

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

February 24, 2009

The Board of Education of the San Leandro Unified School District met in special session on February 24, 2009, in the San Leandro City Council Chambers, 835 East 14th Street, San Leandro, California.

The meeting was called to order at 5:37 p.m. by President Mike Katz-Lacabe. Mr. Katz-Lacabe noted that Trustee Prola would be participating by teleconference from 2234 Belvedere, San Leandro, CA 94577. Mrs. Prola confirmed that the agenda had been posted at the site and was accessible to the public.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Hermy Almonte
Mrs. Lisa Hague
Ms. Morgan Mack-Rose
Ms. Carmen Sullivan
Mrs. Pauline Cutter, Clerk
Mrs. Diana Prola, Vice President (via teleconference)
Mr. Mike Katz-Lacabe, President
Ms. Flavia Coria, Student Board Member

DISTRICT STAFF PRESENT

Christine Lim, Superintendent
Song Chin-Bendib, Assistant Superintendent
Michael Potmesil, 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 5:37 p.m., the Board went into closed session for Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation and Conference with Legal Counsel – Existing Litigation pursuant to Government Code Sections 54956.9(b) and 54956.9. The closed session was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 6:08 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. President Katz-Lacabe said the Board had been in closed session where no action was taken.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On a motion made by Mrs. Cutter and seconded by Mrs. Hague, the Board approved the agenda for the special meeting of February 24, 2009, by a 7-0 vote. Mrs. Prola voting via teleconference.

PRESENTATIONS

- * Mike Walbridge, principal of Wilson Elementary School, presented information to the Board regarding the school's desire to implement school uniforms (much like the program already in place at McKinley Elementary School), for the 2009-10 school year. The presentation included what the school has done thus far to prepare for a school uniform dress code: staff interest, parent survey results, proposed uniform colors and styles, how the school will offer scholarships, and the opt-out process.

While the majority of the Board supported uniforms, Trustees Mack-Rose and Almonte were curious about how the school would encourage an optional uniform program, without making those children who choose not to wear them feel left out. Trustee Prola was concerned that the cost might still be an issue, and Trustee Katz-Lacabe questioned whether or not uniforms dampened individuality.

ACTION ITEM

Educational Services

3.1-A School Uniforms for Wilson Elementary School

On a motion made by Mrs. Cutter and seconded by Ms. Mack-Rose, the Board approved the school uniforms for Wilson Elementary School by a 5-2 vote. Mrs. Prola voting "no" via teleconference and Mr. Katz-Lacabe supporting his "no" vote by referring to Article 13 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

- Carol Alvarez, on behalf of the Drowning Darryls swim team, thanked District staff for all of their hard work, efficiency, and dedication to getting the pool at San Leandro High School up and running, adding that the swimmers are excited to begin practicing once again.

REPORTS

- 1) Correspondence – Clerk Cutter reported receipt of the following emails from February 13, 2009-February 22, 2009: From John McKissack Jr. regarding San Leandro High School pool; from Roberta Weisbard regarding retirement plans; from Sarah Del Grande regarding budget cuts-away from class/not across-the-board; Steve Craig regarding budget-all salary levels should be on same level; Cindy Perales regarding budget cuts-Assistant Director Special Services; from Janet Collamer regarding away from the classroom, mostly at DO; from Jeff Bruno regarding budget cuts – library cuts; from Samuel Goldman regarding budget crisis – across-the-board; from Deborah Reinerio regarding cuts considerations; from Jon Sherr regarding forward SLTA budget update – February 16; from Jeni Engler regarding “Please look at Elisa Alvarez’s suggestions – some good, creative ideas and why not tell your administrators to do this” – just an idea; from Tom Anderson regarding budget consider whole district; from Mary Busby regarding budget Assistant Director of Special Services; from Song Chin-Bendib regarding Supervisor’s position; from Laura Hackel regarding Curriculum Specialist position; from Daniel Chaja regarding the impact of the Assistant Director of Research and Program Evaluation; from Lynda D. Campfield regarding library services; from Kathy Tronvig regarding eliminating 1 day of physical education at the elementary level; from Maria Arechiga regarding budget across-the-board; from Dan Martin regarding “Obama Seeks to Transform Schools with Stimulus Funds” and “Stimulating the Schools: A Plan for Federal Action”; from Michael Song regarding budget – music cuts; from Audrey Brown regarding budget presentation – away from classroom; from Fred Lebe regarding budget cuts – don’t hurt kids – level cuts; from Stephen Cassidy regarding comment; from Janet Beck regarding Director of Curriculum; from Krista Hayman, Renee Lastrapes, Tracie Wallace, Ebado Ismail, Clinton Huey, Gaia Pine, Liz Miller, Pamela Nau, Lorraine Yoshikawa, Renee Solberg, Diana Torres, Johanna Jones, Russ Tomlin, Valerie Delgado regarding budget – library cuts; from Claire McKean regarding SLUSD budget; from Belen Magers regarding Leadership Matters; and from Juanita Oyola regarding budget – across-the-board cuts.
- 2) Student Board Member Report – Flavia Coria reported that in effort to raise awareness to the community and the Board that students care about the school budget, the Associate Student Body and Leadership have announced that there will be a protest against budget cuts on February 26, 27 and March 3, from 7:30-8:00 a.m. The peaceful protest will be held in front of the high school.

