



West Ada

SCHOOL DISTRICT

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES January 26, 2021

Date, Place & Time	The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, West Ada School District, is scheduled for Tuesday, January 26, 2021, at the District Service Center, 1303 E. Central Drive, Meridian, Idaho . The board will convene in special session at 6:00 p.m. The entire audio content of the meeting is posted on the West Ada website at www.westada.org
Trustees in Attendance	Trustees: Amy Johnson, Rene Ozuna, Ed Klopfenstein and Sheena Buffi (Rusty Coffelt joined meeting after he was sworn in)
Staff in Attendance	Mary Ann Ranells, Troy Stephens, Cheri Newbold, Krissy Lamont, Karen Echeverria, Misty Swanson, Dave Roberts, Mandy White, and Scott Montoya
Guests	Sue Darden and remote listeners
CALL TO ORDER & PLEDGE	Chairman Johnson
Amended Agenda/Action	<u>Approve the Amended Agenda as posted</u> Trustee Buffi made a motion, Trustee Klopfenstein seconded the vote was unanimous to approve the Amended Agenda as posted.
Additional Information	Chairman Johnson asked the Clerk if she had any additional information. The Clerk stated all additional information will be attached to the agenda. The patron comments were pulled and attached. The clerk had the names of the coaches for Owyhee High School. Sherm Blaser, Football Alan Perry Cross Country Jacob Klassen, Swim Raimee Ranstrom, Girls Soccer
Board Business Discussion	<u>Chairman's Statement regarding process and meeting for selection of new trustee</u> <u>Chairman Johnson statement below:</u> We have received several questions from the public regarding the Zone 4 trustee appointment process. I asked the Idaho School Board Association and our legal counsel to review the information and determine if there were legal or board process issues that need to be addressed. In the interest of transparency to the community, it is appropriate to address these questions tonight. I want to address the technical questions first, and then the process and applicant qualifications topics in a minute. We had three technical topics that were brought up as concerns: 1. The extension of the application deadline

Discussion Cont.

2. Concerns about off camera communication during the board ranking and before the board action
3. Concerns about the visual display of the final rankings not being shared for the public

EXTENSION: First let me address the extension of the application deadline. The original timeline for the application was not decided by a board vote, it was an administrative decision which allowed it to be extended without board action. Given that our overall goal with the application process was to get a broad pool of high-quality candidates, I asked for the deadline to be extended. At the time I made the decision, I did not know how many applications had been submitted. I wasn't primarily concerned with the number, rather I was concerned that the limited time frame during the holidays would create an unnecessary restrictions on the applicant pool. The communication for Zone 3 appointment included an email to parents across the district, but for Zone 4 we did not do the same communication because the district office was closed for winter break. Also because the office was closed, access to information and questions were not available for those were interested in applying. Finally, I was concerned that due to the holidays the opportunity for potential applicants to miss the opening was higher, so I asked for the extension. I would also note here for transparency's sake that the staff informed me last week that the candidate the board selected had his application in before the extension, not after.

OFF CAMERA COMMUNICATIONS: The board meeting last week was virtual, all board members were dialed in from a remote location. During the selection process agenda portion last week, we discussed that the board members would email their rankings to the clerk and then we would take a break which so that the clerk could tally the board rankings and validate those with another staff person. It was important to allow all the time the clerk needed to ensure that the rankings that were displayed for the board were accurate. All trustee submissions for ranking are part of the board minutes and the time stamps of when the rankings were sent to the clerk are available. During the recess, there was one request made by the clerk for a board member to adjust their ranking because they had inadvertently selected a candidate that had dropped out. The board was not in the same room and not communicating with each other during this time. During the second break all applicants were in the teams meeting and communicating with each other and I remained on camera so the candidates could chat with me while we waited for the break to complete. Again the board was not in the same room, or communicating with each other.

VISUAL RANKING DISPLAY: Unfortunately, we had a technical issue when the board came back from the first break. The audio was available for the public to hear but the visual screen was not available for the public. The board and some staff could see the visual and hear the audio because we were directly in the meeting, and not viewing on the web link. This was remedied as soon as the staff was notified that no video was showing on the public live feed. Legal counsel verified that open meeting requirements for remote meetings only include audio be available, visual is not required. That being said, the West Ada School District does strive to provide both at all times and in this instance, we had 30-40 seconds that we missed the visual. The documentation shared on the screen is part of the public record and has been made part of the draft minutes.

These three concerns have been addressed, reviewed by legal counsel and ISBA and there is no additional action needed. The board met all legal and process requirements.

Discussion Cont.

