

SAN LEANDRO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
SAN LEANDRO, CALIFORNIA
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REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION - MINUTES

February 22, 2006

The Board of Education of the San Leandro Unified School District met in regular session on February 22, 2006, in the San Leandro City Council Chambers, 835 East 14th Street, San Leandro, California.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by President Pauline Cutter.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Ray Davis
Mr. Louis Heystek
Ms. Linda Perry
Mr. T.W. "Rick" Richards
Mrs. Lisa Hague, Clerk
Mr. Stephen Cassidy, Vice President (arrived at 6:03 p.m.)
Mrs. Pauline Cutter, President

DISTRICT STAFF PRESENT

Christine Lim, Superintendent
Michael Martinez, Assistant Superintendent
Cindy Cathey, Assistant Superintendent
Linda Pollard, Administrative Assistant

PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING CLOSED SESSION AGENDA

There were no public comments concerning items on the closed session agenda.

CLOSED SESSION

At 6:05 p.m., the Board went into closed session for Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release/Employment pursuant to Government Code Section 59457. It was determined there was no need for a closed session on Student Expulsions. The closed session was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 7:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. President Cutter said the Board had been in closed session and no action was taken.

President Cutter requested that Action Item 2.1-A, Resolution #06-10 Decrease the Number of Certificated Employees Due to Reduction/Discontinuance of Particular Kinds of Service, be pulled from the agenda.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On a motion made by Mr. Richards and seconded by Mr. Davis, the Board approved the agenda for the regular meeting of February 22, 2006 as amended by a 7-0 vote.

REPORTS Student Representatives' Reports – San Leandro High School representative Kevin Yi reported that African America Career Day would be February 23, where twenty guest speakers in areas such as law enforcement, health and science, and labor and marketing would be discussing career paths and educational experiences with the students. Beautification Day will be February 25 from 9-12 noon. Javier Tellez won the Rotary speech contest and will be moving up to the next level. The last league game for basketball will be February 24. The WASC visit begins with a reception on Sunday, February 26 and ends on Wednesday March 1. Practices for the school musical, *Seussical*, are continuing, Juniors are selling food after school all week to raise money for their class. Twelve high school students are acting as counselors for Washington and Jefferson Elementary schools' Outdoor Education trip for fifth graders to Half Moon Bay.

PRESENTATIONS

- * Washington Elementary School Principal Elvia Teixeira, Literacy Specialist Amy Voge, Math Coach Elaine Dent, and School Assistance and Intervention Team (SAIT) consultant Mary Camezon, presented highlights from the schools' fourth SAIT Monitoring Report. The presentation included progress that has been made towards implementing the SAIT corrective action plan, ratings (minimally, partially, substantially, and fully) that the school has received for each of the nine components of the plan, and next steps that the school will be focusing on as they move toward the end of their second year as a SAIT school.

Mary Camezon, team consultant, explained that the goal for Washington Elementary was to not only exit the SAIT process but to also build policies and practices that would enable them to continue their academic growth after exiting SAIT.

In an effort to accomplish this goal of exiting SAIT, they would continue to focus on fully implementing all components of the SAIT corrective action plan according to the timeline and to address the gap created by the lack of AB466 training for Sadlier Math by working with the County to find possible training, exploring Training of Trainer model, continuing Board Math implementation, three-week lesson planner, math coaching, and attempting to arrange some interim training through Sadlier (publisher).

If Washington Elementary School were not to meet their targets by August 2006, Ms. Camezon said that they would have another year in the SAIT process, or enter Phase II where an even more specific plan would be prepared and implemented, and SAIT consultants would conduct classroom visitation and provide targeted support for classrooms that did not show growth.

Ms. Camezon reported that there was a visit today, and there would be a short visit on March 31. Their last monitoring visit of the year would be May 16, at which time another monitoring report would be prepared for the Board.

Ms. Perry asked what the Board could do to help facilitate the state following through with more AB466 training. Ms. Camezon thanked Ms. Perry for offering to help. She explained that because of the upcoming math adoption next year, many publishers were electing not to be on the California list and all efforts were being made to change this.

Mr. Cassidy was interested in the results of the math assessments for fourth and fifth graders and if these tests were part of the Edusoft program. Math Coach Elaine Dent reported that both fourth and fifth graders showed strengths in algebra and functions, specifically in number sense. Lowlights noticed were in measures and geometry. Ms. Dent explained that the math assessments were separate from Edusoft, and publisher Curriculum Associates provide the assessments, adding that Pam Lear from the county had been working with and supporting staff.

