

# DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMUNITY DISTRICT

## BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

January 26, 2017 – 3:00PM  
Fisher Building, 3011 W. Grand Blvd.  
12<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room  
Detroit, MI 48202

### MINUTES

#### **Call to Order**

The Special Board Meeting of the Board of Education of the Detroit Public Schools Community District was called to order by President Taylor at 3:05pm.

#### **Meeting Norms**

Meeting Norms were read by the President

#### **Roll Call**

Secretary of the Board, Karen Morgan called the roll:

Present: Deborah Hunter-Harvill (via phone), Georgia Lemmons, \*LaMar Lemmons, Sonya Mays, Angelique Peterson-Maybury, Misha Stallworth, and Iris Taylor

There being a quorum present, the meeting was declared in session.

\*present after roll call

#### **Moment of Silence**

President called a Moment of Silence

#### **Call for Special Board Meeting**

Secretary of the Board Karen Morgan read the following statement:

I, Karen Morgan, Secretary of the Detroit Public Schools Community District Board of Education, do hereby certify that the foregoing Notice of the Special Board of Education Meeting was delivered to each Board of Education Member on Wednesday, January 25, 2017, pursuant to its applicable statute.

#### **Approval of Agenda**

Treasurer Mays moved to approved the Agenda

Secretary Stallworth seconded and motion carried unanimously

Treasurer Mays called for a motion to defer approval of Minutes until the next meeting

Special Meeting Minutes

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Member G. Lemmons seconded and motion carried unanimously

## **Strategic Direction Discussion**

President Taylor stated the Board had an opportunity to hear an assessment of the 16 Schools that are on the specific list for the SRO and to hear what that corrective action plans or implementation plans for improvement and what they have achieved thus far and what the intent in moving forward is. The Board to have a focus of have they are going to start with the SRO in looking at all the pieces of the data, what do we think should be the first step, what do we think should be the second step in this entire process and how the Board would take a position to respond to the SRO.

The Talking Points (Draft V3) was read to by Vice President Peterson-Mayberry.

President requested a motion to accept the Talking Points representing the Board.

Treasurer Mays worked with the Communications team of Jacqueline Robinson and Chrystal Wilson. The team wanted to relay three (3) main points; 1. The District has a strong adherence of high performing and high quality options for the students. 2. District is action-oriented and have a plan. 3. a reminder that schools don't close in a vacuum that they clearly impact students and educators and that closing a school in a rapid unplanned way has a ripple effect that extends outward from the schools and impact the broader community and housing evaluations and is extraordinarily destabilizing for a whole host of stakeholders. MASA provided Talking Points to be used at the school level for concerned parents.

The history of SRO was read by Vice President Peterson-Mayberry.

President Taylor stated she would like to share the Talking Points with the Legislators in Lansing so they can understand the District's position, In particular, those on the Education Committees, the Governor's office, and a host of very important stakeholders and constituents.

Vice President Peterson-Mayberry and Secretary Stallworth will provide a list of constituents the Board may want to send out Talking Points with the request that they embrace the points and stand with the District.

Once the Board states their official statement Talking Points will be posted on the Board page as well as Facebook and other media sites.

Secretary Stallworth stated an organization had reached out to requesting her attendance at a meeting scheduled for February 13<sup>th</sup>. My recommendation was that they put together a public comment for the 14<sup>th</sup> that includes an element that the Board could use in their advocacy such as transportation, improvement they may have witnessed.

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President Taylor called a Motion to adopt the Talking Points as the Board's position. All members were in favor and motion carried unanimously

The Board will need to take a position how they want to participate in the hardship and begin to collect data and coach ourselves for those who will have one-on-one interaction what are the thing we should be aware of and exchange to aggressively participation in the process of defining hardship for each of the 16 schools.

Vice President Peterson-Mayberry asked was there an opportunity for the schools themselves to give input on their definition of hardship.

Superintendent stated several principals have expressed an interest in having a say about what is being presented in regards to their schools. Hard data have been collected by the Superintendent. Already working on putting information together and are waiting for the SSRO communication. Principals would be happy to sit down and put more details around their school situation.

President Taylor stated we also need to come together and coach each other so that what we present is uniform and aggressive on how we are to improve areas that need to be improved. There are elements in the Improvement Plan that are not implemented or strategies that might want to be tested to see if they might want to be implemented. The District needs to come back to the Board and say you've heard our plan, you've heard the weaknesses that are in the plan so here is how we are going to strengthen the plan but assertively implement the strategies that we say we need to do. Showing something is different moving forward.

Vice President Peterson-Mayberry stated as far as a timeline what a realistic timeframe with a good solid plan is.

Superintendent suggested Leenet Campbell-Williams and the Network team who work closely with priority schools develop a draft plan, a timeline of what items deliverables for the Board to review and the Board can include items. The principles would be pulled together and to through what they are planning to present and they would have some time to turn that around. There would be an appendix for each of the 16 schools.

Member Hunter-Harvill stated Ivy Bailey and DFT have established a hardship committee and for the Board to engage them.

