

MINNETONKA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #276
District Service Center
5621 County Road 101
Minnetonka, Minnesota

Summary of February 24, 2022 Study Session

The School Board of Minnetonka Independent School District #276 met in study session at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 24, 2022 in the Community Room at the District Service Center, 5621 County Road 101, Minnetonka, Minnesota. Chairperson Chris Vitale presided. Other Board members present were: Mark Ambrosen, Katie Becker, Patrick Lee-O'Halloran, John Odom, Meghan Selinger, Lisa Wagner and Superintendent Dennis Peterson, ex officio.

Prior to the study session, the Board met in closed session to conduct the Superintendent's mid-year evaluation.

Chairperson Vitale began the proceedings by reading the following statement:

I want to begin by saying the past two weeks have been very difficult for our school district.

While world events may be most present on many people's minds today, our school community has been struggling through some significant challenges here at home over the past two weeks, and I don't want to diminish the impact these challenges have had on students, families and staff.

Our school community has been deeply impacted by the events that have taken place--from the initial accusations of derogatory and hateful language and actions at the high school, to the social media attacks that have been leveled at students, to the protest we saw by an outside group that came to our high school and took over what was meant to be a peaceful student-led walkout, and finally, to the peaceful and impactful student sit-in held on Tuesday, where several MHS students shared their own experiences.

Racism, hate speech and hateful actions, discrimination and bullying have no place in the Minnetonka Public School District. I believe, and I speak for the School Board when I say each of us believes, that there is important work to do in ensuring all students and staff feel safe and feel supported. We must, as a community, come together to learn from each other, to listen to our students, to support our students and each other through these difficult times, and to heal.

The work focused on excellence in belonging and student well-being in our district and within all of our schools is critical. The schools have taken big steps with the work of the belonging committees, the reporting tool developed with students and with efforts for staff professional development. There is more work ahead of us, and each of us here and in our district has a role to play.

Thank you to our outstanding administration, teachers and staff who came together to keep our community safe when it was unclear what the intentions were of the outside group that was protesting at the high school last week. Our staff's incredible work behind the scenes together, along with their relationships with our local law enforcement and others, and the collaboration of student leaders, was commendable.

Thank you to our students, who exhibited patience, calm and order during and after the outside group's event. Thank you to the students who came together this week to share their personal experiences with the administration and with each other. And, thank you to all of the parents and community members who support our students, families and staff every day.

We are evolving together as a school community. Let's work to honor each other's journey as we take these steps, to move forward together, to assume positive intent ... and to listen and learn from each other.

This is an amazing community, and I believe there is common ground for us to find to help our community move forward.

REVIEW OF SUPERINTENDENT CANDIDATES AND INTERVIEW WORKSHOP WITH SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH FIRM

Phil Ehrhardt, Anne Noland and Steve Griesbach from the search firm of BWP & Associates led the discussion. Highlights of their presentation included the following:

Search Timeline

December 16	Search Planning Meeting
January 14-27	Community Input – Survey, Focus Groups, Interviews
February 3	Leadership Profile Accepted
February 24	Candidate Slate Presented
March 1-2	Candidate Slate Interviews
March 7-8	Finalists Interviewed
April 7	Superintendent Appointed/Contract Approved

Mr. Ehrhardt thanked District staff and members of the community for their interest and participation in both the focus groups and the survey. He noted that the participation level was the highest his search firm had ever seen. He then presented the slate of five candidates for review:

Candidate A

<u>Education</u>	<u>Experience</u>
PHD Oakland University	Superintendent
EDS Oakland University	Superintendent

MPA U of Michigan-Dearborn
BS U of Michigan-Ann Arbor

HS Principal
MS Principal
MS Assistant Principal
Teacher

Candidate B

Education

BS Black Hills State
MS St. Cloud State
Sixth Year St. Cloud State

Experience

Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent
MS Principal
HS Principal
Teacher

Candidate C

Education

BS U of Illinois-U-C
MA St. Xavier University
MS Chicago State University
EdD U of Illinois-Chicago

