

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

July 6, 2005

The Board of Education of the San Leandro Unified School District met in regular session on July 6, 2005, in the San Leandro Unified School District Administrative Office, 14735 Juniper Street, San Leandro, California.

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m. by President Pauline Cutter.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr. Stephen Cassidy (arrived at 5:20 p.m.)  
Mrs. Lisa Hague  
Mr. Louis Heystek  
Ms. Linda Perry  
Mr. Ray Davis, Clerk  
Mr. T.W. "Rick" Richards, Vice President  
Mrs. Pauline Cutter, President

**DISTRICT STAFF PRESENT**

Christine Lim, Superintendent  
Leon Glaster, Assistant Superintendent

**PUBLIC COMMENTS REGARDING CLOSED SESSION AGENDA**

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

**CLOSED SESSION**

At 5:07 p.m., the Board went into closed session for Student Expulsions pursuant to Education Code Sections 35146 and 48918(c). The closed session was adjourned at 5:34 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 5:35 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.

## CONSENT ITEMS

Mrs. Hague requested to pull Consent Items 4.1-C and 3.2-C.

Ms. Perry requested that Consent Item 3.1-C be pulled for additional language.

### Business, Operations, and Facilities

#### 4.2-C Madison Portables Project

On a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Davis, the Board approved Consent Item 4.2-C by a 7-0 vote.

### Educational Services

#### 3.1-C Recommendation from Administrative Panel for Suspended Expulsion for Student E44-04/05

On a motion made by Ms. Perry and seconded by Mr. Richards, the Board approved the Administrative Panel's recommendation for suspended expulsion for student E44-04/05 with additional language in the replacement and rehabilitation plan with the following changes: *Director of Student Support Services will meet with the Principal, Vice Principal, and Counselor of the middle school to set up a monitoring plan and follow up*, action by a 7-0 vote.

#### 3.2-C Proposed Stipulated Suspended Expulsion Order for Students E50-04/05

On a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded Mr. Richards, the Board approved the recommendation from the Principal and Director of Student Support Services for stipulated suspended expulsion of student E50-04/05 by a 6-1 vote. Mrs. Hague voting no.

### Business, Operations and Facilities

#### 4.1-C San Leandro High School Growth and Renovation Project

Mrs. Hague asked about the consequences if the construction company failed to meet the completion date. Mr. Glaster said that they would be fined an "x" amount of dollars each day of the delay.

Mr. Cassidy asked about the quality of the bid as it was so much lower than the estimated cost of the project and the competitors' bid. He was also interested in what would be replacing the bleacher structure by the pool, once it was removed.

Mr. Glaster explained that the low bid was pretty much what was expected and Vitton Construction was a San Leandro firm that did the modernization. Personal storage which was included in the architect's design, would replace the bleacher structure.

On a motion made by Ms. Perry and seconded by Mr. Davis, the Board approved the contract Bid Package No. 05-05 for Vitton Construction, for the San Leandro High School Growth and Renovation Project by a 7-0 vote.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **California School Boards Association Facilitated Discussion**

#### Follow-Up Work on Team Building

California School Boards Association Governance consultant, Molly McGee Hewitt facilitated the follow-up work on team building. She reviewed her report from the February 23 and 24, 2005 Governance Workshop. Topics for this discussion included any progress that had been made towards the recommendations; development of protocols or processes as identified; future focus for the Board; and review of the criteria for the Superintendent's Evaluation in closed session.

Board members shared their perspective on the progress made since the Governance Workshop in February regarding Board Committee, their functions, structure, and reporting procedures; agenda development and placing items for consideration; roles and responsibilities of the Board and Board officers; study session and workshop meetings; and relationships with executive and site staff.

For the most part, Board members agreed that some progress and positive changes had been made; however, agenda planning process, codifying policies in writing, protocols, Board goals, and public decorum were areas that the Board still struggled with.

President Cutter said the Communication Committee was reconvened as a standing committee with Trustee Cassidy, committee chair, stating that the current purpose of the committee is to develop a communication plan not only to reinvigorate the District's communications in general, but to specifically focus on moving head with a parcel tax if the Board so chooses, adding that the committee was given a formal charge and was now included in the policy.

Mr. Heystek thought that the session helped him with the personal relationships of the group; there was more of a willingness to listen and a greater tolerance for descent.

Ms. Perry felt that a lack of time had prevented the Board from addressing and nurturing the Board development, and it was important that the Board show a united front in articulating their goals to the community.

