March 19, 2024

President's Remarks

Good evening and welcome everyone. I am hoping that tonight's meeting will be slightly less eventful than our last – although I enjoyed sharing a shelter space with the Lacrosse team, and remain impressed that everyone, including those who had joined us for public comment, stayed with us. Although it was not held in the board room, we did manage to record and post the rest of our meeting from the basement.

Well, it's hard to believe we have just a few days left to go until the official start of Spring and, of course, Spring Break! I hope that everyone is able to take some time off to rest and recharge their batteries during the week off.

This evening, I'd like to use my remarks to say a few words in support of three members of our administration team who deserve our gratitude and recognition.

First, Tiana Adams, our board clerk, keeper of all board rules and schedules, planner of board meetings, drafter of all minutes, and, I'm sure most taxingly, patient responder to questions from 14 board members in advance of every meeting. Tiana, who we congratulate tonight on her upcoming marriage, is a steady, calm force on the team. She seems to work more than 24 hours per day, and is always there with an answer to questions about board rules and procedure. This is just the work that she does for the board; I am not going to try to go into her second job working directly with our superintendent, but let me just say, that we all know who really runs things around here. Thank you, Tiana, for everything you do for us, and congratulations again! We are so happy to celebrate you.

Second, to Melissa Oakley. Another force of nature who seems to work more than there are hours of the day. If you ever go to any District 67 event, Melissa likely made it happen, and is there with a calm smile – and a camera – to make sure everything goes right. If there is a crisis, or a need to share information, she moves more quickly than one would think possible to communicate with our community honestly and openly. She is incredibly thoughtful, is genuinely committed to keeping lines of communication open with our district, and is just a joy to work with.

Finally, our Superintendent, Dr. Montgomery. He also seems to work 7 days per week, and in fact, our board has had to really encourage him to take time off. He is tasked with making difficult decisions and often is the recipient of blowback if people disagree either with his approach or what is happening in the district. Yet, he remains focused on his big-picture goals, set by our community through our strategic plan, and has shown a willingness to follow through with those goals even when he has to make hard decisions as a result. He also reports to two boards, making time to meet monthly with all 14 board members, and he answers a **lot** of questions from the community, and those board members.

I highlight these three people today because I want those listening to understand how hard these three individuals, as do other members of our administration, work on behalf of your kids. They have to make difficult decisions, which do not always render them popular. They work long hours, showing up to evening events and responding to calls and emails over the weekend. We do not often pause to say thank you for going above and beyond in so many ways, and I thought tonight was a good moment to do so. With that, I wish everyone a happy spring, a wonderful spring break, and I look forward to finishing out the year strong!