Experience

Assistant Superintendent
Deputy Chief of Schools
Associate Superintendent
Academy Superintendent-Charter
Elementary Principal
Program Coordinator
Director/Instructional Coordinator
Teacher

Candidate D

Education

BA Webster University
M ED Lindenwood University
EdD St. Louis University

Experience

Superintendent
Superintendent
Superintendent
Deputy Superintendent
Area Superintendent
HS Principal
HS Assistant Principal
Teacher

Candidate E

Education

BA Weber State University
MA Weber State University

Additional Coursework

Experience

Superintendent-Interim
Executive Director Elem. Education
Elementary Principal
Assistant Principal
Teacher

Utah State University
St. Mary's University

Mr. Ehrhardt and his associates then went over the interview process with the Board. Highlights included the following:

Importance of the Leadership Profile

- Defines the skills, personal qualities and experiences of your ideal candidate
- Guides the development and choice questions for candidate interviews
- Provides a tool to assess the relative strengths of candidates
- Offers the language for Board conversations and evaluations of candidates

Interview Round 1

- 5 candidates
- 1 – 1.5 hours in length
- Natural setting
- Develop questions list
- 10-14 questions
- Collect evidence

Interview Round 2

- 2 candidates
- May include a presentation by the candidate
- Explore topics from Round 1
- Develop questions list
- District tour

Interview Questions – Topics

- General and personal
- Visionary Instructional Leadership
- Teaching and Learning
- Human Resources
- Belonging, Diversity and Inclusion
- Collaborative Leadership
- Financial and Organizational Management
- School Board Relations
- Effective Communicator

Board Members

- Choose a person to introduce and conclude the interview

- Divide topic areas to specific members
- Each member chooses 2-3 questions for each subject area
- Align questions to Leadership Profile
- Create master list

Interview Tips - Dos

- Explain response expectations to candidates
- Be consistent in how questions are asked
- Smile and enjoy the process
- Ask follow-up questions to clarify
- Listen and watch
- Collect evidence

Interview Tips – Don'ts

- Religion
- Race/national origin
- Age/gender
- Marital or family status
- Lifestyles
- Disabilities
- Criminal record
- Financial affairs

Coming to Consensus

- Eliminate candidates first
- Review all materials from remaining candidates
- Each Board member chooses top 2 candidates
- Discuss agreement and divergence
- Keep the conversation in the room
- Seek to understand the positions of others
- Stay true to the Leadership Profile
- Be evidence-based
- Work toward consensus – avoid voting
- When in doubt, return to the Leadership Profile and the evidence

Board members thanked BWP for the great information and said they were excited to begin the interview process. Mr. Ehrhardt asked the Board to please reach out to him at any point in the process if they have questions or need additional help.

REPORTS ON GOALS

Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Dr. Amy LaDue led the discussion. She explained that the first part of the presentation this evening would focus on the belonging work that the elementary principals were conducting in their buildings. Updates were heard from Deephaven Elementary Principal Bryan McGinley, Minnewashta Principal Cindy Andress and Scenic Heights Elementary Principal Joe Wacker. Highlights of their presentations included the following:

Deephaven - Strategies to Increase a Sense of Belonging

- Deephaven News at 8:03 daily – run by 5th graders
- Morning Meeting in every classroom daily
- Birthday Book program
- Student Leadership – open to 4th and 5th graders
- Peaceful Bus program
- Kindness in Chalk, CARES lessons by parents
- Student-led building tours
- Lighthouse Publishing

Parent Input – Suggestions

- Allow for students to be read to for their Principal Summer Challenge
- Bring back the kindness lesson taught by parents as part of CARES Committee work
- Bring back the Buddy Classrooms program
- Discuss the concept of small talk with students as a life skill
- Find a parent article on how to create a caring and kind community

Student Input – Suggestions

- Have more clubs for kids after school
- Extra time during school to do homework or make connections with other kids
- Each class should have time to get to know new staff
- Help younger students with their homework

Plan of Action

- Parent and student input will be used to reinforce, change, or add to our current practices
- Staff, parents and students will be involved in the process of growing our sense of belonging for everyone at Deephaven

Minnewashta – Strategies

- Grade-level meetings – virtual – monthly
- Exploring trusted adults
- Exploring Search Institute student survey concepts with Kari Palmer
- Teaching common vocabulary and dialogue
- “There is Always Time to do the Right Thing, Minnewashta”
- Community Comments with Cindy and Jenny

Staff Learning Opportunities

- Monthly communication meetings – Kari Palmer
- February communication meeting and professional development on February 18

What Are We Learning?

