

## I. PRELIMINARY

Shepherd called the March 18, 2014, meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

### ***Roll Call***

The following members were present:

JulieMarie A. Shepherd, president  
Cathy Wildman, vice president  
Mary W. Lewis, secretary  
Dan Jorgensen, treasurer  
Amber Drevon, director  
Eric Nelson, director  
Barbara J. Yamrick, director

Also meeting with the Board of Education were:

D. Rico Munn, superintendent of schools  
William Stuart, deputy superintendent  
Brandon Eyre, district legal counsel  
Damon Smith, chief personnel officer  
Georgia Duran, chief communication officer  
Lisa Escárcega, chief accountability and research officer  
John Youngquist, chief academic officer  
Anthony Sturges, chief operating officer  
Adrienne Bradshaw, chief financial officer  
Bonnie Lavinder, director of equity and engagement  
Tonia Norman, assistant to Board of Education

### ***Pledge of Allegiance/Welcome to Visitors***

Shepherd led the Board and audience in the pledge to the flag. She then welcomed visitors to the meeting.

### ***Approval of Agenda***

The March 18, 2014, agenda was approved as written.

### ***Approval of Minutes***

The minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Education held on March 4, 2014, were approved as written.

### ***Opportunity for Audience***

Tony Macciols shared that his wife was recently assaulted by a student at a district school site. He feels that discipline procedures were not followed and asked that reasonable consequences be established for defiant students.

Shepherd requested that Eyre meet with Macciols to discuss student discipline concerns.

Alfonso Gomez, parent and minister, serves as a volunteer at Aurora Central

High School. He has seen many changes at Aurora Central and feels proud that his kids have graduated or will be graduating soon.

Gomez shared that many immigrant parents are reluctant to talk to school leaders about their kids. He serves as a liaison between parents and school leaders, and commented that many parents now feel safe, secure and open to express their feelings. He noted that Principal Roberts has made a number of changes, which his daughter did not first embrace but she now feels that changes were made for the best. He is pleased with the direction of the school and plans to continue his volunteer efforts. He loves his community and plans to continue working with young people who are involved in gangs and drugs.

Shepherd thanked Gomez for all his work and efforts with Aurora Central students and young people in the community.

## **II. INFORMATIONAL REPORTS**

### **Board of Education Report**

Lewis and Nelson attended the grand opening celebration of the Kids Clinic at Crawford. Lewis encouraged everyone to visit the clinic to see the exciting and amazing work that is occurring.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Munn noted that the Board received a copy of the letter that he provided to the district's legislative delegation as a follow up to the meeting with Senate President Morgan Carroll. The letter addresses the impact of proposed legislation on the 2014-15 district budget. The Board will have an opportunity to review budget priorities for the 2014-15 school year in April.

### **Leadership Team Report**

#### Unified Improvement Plan Update

Arkansas Elementary School Principal Kevin Shrum; Jewell Elementary School Principal Patricia Lewis; and Aurora Central High School Principal Mark Roberts, provided an update on site unified improvement plans.

Principal Lewis shared that teachers are taking more responsibility for student learning by noticing and naming when students experience growth and reflecting on their own efforts to move students. She explained that reading has been the focus at Jewell throughout the school year and highlighted one year's growth gains experienced by students across all grade levels. She reviewed challenges associated with discipline and highlighted work occurring to reduce office referrals, including implementation of school-wide procedures and inclusion of restorative justice approaches that teach students to reflect on their behavior and better problem solve.

Principal Lewis discussed the need for additional supports, interventions, and resources to address social-emotional concerns of students. She is most appreciative of extra resources that were provided to Jewell this school year to support an assistant principal and part-time counselor. She noted that Aurora Mental Health has provided weekly support to address social-emotional needs of

new and current students and their families. She expressed the importance of providing professional learning to staff to better support social-emotional issues of students, and highlighted processes that have been implemented, including behavioral plans; parent meetings; and one-on-one intervention work between select students and paras. She plans to work with Chief Accountability and Research Officer Lisa Escárcega to assess students in April and is looking forward to hearing about a school-wide approach that better supports student needs.

Principal Lewis shared that Comcast and Children's Hospital have adopted Jewell and representatives plan to partner with staff on a landscaping project, mural painting, and support for a parent center to assist families with food and clothing needs. She expressed that students will have an opportunity to go to Calwood in April and a leadership team planning retreat with seven teachers is scheduled in June.

Principal Lewis noted the importance of solidifying the staff and continual monitoring of climate throughout the school year. She will be meeting with individual staff members in April to determine their overall commitment to increase student achievement and the professional culture at Jewell.

Nelson asked about the time line and effectiveness of support from Aurora Mental Health. Principal Lewis replied that support from Aurora Mental Health has made a big difference for students this year. She shared that Aurora Mental Health staff is at Jewell two days per week and works with students for approximately 15 to 20 minutes. She is very interested in a program outlined by Chief Accountability and Research Officer Lisa Escárcega that provides staff, students and parents with consistent ongoing problem solving skills and group supports.