Mr. Cassidy also asked if similar assessments were being done in the English Language Arts. Ms. Teixeira said that approximately every six to eight weeks, English language, math, and newly implemented English language development assessments were administered along with Data Talks.

On behalf of the Board, President Cutter thanked the presenters for their very encouraging report.

- * Members of the Elementary and Secondary Safe School Support teams, along with Cindy M. Cathey, Assistant Superintendent for Educational Services, and Barry Chersky, the District's consultant, presented an overview of the work of each team in support of the District's goal that schools are safe for all students, including our gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students and staff.

Superintendent Lim explained that the work around sexuality orientation and gender identity was very challenging work and thanked Assistant Superintendent Cindy Cathey for being a very courageous leader.

Ms. Lim provided historical context of the District's efforts to address issues of sexual orientation and gender identify during the 2004-2005 school year and the progress made with the help of Barry Chersky, who has been working with administrators and staff to establish a comprehensive program. Highlights included:

- Revising and redistributing the District's nondiscrimination policy 5145.3 to explicitly address sexual orientation and gender identity, and Board Resolution #98-39 concerning sexual orientation that was adopted in 1998.
- Two Safe School Support teams were convened, one comprised of staff from each of the elementary schools, and the other made up of staff and administrators from the middle and high schools.
- Surveys were conducted at both levels. Based on the feedback from the elementary teaching staff and students at the high school, the District was restructuring the training program as well as exploring ways to integrate this work into other existing programs such as WASC and the equity work, as well as incorporating it into the District's infrastructure e.g. new staff training.

Regarding the aftermath that has occurred over the Safe Space poster, Ms. Lim announced that while the poster had been displayed at every middle and high school classroom, it would not be posted in the elementary classrooms, pending additional work with staff, community, and further Board action. Resolution #98-39, however would be posted at all elementary sites.

Ms. Cathey stressed that while laws, Ed. Code, and policies tell us what we must do, everyone has a responsibility to actively create schools and classrooms that are respectful, inclusive, welcoming, and safe for all students and staff, including our gay lesbian, transgender, bisexual and questioning youth and staff. We cannot turn our back when we hear and see things that don't contribute to creating that inclusive, respectful environment, with Mr. Chersky adding that more than that, "it's the

right thing to do”.

Responding to those community members who felt there was a hidden agenda, Mr. Chersky clearly and explicitly stated that the agenda was essentially two-fold: one to ensure that every student, family member, staff person in this district is safe, regardless of their personal identity, and secondly, that every student receives a quality education. He also made it clear that when discussing sexual orientation and gender identity, we are not talking about sex education or activity, which would be very inappropriate and was not what the work was about.

Members of the Elementary Safe School Support Team shared alarming statistics that came from various national studies such as:

- 91% of the California middle and high schools hear their peers use slurs about sexual orientation.
- 41% hear their teachers making those kinds of slurs, those negative comments.
- 53% of students report hearing homophobic comments made by school staff.
- 41.7% of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender do not feel safe because of the sexual orientation.
- Students harassed based on actual or perceived sexual orientation are also more likely to have low grades – C’s or below.

Results of the survey completed by 90 students at San Leandro High revealed that:

- While 50 percent of the student surveyed said they would be bothered by hearing a racial slur, 60 percent said they would not be bothered by hearing an anti-gay comment.
- 40 percent of students surveyed said they hear derogatory comments such as “that’s so gay,” “fag,” “dyke,” and “queer,” on campus 2-10 times a day, and 25 percent said they hear the anti-gay comments 10 or more times each day.
- 42 percent said they never hear staff intervene when anti-gay comments are made.
- 40 percent reported making anti-gay comments 1-2 times a week; 21 percent reported making anti-gay comments 2-10 times a day.
- Two-thirds (66 percent) said that San Leandro High School is not a safe campus for students to be openly gay; 55 percent said it is unsafe for staff to be openly gay

Mr. Chersky added that in addition to the student voices, an anonymous, confidential, elementary staff survey was conducted in preparation for their staff training, where the survey showed that out of approximately one-third of the elementary staff responses, 60 percent indicated that they were aware of harassment and name calling related to sexual orientation or gender identity at their site in the form of

homophobic comments and anti-gay slurs, as a form of putdown. When asked about the perceived impact on elementary students who were harassed, staff reported shame, embarrassment, fear, withdrawal, anger, not wanting to come to school, low academic achievement, low self-esteem, confusion, intimidation, and humiliation, etc.

A video-clip – *It's Elementary*, and a sample picture book – *The Family Book*, and an age appropriate lesson being considered – *The Crumpled Person*, which was part of the elementary professional development were shared.

