

**J.O. COMBS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 44**  
**MINUTES OF THE GOVERNING BOARD RETREAT**  
**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2015**  
**8:45 A.M.**  
**ENCANTERRA**

**Welcome** - Dr. Blanchard welcomed everyone in attendance and thanked Mr. D'Elena for securing the venue for the Governing Board Retreat. She noted that a copy of the agenda is located in the packet. Dr. Blanchard shared that we will have guest speaker, Karen Loftus from the Arizona School Board Association (ASBA) facilitate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis.

**In attendance were:**

Shelly Hargis	Governing Board President
Pat Pinckard	Governing Board Member
Dr. Gary F. Kemp	Governing Board Member
Bob D'Elena	Governing Board Member
Gayle Blanchard	Superintendent
Patty Rogers	Assistant Superintendent
Karla Slovitsky	Director of Business Services
Shannon Weber	Director of Support Services
Jack Wallbrecht	Director of Technology
Santa Dunker	Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction
MaryLou Martinez	Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent & Governing Board

**Absent were:**

Kathy Bourgeois	Governing Board Clerk
Kelly Guerra	Coordinator of Community Education
Jane Rupard	Director of Student Services

**Team building activity** – Dr. Rogers presented a team building activity.

**Presentation of summary reports for all departments and school sites** – A PowerPoint presentation was used to highlight the 2014-2015 school year. Each school site and department provided a summary of highlights for the following topics:

- 3 Accomplishments
- 2 Proudest Moments
- 1 Thing to Do Differently

**Analysis of District's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT Analysis)** – Dr. Blanchard introduced Ms. Karen Loftus with the Arizona School Board Association (ASBA). Using the District Priority Map, Ms. Loftus explained to the group how a SWOT analysis is conducted. She asked participants to break into groups and look at each of the five priorities.

- Outstanding Student Achievement
- Operational Excellence
- Maximizing Technology
- Exemplary Customer Service
- Safe, Secure Learning Environment

The groups were asked to brainstorm and place statements into context based on strength, weakness, opportunity, or threat categories. This was a timed activity and Ms. Loftus facilitated by asking clarifying questions throughout the activity. The activity generated much discussion about funding, training, and staff retention, which appeared as common themes in the five priorities. Participants helped generate a list of statements in regards to staff retention and community involvement and engagement.

Ms. Loftus talked about her point of view regarding “engagement” then asked some clarifying questions such as “what is the engagement level of the staff?”, “what are the things we can do differently to increase retention?”, “what physically can the Governing Board do to help increase retention?” President Hargis described the Governing Board’s role as one that is to support the District. There was a discussion about creating two sets of action plans – one for the staff and the other for the Governing Board. An example given was Governing Board may state they are going to commit to doing “x” in an effort to improve community engagement. Examples included attending community/school events and inviting other community members to attend.

Dr. Blanchard noted that she would conduct a similar exercise with the Leadership Team and would bring information back to the Governing Board.

President Hargis suggested Support Staff Leadership and referenced the Leadership Academy model yet for support staff.

Dr. Blanchard asked the participants if there are any other weaknesses, opportunities, or threats that the Board would like to add. President Hargis stated funding and Dr. Kemp stated student planning (college and career exploration).

Discussion centered upon community involvement and engagement. Ms. Pinckard mentioned a program called “Team Mates.” President Hargis suggested fifth and sixth graders to be pen pals for the elderly. Dr. Kemp will research *U Serve* (service and volunteerism opportunities).

Ms. Loftus shared one final action-planning tool with the group that related to time and impact analysis. The time required by the Board/District plus the impact to the Board/District. She noted that District should have an action plan for every strategy identified. It needs to be a realistic plan so think about identifying the roadblocks and set realistic timelines.

**Student Achievement Data** – Ms. Dunker discussed the Galileo August Pretest to May Post Test data. She mentioned that Ranch Elementary was the highest.