Trustee Hague (newly appointed to the Board in February 2005), said that it would be an interesting experience to set Board goals. While she doesn't have a sense of it now, she felt that there was some desire for revenue enhancement, but without a clear articulation of specifics it was like putting the "cart before the horse."

Mr. Cassidy, who was elected to the Board in 2004, was confident that since the contract settlements were behind them for now, the Board and staff could focus on the parcel tax including his desire to advocate for a community workshop to receive input and identify uses for the parcel tax as well as the long term interest of the students and District.

Mr. Cassidy thought re-identifying the vice president's role in the agenda planning process, and allowing the majority of committee members to formulate their own meeting agenda were positive changes, adding that while there will be disagreements along the way, the Board was doing well in addressing them.

Mr. Davis, newly elected to the Board in 2004, had been laboring under the goals of a previous Board and was looking forward to the opportunity of establishing the goals of the current Board, and formalizing the protocols, keeping in mind the need for consistency in the process.

Mr. Richards felt the working relationship between the members was better; however the Board still needed to develop their short and long-term goals as well as the protocols and ways to work together to accomplish them.

With the inclusion of the vice-president in the agenda process, Mrs. Cutter thought it was difficult to accommodate the parties, thus adding frustration to the process. She mentioned the need for distinction between crucial or non crucial information to be better defined.

Periodically the facilitator, Mrs. McGee-Hewitt, would interject thoughts, observations, and examples to better guide the Board with their endeavors to develop strong collegial and respectful relationships with each other such as looking at their operations and asking themselves if their work and leadership moving the District forward was to the betterment of the District, or an impediment to the District.

It was Ms. McGee-Hewitt's opinion that emails, in addition to it being very easy to misread their intent, were causing Boards some significant legal issues because in some places they are viewed as "serial voting". She stated that CSBA recommends that emails be used as an information source (factual) as opposed to asking for any opinion.

The discussion continued regarding Board meeting decorum specifically focusing on time spent on agenda items, and showing respect for the Superintendent, staff and each other in the public forum.

Mrs. Cutter felt that the Board spent too much time arguing over the “process” and not the “product” in the public forum, thus losing site of the focus.

Mr. Heystek stated that while the level of cooperation had improved both visibly and internally, he would like to see the Board work on their “people skills” not only for the public but for staff. He has noticed staff members “shuddering” or bracing themselves when they appear before the Board and he thought the Board could do a better job in preparing themselves with questions that are germane to the presentation or to ask questions ahead of time.

Mr. Davis reiterated his concern of “no surprises”, and the importance of, whenever possible, providing staff with questions before hand so that they could be better prepared to respond.

Mr. Cassidy saw it as a disservice to each other when members criticize each other when they are speaking under Board comments.

Mrs. McGee-Hewitt suggested that Superintendent Lim send her a tape of a Board meeting and she would provide feedback; in the meantime, she recommended a “Time on Task” analysis which would help the Board realize where and how they were spending their time at the meeting and on agenda items and focus on maximizing the use of their time.

Superintendent Lim said that this had been a challenging year. With new Board members joining in December as well as February, quality time needed to work as a team was lacking. It also had been very frustrating to her because the protocols are not in place, which is the basic foundation of how we develop as a team. She described the Board meeting as “her classroom”, where she sets the agenda and/or lesson plan, and executes it; however in her opinion it never seemed to be “good enough”. She agreed with Trustee Heystek on the “cowering” of the staff, because lack of clarify about protocols, expectations etc. While she understood the intent of the agenda planning process, it had been cumbersome due to the scheduling of the meeting, and lack of understanding of what the Superintendent’s job entails.

Ms. Lim stressed that in order to become a successful governance team, we needed to develop protocols that would help us develop our relationship could not be put off.

It was the facilitator’s experience that groups who do not establish protocols, or are constantly changing protocols, are never satisfied with their meetings and feel that they have not accomplished anything, adding that protocols foster open communication by giving everyone a equal playing field, so when you proceed to

hold the Superintendent and staff accountable it is based on professionalism and what has been accomplished rather than a relationship issue.

Mrs. Hague found it frustrating when veteran Board members would ask “What can I help you with?”, or “what do you want to know?”, when in fact she didn’t have any idea at this point in time. She described it as “meta-cognition” - knowing what you know and knowing what you don’t know.

Ms. Perry said that our Board was unique in that it was a Board of seven as opposed to a five-member Board. She felt that efforts had been made in improving the decorum of the meeting; however they regress occasionally.

Mr. Davis thought that everyone was interested in the overall goal of setting aside quality time to discuss the “real” issues; and find other ways of addressing the more mundane or routine items.