Jane Abelee, Vice Principal at John Muir, reported that staff saw the poster as a tool in educating students about another group of people who are harassed and discriminated against stressing that the discussion was about life styles, families, and communities and didn't involve talking about sex. The training generated a very rich and engaging discussion with every member of the staff agreeing to hang the poster in their classroom and talk to the students in their first period.

Debbie Potmesil, John Muir counselor, shared a sixth grade teacher's lesson plan which included explaining to her students that a very important, new poster would be hanging in the classroom soon declaring that this was a "safe space" where bullying, "put downs", hate language, racism, teasing and prejudice would not be tolerated. The lesson went on to explain that teachers were concerned about a certain type of bullying against a certain group of people and how hurtful and damaging that could be. A few reflections from the sixth grade students in that teacher's class included:

- "I felt happy to know that people are finally accepting "gay" people or else the "high schoolers" wouldn't have made that poster."
- "I felt good when my teacher showed me the poster and talked about it because one of my classmates in the Philippians loves boys and he's a boy, he's "gay"
- I'm sure if he sees that poster he will be proud of himself."
- "I think it's the "right thing to do."

San Leandro High School Principal Amy Furtado felt that their staff development was very well received and, in light of the all the media attention, had united the staff. She said that the high school began their training last year, with the most powerful piece of this work being the voices of current students and graduates (gay and lesbian) who shared with staff their feelings that staff had not been supportive, feeling different and isolated, and that home was not a safe place to go to either, making teachers realize how imperative it was to look at strategies to change the climate, create courageous conversations and make the school a safe place.

Ms. Furtado reflected on her personal experience and endless battle she

faced, as a teacher at American High School in Fremont, to make a very special transgender teen Eddie “Gwen” Arajuo feel good about being in school, who, sadly, became a victim of a brutal hate crime. Excerpts from a powerful video, “*Staging a Response to Hate*” was shared, which featured a community who not only took responsibility for the death of this student, but also for educating the people who murdered her and what might have changed were the resources available. Ms. Furtado introduced Gay, Straight Alliance (GSA) advisor and Safe School Task Force member Duy Nguyen, adding that along with GSA advisor Tom Laughlin, had been instrumental in carrying this work forward at the high school.

Ms. Cathey presented the District Action Plan outlining district-wide, elementary and secondary level focuses related to creating schools and classrooms that are safe for all students, including gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender students, noting that consultant Barry Chersky would continue to guide the District in the this work and that the dates were subject to change upon actual progress of each action step.

Board members thanked staff for the presentation, echoing their support for continuing this very important endeavor.

Mr. Davis thanked the presenters for helping him to understand the issue, and amplifying the Board’s needs to deal with it, with Ms. Perry noting the difference in the climate since the 1998 resolution was adopted.

Mr. Heystek thought the presentation had substance and passion; however, he would like to also see the Safe School Task Force teams confront and discuss other types of student safety such as physical and emotional safety, particularly with gangs, sexual predators, and internet security, adding that the San Leandro Collaborative was working on an internet safety event.

Mrs. Hague verified that as middle school teacher in a neighboring district, this was indeed the climate throughout the area and we needed to make sure that all students feel safe and secure in classes, so that “learning can go on.”

Mr. Cassidy requested a copy of the statistics generated from the survey of the District’s high school students, the anonymous/confidential elementary staff survey that was conducted last May, and an electronic copy of the draft action plan. He felt it was important that there be meaningful parent/community input as well as an opportunity for every one to be heard and for their views to be addressed. He was glad that the District was moving forward in a conscientious manner, and slowing

down to a certain extent at the elementary level to involve the parents.

Mrs. Cutter said this very important work not only needed to be addressed in the classroom, it must include parents. She commended staff for taking a step back, allowing the District to do a better job.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Geoffrey Luce, Dr. Clifford Harris, Jeff Kunz, Jay Ruuska, Amy Olson, Stacie Clausen, Lori King, Pat Rennie, Scott Rennie, Catherine Luce, Margaret Horwitz, Joanna Figueroa, John Olson, Eric King, Judi Burke (on behalf of Keitha Rojas), Denise Lucas, Rebecca Rodriguez, James Holt, Morgan Mack-Rose, Peter Brothers, and Kristin Porter addressed the Board regarding the Safe School Poster.

While all of the speakers appreciated and supported the District's efforts to keep all students safe, most of them felt there was a lack of communication, the poster was not age or developmentally appropriate for the elementary level, would like to see more inclusive language, and not single out just one particular group, and in the future make sure that parents and the community are fully informed and involved before decisions are made with regards to all material that elementary children may be exposed to, giving parents an opportunity to "opt out."

