

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

January 5, 2010

The Board of Education of the San Leandro Unified School District met in special session on January 5, 2010, in the San Leandro Unified School District Office Conference Room 1, 14735 Juniper Street, San Leandro, California.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by President Katz-Lacabe.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mrs. Pauline Cutter  
Ms. Morgan Mack-Rose (arrived at 6:35 p.m.)  
Mrs. Diana Prola  
Ms. Carmen Sullivan  
Mr. Hermy Almonte, Clerk  
Mrs. Lisa Hague, Vice President  
Mr. Mike Katz-Lacabe, President

**DISTRICT STAFF PRESENT**

Song Chin-Bendib, Assistant Superintendent  
Mike Potmesil, Assistant Superintendent  
Cindy Cathey, Assistant Superintendent

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

**CLOSED SESSION**

At 6:31 p.m., the Board went into Closed Session for Student Expulsions, Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release/Hiring, Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation-significant exposure to litigation pursuant to Education Code Sections 35146 and 48918(c), and Government Code Sections 54957 and 54956.9(b).

The Board returned to open session with the Pledge Allegiance to the Flag at 7:12 p.m. President Katz-Lacabe reported that at the December 15, 2009, Board meeting the Board took action to terminate the Superintendent's contract without cause pursuant to Paragraph 8D of the contract, "*In its discretion, the Board may*

*discharge the Superintendent and terminate this Agreement without cause for any reason at any time. The Board shall give the Superintendent thirty (30) days written notice of such a decision”, and action was taken by majority vote and notice was effective December 18, 2009.*

## **PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

None

## **CONSENT**

### Educational Services

3.1-C Recommendation from the Director of Student Support Services for Readmission from Expulsion for student E16-07/08

3.2-C Non-Public School Contracts

On a motion made by Trustee Cutter and seconded by Trustee Hague, the Board approved the consent items by a 7-0 vote.

## **CONFERENCE**

### General Services

1.1-CF Resolution #10-01 Providing for The Issuance and Sale of General Obligation Bonds, Election of 2006, Series C, In the Aggregate Principal Amount of Not To Exceed \$20,000,000 (Tax Exempt)

The Board discussed and considered adopting Resolution #10-01 Providing for The Issuance and Sale of General Obligation Bonds, Election of 2006, Series C, In the Aggregate Principal Amount of Not To Exceed \$20,000,000 (Tax Exempt).

Assistant Superintendent Song Chin-Bendib explained at the December 1, 2009, the Board adopted Resolution #09-59, which authorized the issuance and sale of the District's General Obligation Bonds, Series C, in the amount of not-to-exceed \$30,000,000, which specified that the Bonds be issued under the Education Code, which limits the maturity of the Bonds to 25 years. However, while working with Dale Scott & Co, and De La Rosa, the underwriter, it was discovered that the 25 year limitation was producing debt service on the Bonds, which, when combined with the expected debt service on the District's other upcoming bond issues, would bring the expected tax rate close to \$59.00 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation (much higher than the \$47.00 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation originally

estimated at the that Board meeting).

At the advice of Dale Scott & Co., if the Bonds were structured using authorization in the Government Code, which allows general obligation bonds to mature from 30 to 40 years after issuance, the expected tax rate to pay debt service on all the District general obligation bonds issued under Measure B would be closer to \$50.00 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation, based on present estimates. The fiscal impact to tax payers under the longer maturity would be to lower the annual tax rate and to increase the total debt service payments over the life of the bonds.

Tonight, based on this information, the recommendation was made to bring this back to the Board before taking any final pricing action and to give the Board the opportunity to extend the repayment term of the Bonds, thereby producing a lower annual tax rate.

Assistant Superintendent Chin-Bendib indicated that in order to avoid impacting the District's projects, we need to have the money by March 2010.

The Board briefly posed a few clarifying questions which were addressed by staff and Bill Madison, Bond Council.

On a motion made by Trustee Mack-Rose and seconded by Trustee Prola, the Board adopted Resolution #10-01 Providing for The Issuance and Sale of General Obligation Bonds, Election of 2006, Series C, In the Aggregate Principal Amount of Not To Exceed \$20,000,000 (Tax Exempt) by a 7-0vote.

## Human Resources

### 2.1-CF Superintendent Search

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

- Trina Dumas addressed the Board regarding how disappointed she continues to be on the way things have been handled by this Board and that parent involvement seems to be overlooked not only in this process but in all areas of the District.

The Board discussed and provided staff direction to request proposals from potential superintendent search firms to include a portfolio of services and associated fees.