Wildman commended Principal Lewis for taking her dreams, creating outcomes and finding resources to support her goals. Principal Lewis thanked Wildman for her continuous support.

*A copy of the Jewell Elementary School update is appended to the March 18 minutes.*

Roberts reviewed Aurora Central's comprehensive strategic plan focusing on literacy, reading and writing. He shared that a majority of strategies were funded through the Tier Intervention Grant and other resources. He noted that strategies and literature outlined in the 2013-14 school year consisted of work from Ellen Levy, Mike Schmoker, Eric Jensen, Robert Marzano, Madeline Hunter, and Doug Lemov. He indicated that work in the 2014-15 school year would focus on strategies from Robert Marzano.

Roberts highlighted work that fosters positive school culture to increase student achievement, including efforts to increase parent engagement and provide students with university field experiences. He shared that students are viewed in a 365 degree framework in order to monitor progress and ensure appropriate supports are in place. He discussed strategies to increase parent and community involvement at school, including parent learning walks that provide opportunities for parents to visit classrooms. He shared that a futures fair with community partners is scheduled tomorrow at 8:15 a.m. A spaghetti dinner is also scheduled on April 17 for parents and families during parent/teacher

conferences.

Lewis asked if information was posted on the Aurora Central website. Roberts replied that information is posted on the school's website. He added that a brochure was recently developed for visitors to promote and highlight achievement and activities at Aurora Central.

Drevon commended Roberts for efforts and ideas to engage the community. She requested that Roberts provide the Board with an update regarding the turnout.

Jorgensen asked if changes were substantial enough to increase student achievement. Roberts shared that Acuity data showed an increase in language arts and a slight increase in mathematics. He shared that attendance has increased, but continues to be an ongoing concern.

Jorgensen asked about achievement differentiations from current to past practices. Roberts commented that "what gets monitored gets done." He shared that the administrative team and district coaches monitor classrooms and set expectations for teachers. He shared that professional development focusing on writing, lesson plans and analysis of student data are consistent and aggressively monitored. He noted that teachers are expected to have learning targets posted in their classroom and added that administrators meet with two to three teachers per day. He emphasized that consistency is part of the process to increase achievement.

Yamrick asked about supports for parents to better assist students. Assistant Principal Cynthia Trinidad-Sheahan shared that parents were provided Infinite Campus training to access the parent portal to check attendance and grades. She added that a computer course; FAFSA training to assist with student financial aid; and Brain Wise training to educate parents about emotional development stages of their child, have been provided for parents. Parents are comfortable coming in and meeting with staff to discuss training and strategies to engage their student.

*A copy of the Aurora Central High School update is appended to the March 18 minutes.*

Shrum highlighted additional resources that were provided to staff to increase learning and strategies to build relationships and strengthen the Arkansas community. He shared that office referrals have decreased, which is mostly attributed to the addition of an assistant principal and counselor and the renewed approach to behavior and discipline. He shared that restorative practices are used to problem solve and to help kids reflect on choices and its impact on learning. He highlighted proactive steps that have been implemented by his assistant principal and counselor to decrease discipline referrals, including classroom visits to promote social skills and problem solving skills, and small group and one-on-one support for students with multiple referrals. He shared that administrators work with teachers to establish strategies to build relationships and connections so kids feel safe to take learning risks. He expressed that professional learning is very centered, focused and targeted around reading and small group instruction to increase student learning, and the instructional leadership team has developed components of small group instruction and success criteria to utilize when observing classrooms. He noted

that growth has been seen on TCAP and Acuity data and kids are starting to highlight their reading growth. He added that instructional coaches are providing supports for teachers as well.

Yamrick asked about growth gains at the fourth grade level. Shrum explained that teachers are making the difference and providing supports to help students become more reflective in their behavior and learning.

*A copy of the Arkansas Elementary School update is appended to the March 18 minutes.*

Youngquist appreciates the Board's interest in having quarterly site UIP updates. Wildman shared that the Board became involved in specific site UIPs and the TIG grant process last year.

### **Legislative Priorities**

#### Legislative Update

District Lobbyist Mary Kay Hogan indicated that the revenue forecast for the state budget indicated slow growth with additional funding expected to go toward emergency reserves, state education, and set asides. She shared that the School Success Act, House Bill 1292, and the School Finance Act are expected to return to committee for discussion tomorrow. She reviewed concerns related to the School Success Act, including limited flexibility and prioritization of the negative factor. She noted that messaging from district leaders who have been invited to meet with legislators regarding the School Success Act has been consistent. She anticipates that minimal changes will be made to the School Success Act after it comes out of committee. She acknowledged Senator Nancy Todd for being a strong supporter of the district in terms of flexibility related to the negative factor.

Hogan shared that one initiative that is expected to be included on the ballot relates to video lottery terminals in which proposed funding would be earmarked for K-12 education. She also shared that a bill to increase School Counselor Corps Grants from \$5 million to \$10 million is being discussed and is expected to be included as a set aside.