- There are discrepancies between how students and staff see things
- Huge need from our students to participate in school-wide opportunities and feel more connected to our school
- Need for more time to connect as a staff and as a school community
- Students all desire connections and want the opportunity to have ownership and leadership over their education
- Listen to student voice – include them and reflect on what they have to say
- How to bring more common language to this work
- Students want more opportunities to prove their leadership skills
- Gap between what we think we are teaching and what the students think
- Working with special education students may require different strategies to reach outcomes

Scenic Heights – Resources

- Social worker, counselors, principal, student support para, admin support
- Wellness Committee, Social Committee
- Student Support Team
- Child Study Team
- Library resources
- Climb Theatre presentations on belonging and inclusion
- Partnerships with ICA Food Shelf, Minnetonka Family Collaborative

Strategies to Elevate and Respond to Student Voice

- Kindness Retreat
- 4th and 5th grade listening sessions
- Search Institute training
- KRTS (Kids Run the Station)

- Minute Meetings

What Helps Students Feel Like They Belong

- When teachers greet me in the morning
- Being included to play games with my friends at recess
- My teachers answering my questions
- When adults in the building know my name
- My teachers and friends help me feel better when I am feeling down

Staff Learning Opportunities

- Search Institute training
- Social Thinking training
- Staff Book Club
- Staff meeting/pamphlet walk

Strategies to Increase Belonging

- Monthly classes taught by counselors: support, friend friction vs. bullying, empathy, stress and calming, acceptance and belonging, being grateful, grit
- Book Club reflections
- Professional development survey – resilience, self-care, Happiness Advantage
- Minute meetings -every student

Additional Resources

- Belonging Committee for staff to discuss belonging and inclusion
- Staff to set cultural competency goals
- More professional development on leading difficult conversations
- Central approved curriculum to teach these areas

Dr. LaDue then updated the Board on the recent professional development session held with Principals and Admin Council to share resources and lessons learned. Highlights included the following:

Updates on Resources to Support Staff and Students

- Student Belonging Committees, Advisory groups and focus groups
- Expanded clubs and activities
- Peer opportunities to create belonging
- Confidential reporting tool and communication to raise awareness
- Classroom resources representative of school community
- Opportunities for small group connection and support
- Structures to support creating connections

- Resources to support families experiencing needs
- Staff committees
- Responsiveness to specific building needs
- Semi-structured time for staff connections

Overview of First Sharing Session

- Strategies used to positively impact and support staff in your department related to creating a community of belonging for students and staff
- Actions from your department to positively impact the student experience as it relates to their sense of belonging
- Other strategies or ideas used during this school year to support our belonging efforts
- Lessons learned during this year related to belonging
- Additional resources that will support moving this work forward

Impacting Belonging Efforts

- Develop relationships, serve as role models, and mentor students
- Demonstrate empathy when providing support
- Be intentional with feature storytelling and publications
- Produce videos in support of belonging and inclusion efforts
- Make resources and information accessible on website
- Provide opportunities for student voice – preferences and ideas
- Use systems and tools to provide access and support student identity
- Implement selection processes that identify candidates who are “other centered” and inclined to create community and conditions for belonging
- Broaden recruiting efforts to increase hiring of staff with diverse backgrounds
- Assess new staff’s experience to gauge belonging

Update on Elevating and Responding to Student Voice

- Created multiple new clubs, groups and events where students are able to have positive and empowering conversations with staff and with their peers
- Met regularly with student leadership teams to focus on their experiences and address areas that may decrease a sense of belonging
- Reframed Unified classes – partnership between Special Education and General Education

Update on Staff Learning

- Mental health and anxiety
- Sensitive conversations
- Interrupt, Question, Educate, Echo
- Developmental Relationships work with the Search Institute

