

## **BOARD WORK SESSION**

**June 19, 2017**

A board work session of the School Board of Independent School District No. 518, Worthington, Minnesota, was held at the Worthington High School Media Center at 1211 Clary Street, Worthington, Minnesota on June 19, 2017, at 5:00 p.m.

The following were present: BOARD MEMBERS – Lori Dudley, Stephen Schnieder, Joel Lorenz, Linden Olson

Absent: Scott Rosenberg, Brad Shaffer, Victoria Blanchette

ADMINISTRATORS – John Landgaard, Superintendent, Dave Skog, Director of Management Services

The focus of the work session was to discuss and define the district's expectations with the Communications Consultant, Jeff Dehler of DehlerPR.

The board went on to ask a variety of questions of Mr. Dehler. One of the questions asked was if he thought there was enough time to communicate a plan to the public to hold a referendum in the fall. The answer depends on if the community is ready to move forward with a referendum and if the public knows what the issue is and what is going on with it. Mr. Dehler discussed that a communications audit would be done to see if the public feels they are receiving enough communication from the district. He added he would do an analysis of the current communications to form a strategic communications plan. He went on to talk about the process and timelines associated with the audit which would be reviewing what the district is currently using and obtaining names of people to meet with to form focus groups.

Mr. Dehler went on to answer the question on what will it take to help pass a referendum? He indicated that you have to have a great plan that does not cost too much; have lots of community engagement; a super dedicated board, staff and citizen advocates to tell your story. Advised to have a statistically valid survey done and form a communication plan on the option that is chosen. You need to make people feel like they are being listened too and report back to them and tell them what you plan on doing. He advised to hire language liaisons to help tell your story to the minority population. Contact different groups and find out what line of communication is best with conveying information to these groups. Figure out what communication has happened since the last referendum. He advised to go where the people are and where they are comfortable, i.e. church or your local meat packing plant break room and bring back questions they have. He also talked about the negative impact a non-supportive school system has on the property values in Worthington.

In summary, the board would like to see a communications audit done as soon as possible to look at the resources we currently have and what the district needs to do differently to effectively communicate with the public.

Work session adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Joel Lorenz, Clerk

Lisa Ahrenstorff, Deputy Clerk