Lewis asked if discussions had occurred around funding to implement Senate Bill 191. Hogan replied that discussions had occurred around funding. Escárcega shared that 50 percent of the teacher evaluation rating has not been implemented, but the rating would count. Lewis asked if overall implementation varied from district to district. Escárcega replied that the implementation process varies across districts. Munn added that start up costs vary across districts.

Shepherd thanked Hogan for providing an update to the Board. Hogan expects to have more information to report to the Board in three weeks.

### **III. CONSENT AGENDA**

Wildman moved and Nelson seconded to approve the following items on the consent agenda as presented.

- Aurora Public Schools Resolution Regarding Erasing the Negative Factor

- Personnel

Roll Call: Drevon, Jorgensen, Lewis, Nelson Shepherd, Wildman, Yamrick #8295

Approved on a vote of 7-0

#### **IV. BOARD WORK**

##### **Ends Conversation and Open Dialogue**

###### Open Dialogue

###### Discipline in APS

The Board held a discussion regarding discipline practices in APS. Staff and parents provided information and answered questions around discipline at the February Board work session. The APS Philosophy Statement on Student Discipline, which includes governing principles and guiding questions for the Board and Leadership Team, was provided to the Board in advance of the meeting. The Board generally agreed that the district's philosophy statement reflected its values. The new restructuring efforts to establish the Division of Equity in Learning and combining work with the Division of Instruction is expected to increase equity work and provide social-emotional learning supports and interventions. The Board will continue to monitor district discipline practices.

Drevon requested that language be revised under one governing principle to reflect "used" instead of "viewed" as follows: Discipline should not be *used* as a means of condemnation or retribution. She shared that the proposed word change relates to perception and wants to ensure that the statement is viewed as intended.

Drevon requested additional clarification under governing principles to better reflect overrepresentation disparities between minority student population groups and the White student population group.

Wildman reviewed research that highlighted national discipline data related to minority students. She discussed the importance of applying fair discipline policies and practices to all students, as well as teachers and staff feeling comfortable to provide appropriate equitable consequences for all students. Nelson feels that the Board's focus should be on trends at the district level. Jorgensen suggested that the Board revisit research gathered by Wildman at a future Board retreat.

Lewis discussed the importance of highlighting the district's statement that emphasizes shared responsibility of staff, students, and parents to keep sites safe. She would also like to see the district pursue funding opportunities through the My Brother's Keepers initiative that helps young men of color succeed in school, and finding additional resources and supports to address social-emotional needs of students to help minimize disruptions to the learning environment.

Yamrick would like a district leader designated to monitoring of discipline practices. She shared positives related to the Restorative Justice Program and suggested that it be mentioned in the district's discipline statement. She also

concurred with Lewis regarding the importance of highlighting the district's statement pertaining to shared responsibility of staff, students and parents to keep schools safe.

Jorgensen and Shepherd prefer to keep discipline policy statements more general and limit inclusion of initiatives or programs. Shepherd shared that a number of schools are gravitating toward the Restorative Justice Program, but the school has to opt into it.

Lewis asked if the Leadership Team had concerns related to the discipline policy. Munn shared that Leadership Team is working to craft a budget that addresses appropriate discipline practices, social-emotional issues and student achievement. He plans to work with the Board to identify and prioritize needs.

#### Board Newsletter

Lewis and Duran reviewed drafted guidelines for the Board newsletter. The newsletter is designed to give Board members opportunities to share key information with the community and highlight activities and events that they attended. Each Board member will be limited to two activities or events to include in future newsletters. Duran will include the Board newsletter in an upcoming audit to determine overall viewership.

Shepherd and Nelson will be attending the National School Boards Association Conference in New Orleans, April 5-7. They will report out on the conference at the April 15 Board work session.

#### Policy Perception Checklist

Did the Board receive information at tonight's meeting that requires a policy change?

The Board will continue to monitor discipline in APS.

Did the Board receive information at tonight's meeting that requires additional information or monitoring?

Additional information will be provided to the Board.

#### ***Board Self-Monitoring***

Wildman shared that there was good participation and listening at tonight's meeting. She appreciated hearing reports from principals related to unified improvement plans.

### **V. CONCLUDING ITEMS**

#### ***Opportunity for Audience***

June Borkowski, third grade teacher at Arkansas, expressed appreciation to the Board and Superintendent for recognizing the need for differentiation between schools that need additional support. She shared that the assistant principal and counselor have provided great supports for working with kids with mental health needs in small groups and preparing and teaching them how to behave in

March 18, 2014

appropriate settings. She appreciates the additional supports to assist teachers and helping all students succeed in learning.

***Next meeting date***

The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held on April 1, 2014, at 6:00 p.m. in the Dr. Edward and Mrs. Patricia Lord Boardroom of Educational Services Center 4.

***Adjournment***

The regular meeting of the Board of Education adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**President**

**ATTEST** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Secretary**