Treasurer Mays contemplated sending a letter to the governor and the SSRO expressing consternation around the process that starts with letters being sent to parents and then having a two-week gap before getting feedback on appropriate actions.

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The last attachment was a letter notifying the District that there was an expectation of closing the 16 schools by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Between 30-45 days the SSRO will define hardship. President specifically asked the process. Once Ms. Baker makes her final recommendation having had interaction with the district that are affected regarding their schools the final decision then goes to the Governor's office. The ultimate decision on closures rest with the Governor. The Board would like to be involved with the interaction with the SSRO.

Action Steps thus far:

1. To do the communication we agree upon.
2. To participate in the hardship process.

Vice President Peterson-Mayberry, Treasurer Mays, and Member Hunter-Harvill volunteered to be key people that the District can contact regarding the willingness to participate in this process. Chair will participate as appropriate.

The District needs to come back to the Board from all the information provided to state here are the weak gaps this is how we are closing, specific target dates to say when actions are going to occur, then have a round table discussion around some of the Best Practice models discussed in the plan. President and Vice President will make themselves available. An update will be presented at the February 14<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

Consider geographic realignment that makes sense for improvement in quality education looking at all the data elements such as where schools are located, enrollment, capacity, infrastructure, and from Human Resources where the vacancies are in the schools, or subject specificity as to where the vacancy are.

Documents were distributed from Operations and Facilities regarding buildings. Ken Tokarz, Deputy Superintendent Operations Division and Felicia Venable, Executive Director. Facilities briefly went over the operations documents distributed to the Board. Documents are currently being updated to provide the information relative to the 16 schools.

Member L. Lemmons recommended the Board challenge the law. Come up with a legal plan to both challenge PA 192-197 and its constitutionality both state and U.S. and ask for a declaratory judgement to the Attorney General's position. The impact of even citing the school closings destabilizes its employment, community neighborhoods and family. If we don't move expeditiously we are playing into the hands of those willing to destroy the District.

Cassandra Washington, Executive, reviewed the Human Resources report with the Board.

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Member L. Lemmons mentioned data from Quick to Learn can aid in the defense of any potential school closing. The data is located in Wayne State research. A binder was distributed to Board members containing the research.

According to Cassandra Washington the following pertains to substitute service. All subs are permitted through MDE (up to 90days in classroom), currently have a valid teaching permit. Stated they begin with 45 Teach for America teachers but currently only have less than 10.

Summary of steps taken around the focus of SRO:

1. Signing off on the communications plan with Talking Points.
2. Identify constituents, legislative, and community stakeholders to share Talking Points.
3. Participate in the process of defining hardship.
4. Revision of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) closing gaps.
5. Need to answer questions around realignment by retrieving and analyzing data.
6. Scope of potential litigation

Member L. Lemmons SRO history is under Rhodes and because the newly elected Board did not take office until January 1, 2017 and the District Fiscal year runs July 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup> all actions prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> are done prior to and should reflect on the state and not the Board.

The Talking Points were approved by the Board but can add notes under SRO.

Member L. Lemmons stated to that point you will note that on that area until that is done I disagree that this sole decent as to that and having a special meeting at a special time because he was not able to adjust during regular business hours for a special meeting to accommodate some members.

Member Hunter-Harvill wanted to add “Board of Education” on the Talking Points. Would like to request a debriefing time.

Treasurer Mays motioned to amend the previously approved Talking Points to change bullet point #3 to say the Board of Education has a clear plan, and capture under the SSRO History section the comments that Member L. Lemmons made about the dating and position of bullet point #2.

Vice President Peterson-Mayberry seconded.

Motion carried unanimously

Treasurer Mays requested Member L. Lemmons provide a history of action taken by the previous Board litigation wise and in protest of PA 192-197.

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General Counsel Hurks-Hill stated the Board could file a Declaratory Judgment and continue to take the actions being taken by the Board simultaneously.

Member L. Lemmons can provide the data needed within 24 hours.

Treasurer Mays motioned for preparation of written legal opinion on the Boards series of logical option.

Secretary Stallworth seconded

Motion carried unanimously

The next meeting is February 14<sup>th</sup>, the body will come back to discuss the realignment and legal opinion prior to the Board meeting.

Member L. Lemmons stated that past practices the agenda or notices had to indicate what action items were taking place.

General Counsel stated it is not necessary to list actions and that action can be taken during the meeting process. Independent of the agenda stating action items, a motion can be made during the meeting to take action.

Vice President Peterson-Mayberry spoke with a couple of community members that they are not used to seeing the meeting notices and that we should consider posting in additional areas for viewing.

## **Public Comment**

The following offered public comments:

Helen Moore encourages the Board to get the lawsuit going and take action

Wyoming Cranbrook area resident

James Beasley

Russ Bellant – teacher pay and school closures

Tom Banks – solutions with data backing up success

Elena Herrada – District audit

Chair requested motion to adjourn

No objections Meeting adjourned at 4:57pm



Certified:

Karen Morgan, B.S.B.M

Secretary of the Board