

J.O. COMBS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 44
MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2015

A public meeting of the J.O. Combs Unified School District #44 Governing Board convened on Wednesday, January 14, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the Multi-Purpose Room at the J.O. Combs Middle School. Members of the Governing Board present were Shelly Hargis, President; Kathy Bourgeois, Clerk (absent); Pat Pinckard, Member (arrived at 6:38 p.m.); Bob D'Elena, Member; and Dr. Gary Kemp, Member. District Leadership present were Marcus Berkshire, Tammy Stimatze, Angie Beauchene, Bradley Shepstead, Sue Kruse, Mark Mauro, Brenda Mayberry, Jane Rupard, Shannon Weber, Jack Wallbrecht, Santa Dunker, Kelly Guerra, Karla Slovitsky, Dr. Patty Rogers, Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Gayle Blanchard, Superintendent, and MaryLou Martinez, Administrative Assistant.

Call to Order – Governing Board President Mrs. Shelly Hargis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Agenda – Dr. Kemp made a motion to approve the meeting agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. D'Elena, and the motion carried 3-0. Kathy Bourgeois was absent and Pat Pinckard arrived at 6:38 p.m.

Welcoming of Guests – President Hargis introduced Board member, Mr. Bob D'Elena who was appointed by Pinal County School Superintendent.

Pledge of Allegiance

Superintendent's Report – Dr. Blanchard presented regarding the many activities taking place around the district and community. She shared a few items from the Superintendent's Update:

- Kindergarten Prep Program at Ranch Elementary
- College and Career Week at Ellsworth
- ACT EXPLORE Testing at J.O. Combs Middle School
- Junior Achievement BizTown

Student of the Month – Mr. David Dunning, Safety & Security Director from Banner Ironwood Medical Center (BIMC) was present to assist with the Student of the Month recognition. Mr. Dunning shared that BIMC has filled the position of Chief Medical Officer. Dr. James Brown replaced Dr. O'Connor. He said that Dr. Brown has been with Banner for a few years having worked in the west valley. Mr. Dunning also mentioned that BIMC has two new programs. The first is aromatherapy for the in-patient unit to help create a comfortable and relaxing environment and reduce the need for pain medication and the second the addition of several mid-wives (with more to come). He also shared that BIMC is looking to hire two additional OB/GYN physicians.

The J.O. Combs District continues to partner with BIMC recognizing one student every month from each of the schools where students are recognized for the various pillars of character, which include Responsibility, Trustworthiness, Citizenship, Caring, Respect, and Fairness. Dr. Patty Rogers, Assistant Superintendent read a brief paragraph about each student and presented certificates to all recipients and they then had a photo taken with Superintendent Blanchard, the Governing Board, and David Dunning from Banner Ironwood Medical Center.

Focus on Students – Principal Kruse from Ranch Elementary introduced Miss Renee Braun, 5th grade teacher. Miss Braun shared that all teachers are focusing on the implementation of academic vocabulary in an effort to help students succeed academically and perform well on AzMERIT. She commented that this is a school wide program and tonight's presentation is based solely on the fifth grade. She remarked that these students have taken on a leadership opportunity to represent the school as a whole. The students presented a PowerPoint and described the 12 powerful words that every student should know. The presenters commented that understanding the words helps students succeed in all subjects.

Staff Recognition – Principal Kruse shared that this month she started having staff write nice things about teachers and other staff members. Principal Kruse recognized Miss Susan Flore, Kindergarten teacher. She read a letter a coworker had written about Miss Flore stating that "She is an amazing teacher as well as team leader and

supportive to her coworkers and has a sympathetic ear. The dedication to her students is remarkable, she is kind and respectful.”

Volunteer Recognition – Principal Kruse recognized the members of Ranch Parent Teacher Organization. She said that the PTO does so much for the school and that they are a very supportive. She presented Mr. Steve Notch and Mrs. Jody Warren with a small token of appreciation saying “Thank you for the mountain of things that you do for Ranch. We appreciate you going that extra mile.” Principal Kruse shared the names of the PTO members - Mr. Notch, Vice President; Jody Warren, Treasurer; Stefani St. George, Secretary and Traci Vezzosi, President.