There are two remaining topics on process I want to address:

- Trustee eligibility, qualifications, roles and responsibilities
- The board process for written interview questions

Regarding questions about qualifications, the legal requirement for trustee eligibility can be found in Idaho Code in detail and in board policy 200.2. The board also has policy 201.2 that outlines duties and responsibilities. Board policy 201.2 states the trustees are responsible “To represent the district patrons and to protect the public interest in governance of the school district.” Because we have had concerns that a trustee must have children in the schools, I wanted to share that there is no legal requirement for that. I believe if that was made a requirement that there would be legal challenges. Schools impact so many different stakeholders from parents, students and staff to business owners, taxpayers, and other elected officials. The trustee’s role is to represent all of the patrons of their zone and protect the public interest in governance of the school district. During a normal election cycle, it is the patrons of the zone, parents and others that elect the trustee that represents them. Although not specifically in policy, as a guiding philosophy during an appointment process the board should strive to appoint a representative that emulates representing the total patron population of a zone.

We also had several questions on whether the written interview questions were mandatory or optional. As chair, I drafted the written interview process that was adopted by the board on Jan 12 and when I was drafting that language, I specifically debated the word “asked” versus “required” as I was writing. The final version included the word “asked” mainly because I didn’t want to limit the board’s selection to one or two pieces of information, it was important to look at all of the information submitted by the applicant including the application, letters of recommendation, resume’s etc. It was also important that a trustee not be limited in their personal ranking, that each trustee be able to create their rankings individually. That all being said, that was my intent, but I can also see how based on the language one could interpret that the written questions were required. It is important that the intent I had when drafting was the same understanding the board had when passing the motion and the same understanding applicants within the process had. Legal counsel has advised that there was nothing “illegal” about the process the board followed for appointing the Zone 4 trustee; however, we need to acknowledge there is a public perception and trust issue because of the confusion. The agenda tonight was amended to include a board discussion about the process and whether or it was implemented as intended, and for the board to determine the next steps forward as a team.

At the end of the day I believe we all want the same thing—what is best for our kids. That looks different by child and by family. What is core to supporting our kids is trusting that each and every person care deeply about their schools, their community and our kids. In today’s environment, where it seems like trust has eroded everywhere around us, we as an entire district have to try harder than ever before to find ways to fix, build and maintain trust.

Trust is defined as a belief in the character, strength or truth of someone or something. Rebuilding trust starts with an assumption of good intent about all parties. That can only happen when everyone takes a step back and decides to stop communicating ABOUT each other in places like private social media groups and instead communicates respectfully WITH each other. We all need to take a step back and acknowledge that there are different approaches and different viewpoints and that all are valid. As we take a step back we all need to communicate more respectfully, listen to understand each other, admit mistakes openly, forgive quickly, and adjust regularly to continually find new

Discussion Cont.

ways to move forward with the goal of being better today than we were yesterday.

I am going to now practice what I just outlined and make a statement of self-declaration.

Possible Self Declaration of Open Meeting Violation

Chairman Johnson statement: I just completed on year as a school board trustee in West Ada on January 14, and in that time the board has not received any open meeting law training, nor does the board have written protocols or processes currently in place to help board members navigate open meeting laws and avoid unintentional violations.

The board engaged in a series of emails in December and in January, which could be considered to be deliberative in nature and/or where multiple trustees were a sending party or recipient. While I do not believe that there was any intention to engage in inappropriate conduct, to the extent that such emails constituted a violation of the Idaho open meeting laws.

Action

Possible Self Declaration of Open Meeting Violation

Chairman Johnson statement: I hereby move that the Board self-declare an open meeting violation. I further move that the Board engage ISBA in training session relating to Open Meeting Laws, as a refresher to existing board members and as new training for our new trustees. Trustee Klopfenstein second and the vote was unanimous.

Discussion

Address process for selection of Trustee and consideration of possible re-declaration of vacancy [Board of Trustees / Board Meeting Recordings \(westada.org\)](#)

Trustee Klopfenstein: He ranked the candidates internally based on the night of January 12th. After the additional questions came in, he moved candidates up and down on his individual ranking. Mr. Coffelt was high on his list because of resume and questions on the application he answered. Trustee Klopfenstein wanted to hear from him. Trustee Klopfenstein stated. He does not know Mr. Coffelt and was very impressed with his well-rounded resume.

Trustee Ozuna: Supported the idea of the written questions. Trustee Ozuna crossed out the candidates that did not answer the written questions. The verbal part of the interview all 8 candidates were on a level playing field. Mr. Coffelt has an outstanding resume and verbal interview.

Trustee Buffi: Made her rankings after the applications were posted to website. She did read all the written questions. Trustee Buffi wanted to restore the education aspect on the board. All 7 candidates that had educational background and a social emotion background were moved to the top of her list. She made the motion to move the top 8 selected collectively by the board. Trustee Buffi stated she trusted the process. Once the verbal started those 8 were on a clean slate. Trustee Buffi made the motion for Rusty Coffelt based on the verbal interview.

Chairman Johnson: Eliminated those that did not answer questions but once the verbal interview process started everyone was on a level playing ground. Mr. Coffelt nailed the verbal interview.

