



# West Ada

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

### SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

December 7, 2015

Date, Place & Time A special meeting of the Board of Trustees, West Ada School District, convened at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, December 7, 2015 at the Star City Hall, 10769 West State Street, Star, Idaho

Trustees in Attendance Chairman Tina Dean, Dr. Russell Joki, Dr. Julie Madsen

Staff in Attendance Joe Yochum, Trish Duncan. Vaughn

Guests Chris Stokes, Jerry Reininger, James Fisher

**CALL TO ORDER** Chairman Dean

Listening Session Vaughn Heinrich reviewed steps the board will take as they receive completed applications for the superintendent position. The application procedures have been posted in Oregon, Washington, Montana and Idaho and trustees will paper screen and conduct interviews as applications are received. (see Attachment A)

Chairman Dean opened the floor to comment.

**Chris Stokes** attended to make sure her input had been heard. Ms. Stokes felt the salary package for the previous superintendent was not too high and was not out of line for the position. Her opinion was different than other taxpayers who think paying minimum wage is just fine. The next superintendent should be paid commensurate with their abilities, experience and the fact they are in charge of the largest district in the state. **Trustee Joki** and **Chairman Dean** agreed with Ms. Stokes compensation should be commensurate with the responsibilities. Trustee Joki liked what Ms. Stokes said about minimum wage because classified employees in our district deserve more also. **Trustee Madsen** also agreed the job deserves a high salary, she would also be willing to pay more than the previous contract, but the board needs to be completely transparent to the taxpayers about what that salary will be.

**Joe Yochum**, interim superintendent, provided the board and attendees with the results of the staff and community survey. The staff survey was sent to 4,200 staff members and 533 responses were received. The survey questions and results follow:

- What do you feel is the most appropriate educational background for candidates for superintendent? Masters, experience and doctorate were the answers most often mentioned.

- What are the most essential prior work experiences for a superintendent? Experience, classroom, teacher, district and superintendent were the answers most often mentioned.
- What are the most important skills a superintendent should have? Ability, communication, district, teachers were the answers most often mentioned.
- What is the optimal attitude/disposition that a superintendent should have? Teachers, students, district, positive were the answers most often mentioned.

The patron survey was sent to 26,709 patrons of the district by email and 1,371 responded to the following questions:

- Which of the following educational levels do you think are important? Multiple answers were possible and the three highest percentages were graduate degree in education; graduate degree in business, and an earned doctorate.
- Which of the following experiences do you think are important? The highest percentage of answers were classroom teaching experience; principal experience, business experience, district office experience, and superintendent experience.
- Which of the following leadership skills do you think are important? The highest percentage of answers were teacher improvement, school finance, student achievement, curriculum planning, community relations, and principal improvement.
- Which of the following leadership values do you think are important? The highest percentage of answers were honesty, a communicator, teacher involvement, love of children, a listener, and parent involvement.

Trustee Sayles joined the meeting at 5:43 p.m.

**Jerry Reininger**, patron, pointed out that on page four of the staff survey, skills was the most often used word, but was not listed in the graph at the bottom of the page. **Mr. Yochum** responded the word must have been left off the graph, it was evident it had the largest number of responses on that question.

**Chris Stokes** stated the word “skills” did not give patrons a lot to go on and suggested the survey needed to be enhanced. **Trustee Joki** replied the board had discussed the items on the survey and teaching experience is the most important skill followed by understanding what effective classroom teaching is. The wordle document is better portrayed in an electronic presentation, which does break down into more discreet definitions. The handout is limiting but has great depth to it and they have heard comments from teachers and patrons regarding the qualities they would like to see in the new superintendent. **Ms. Stokes** stated it seemed that if they are looking at a superintendent who will be responsible for all levels and all functions, they would want more than teaching experience or the ability to improve teaching skills. They would want them to manage others who do those jobs. She hoped the bigger picture was being looked at. **Chairman Dean** responded the trustees will use the survey

results to extrapolate what qualities they would like in a superintendent. They want teaching and administrative experience and have received resumes from extremely qualified candidates and will not stop with the minimum requirements. **Trustee Joki** stated that we are a learning business. They need someone who understands teaching, who can increase student learning, to disaggregate curriculum, achievement scores, and will motivate principals and teachers.

**James Fisher** thanked the board for the opportunity to give input on the process. Having been an administrator for over thirty years, he feels that honesty is a good quality to have. Hiring someone without a doctorate doesn't make sense and there is no need for someone to have a business degree, this is an education business. The main quality they should look for is great communication, someone you would be able to take to lunch, discuss issues and get answers. This boils down to five people's opinion and wished the board luck with their decision.

**Trustee Madsen** responded they had heard over and over that staff and parents are looking for an outstanding communicator, someone who goes out to the community, schools and businesses. **Mr. Fisher** suggested one thing that would make it better is for the superintendent to be on television instead of the district spokesman.

**Chairman Dean** stated the board has seen recurring themes and strands from all of the parties they have been able to speak with and have formed an in-depth design of what they are looking for in a superintendent.

**Trustee Madsen** spoke to the question of when patrons will be involved in the hiring process. Since the initial screening will be done in executive session to protect the confidentiality of the candidates, patrons, students, staff and employees will meet candidates who are asked to come for an interview at public forums and during a tour of the district.

**Chairman Dean** continued by stating that when a candidate is interviewed and taken on a tour of the district, one of the trustees will be shadowing the applicant to watch interactions and using those times as judgement and decision builders.

## ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Joki moved, Trustee Madsen seconded and the vote was unanimous to adjourn at 5:58 p.m.

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Chairman

Clerk