Citizen’s Comments -

The Governing Board invites the viewpoints of citizens throughout the District under guidelines as presented in Policy BEDH. (Policy BEDH—Public Participation at Board Meetings is posted in the Governing Board Room or available at the District Office.) State statutes prohibit the Governing Board from discussing an item that is not on the agenda, but they do listen to compliments / concerns and request that staff follow up on any questions.

Raven Champagne – Miss Champagne addressed the governing board to express her concerns about the high school band program and the band teacher. She mentioned that she is a high school student who played the flute. Miss Champagne remarked that the band teacher has a problem with dealing with kids. She had two questions -- why is it okay that students are turned away by administration and why allow public humiliation by a teacher.

Brandon Loyola – Mr. Loyola stated that he is a high school senior and mentioned that his experience with the band program this year is devastating. He said that students are leaving the program and being bullied by the current band director. He stated that school administration is not allowing students to switch out of an elective class.

Tonya Arriaga – Mrs. Arriaga claims that her daughter, who participates in the band program, has been bullied and that other band students have witnessed it. She claims the band teacher has isolated her daughter because the student has to take medication. Mrs. Arriaga said that her daughter has panic attacks and claims that Miss Trent has advised her daughter will be punished and lose points if she leaves to take medication. Mrs. Arriaga remarked that her daughter is a special needs student and that music is her therapy. She added that her daughter played flute for seven years and now forced to play another instrument. Mrs. Arriaga also claims that Miss Trent has instructed band leaders to belittle other band students and that all families have gone to administration regarding the issue.

President Hargis stated that the Governing Board would ensure that someone would follow up in regards to the concerns expressed.

Approval of Consent Agenda Action Items – Mrs. Pinckard made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. D’Elena and the motion carried 4-0.

- A. Approval of Minutes
 - i. Regular Meeting December 10, 2014
 - ii. Special Meeting December 3, 2014
 - iii. Executive Session December 3, 2014
- B. Business and Finance
 - i. Monthly Financial Report December 2014
 - ii. Student Activities Financial Statement December 2014
 - iii. Expense Voucher
 - # 6029 \$ 153,705.64 # 6032 \$ 219,102.35
 - # 6030 \$ 133,226.16 # 6033 \$ 36,624.74
 - # 6031 \$ 145,269.58
 - iv. Payroll Voucher
 - # 31 \$ 216.31 # 35 \$ 539,234.74
 - # 32 \$ 8,921.49 # 36 \$ 259,971.35
 - # 33 \$ 366.69 # 37 \$ 538,846.82
 - # 34 \$ 1,791.77 # 38 \$ 263,965.53
 - v. Intergovernmental Agreements
 - a. Intergovernmental Agreement Carl Perkins Program FY 2014-2015

- vi. Bid Request(s)
 - a. Recommendation to Ratify Sole Source Purchase of Aesop Software Training
 - vii. Bid Approval(s)
 - a. Recommendation for Rejection/Non-Award Proposal for Special Education Math Textbooks for Adoption - K thru 8th Grades Due to Cost
 - viii. Purchase(s)
 - a. None
 - ix. Grants, Gifts and Donations
 - a. None
 - x. Overnight and/or Out-of State Travel Request
 - a. Alamo Bowl, San Antonio, TX, December 26-31, 2015, CHS Marching/Concert Bands Grades 9-12
 - b. Wilson Trainer Development, Boston, MA, February 2-3, 2015, Cassandra Bates Academic Coach (funded by Title I and Title II)
 - c. Arizona FCCLA State Leadership Conference, Tucson, AZ, March 29 to April 1, 2015, Combs FCCLA Grades 9-12
 - d. Combs High School Culture Club/Foreign Language Department, Italy and Spain - *Date Change to coincide with Spring Break March 5-13, 2016 - pending approval of District Calendar*
- C. Personnel
(A.R.S. §38-431.03 (A)(1) the Governing Board may go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters.)
- i. Job Descriptions
 - a. None
 - ii. Administrative Staff: Resignation, Termination, Transfer, Leave of Absence, Employment
 - iii. Certificated Staff: Resignation, Termination, Transfer, Leave of Absence, Employment
 - iv. Support Staff: Resignation, Termination, Transfer, Leave of Absence, Employment
 - v. Substitute Staff: Resignation, Termination, Transfer, Leave of Absence, Employment