Action

Address process for selection of Trustee and consideration of possible re-declaration of vacancy

Chairman Johnson called for a motion. The Action item failed due to a lack of a motion being made by any trustee.

Recommendation

Possible Administration of Oath of Office (Depending on the outcome of section B.4a)

Clerk Newbold administered the Oath of Office to Rusty Coffelt as the Zone 4 Trustee.

Consent

Recommendation: Mountain View High School Principal (Dr. Mandy White)

Dr. White, Regional Director, thanked all the staff that helped in the interview process. District Administration would like to recommend Scot Montoya for Principal at Mountain View High School. Mr. Montoya currently is the Principal at Lake Hazel Middle School. He also been a Vice Principal at Meridian High School. Trustees Coffelt welcomed Mr. Montoya on his new adventure.

Vice Chair Ozuna made a motion, **Trustee Buffi** seconded, and the vote was unanimous to approve consent agenda.

Meeting Minutes

- a. [January 19, 2021, Special Board meeting](#)
- b. [January 12, 2021, Annual Board meeting](#)

[Employment Recommendation](#)

[Summary of Leave Requests](#)

Recommendation to approve the Principal for Mountain View High School

Recommendation to approve coaches for Owyhee High School

- a. Swim Coach
- b. Cross Country Coach
- c. Girls Soccer Coach
- d. Football Coach

[Recommendation to approve National Youth Tobacco Survey](#)

[Recommendation to approve scoreboard donation to Owyhee High School](#)

[Approve Red Cross Facility Use Agreement](#)

[Approve pre-qualified list of providers for professional land survey services](#)

[Recommendation to approve Star Gravity Irrigation rebid](#)

Recommendation to remove the [enrollment cap off Hillsdale Elementary](#) for the 2021-2022 school year

Consent Cont.

[Updated language added to student handbooks](#)

[Amendment to Cascade Transportation contract](#)

[Approve Owyhee HS Roadway Package No. 1 change order](#)

Discussion

[District Surplus](#)

Pioneer School of the Arts and Spalding STEM moving from a modified calendar to a traditional calendar beginning 2021-2022 school year

Dr. Ranells, gave an overview on the notification that the parents of the modified schools received. The Schools will remain Schools of Choice. The logistical and operational reason were outlined. The alignment for district wide collaboration, events, testing dates, and the impact to transportation. Trustees asked if we had negative patron concerns. Dr. Ranells indicated we had a few but not many.

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Pioneer School or the Arts and Spalding STEM moving from a modified calendar to a traditional calendar beginning 2021-2022 school year

Trustee Klopfenstein made a motion, **Vice Chair Ozuna** seconded, and the vote was unanimous to move Pioneer and Spalding to a traditional calendar.

WORKSESSION

Process to conduct Superintendent Search - Misty Swanson (ISBA)

Misty Swanson, Chief Deputy for ISBA, outlined the ISBA's role when conducting a Superintendent Search. Ms. Swanson outlined two options.

Option 1:

Establish the search timeline

Determine key qualifications

Advertise the opening & recruit candidates

Review Applications

Option 2:

Included everything from Option 1 with the additions of the following:

Selection of Finalist (assist the board in providing information)Conduct

Reference Checks

Conduct interviews(Schedule interview and assist board with the interview questions

Selection of Superintendent and Contract Discussion

Other Assistance if needed

The above provides only guidance to the Board. The above does not make selection. This is an entire Board decision that is made in open session.

Questions around the process

Trustees discussed process, timeline, and next steps. Trustees asked questions around compensation, qualifications, job description, and characteristics. The public forum for patrons and community was a topic of conversation. How would this look. The survey process from all stake holders in the District. They also requested the process that was used when hiring Dr. Ranells. The pros and cons of a Nationwide search.

Trustee took a comfort break 8:14-8:27 pm.

Superintendent Job Description

Dave Roberts, Chief Human Resources Officer, provided the trustee with the Superintendent Job description from West Ada and from other school districts for point of reference. He discussed what should be in a job description, the

Action

process, defining qualifications and characteristics necessary for the Superintendent position. Mr. Roberts prepared a binder with board policies and updated job description. The job description should include what is expected, student achievement and possible tools used to recruit candidates. Trustees asked about the timeframe. Qualifications compared to other states and compensation compared to other states.

Superintendent Search Process/Next Steps

Vice Chair Ozuna moved that we engage ISBA option 2 to conduct a National Search for the next West Ada Superintendent. I propose that Mr. Roberts be the point of contact for the Administration and Trustee Buffi as the primary board contact with support from Chairman Johnson. **Trustee Klopfenstein** seconded and the vote was unanimous.

ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Klopfenstein made a motion, **Trustee Coffelt** seconded, and the vote was unanimous to adjourn at 8:55 p.m.

Chairman

Clerk