenting that the school is going through the process and data to identify the direction in which they wish to proceed. When students become “regular attendees” (30 days in the program), the hope is their school attendance will improve overall. The program includes before and after school programs, including Power Hour before school and clubs like the Chess Club, Archery Club, etc., which take place after school.

Family and community participation and encouragement is a large part of 21CCLC. It is felt when parents are more comfortable coming to the school for activities, they will be more comfortable coming for academic reasons.

Mr. Scott asked if students received breakfast during Power Hour. Ms. Hershkowitz told him yes, and that students are entering their classroom with a good breakfast and homework completed, thus having a good start to their day.

Standard 1 – School Culture

Ms. Torres spoke of creating a positive academic culture that will increase parental understanding of standards, instruction, and family responsibility. The means of accomplishing this included establishing high expectations for a friendly and welcoming environment by all staff, continuing to support Character Counts and recognize staff and student academic and character successes at award assemblies. To measure success, Hassayampa will analyze data collected on the District’s biannual parent survey.

Standard 2 – Curriculum and Academics

Ms. Hershkowitz spoke concerning curriculum and academics. For the 2015-2016 school year, a greater emphasis of focus will be placed upon this standard. Conducting Walkthroughs will be a large part of achieving this goal and include increasing the frequency of walkthroughs for new teachers and updating the walkthrough instrument to better align with goals for both teacher evaluation system and best practices.

Professional development time will focus around Hassayampa teachers gaining more understanding of the Essential Elements of Instruction while working as a Professional Learning Community to help strengthen conversations about student needs, best practices, analyzing various data, the AZ College and Career Ready Standards, use of Beyond Textbooks, as well as LETRS Training-Module 1.

### Standard 3 – Parent and Community Involvement

Ms. Bowser spoke of different activities to encourage the involvement of parents in the school, which include maintaining the Hassayampa Facebook account, providing timely updates on school events and celebrations, hosting the monthly Principal’s Coffee, continuing to improve volunteer opportunities through the use of the staff volunteer liaison and collaborate with parent and community organizations such as the PTA, Del E. Webb Center, Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce, Chaparral Ice Cream, Elks, Desert Caballeros Western Museum, McDonald’s, etc.

### Standard 4 – Professional Development and Leadership Building

Ms. Hershkowitz told the Board support for new teachers has been a big help and is very important. Strategies to assist in professional development and leadership building are as follows:

- Support staff members will meet with the principal to discuss school culture and priorities.
- Monthly new teacher meetings will be provided by the achievement teacher with a focus based upon identified needs.
- On-going professional development will occur in the areas of the LETRS, AZCCRS, Balanced Math, Beyond Textbooks, DIBELS Next, EEI, and Professional Learning Communities
- Team meetings to improve teacher effectiveness and professional growth by answering DuFour’s four questions. 1.) What do we want students to learn? 2.) How will we know they’ve learned it? 3.) What will we do when they’ve learned it? 4.) What will we do when they haven’t learned it?
- Principal will perform weekly walkthroughs with all core classroom teachers.

### Wickenburg Virtual Academy (WVA) - School Improvement Plan

The goals of WVA are as follows:

Goal 1 – Establish a Marketing Campaign that increases public awareness of the Wickenburg Virtual Academy. WVA administration will involve parents, teachers, staff, and students in the promotion of our school.

Mr. Miller commented one of the biggest things WVA is trying to accomplish since the move from Vulture Peak Middle School to the high school is to educate everyone that they are not the “Alt School” any longer. He stated they have extremely gifted students who are taking online classes and stressed how important it is to shed label of “Alt School”.

Ms. Peterson stated the Virtual Academy services all grades, and is not just for credit recovery. In an effort to inform the public about the online school services and what is available with the online schools, they are doing presentations for schools and teachers. They are looking at creating Facebook and Twitter accounts, and are looking at doing some videos to explain virtual school.

Other strategies to be used to increase awareness of WVA, academic standards, and individualized student support are 1.) Encourage students to apply for awards and scholarships. 2.) Include WVA students in community awards. 3.) Email a monthly newsletter to WVA parents, to help parents keep connected with our school. 4.) Write newspaper articles showcasing the accomplishments of WVA students.

Goal 2 – Establish a WVA Personal Learning Community focused on the CAILL Framework as it relates to digital or online instruction.

Ms. Peterson informed the Board they had had to change their PLC, as they had new teachers who had never taught online. To assist in achieving this goal, WVA staff will study the book, Teaching Online- A Practical Guide, by Susan Ko and Steve Rossen, and meet every other week to discuss the chapters assigned. Staff will discuss and identify areas in their online teaching assignments where they could apply concepts discussed in the PLC.

Staff will develop materials to assist in their online teaching experience. Resources that will be developed (by May 2016) are 1.) Orientation Videos to help online students have training at their fingertips as needed. 2.) Create Orientation Videos for Parents to help them have a better understanding of how to help their online student to be successful. 3.) Create a compact for parents, students, and teachers to read and sign. 4.) Create resources that will be given at registration to guide parents and students as they have questions.

Goal 3 – Design a professional development plan for WVA staff that is focused on the CAILL Framework as it relates to digital or online instruction.

The plan will include staff meetings every other week to collaborate on academic goals, curriculum, and “best practices” used in online instruction. 2.) The WVA staff will collaboratively create a handbook to be used as a guide for new and continuing WVA teachers as evidence of growth and development as an online teaching staff. 3.) WVA will have an all-day retreat in the spring to review goals set by our A+ Plan, chart our progress, adjust and finalize last steps for completing our A+ plan and begin drafting our 2016-17 goals. 4.) WVA will begin drafting a WUSD Online Teacher Evaluation Tool, aligned with current WUSD Teacher Evaluation document but with changes to make it more applicable to the online teaching environment.

Ms. Gill asked about students coming into the classroom while doing online classes. She asked if WVA have kids from elsewhere doing online classes. She was told yes. WUSD students who come in are “blended” students because they take classes both in the classroom and online. WVA students are virtual students and WVA staff only see them when they are having problems or come in for testing. There are actually two complete different programs running at same time.

Mr. Maglio asked if WVA was set up for the K-8 students. He was told the District contracts with Mesa Long Distance Learning Program for K-8 curriculum. Ms. Garcia works with Mesa to get the kids going. She also proctors the exams. The Academy has also picked up some electives from Mesa, as most of the teachers at WVA are core subject teachers. However, they are beginning to pull in some of the CTE teachers to assist with the required electives needed to graduate.

Mr. Arnett commented that, looking at common elements in the School Improvement Plans, the ones he sees as very important provide support for students and mutual support among staff. What comes out is we care. He would like staff to be able to say, “As professionals, we know how to care”. If we can say we care and as professionals we know how to care, we are going to get support. He also commented the reports are very helpful to Board and expressed his appreciation for them.

Mr. Maglio commented the reports are very valuable and expressed his appreciation.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Joe Maglio, Board President