Bond Capacity Update – Dr. Blanchard introduced Mr. Michael LaVallee and Ms. Sandra Park from Stifel, Nicolaus and Company who shared information about bonding and bonding tax rates. Mr. LaVallee discussed a potential bond election including property tax rates and assessed values.

Mr. LaVallee talked about assessed values, historical tax values and estimated debt service required and the projected impact on secondary tax rate. He shared two scenarios and the data represented for each; a 12 million dollar and an 18 million dollar bond election.

Mr. D'Elena asked about column 7 and the two entries of "0" (zero) indicating no principal for those periods. Mr. LaVallee explained the overall debt service appears more level in column 15 and the zeroes in column 7 remained to level out the tax rate.

CONSIDERATION AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR ALL MATTERS RELATED TO THE REFUNDING OF CERTAIN BONDS OF THE DISTRICT BY THE SALE AND ISSUANCE OF REFUNDING BONDS OF THE DISTRICT INCLUDING DELEGATION TO THE SUPERINTENDENT AND THE DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS SERVICES OF THE DISTRICT TO DETERMINE CERTAIN MATTERS RELATED THERETO – Mr. LaVallee presented information regarding refunding of bonds and explained that most bond sales have a "call sale" which prepay bonds. He mentioned that as a district (at our option) we have a 10 year call provision. He explained the "call date" definition. He explained a scenario by referring to all the bonds outstanding referencing the highlighted information on page 3 of the presentation. Mr. LaVallee spoke about the bond analysis identified and the refunding analysis – estimated spread information.

Mr. LaVallee stated there are some steps involved before District can lock in the rates if Stifel receives permission this evening. Rates fluctuate and as long as there is approval on the resolution, the District may wait until the market is better.

Mr. D'Elena asked for clarification regarding what ~~code calculation~~ DISCOUNT RATE we are using. Mr. LaVallee explained we are using arbitrage yield, it is a federal tax code calculation.

Mr. LaVallee commented that if a resolution is approved it allows Stifel to move forward with the bond refunding. Mr. D'Elena asked if the federal announcement about interest rates would impact this scenario. Mr. LaVallee commented no, meaning it would be a function of two markets because two of the series would be in escrow for 2 years and the third series would be in escrow for 3 years.

President Hargis made a motion to adopt A RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR ALL MATTERS RELATED TO THE REFUNDING OF CERTAIN BONDS OF THE DISTRICT BY THE SALE AND ISSUANCE OF REFUNDING BONDS OF THE DISTRICT INCLUDING DELEGATION TO THE SUPERINTENDENT AND THE DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS SERVICES OF THE DISTRICT TO DETERMINE CERTAIN MATTERS RELATED THERETO as presented, seconded by Mr. D'Elena, and the motion carried 4-0.

Approval of the Gifted Scope and Sequence – Ms. Dunker discussed the material explaining that the Arizona Department of Education requires the submittal of a district's governing board approved Gifted Scope and Sequence as part of the six year cycle monitoring process. She noted that some updates were made to include the formation of a Gifted Advisory Group for parents, which started in May, and a gifted parent night for K-12 students. She mentioned that an elementary breakout session is planned as well and for the middle school and high school. Ms. Dunker also noted the updated information about second grade blanket testing, grades 9-12 gifted programming and gifted cluster teacher professional development.

President Hargis wanted to know how many gifted students are enrolled. Ms. Dunker did not have the information readily available but believes it to be 175 students. President Hargis asked if enrollment increased from last year. Ms. Dunker said she could obtain exact numbers for the board. President Hargis asked about the second grade blanket testing and if District identified additional students. Ms. Dunker said that two additional second grade students were identified.