Lori King, Catherine Luce and Eric King made reference to a very successful program being implemented at Roosevelt Elementary School called "Soul Shoppe" which provides assemblies that encourages children to respect others, teaches them to communicate in difficult situations, and adequately supports the spirit of the issues presented tonight. They suggested that the district consider implementing this effective program district-wide, which would also help in educating students and preventing harassment issues at the older grade levels.

Mr. King also felt that as a black man in America, challenges faced by those with specific sexual preferences should never be equated with the struggles faced by blacks in America. "Any statements made to a board, circle of friends or in curriculum disrespect and dishonor the very painful, but very proud, heritage of *black America*."

Margaret Horwitz favored zero tolerance at every age and felt that the posters would rob elementary students of their childhood innocence and that adults needed to be cautious of whom they were speaking to regarding sexual issues.

Those not sharing the thoughts and concerns of the majority of speakers included Keitha Rojas, a Jefferson Elementary School parent, whose letter was read by Judi Burke because she could not attend, felt that students needed to respect those who are different from themselves and if K-12 teachers included gay and lesbian people in their teaching of families, history, and social awareness they would be providing all students with a more accurate picture of our diverse

community, helping students to learn to get along, and creating a safer and respectful learning environment. She urged the Board to not let fear and disagreements take this away from the children of San Leandro.

Rebecca Rodriguez, a “proud” gay parent, felt that there was some confusion over behavior identify and orientation. She urged the District to stay the course and think about the overall wellbeing of children’s rights to an education in San Leandro, adding that she was committed to public education, and would do everything she could to collaborate and build a community of people who might have different values, but have the common vision of ensuring that all children in San Leandro have a right to an education.

Morgan Mack-Rose didn’t want her child to be in a classroom where parents are allowed to “opt out” of discussions regarding race discrimination and sexual identification.

The Board took a break at 9:55 p.m. and reconvened at 10:05 p.m.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

REPORTS

- 1) Correspondence – Clerk Hague reported receipt of emails from Ed Shapiro regarding lost property; Lori King, Catherine Luce, Amy Olson, regarding Safe Space Poster; Beth Hefner regarding the incident at James Madison; Ernest Avellar regarding the budget; Mary Styner regarding Academy for Business and Finance Business Plan Presentations; Phyllis Harrison regarding African American Career Day; Ed Shapiro, Gayle Ferrea, Sabrina Ramirez regarding school nurses; and Deborah Reinerio regarding the CTE Award Ceremony.
- 2) Superintendent’s Report – Superintendent Chris Lim commended staff for the well-orchestrated presentation, acknowledging that when this type of work is undertaken mistakes are made and that District had made a mistake by proposing that a high school poster be displayed at the elementary schools, and that staff and her had listened to the concerns addressed, and would incorporate this divergent conversation, move forward, and hoped that through the timeline presented, an appropriate poster, inclusive and without any misconceptions about language and sex education, would be developed.

Ms. Lim drew the Board’s attention to the General Fund Unrestricted Revenue and Expense Changes chart, showing a deficit of \$969,822. She recommended that this be referred to the Finance Committee to work through various ways to balance the budget, following Business Manager

Bruce Colby's review.

Mr. Cassidy asked about ADA, to which Mr. Colby explained that this year the District had been over funded this year for the amount of students we had, and that the 2006-07 funding would be based on the true revenue for the amount of the ADA we had.

Mr. Cassidy was happy that the Finance Committee would be reviewing this, reminding staff to involve employee representatives in the process. Superintendent Lim said that she would specifically invite them.

Mrs. Hague added that ADA funding could be a challenging situation, and thanked Mr. Colby for the data.

Mr. Richards reported that new legislation, SB 1358, was recently introduced, which could provide an additional \$200 million to equalization.

President Cutter appreciated being kept informed.

3) Board Representatives' Reports

- Alameda County School Boards Assn. – Ms. Perry reported that they met on January 19, regarding the preschool initiative. A representative from Preschool for All California, County Superintendent Sheila Jordon and Angie Garling from Child Care Planning were in attendance. She said that she would make copies of the presentation and the initiative for the Board. In April the committee would be honoring student board member representatives. The annual board member recognition was scheduled for their May meeting. She was trying to set up an event for their next meeting, March 16, to include Jack O'Connell, who would be in the area at that time.
- Mid-Alameda County Special Education Local Plan Area – Ms. Perry reported that the committee met on February 15 and discussed changing their MOU to include additional criteria language regarding looking into the impact of the revenue on the other existing LEAs before accepting a new LEA. The next meeting will be in May.

Mr. Heystek asked that Consent Item 4.9 C be pulled from the consent calendar.

