

GEORGE-LITTLE ROCK COMMUNITY SCHOOL  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

The George-Little Rock Board of Education met for a work session on July 20, 2020 at 5:00 pm in the Superintendent Office/Board Room in George with President Kristi Landis calling the meeting to order. Board members present were Kristi Landis, Wade Netten, Andrew Sprock, Austin Lloyd, and Jason Fugitt. Also in attendance were Superintendent Tom Luxford, Board Secretary Cathy Bonestroo, and guests Valecia West, Gary Richardson, and Les Douma.

Agenda was for strategic planning for the board and superintendent including building consensus on what effective education looks like at GLR, building a trusting relationship between the board and the superintendent, and setting goals in priority areas that positions GLR for success. Board members were asked to reflect on why they became board members. Superintendent Luxford shared his early reflections about the district. Luxford shared it's nice to be in the community and feels welcome with great people. He wants to get little things done right to make big things happen. The transition has been good with the overall view that it's about people and wants sustainability in the communities and the district with building strong partnerships. Tough decisions will be needed but with answers behind the decisions. He shared it is a wonderful district, and he is blessed to be here.

Board reflected that consistency and visibility they were looking for is being seen. Priorities were discussed as a balanced budget recognizing the steep learning financial curve for Tom, an effort to work together to learn and understand the unique and complicated Iowa finances and laws, the impact of enrollment and graphing out for trends, and long-term facility planning. Richardson shared boards struggle with finances more than a balanced budget and encouraged looking at financial trends, solvency ratio, cash balance, revenues and expenditures, and unspent balance. Discussion was held on attrition and when needed early retirements and not replacing for sustainability. Both Richardson and Bonestroo recommended Larry Sigel with ISFLC for workshops for Iowa school finance as explains well in common terms.

Community and public relations and branding were discussed with the need to promote the district better and celebrate the little things. Protocols and procedures will be in place recognizing concerted and common effort on all levels. Social media presence was also discussed to capture GLR moments. Suggestion was made to streamline concerts and other events and go beyond social media with using website, newspapers, newsletters, Channel 77, and emails.

Communication was also discussed and the need for consistency including for sharing programs info to be relayed the same between districts. Internal communication with staff and the board is needed on a regular basis setting a protocol remembering that face to face is important for administration. Luxford shared that keeping a scorecard needs to stop, and we are one district must be the focus. Cross training will also become a focus along with district protocols and procedures for curriculum, TLC, organization, hiring process, etc. Focus for evaluations is to grow them, not "get them". There is a need for admin to be in the classrooms to see student engagement and help teachers feel supported, but it needs to be intentional, deliberate, and have a purpose. Importance of correcting people was also discussed to prevent compounding issues. There is a need to know and trust the info between admin and the board.

Professional development (PD) was discussed with the focus of what does the data say. PD must be meaningful with the PLC the horizontal framework. Teachers are learners too, so strategies for classroom

management, process of developing TLC with talking to peers and unpacking standards and prioritizing. Reflection is needed early and often with personalization, consistency, and utilization needed for PD. Grade level expectations need to match curriculum expectations across the district.

Les Douma presented on culture and how critical it is at GLR focusing on what goes on and the atmosphere within the district needs to be carried on in all areas. Success is limited by the internal culture. Communicator transfers and continues unless leadership addresses issues. What's not going right needs to be confronted and go down the list for improvements. Culture of how adults and students work together is critical. When discipline slides in the classroom, it is difficult to reign it back. There needs to be expectations of parents and staff on how they view accountability within the district. Discipline is expected for a learning environment. Students need to know about accountability issues and what's expected. Consistency and focus of going in the same direction from classroom to classroom and team to team. Discussions should be promoted and learning how to disagree, allowing open discussions, and appropriately dealing with disagreements.

Chain of command is critical and must happen. Teachers cannot skip the chain of command and go directly to the board. Parents and teachers need to go to the problem first and work their way up with resolutions using the right chain of command. By treating each other right, good things will occur. Maintaining high accountability and expectations need to be communicated. Mission and core of GLR and the belief needs to be reflected by living up to it and driving the district. Humility is needed to resolve to do what is necessary to make GLR the best. Philosophy should be to preserve the best but improve the rest. Each group should reflect and ask how they can be better. It was also noted that culture is difficult to change if there is a lack of trust.

GLR people need to be proud of the district, proud to be working at the district, and the board needs to be proud of the district staff and students. Focus should be on how we are delivering on our mission. Use the resources we have and do the best with what we have to deliver on the mission. Good people working with good people and knowing they are appreciated through face to face discussions, notes, articles etc. is needed. Students and staff need to be appreciated within all groups from athletics to music, ag, academics, and other activities with the same feeling promoted throughout. Theme is building trust with good, consistent communication. Decisions made in cooperative process is critical noting who is impacted and if they were included if impacted.

Marketing and a consistent message are needed including letterhead, signage, and first impression of the district. Academics needs to be realigned first and foremost and activities to support student achievement follow. Confront inferior and mediocre performance is a must. Leaders integrity is eroded when not confronting issues. Every person, every program, every building needs to know they are critical to the district. High accountability for everybody in being professional. Everyone striving for the same goal with only above the line behavior expected.

The boards role was discussed as striving to make the right decisions to make the district the best and be visionary. The staff needs to be empowered to work on district culture. Pride needs to be across the district and facility. Once decisions are made, they need to be fully supported with no comments on the side. Same across the board with a good response as "I support what we did as a board, although I voted against with my own reasons" and leave side comments out. District confidentiality is important noting cautiousness is needed with board emails. Closed sessions often have tough decisions and must stay within closed session as confidential, not even sharing with spouses. Board should not solve problems that come to them, but should listen to person and redirect and encourage to talk to the proper chain of

command, and then refer to superintendent or board president. Advice was to work hard on culture and have quarterly reports on goals and a short review with the superintendent to provide feedback.

Work session ended at 6:55 pm.