- Responsive Classroom reboot
- Social Thinking in COVID
- Ongoing conversations during staff meetings and professional development meetings where we discuss the current impediments to students feeling a sense of belonging and action steps we can take to remove those impediments
- Book studies

Update on Lessons Learned

- Blind spots are being identified and are providing us with insight into how different groups feel and experience school. Awareness of areas that were not on our radar has been the best gift we have received from the advisory groups.
- The impact COVID has had on social and emotional relationships is significant. More emphasis has been placed on increasing students' social and emotional skills and awareness.
- Taking time to empathize, take perspectives, and involve key stakeholders in the conversation of belonging is important. People are inspired and want to take action when they can see the vision and how they fit into the bigger picture of the work.
- The lesson learned is to listen to and provide meaningful moments of care for our students.

In the discussion that followed, Board member Lee-O'Halloran noted how important it was to have these difficult conversations with students, to assess their sense of belonging in today's climate. Board member Becker said she looked forward to the presentation at the Board meeting next week regarding the Search Institute training. Vice Chair Ambrosen said it was obvious that more student voice is needed at every level in the District. He also noted the importance of offering additional staff training in these areas. Board member Selinger asked about the use of the confidential reporting tool. Executive Director of Communications Dr. JacQui Getty responded that it is being utilized approximately three times per month, which is an uptick from the past. She noted that the informational posters at the high school showing the QR code have been very helpful in getting the word out about the tool.

At this point in the proceedings, the Board took a brief recess. The Study Session resumed at 8:15 p.m.

CITIZEN INPUT

Chairperson Vitale extended an invitation to members of the audience who wished to address the Board on any topic. He also read the guidelines for Citizen Input, for the benefit of those who wished to comment.

The following individuals then addressed the Board:

- Chanhassen resident Michael Remucal spoke regarding the Safe Learning Plan and urged the Board to follow the District's Health Services Director's guidelines

- Excelsior resident Chad Herman spoke against masking
- Chanhassen resident Faith Staut spoke against masking
- Eden Prairie resident Julie Kazmierkoski spoke against masking
- Shorewood resident Chris Hacker spoke against masking
- Minnetonka resident Brandon Voges spoke against masking
- Wayzata resident Isabelle Geurkink spoke against masking
- Shorewood resident Al Perez spoke against masking
- Eden Prairie resident Camellia Ramos spoke in favor of masking
- Minnetonka resident Alan Arlt spoke against masking
- Minnetonka resident Albert Ross spoke regarding his child’s school experience in Minnetonka
- Excelsior resident and MHS student Jin Bang urged the Board to do a better job regarding diversity, equity and inclusion
- Chaska resident Chelsea Carlson urged the Board to do more to combat racism in the District
- Minnetonka resident Carrie Hahn spoke about the importance of leadership and her fear that children who continue to wear masks will be bullied
- Minnetonka resident Paul Gilles spoke against masking
- Chanhassen resident Ben Snyder spoke against masking
- Minnetonka resident Megan Costa spoke against masking
- Excelsior resident Lenen Hoofnagle spoke against masking
- Excelsior resident Kelly Dewane spoke against masking
- Chanhassen resident JoAnn Quackenbush spoke against masking
- Chanhassen resident Chris Kratoska spoke against masking, specifically for preschool children
- MHS student Genevieve (no last name given) spoke of her fear that students who continue to wear masks will be bullied. She also spoke of the importance of prioritizing students’ mental health.

REVIEW OF FY22 AMENDED BUDGET

Executive Director of Finance and Operations Paul Bourgeois led the discussion. He explained that the District continually monitors actual revenue and expenses against budgeted amounts through the year, and typically makes mid-year budget adjustments to reflect any changes in revenue and expense projections that have materialized in the first 6-7 months of the year. For FY22, there have been more adjustments than usual due to the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the cost of delivering instruction in a safe manner and providing opportunities for learning loss recovery for students.