Dr. Kemp made a motion to approve the Gifted Scope and Sequence as presented, seconded by President Hargis, and the motion carried 4-0.

Approval of District Calendar for 2015-2016 – Dr. Rogers presented on behalf of the calendar committee and recognized committee members. She thanked the committee for their time and for helping with the District Calendar. Dr. Rogers discussed the overall process and shared that the committee looked at a modified calendar option as well. She explained that both Option A and Option B calendars are similar however Option A is a Wednesday start with an end date of May 24 and Option B is a Monday start with an end date of May 20. She reviewed the survey results and the parent/teacher conference dates selected. Dr. Rogers presented the recommendation from the committee which is to adopt calendar Option A. She mentioned that parent/teacher conference dates are not on the Option A calendar but fall on September 17-18 and February 18-19.

President Hargis commented that she likes the fact that parent/teacher conferences are not scheduled after the October break. She mentioned that we may get better attendance that week and that it is probably a good change in the calendar.

Mr. D'Elena made a motion to approve the District Calendar for 2015-2016 Option A with parent-teacher conference dates of September 17-18 and February 18-19, seconded by Dr. Kemp, and the motion carried 4-0.

Student Achievement Update – Dr. Rogers discussed student achievement data, shared school celebrations, talked about areas of focus and explained next steps. She noted that there is a correction to the Reading Galileo 7th & 8th grade data. She explained that the pretest percentage of 55% for 7th grade and a "blank" percentage for Honors and Resource is due to all students receiving the pretest which affected the 2014-2015 percentage column. Dr. Rogers thanked Mr. Berkshire and Ms. Dunker for their help in preparing the data.

President Hargis commented on the 2nd grade math Galileo pretest percentage 47% for the District versus current at 74%. The District-wide goal passing proficiency is 80% as measured by Galileo.

Dr. Rogers shared the school celebration highlights which included Combs Traditional Academy, 34% increase in 3rd grade math and Harmon Elementary 25% increase 2nd grade math. She shared that Ranch Elementary had the highest overall increase in math at 30%.

Dr. Rogers shared her feeling that we are moving in the right direction based on observations by principals during instructional rounds. She commented on a recent experience at Ranch Elementary while observing the engagement of students. She was so impressed by how much was happening in the classroom compared to what she observed when she visited the classroom at the beginning of the year.

President Hargis asked for clarification regarding 5th grade reading and math data. She said it appears as if students are struggling across the district. She asked if it was due to something new that has been introduced. Dr. Rogers responded yes and referred to the introduction of Arizona College and Career Readiness Standards. She noted that 2nd quarter reading percentages increased in almost every school.

Approval of a Tuition Free All Day Kindergarten Program – Dr. Blanchard brought forward a recommendation to approve tuition free all day kindergarten program. She explained that staff worked collaboratively by taking an existing program which meets the needs of the community to create the all day kindergarten program. Mrs. Slovitsky, Mrs. Guerra, and Ms. Dunker presented the information and discussed enrollment data, what neighboring districts offer, where we currently are with a tuition based all day program, recommendations and rationale noting that the program aligns with district priorities and is fiscally sustainable. The tuition free program mirrors the current program and will have a certified teacher responsible for core academic areas and a highly qualified paraprofessional responsible for developmentally appropriate enrichment activities.

President Hargis asked for clarification about the program schedule asking if the student would go to a teacher for half the day and then move to another room for the other half of the day. Ms. Dunker responded yes and that there is an opt-out option, however if half day option is selected then the parent would be responsible for mid-day transportation.

Mrs. Slovitsky spoke about the financial and facilities piece and staffing of six kindergarten paraprofessional would be coming from the Maintenance & Operations (M&O) budget. She said total new cost to M&O is \$183,000. Mrs. Slovitsky commented that the Young Coyotes program is very successful and this revenue will help to offset M&O costs.

Dr. Blanchard shared that Casa Grande Elementary has a similar program and they made a switch to make it a free full day model and captured 100 students.

