

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE CAMP
VERDE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Work Session Minutes taken Tuesday, January 21, 2014

Camp Verde Unified School District Library, located at 280 Camp Lincoln Road
Camp Verde, AZ
86322
5:30 PM

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Board President Freeman called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Board Members present were: Helen Freeman, Bob Simbric, Judy Gilbert, Christine Schneider and Trent Hackett.

Administrators present were: Superintendent, Dr. Amber Marchant-Lee; High School Principal, Mr. Bob Weir; Elementary Principal, Mrs. Debi Pottorff; South Verde Technology Magnet Principal, Mr. Steve King; Director of Business Services, Mr. Steve Hicks; and Support Services Director, Mr. Stacey Barker.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mrs. Gilbert led the pledge of allegiance. There was a moment of silence.

4. AGENDA REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE

Mrs. Gilbert moved, seconded by Mr. Hackett to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried 5-0.

5. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ON PROJECT BLANK SLATE AND GOVERNING BOARD VISION/MISSION AND GOALS

Dr. Lee began by stating that the administrative team had met and discussed Project Blank Slate and where the District has been and where they would like to be. She let the Board know that in their packets were ideas that the Principals had previously gone over with the Board that included input from the teachers at their sites regarding the Project. The Student Tool Box was included in the packet as well as ideas for a Board Mission statement.

Each principal gave an update on their vision regarding the Project. Mrs. Pottorff stated that at the Elementary School they have established a Responsibility Room to instruct students who need to be removed from the regular classroom. It helps to keep the other students on track and helps her and the teachers to concentrate on instruction, rather than discipline. In order to reach instructional goals the Elementary School would like to hire three more teachers next year to ensure smaller class sizes. Other areas presented were: adding an instructional coach or mentor; adding a technology teacher to help with common core; and modifying the kindergarten year. There was some discussion on a modified kindergarten year and how it would work if the Board adopted the four-day school week. The days will be longer for kindergarten students. Mr. Simbric asked if it was possible to use the first half of the day for academic instruction and the second half for skill and character building as well as implementing a student reward system. Mrs. Pottorff said that it was possible. The policy also gives parents the option to enroll their students in half day kindergarten if they choose to.

Dr. Lee spoke on behalf of Principal Howe and the Middle School. The 6th grade teaching team is discussing decreasing the amount of times students change classes and teachers. Traditionally students have had four instructors a day. They would like to

decrease that to two instructors, easing their transition into Middle School. Dr. Lee explained that Mr. Howe was currently attending an in-service on Capturing Kids Hearts that was recommended by the superintendent of Ash Fork. The goal is to increase student motivation and performance, while building and maintaining relationships with kids and their families. If Mr. Howe feels that the program will work at Camp Verde Middle School he will propose to implement it school wide.

High School Principal Weir spoke on the need to focus on teaching remediation classes in English and Mathematic literacy; the need to decrease class sizes, increase attendance and increase the graduation rate. All of which would help the high school obtain a letter grade of A. The High School and Middle School have been working together to align the English curriculum. Mr. Weir spoke on expanding the alternative program to accommodate students who are three credits or more behind. Mr. Simbric asked him to expand on the potential four-day school week. Mr. Weir believed that all of the above-mentioned would be possible if a four-day school week was adopted. Instruction time would increase, advisement would be eliminated and there would be more time for homework (at school), individualized instruction and increased elective opportunities. It would also decrease the need for substitute teachers.

Principal King of South Verde felt that it is a heavy task teaching the students to believe in themselves with the student population's circumstantial demographics. Many students come from single parent families or home environments that are financially and sometimes physically unstable. He felt that Project Blank Slate meant finding a way to instill personal motivation in students so that they can take charge of their own success. He said that South Verde has incredibly diverse needs, some students don't know their times tables and some belong in calculus classes. However, South Verde's mathematics program has grown leaps and bounds since they started targeted intervention. Teaching students how to want to succeed continues to be a challenge. Mr. Simbric felt it very important that the administration approach the potential four-day week as it is intended: an opportunity to raise the levels and the outcome of student academic success. He continued, stating that, demographically, Camp Verde is largely a retirement community. People may not understand the prospect of raising student performance using the four-day week unless it is clearly communicated. He has heard from people in the community that don't understand and see it as a waste of taxpayer's money. Mrs. Gilbert stated that she had heard some negatives from community members as well. Mrs. Freeman stated that they needed to be able to show the community how it is a good idea for students. Mrs. Freeman, Mrs. Gilbert, Mr. Hackett and Mr. Simbric all stated support for the four-day week concept. There was some discussion on using grant monies to support enrichment courses for students on the off day. Mr. Simbric felt it important to begin with the end in mind, the end being, every student being a success story. Mr. Hackett agreed that the four-day school week is a solution to a problem, but felt that Project Blank Slate would be ever evolving. Mrs. Freeman agreed that the Project would be ongoing and felt it important to communicate to all members of the community the potential to increase academic performance and student enrichment. There are segments of the population that are harder to reach. There was conversation on how to communicate with the population as Board meetings are open to the public, and a forum has been held, yet there has been little public participation. There was discussion on the upcoming public forum (on January 29) and how to best communicate with, and receive feedback from the community. The discussion continued as Dr. Lee reported that so far the Middle School parent surveys came back 135 in favor of, and 25 against the four-day week. Mrs. Pottorff reported that at the Elementary the parent surveys were also overwhelming supportive of the four-day week, a ratio of 3 to 1.

Mrs. Freeman felt that the vision of Blank Slate that the administrators expressed was different from hers. She felt it important to adopt the Student Tool Box or something

like it in order to have a foundation. Mrs. Gilbert agreed. Mrs. Schneider felt that more work needed to be done on the Tool Box before it was adopted. However, she felt it important to lay a foundation where everyone speaks the same language, be it a Mission Statement or a Tool Box. We need to be able to answer the question, how does what we are doing fit into what we want our students to look like. Mrs. Schneider continued, stating that the sooner the Board gets something published that supports that, the better.

There was no action taken on the item. The Board will continue working on the Student Tool Box and continue their discussion during another meeting.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Gilbert moved, seconded by Mr. Hackett to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:24 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Hudson
Board/Administrative Assistant

Helen Freeman
Board President

Trent Hackett
Member

Judy Gilbert
Member

Christine Scheideer
Member

Bob Simbric
Member