Mr. Bourgeois noted that the FY22 Amended Budget projects the following amounts for the General Fund:

<i>General Fund Revenues</i>	<i>\$144,135,570</i>
<i>General Fund Expenses</i>	<i>\$145,242,392</i>

<i>Projected Revenues Over (Under) Expenses</i>	\$ (1,106,822)
<i>Net Change in Fund Balance</i>	\$ (1,106,822)
<i>Projected Ending Unassigned Fund Balance</i>	\$ 23,727,906
<i>Unassigned Fund Balance as Percent of Expenses</i>	16.3%
<i>Net Change in Unassigned Fund Balance From FY21</i>	\$ (360,790)

Mr. Bourgeois then went over amended budgets for the Nutrition Services Fund, Community Services Fund, Capital Expenditures Fund, Debt Service Fund, Fiduciary Funds-Donations, Athletic Equipment Fund, Self-Insurance Health & Dental Fund, Other Post-Employment Benefits Fund, Arts Center Fund, Dome Operations Fund, Aquatics Fund, Pagel Center Operations Fund, Long Term Facilities Maintenance Fund, Building Construction Fund, OPEB Bonds Debt Service Fund, and Capital Projects Technology Fund. Chairperson Vitale noted that the FY22 amended budget would be brought back to the Board’s regular meeting in March for approval.

REVIEW OF PROPOSED SELF-INSURANCE FUND RATES FOR FY23

Mr. Bourgeois presented this item to the Board. He explained that the District has had a Self-Insurance Fund for health and dental insurance since fiscal year 2001. In the 20-year period since FY2002 after the fund established its reserve, average premium increases have been 3.51%, significantly below regional health insurance cost trends over that same time.

For FY22, the Health Insurance Plan through January is running at a pace that projects to a continued surplus at year end. Projections for June 30, 2022 indicate a potential cash-basis surplus estimated at \$920,458.26, or 6.3% of projected expenses. This would follow on the FY20 cash-basis surplus of \$2,837,639.11, or 23.3% of actual expenses, and \$1,840,117.32, or 13.2% of actual expenses. Both the FY20 and FY21 surpluses were primarily the result of the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic. It is important to note that medical premiums were increased 2.2% for FY21 – set in February 2021 prior to the time the COVID-19 shut down was announced in March 2021, and premiums were held steady at a 0.0% increase for FY22.

FY22 Medical Claims of \$7,642,706.82 through January 2022 are running approximately \$770,000 above the January 2021 level of \$6,871,602.14. FY22 Administrative expenses are running flat with January 2021. FY22 Revenues are running flat with January 2021. Projecting forward to June 30, 2022, the Health Insurance Plan is projected to end with a surplus of \$920,458.26, or 6.3% of projected expenses.

For FY22, the Dental Insurance Plan through January 2022 is running at a projected surplus level of \$49,563.43, or 4.0% of expenses on a cash basis. The Dental Insurance Plan had a cash-basis surplus in FY20 of \$203,016.59, or 20.7% of actual expenses and

operated at a break-even level of revenues to expenses in FY21. Dental premiums were held flat at FY21 rates for FY22.

FY22 Dental Expenses of \$737,947.34 through January 2022 are running flat with January 2021 while FY22 Dental Revenues of \$785,799.62 are also running flat with January 2021.

The projection for the Dental Insurance Plan for the remainder of the year based on FY22 trends indicates that the Dental Insurance Plan is on track to finish FY22 with an estimated \$49,563.43 surplus, totaling 4.0% of expenses.

Looking forward to FY23, for the Health Insurance Plan, applying medical trend rates of 7.3% as projected by the Segal Health Trend Cost Survey (a widely used projection by actuaries for developing health insurance premiums) to the FY22 District projection, and 3% historical inflation rates to administrative costs to the FY22 District projection results in total expected expenses for the Health Insurance Plan in FY23 of \$15,655,585. This compares to the CBIZ Actuarial Calculation which used expenses of \$16,066,679 for the

CBIZ Actuaries have calculated that to have revenues equal expenses for the Health Insurance Plan in FY22, a premium decrease of (1.19%) would achieve that balance. However, they.