Ms. McGee-Hewitt alluded to the Superintendent’s comment regarding the challenges of this year and the frustration of the feeling that it’s not “good enough”, or never having met the expectation. She said that this was not at all uncommon with Superintendents; however in Districts where there was stability in terms of a working relationship between the Superintendent and Board, even though there would be professional disagreements of opinion, there wasn’t great frustration over a long period of time because they just stopped trying to meet the needs.

In response to Mr. Heystek’s question regarding how to create a culture of having the courage to raise issues without being badgered, Ms. McGee-Hewitt shared an example, “Time plus truth equals trust”, explaining that over a period of time if you can be honest and share honesty, then you can build trust with each other. It is also important the group practices “extreme courtesy” towards one another in public about how we ask the questions, remembering to say “your sorry” when you act inappropriately, adding that it does take a period of time and an agreement by the group to accomplish this.

Ms McGee-Hewitt was happy to say that tonight the Board echoed an interest in developing a culture of coming together; but until we agree to a “game plan” about how we are going to operate and have agreed-upon goals, that will not happen, and right now everyone has different missions and expectations.

Mrs. Hague felt that as a new Trustee it was difficult to step into someone else’s agenda, particularly if it’s not a shared agenda.

Mr. Cassidy said that he was looking forward to the Board developing the goals and acting as a team to accomplish them; suggesting that by not practicing “extreme courtesy” in public towards not only staff but each member as well, it sometimes prevents us from moving forward and building that trust. .

Mr. Heystek reminded the Board that in his first years of his term, he was accused of being too verbose and echoed Mr. Cassidy's thought that a process needed to be established where we respectfully hear Board members who may have more to say on any issue, keeping in mind the hour of evening.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Ms. McGee-Hewitt said that she would review the 9000 series of the District's policies, and outline suggested protocols i.e. Public Comment and Testimony at Meetings; Identification of Board Goals to Agenda Items and District Progress; Public Behavior and Decorum at Board Meetings; Board Member Attendance at Continuing Education Programs; Format and Procedure for Superintendent Evaluation, adding if Board members had additional protocols of interest to them, let her know and she would include them.

To insure future success, Ms. McGee Hewitt recommended

- Developing a "Unity of Purpose" where the group identifies what they want to accomplish, what they believe in, what they stand for and how they want to be perceived in the community as a governance team, before setting goals with the Superintendent.
- Completing the development of our own District Governance Handbook (she will outline questions that need to be asked and developed before the District's next goal setting process).
- Formally adopting the CSBA Professional Governance Standards and ACSA/CSBA Professional Superintendent Standards (Ms. Perry said that had been done a number of years ago; however, Ms. McGee-Hewitt said that CSBA suggests adopting them annually.
- Participating in a Board Self Evaluation process prior to the Evaluation of the Superintendent.

Mr. Cassidy requested a breakdown of how many five-member vs. seven-member school boards there were in Alameda County. He also wondered if our Board might be more effective if there were only five members.

Having worked for both configurations, Ms. McGee-Hewitt said it was a lot easier working for five rather than seven; however, there were different dynamics and that the number of members was not always based on the size of the district, for example, San Diego Unified, which is the second largest district in the state, has only five members and there are some districts that only have three members.

**PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

None

**ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

None

The Board went into closed session at 7:50 p.m. for Public Employee Performance Evaluation, Title: Superintendent's Evaluation pursuant to Government Code Section 54957. The Board returned to open session at 9:30 p.m. President Cutter said the Board had been in closed session and no action was taken.



## **ANNOUNCEMENT**

### **Future Board of Education Meetings**

- Regular Meeting – July 20, 2005
- **Regular Meeting – August 9, 2005 (placeholder)**
- Regular Meeting – August 23, 2005
- Regular Meeting – September 7, 2005
- Regular Meeting – September 20, 2005
- Regular Meeting – October 4, 2005
- Regular Meeting – October 18, 2005
- Regular Meeting – November 1, 2005
- Regular Meeting – November 15, 2005
- Regular Meeting – December 6, 2005
- Regular Meeting – December 13, 2005
- **Regular Meeting – January 9, 2006 (Monday)**
- Regular Meeting – January 17, 2006
- Regular Meeting – February 7, 2006
- **Regular Meeting – February 22, 2006 (Wednesday)**
- 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
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## **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mr. Richards, the Board adjourned the meeting at 9:32 p.m. by a 7-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Superintendent Christine Lim, Secretary