

WASHINGTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

GOVERNING BOARD MINUTES: SPECIAL MEETING – STUDY SESSION

2011-2012

May 10, 2012

Tumbleweed Elementary School  
4001 W. Laurel Lane  
Phoenix, AZ 85029

**I. SPECIAL MEETING**

**A. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Mr. Maza called the meeting to order at 4:44 p.m. Governing Board members constituting a quorum were present: Mr. Chris Maza, Mr. Bill Adams, Ms. Clorinda Graziano, Mr. Aaron Jahneke, and Mrs. Tee Lambert.

**B. Adoption of the Special Meeting – Study Session Agenda**

A motion was made by Mr. Adams that the Governing Board adopt the Special Meeting – Study Session Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Lambert. The motion carried.

UNANIMOUS

**II. STUDY SESSION**

**A. Governing Board Study Session Regarding a Possible Capital Override Recommendation**

Dr. Cook introduced Adele Russell, Principal of Tumbleweed Elementary School who welcomed the Board to Jordan Blair's 6<sup>th</sup> grade classroom. Ms. Russell stated that Mr. Blair was an amazing teacher who engages his students all the time and even more so with the new technology in his classroom. She advised that students work in small groups as Mr. Blair works with a larger group with no classroom management problems. Ms. Russell introduced Mr. Jordan Blair to demonstrate the technology used in his classroom.

Mr. Blair stated that there were many ways to utilize technology to improve the quality of teaching in the classroom. He gave an excellent presentation explaining how he used the following new technology in his classroom:

- SMART Board
- Audio Enhancement System
- iPod
- iPad
- SMART Responders
- Document Camera

Dr. Cook thanked Mr. Blair for his demonstration and praised him for being an extraordinary teacher. Dr. Cook advised the Board that much of the technology demonstrated by Mr. Blair was donated, and/or paid through grants. She also advised that Title III money is being used for audio enhancement systems in all of the SEI classrooms, which is very helpful for the English language learners.

Dr. Cook stated that the purpose of the Special Meeting – Study Session was to have an opportunity to share with the Board the work of the Capital Override Task Force and the dilemma that the District is facing.

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Dr. Cook introduced Ms. Sue Snyder, Director of Organizational Management, who facilitated the Capital Override Task Force meetings for the past two years. Ms. Snyder reviewed the work of the Task Force. She referred to the recommendations made by the Technology Committee for the technology needs of the District (with options ranging from \$21 million to \$68 million).

Mrs. Lambert asked if the example of the estimated homeowner impact on page 26 was for a \$55 million capital override. Ms. Snyder answered in the affirmative.

Mr. Adams stated that this will require educating the community members and will require a strong marketing component for this to be successful.

Mr. Jahneke asked if the District had been able to receive soft capital funding from the legislature, would it be looking at this situation differently. Dr. Cook responded that if the District had received all of the capital funding over the last several years, it would not have a need to consider a Capital Override.

Mr. Adams stated that the public will assume that the District had received funds for these technology needs and asked how the District would respond. Dr. Cook replied that if the Board is presented a recommendation at a Board meeting in June, they will also be presented a marketing plan. Dr. Cook advised that the Task Force addressed this issue and the marketing plan would utilize that information to respond to the public's questions. She stated that the marketing plan would include advising the public that the District had not received the anticipated capital funding and that the capital override would make a difference in children's lives.

Ms. Snyder referred to Attachment A on page 3 which was provided to focus groups. She stated that everyone was very surprised when they were presented with the unfunded amounts. Mr. Maza stated that the public may misinterpret that the \$43,852,423 unfunded amount is a budget cut, however, it is not. He further stated that people will say that a capital override overrides the capital budget, but when the capital budget is nearly zero, 10% of that is zero. He stated that it is actually 10% of the Revenue Control Limit.

Mr. Maza advised that the public's perception of an override had a negative connotation. Mr. Maza's personal opinion was in favor of the capital override. He stated that you cannot know how the public will respond unless you ask the question.

Mrs. Lambert said that people may not know what "unfunded" means and suggested saying "dollars not received". She stressed the importance of using simple terminology and advising the public that these tools are essential to meet national and state expectations in assessments.

Mr. Jahneke advised that the public needs to be educated that the District has targeted funds and money cannot be moved into capital from another account. He stated it is important to educate the public that the District did not receive capital funds required by statute.

Ms. Graziano agreed with comments made by the Board members that the major component is educating the public. She stated that how the District gets the message to the voters is the key to getting an override passed. Ms. Graziano stated that the District must be responsible to the students and agreed with Mrs. Lambert that the technology tools are necessary for the educational component to assess student growth. Ms. Graziano stated that the items were not extravagant and

everything was basically needed.

Mr. Maza stated that he looks at the employees who are held to a certain set of standards and expectations using the tools available. He hoped that the taxpayers would realize the importance of obtaining new technology to assist employees in performing their duties.