Ms. Dunker explained that not all grades take the AIMS science test just the fourth, eighth, and high school levels. Ms. Pinckard inquired as to why the science data indicates a decrease. Ms. Dunker will have to explore further by looking at instruction, strand and concept, and formative assessment.

Dr. Kemp asked if the AIMS science test in high school is the biology test. Dr. Rogers confirmed. There was a discussion among the group concerning AIMS science data and the possible contributing factors affecting decreasing scores. President Hargis is interested in seeing the comparison between the AIMS science scores and Galileo. Dr. Kemp asked about the comparison of high school AIMS science scores and failing students.

Ms. Dunker explained that the percentage of ELL students reclassified means the percentage of students who are officially out of that program but will be monitored for two years.

President Hargis asked for an update regarding the elementary gifted program. Ms. Dunker responded that she has not received any concerns specific to the gifted cluster model.

Mr. D’Elena suggested to include raw number of students along with the percentage on the PowerPoint slides.

At the conclusion of the Student Achievement Presentation, the Directors were excused from the meeting.

### **Discussion and Development of Operating Protocols for Governing Board –**

- Communication – The Governing Board is happy with the way things are. Dr. Blanchard explained that meeting invites will be sent for all major events. In addition, school newsletters will be sent electronically to the board as we receive them.
  - The group discussed board protocol in regards to voting. The Board agreed upon the President calling for the vote and stating for example “4-0”. The President will state “yea” and “nay” only when necessary, i.e. abstention.
  - The group discussed the superintendent’s goals and performance pay processes. The board agreed that the Superintendent would be called back into the meeting to explain their findings before

reconvening into regular session. Dr. Blanchard asked the board members to email her if there are any other items they would like her to include in her goals. Governing Board talked about the percentage breakdown for each of the five goals and discussed that they have the ability to modify the goals if the State radically changes things. For example, it may be part of the motion.

- The Governing Board agreed that Dr. Blanchard and Ms. Hargis schedule a time to meet with Supervisor House regarding the developer/development update.
- District E-Mails – All email addresses have been transferred over to the @jocombs.org accounts. Mr. Wallbrecht is available to assist the board members to set up their email on their phones. During the transition, we will send information to personal email and .org emails for the next four weeks.
- Site Liaisons for 2015-2016 – The list will be updated as follows:
  - Ms. Hargis – Combs High School and Harmon
  - Dr. Kemp – Ranch and Simonton
  - Ms. Pinckard – Combs Traditional Academy
  - Mr. D’Elena – J.O. Combs Middle School
  - Mrs. Bourgeois – Ellsworth
- Governing Board Evaluation – The group discussed and agreed upon adding a fourth rating to the board self-evaluation form. They want to add an “E” for exceeds. Mr. D’Elena requested the addition of a “comments” section after each heading (A-F).
- Board Goals – The group discussed the option of writing their own board goals. Goals would be written and reviewed in December. The Board will look at two areas: community engagement/involvement and staff retention. Dr. Blanchard suggested waiting until District returns with feedback regarding the community engagement and retention focus areas.
- Pinal County ASBA Meeting – October 20 – Dr. Blanchard shared that District will host the meeting at Combs High School and will send a meeting invite to all board members to save the date.
- Upcoming District Events – Welcome Back Event on Friday July 31 at 7:30 a.m. at Combs High School; meeting invite will be sent
- Board Meeting Schedule for November and March – Dr. Blanchard pointed out that the Governing Board Meeting schedule for November and March have been adjusted due to holiday and spring break dates. The board meeting dates will be November 4, 2015 and March 2, 2016. The Governing Board accepts these adjustments.

The retreat ended at 2:56 pm

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Shelly Hargis, President

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Kathy Bourgeois, Clerk

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Patricia J. Pinckard, Member

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Gary F. Kemp, Ed.D., Member

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Bob D’Elena, Member

Respectfully Submitted by:  
MaryLou Martinez  
Administrative Assistant  
Superintendent / Governing Board  
June 17, 2015