

Granite School District

Board of Education Meeting

Study Session

January 27, 2015

A study session for Granite School District was held in Auditorium D at the Granite School District offices, 2500 South State Street, Salt Lake City, Utah. President Terry Bawden called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., those in attendance:

Terry Bawden	President
Connie Anderson	Vice President
Connie Burgess	Board Member
Gayleen Gandy	Board Member
Dan Lofgren	Board Member
Sarah Meier	Board Member
Karyn Winder	Board Member

The following members of the administration were present:

Martin W. Bates	Superintendent
David Garrett	Business Administrator/Treasurer
Don Adams	Assistant Superintendent
Mike Fraser	Assistant Superintendent
Linda Mariotti	Assistant Superintendent
John Welburn	Assistant Superintendent

Ben Horsley, Director, Communications, and Doug Larson, Policy & Legal Services, were in attendance. Merilynn Boekweg, Board Recorder, also attended.

STUDY SESSION:

Superintendent Bates reminded the Board that the information sent to them prior to the meeting explained the agenda items and gave in-depth details. Board members were encouraged to use this process to study the information prior to study sessions in the future.

1. SAGE Discussion

Rob Averett, Director, Student Assessment, quickly reviewed the information the board had received. He focused on how to access the Utah State Board of Education web site (www.schools.utah.gov/) and navigate the data gateway to find results for the SAGE testing and individual school report cards.

There are three accountability reports. He explained that the PACE (Prepare, Access, Complete, Economic Success), UCAS (Utah Comprehensive Accountability System), SAGE (Student Assessment of Growth and Evaluation) and the ACT (American College Test) were the tests used to produce accountability reports.

The SAGE results and school grades for 2014 were released in December 2014. Dr. Averett identified an error in calculations and the USOE is reassessing the results and will release a corrected set of scores. This correction will raise 9 of Granite's schools original grades and an increase may be realized in additional schools.

The school Report Card issued by the USOE was discussed. A copy of a high school's accountability report was reviewed and the Board was instructed on how to interpret the information.

SAGE testing scores were much lower than CRT scores have been in the past. Dr. Averett explained that they were not really comparable. The new more rigorous core curriculum has necessitated a rigorous accountability test. This is an affirmative test with 11,000 possible questions that have been reviewed by educators and parents. When a student answers a question correctly a more difficult question is then asked. If a student's answer is incorrect the test then gives a less difficult question. This pattern helps identify closely where the student is in mastering the curriculum. Dr. Bates reminded the Board that the 2014 SAGE test is the baseline year. Results for 2015 should be released shortly after the test is taken. Teachers can use the data to set up classes and know where students need help prior to the upcoming year. The Board discussed the performance of schools comparing their socioeconomic status that is based on the number of free and reduced lunch applications and the reported average of proficiency.

The ACT and AP (Advanced Placement) results were reviewed. Granite's scores and participation levels have increased which is a positive reflection of the emphasis that has been placed on these tests. (Exhibit #15-24)

Mr. Lofgren asked what would be done to get the information out to communities when the SAGE corrected scores are available. He suggested a press release or media coverage of some kind. Members of the Board agreed the public needed to be aware of the correction which resulted in increases in school grades.

A discussion pursued regarding the importance of professional development for teachers in interpreting and using the testing data. It was important to the Board that ways be found to help schools and teachers to move forward in different and challenging ways by using the data. Dr. Bates commented that the administration is taking “bright spots”, the areas in which advancements are being made, and helping other educators learn to develop them in their schools.

Dr. Bates stated that if teachers teach “The Granite Way” the students become more proficient and the scores are better. He explained teachers should not teach the test but rather teach the core standards which will be beneficial to their students as they take the test. Collaborating with their grade level in Professional Learning Communities (PLC) is an excellent way to get help and give help in teaching the core.

President Bawden commented that Granite District is a “big ship” and it will take time and persistence in readjusting the way it develops educational change.

2. Community Council Policy Discussion

Mr. Larson had previously supplied the Board with information on the roles of a school community council (SCC). The minimum statutory requirements for SCC’s as listed in Utah Code (53A-1a-108) are that every school receiving school trust land monies must establish and maintain a school community council for the purpose of using funds from school trust lands to promote student achievement and community engagement. They are required to:

- Create a School Improvement Plan
- Develop a Learning and Nurturing Development (LAND) Trust Plan
- Assist in creating and implementing a Professional Development Plan
- Create a Reading Achievement Plan (for elementary schools).

SCCs should also advise and make recommendations regarding school and District programs, school walking routes, and other issues related to the community environment for students. (Exhibit #15-25)

The Board looked at criteria for measuring the capability of existing Councils. In doing so it was evident that a large percentage of the SCCs in Granite are disorganized, have minimal input, and participate in little or no collaboration. A few SCCs are staffed and functioning at a higher level but not completely with all the statutes. The Board is concerned as they look to them for more decision making on a local level they are not ready to do so.

A discussion followed about outlining what might be expected of a high functioning SCC. Training of the leadership seemed to be a key point in helping the SCC's understand what is expected of them in addition to signing off for LAND Trust Plans. Addressing "meaty" matters with substance regarding their community school could help to develop interest and retain SCC members. They will feel valued and want to become more involved with school based decisions. Members need to see what is expected of them and what they can be part of. A caution was given that areas where they cannot be a decision maker should be clearly stated and part of the training.

The Board had encountered some examples where principals need training on what the SCCs are allowed to be part of. The feeling was some principals are having a difficult time working with the SCCs because they are hesitant to let go of some control. Principals should be encouraged to become ambassadors for their school while working with the community.

Dr. Bates asked the Board to send him a one page list or description regarding their personal view of the scope of authority of SCCs by Tuesday, February 3. Mr. Larson provided the Board a link to the current School Community Council Policy.

<http://www.graniteschools.org/legal/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2014/07/VIII.A.23-SCC-Policy.pdf>

Motion: **I move we adjourn.**

Made by: Dan Lofgren

Seconded by: Gayleen Gandy

Called for vote: President Bawden

Results: Carried Unanimously

The Board adjourned at 7:00 p.m.