Ms. Lambert asked if the Task Force spoke to other districts regarding their experience with having a capital override election in regard to obstacles encountered or how they educated the voters. Ms. Snyder stated that they had not contacted other districts, but thought it was an excellent suggestion.

Mr. Adams suggested that the District ask for a capital override and request the maximum amount of \$68 million. Mr. Adams said it was important to keep the message simple so the voters will understand the need.

Mr. Maza asked if there was a recommendation from the Board to call for a capital override, was there a Political Action Committee (PAC) prepared to assist with the efforts. Ms. Snyder responded that the PAC that was formed previously for the M&O/Bond override had stayed intact and are organized and prepared to assist with a capital override election. Ms. Snyder advised that there was a person ready to head the committee if the Board recommended a capital override.

Mr. Maza asked if a Board member was allowed to sit on a PAC. Dr. Cook advised that Governing Board members did not give up any of their rights as a private citizen. She stated that as a citizen, a Board member was allowed to conduct their affairs at night as they wish, but not in their official capacity as a Governing Board member. Mr. Rex Shumway confirmed that as long as it was known that the Board member was there in a personal capacity and not there representing the Governing Board or any other district organization, they did not give up their personal rights as a citizen.

Mr. Jahneke stated that it seemed the District would save money over time with better technology and asked if there was a possibility to conduct an analysis. Mr. Chris Lieurance, Director of Management Information Systems, advised that there was a 26% increase in technology support calls from last year to this year and expected a comparable increase next year due to the increasing number of computer breakdowns. Mr. Lieurance advised that new technology would make employees more efficient in completing their duties and will, therefore, save the District money.

Ms. Graziano asked who will make the decision for which dollar amount to request for a capital override. Dr. Cook advised that if the Board wishes, a recommendation will be presented at a June Governing Board meeting with an amount based on the Task Force Committee's work. The Governing Board will have the option to approve the recommendation and adjust the requested amount for approval.

Ms. Graziano asked if it was possible to ask for more than one amount and let the voters choose which option they would prefer. Dr. Cook advised that the ballot language is legally bound.

Mr. Maza asked Board members to review the four options listed on Attachment C on page 5 to ensure that the proper amount is requested. Mr. Adams stated he would suggest requesting the \$68 million, but trusts that the Task Force will recommend the appropriate amount based on their work.

Mr. Adams suggested that the PAC find a way to conduct a voter survey to see if they would vote for a capital override and how much they would support.

Mrs. Lambert stated she was on the last A Bond election committee and that a large portion was directed to technology which gave the District the computers that are currently being used. She said the community was very supportive of the needs of the District and passed the A Bond. Mrs. Lambert suggested that one way to promote new technology was to use technology, e.g., community emails or Facebook.

Dr. Cook asked if the Board was comfortable with her sending an email to District employees that the Board had participated in a Study Session to review the work of the Task Force and looked forward to the possibility of calling for a capital override in June. She stated that if the Board were to call for a capital override, she would not legally be able to use technology to notify employees. The Board agreed to allow Dr. Cook to send an email to the employees.

Ms. Graziano referred to "All Other Recommendations" on Attachment C on page 5 and asked what was the difference between the "free" System Management Software and Video Conferencing for the \$21 million option versus the \$35 million option where it was "paid". Mr. Lieurance responded that the free software usually contained advertisements with no technical support and was similar to a free trial package.

Ms. Graziano asked where the school sound systems would be installed. Mr. Lieurance stated they will try to augment the band and choir rooms, gymnasium, auditorium, and a portable unit to hold outdoor events. Ms. Graziano asked if there was consideration for music rooms to have keyboard/instrument labs. Mr. Lieurance advised that they were not included in the override amount. Ms. Graziano asked if there was a possibility there would be funds for the labs. Mr. Lieurance stated there probably would be funds for that purpose if the override passed. Ms. Janet Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent for Academic Services, advised that there would be budget capacity for the labs if the one of the higher override amounts were requested.

Mr. Lieurance advised the Board that the lower the dollar amount of the override request, the longer it will take to get the new technology in the classrooms.

Governing Board members expressed their appreciation for the Study Session and the detailed information.

Dr. Cook thanked the Governing Board for their comments and suggestions.

### **III. GOVERNING BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Mr. Maza thanked Jordan Blair for his demonstration and thanked Dr. Cook for making the arrangements to have the Study Session at Tumbleweed Elementary School to view the new technology.

Mr. Jahneke acknowledged the demonstration which gave him a better understanding of the need for the new technology.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

UNANIMOUS

A motion was made by Mr. Jahneke to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Graziano. The motion carried.

SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS

Documents were signed as tendered by the Governing Board Secretary

Joyce Shiota  
BOARD SECRETARY

5/24/12  
DATE

Ann Zahra  
BOARD OFFICIAL

05/24/12  
DATE