Given that the Health Insurance Plan is on pace to generate a cash surplus during the period of FY20-FY21-FY22 of \$5,698,214, including a 6.3% surplus for FY22 it was prudent to project forward for FY23 using a 0.0% increase in health insurance premium rates, because that 6.3% cushion of ongoing revenue over ongoing health care expenses for FY22 is still available to offset ongoing health care expenses in FY23.

Projecting the Health Insurance Plan for FY23 used the following factors:

- 0.0% premium rate increase
- 1.5% interest earnings on the cash balance
- 7.3% health claims expense increase per Segal Health Trend Cost Survey
- 3.0% administrative expense increase

This Health Insurance Plan projection for FY23 indicates a total of \$15,755,161 in revenue to pay for \$15,644,584 in medical claims expenses and administrative expenses, resulting in a projected cash-basis surplus for FY23 of \$110,577. Given that the Health Insurance Plan is on pace to generate a cash surplus during the period of FY20-FY21-FY22 of \$252,073, including a 4.0% surplus for FY22 it was prudent to project forward for FY23 using a 0.0% increase in dental insurance premium rates, because that 4.0% cushion of ongoing revenue over ongoing dental care expenses for FY22 is still available to offset ongoing dental care expenses in FY23.

Projecting the Dental Insurance Plan for FY23 used the following factors:

- 0.0% premium rate increase
- 3.1% dental claims expense increase per Segal Dental Trend Cost Survey
- 3.0% administrative expense increase

This Dental Insurance Plan projection for FY23 indicates a total of \$1,296,810 in revenue to pay for \$1,285,831 in dental claims expenses and administrative expenses, resulting in a projected cash-basis surplus for FY23 of \$10,979.

These projections indicate that because the Health Insurance Plans and Dental Insurance Plans are running at a surplus rate of ongoing revenue to ongoing expenses in FY22, they are both projected to operate at slightly above break-even level in FY23 even with no increases in monthly premiums for FY23.

Mr. Bourgeois noted that this information was presented to the Self-Insurance Advisory Committee at their February 7, 2022 meeting. After discussion of the data and information, and in consideration of the strong financial position that the Self-Insurance Fund is in, the Self-Insurance Advisory Committee voted unanimously 11-0 to recommend to the School Board that Health Insurance premiums and Dental Insurance premiums remain at the same levels for FY23 – a 0.0% increase in common parlance.

Board members thanked Mr. Bourgeois for the great report. Chairperson Vitale noted that the Board would approve the rates at its regular meeting in March.

REVIEW OF 23-24 CALENDAR PARAMETERS

Executive Director of Human Resources Dr. Mike Cyrus led the discussion. He noted that the District's Calendar Committee had met twice in the past few weeks, and the discussions had been very productive. He said the committee's recommendation was Draft Calendar #2, as shown on the following page:

MINNETONKA PUBLIC SCHOOLS											
2023-24 CALENDAR – DRAFT 2											
August, 2023			August						February, 2024		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
28	29	30	31								2
September, 2023			September						March, 2024		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
25	26	27	28	29	30	31					30
K-17	1-12:19	Tea 19									Tea 21
October, 2023			October						April, 2024		
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November, 2023			November						May, 2024		
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20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
27	28	29	30								1
19 Stud	Tea 20										Tea 22
December, 2023			December						June, 2024		
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
25	26	27	28	29	30	31					30
Stud 14	Tea 14										Tea 22
January, 2024			January						July, 2024		
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		1
29	30	31									2
Stud 20	Tea 21										Tea 21

Color code: **New Teacher Workshop**; **Staff Work Days (no students)**; **Parent/Teacher Conferences**; **Late Starts/Early Release**; **End of Quarters**

In the discussion that followed, Board members asked Dr. Cyrus to expand the “Weekday Holidays and Observances” sheet that had been in the Board packet for this agenda item. Board member Selinger noted that Mexican Independence Day was actually in September, not May. Dr. Cyrus thanked the Board for the feedback and said he would take it back to the committee. Chairperson Vitale noted that the calendar would be brought back to the April regular Board meeting for approval.

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned the Study Session at 10:30 p.m. A Special Meeting of the Board followed.

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