CONSENT ITEMS

General Services

- 1.1-C Approval of Board Minutes - November 1, 2005
- 1.2-C Approval of Board Minutes – January 18, 2006
- 1.3-C Approval of Board Minutes – January 31, 2006

Human Resources

- 2.1-C Acceptance of Personnel Report

Educational Services

- 3.1-C Recommendation from the Administrative Panel for Expulsion
- 3.2-C Recommendation from the Administrative Panel for Expulsion
- 3.3-C School Assistance & Intervention Team (SAIT) Monitoring Report

Business, Operations and Facilities

- 4.1-C Intra-Budget Transfers
- 4.2-C Ratification of Payroll
- 4.3-C Approval of Bill Warrants
- 4.4-C Liability Claim Submitted to San Leandro Unified School District
- 4.5-C Resolution #06-06 Designating Authorized Agents to Sign School Orders for Revolving Cash Fund Account
- 4.6-C Resolution #06-07 Designating Authorized Agents to Sign School Orders for General Fund Payroll Account
- 4.7-C Resolution #06-08 Designating Authorized Agents to Sign School Orders for General Fund Clearing Account
- 4.8-C Release of Retention – Health & Safety Retrofit Modernizations at Garfield, McKinley, Monroe, Washington, Wilson, and Roosevelt Elementary Schools.

On a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Ms. Perry, the Board approved the consent items with the exception of Consent Item 4.9-C by a 7-0 vote.

4.9-C Resolution #06-09 Authorizing and Directing the Execution of Certain Lease Financing Documents and Authorizing and Directing Certain Actions

Mr. Heystek noted that the actual lease agreement was not included in the Board packet, adding that he was not opposed to this form of funding; however, he would like to see the details as well as a plan on how the Adult School proposed to absorb the cost, should the grant funding not be received from the state.

President Cutter suggested tabling this item to the Special Board meeting, Feb. 27, 2006 so that it would not effect the timeline for the project.

On a motion by Mr. Heystek and seconded by Mr. Richards, the Board tabled Resolution #06-09 Authorizing and Directing the Execution of Certain Lease Financing Documents and Authorizing and Directing Certain Actions to the February 27, 2006, Special Board meeting by a 7-0 vote.

ACTION ITEMS

Human Resources

2.1-A Resolution #06-10 Decrease the Number of Certificated Employees Due to Reduction/Discontinuance of Particular Kinds of Service

This item was pulled from the agenda.

CONFERENCE ITEMS

General Services

1.1-CF 2006 California School Boards Assn. (CSBA) Delegate Assembly Election

The Board discussed and considered the submission of a ballot for the 2006 CSBA Delegate Assembly Election.

Responding to Mr. Davis, Ms. Perry, the District's CSBA delegate representative, supported submitting the four candidates as they appeared on the ballot.

On motion made by Ms Perry and seconded by Mr. Davis, the Board approved the submission of a ballot for George Granger (Castro Valley USD), Joaquin J. Rivera (Berkeley USD), Janice E.P. Schaefer (Newark USD), and Anne E. White (Livermore Valley Joint USD) to the 2006 CSBA Delegate Assembly Election by a 7-0 vote.

Business, Operations and Facilities

4.1-CF Williams Lawsuit Facilities Conditions Quarterly Report

The Board discussed and considered approving the Williams Lawsuit Facilities Conditions Quarterly Report from October 1, 2005, through December 31, 2005.

On motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Ms. Perry, the Board approved the Williams Lawsuit Facilities Conditions Quarterly Report from October 2, 2005, through December 31, 2005 by a 7-0 vote.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Business, Operations and Facilities

4.1-I Miscellaneous Receipts in the amount of \$8,986,164.04 have been deposited in the Treasury of Alameda County.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Because of the hour, President Cutter asked for a motion to adjourn or extend the meeting beyond 10:30 p.m. Mr. Cassidy requested that the Board meeting be extended for ten minutes.

On a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Richards, the Board adjourned the meeting at 10:33 p.m., without additional suggestions and comments from Board members, by the following 4-3 vote:

- Davis, Hague, Perry, Richards voting - Yes
- Cassidy, Cutter, Heystek voting - No

ANNOUNCEMENT

Future Board of Education Meetings

- **Special Board Meeting – February 27, 2006, 6 pm**
- Regular Meeting – March 7, 2006
- Regular Meeting – March 21, 2006
- Regular Meeting – April 4, 2006
- Regular Meeting – April 18, 2006
- Regular Meeting – May 2, 2006
- Regular Meeting – May 16, 2006
- Regular Meeting – June 6, 2006
- Regular Meeting – June 20, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Hague, Clerk