3) Union Representative Reports -

- Billy Campbell, Teamsters representative, thanked the Board for including and recognizing parties and stakeholders in the budget reduction process.
- Claire McKean & Carol Alvarez, California Schools Employees Association (CSEA), addressed the Board regarding saving CSEA positions. Ms. McKean urged the Board to start the cuts at the administrative/management level at the District Office. Ms. Alvarez expressed how reckless the process seems to have become and hoped that the Board would “slow down”, and look at the process, so that decisions can be made logically, fairly, and across-the-board.
- Mark Hamilton, San Leandro Teachers’ Association Executive Board, thanked the Board for including a wide array of voices in the budget priorities and their commitment to the process. He urged the Board to keep the cuts as far away as possible from the classrooms, the teachers in them, and those who directly support classroom maintenance, safety, discipline, and coordinate and offer needed interventions.
- Jan Nuño, San Leandro Managers Association (SLMS), reiterated that SLMA believes that realignment of services with reductions made in each department, at every employee level, without laying off staff would best preserve our service to students. In addition, she stressed that everyone needs to rise to the services of our children, adding that SLMA pledges to continue give their best, to work hard together, to get through these difficult times.

4) Superintendent’s Report – Superintendent Lim stated that she would defer her comments until Conference Item 2.1-CF, Prioritize and Take Action on the List of Program Reductions and Services.

5) Board Committee Reports

- Facilities/Technology – Mrs. Cutter reported that the committee met on February 19 and discussed the contract for Architectural Engineering Services for Port of Oakland Noise Abatement Phase II from AEDIA Architecture and Planning, contract for Hazardous Materials Assessment and Hazardous Materials Remediation Observation for Port of Oakland Noise Abatement Phase II from Vista Environmental, Change Order No. 1 for the McKinley & Washington Elementary Schools Portable Classroom Project with D&D Pipelines, and signage for Chabot College at the Adult Education campus.

- Alameda County School Boards Association – Ms. Sullivan reported that the Association met on February 19 and discussed the need to revive this group which has not met regularly for the past year. Goals, visions and the importance of continuing Districts’ dues and memberships were also discussed. Ms. Sullivan noted that Trustee Almonte also attended the meeting.

CONSENT ITEM

Human Resources

- 2.1-C Resolution #09-11, Authorizing Execution of Agreement with Office of Administrative Hearings for Hearing Services

On a motion made by Ms. Mack-Rose and seconded by Mrs. Cutter, the Board adopted Resolution #09-11, Authorizing Execution of Agreement with Office of Administrative Hearings for Hearing Services by a 7-0 vote. Trustee Prola voting via teleconference.

CONFERENCE ITEM

Human Resources

- 2.1-CF Prioritize and Take Action on the List of Program Reductions and Services

PUBLIC COMMENT

The following District staff, teachers, parents, students, and community members addressed the Board regarding the proposed program reductions and services, stressing the importance of delicately handling the cuts: Katy McCarthy, Susan Deming, Sara Norris, Alex Harp, Victoria Forrester, Ali Cannon, Terry Minton, Steve Craig, Barbara Stump, Elizabeth Puccio Susanne Wong, Myra Waal, Melody Fehr, Jocelyn Gooch, Russell Tomlin, Estaban Zapiain, Kathy Thompson, Patty Fishbaugh, Richard Fishbaugh, Patti Davis, Dale Gregory, Rick Richards, Pamela Lowe, Laura Michaels Fox, Jerry Criswell, Ben Wallace-Ailsworth, Jack Nelson, and Stephen Cassidy.

At 8:15 p.m. the Board took a break and returned to open session at 8:20 p.m.

Superintendent Lim commented how saddened she was by the state of affairs in public education and the extremely difficult time it is for all school districts in the state. She hoped that the District would

make smart, short-term decisions in exchange for the long-term health of our mission, and pull together and begin building back the essentials of what is being “shaved off the top” to provide adequate funding for every child in our education system. Mrs. Lim stressed she is ready to continue to make the district whole – “addressing the achievement gap with less and dedicated will and skill.”

In addition to bringing forward a list of program reductions and services developed at the February 17 for Board consideration, the Superintendent announced 15 percent in cuts (totaling \$643,000) at the District Office in response to a request made by the Board.

Following a lengthy discussion, the Board came to consensus on a list of items that included the proposed district office job eliminations (including an additional \$90,000), teacher reductions at the Lighthouse Independent Studies program, and larger class sizes in K-3 at the elementary schools. The Board then authorized the Superintendent to bring a recommendation concerning the reduction of certificated services for the 2009-2010 school year to the Board meeting on March 3, 2009,

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

The Board thanked everyone for their input regarding this financial situation that the District is facing, adding that a very challenging and difficult task has been placed upon us, but with your continued help, we will try to make the best decision for the children that we serve.

- Ms. Prola asked that a list of the agreed-upon cuts and amounts be emailed to the Board.
- Ms. Mack-Rose asked for consensus to have staff draft a document similar to Castro Valley Unified School District regarding their recommended actions in addressing the state fiscal crisis on or before March 15. In response to Ms. Mack-Rose’s request, it was the consensus of the Board to have the Communications Committee discuss and consider communication strategies at their February 27 meeting.
- It was the consensus of the Board for The Budget Advisory Committee to draft a list of priorities for restoring items that have been cut.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mrs. Cutter and seconded by Mrs. Hague, the Board adjourned the meeting in memory of Trustee Sullivan’s father, John Ward, at 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Pauline Cutter, Clerk