President Hargis commented that the community had wanted this type of program and she thanked District staff for bringing information forward.

Dr. Kemp made a motion to approve a Tuition Free All Day Kindergarten Program, seconded by Mrs. Pinckard, and the motion carried 4-0.

Update from Arizona School Board Association Conference, Dec. 11-12, 2014 – Dr. Blanchard and Dr. Kemp attended the conference in December. Dr. Blanchard shared her take away on the topic of a four day school week and cited Williams, Arizona. She mentioned that a presentation was conducted by district administrators. Dr. Blanchard summarized that a four day school week for the Williams District did not save money nor did it improve staff or student attendance. She stated that a four day school week would not be something she would recommend or consider at this time. Dr. Kemp shared that he attended the keynote speaker session conducted by Ms. Diane Ravitch, Research Professor of Education at New York University and former U.S. assistant secretary of education. He mentioned that Ms. Ravitch wrote the book *Reign of Error*. Dr. Kemp said we need to be concerned about what is happening in education in the state of Arizona and that we are doing well as educators. Dr. Kemp encouraged those in attendance to access the Arizona School Board Association website for presentation materials.

Summary of Governing Board Self-Evaluation – President Hargis provided a brief summary of the board self-evaluation and shared information pertaining to the operation of the Governing Board. She commented that Board relationships with the superintendent, community, between members during meetings, the instruction program, and the financial management of the schools all received a satisfactory rating. She noted however, that Board relationships with staff and personnel item D(2) received a “need improvement” rating as the board members continue to make every effort to become acquainted with District personnel. She commented that Board

Members could never be perfect at that. Overall, the Board feels the major priority is student achievement and includes student retention, salary review, safety and technology. President Hargis noted that more parent involvement/support is needed in the operation of school system. She stated that marketing and social media is a significant accomplishment and thanked Dr. Blanchard and Dr. Rogers for their efforts in this area.

Organizational Meeting –

- A. Call to Order by President Hargis
- B. Election of Governing Board President for Calendar Year 2015 – There was one nomination; Mrs. Hargis. A vote was taken and it passed with a 4-0 for Mrs. Hargis as Governing Board President for Calendar Year 2015
- C. Election of Governing Board Clerk for Calendar Year 2015 – There was one nomination; Mrs. Bourgeois. A vote was taken and it passed with a 4-0 for Mrs. Bourgeois as Governing Board Clerk for Calendar Year 2015
- D. Schedule Regular Board Meetings and Special Board Meetings or Study Sessions for Calendar Year 2015 – President Hargis made a motion to schedule Regular Board Meetings on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. or 5:30 p.m. for Executive Sessions (if needed), seconded by Mr. D'Elena and the motion carried 4-0.
Mrs. Pinckard made a motion to schedule Special Board Meetings/Study Sessions on the fourth Wednesday of each month, seconded by President Hargis and the motion carried 4-0.
- E. Adjournment – Mrs. Pinckard made a motion to reconvene into regular session at 8:09 p.m. seconded by President Hargis and the motion carried 4-0.

Adjournment – President Hargis made a motion to adjourn at 8:10 p.m., seconded by Mr. D'Elena and the motion carried 4-0.

One or more Governing Board members will / may participate by telephonic or video communications. The Governing Board reserves the right to change the order of items on the agenda, unless a specific time is listed on the agenda.

The Governing Board reserves the right to move into executive session for legal advice with its attorneys, in person or by telephone, for any item listed on the agenda, pursuant to A.R.S. §38-431.03(A)(3).

J.O. Combs Unified School District #44 endeavors to make all public meetings accessible to persons with disabilities. Please call (480) 987-5300 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting to request an accommodation to attend or participate in the public meeting.

Governing Board Members

Shelly Hargis, President

Kathy Bourgeois, Clerk

Patricia J. Pinckard, Member

Gary F. Kemp, Ed.D., Member

Bob D'Elena, Member

Respectfully Submitted by:
MaryLou Martinez
Administrative Assistant
Superintendent / Governing Board
January 14, 2015