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Mike Potmesil

provided some general background information and guidelines regarding the superintendent search process such as:

- The Superintendent Search generally takes between 10 to 24 weeks depending on the process
- Most firms conduct a character study/search that involves parents, community, teachers, classified staff, administration and Board
- Using the information obtained, the process can take different directions such as limiting the search to internal candidates only or extending the search state-wide, nationally or even internationally, depending on the proposed sequence of the search and recommendations from the firms
- The Board selects potential firms from those submitted, noting that, for a district the size of San Leandro Unified, it would be from four to six.
- Those selected firms come to a Board meeting where they give a presentation in open session
- The Board selects a search firm
- Searches can range in cost from \$20,000 to \$40,000

Trustee Cutter explained that, having been through this process before, the Board reviews the superintendent search proposals, and narrows the selection down to an agreed-upon number, at which time the Board then provides direction and expectations of the District, adding that proposals submitted do not obligate the District in any way.

Trustee Sullivan would like to have at least six firms that are located within the State of California to select from, adding that she was concerned that the Board had already received a proposal dated December 31 (before the Board had agreed to agendize the process).

Mr. Potmesil explained that in keeping with the timeline, he had already contacted three or four firms. Trustee Mack-Rose and Prola also stated that while at the CSBA conference, they had spoken to some firms to get some sense of the response time from the initial request.

Trustee Almonte would like to see guidelines, and input from parents, staff members, and stakeholders be in place prior to soliciting for proposals. Mr. Potmesil reiterated that firms offer a proposal, and then the Board shapes the process. In addition, Trustee Hague also shared that Pleasanton Unified was currently going through this process, and that once a search firm has been selected community input and other matters related to the

search process begins.

On a motion made by Trustee Mack-Rose and seconded by Trustee Prola the Board directed staff to solicit requests for proposals from no less than six potential superintendent search firms to include a portfolio of services and associated fees to be received by January 12, 2010, extending the date by one week if an adequate pool is not received. Trustee Cutter asked to amend that motion and Trustee Mack-Rose agreed, by requesting that proposals be sent electronically by January 11, 2010, which was passed by a 6-1 vote. Trustee Sullivan voting no.

## **DISCUSSION**

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources facilitated a Board discussion on Board Governance that included communications, working styles, Board norms, protocols and Board goals.

Trustee Mack-Rose provided background information, reporting that at a recent CSBA conference, she learned that in addition to regular Board meetings and study sessions, CSBA was encouraging district boards to schedule periodic discussion sessions. Trustee Mack-Rose explained that as opposed to a staff-directed study session, discussion sessions were Board directed, public meetings that provide the Board a setting to informally discuss and seek understanding rather than agreements or solutions to issues that impact the District, thus the Board can be better informed.

Assistant Superintendent Potmesil provided a brief introduction regarding the context of the meeting and distributed several handouts targeting the following topics of the discussion:

1. Debate versus Dialogue – Different Discourse – As opposed to debate, which is about winning, dialogue assumes that many people have pieces that go together, it's about collaboration and exploring common ground; revealing assumptions for reevaluation, reexamining all positions, admitting that other's thinking can improve on one's own, searching for strengths and value in others' positions, discovering new options, and not seeking closure or action.
2. Working Styles – Getting to Know Us: A questionnaire was distributed with the purpose of identifying dominant working styles of the Board. Responses were ranked in order of best (#1) to least (#4). The columns were totaled with the lowest score representing their dominant working style: Analytical, Driver, Amiable, and Expressive and what each style brings to the table.
3. Agreements: The Board looked at the norms, the protocols, and vision, offering suggestions to ensure unity among team members, and that effective operating procedures are in place to meet the District's challenges effectively.

A. Norms:

- Speak one at a time
- Look at each other when we speak and acknowledge valid points made by the other person
- Listen to all ideas as valid when presented
- Assume a best intention, best effort
- Support decisions of the majority after honoring the right of individual members to express opposing viewpoints and vote their convictions
- Respect each persons' perspective
- Don't get emotional, argumentative or personal

B. Protocol – with community and staff

- Listen and be respectful
- Mindful of the tone when asking a question or making a comment
- More time to review an issue i.e. Board packet
- Put yourself in the other person's place

C. Vision (creating hindsight in advance)

- How you do create an organization that is built to last?
  1. Identify your core values (what are you good at?)
  2. Maintain the course and stimulate progress

Assistant Superintendent Potmesil asked if the Board was interested in creating a vision for the District. The Board felt that visions are often conveyed during various processes i.e. Superintendent searches and conversations, and would rather not pursue that at this time.

The Board took a break at 9:00 p.m. and returned to open session 9:05 p.m. and agreed to continue for 45-minutes longer.

4. Board Governance:

A. Committee structure, liaisons, specific individual responsibilities

- Board should rank committee selection
- Consider reducing the number of committees i.e. merging

5. Eyes on the Prize or How do we Maintain our Focus on Our Goals?

- Posting goals (copies, posters, and/or top of the agenda)
- Student photos electronically projected on a screen before the meeting begins
- 10-minute school site presentations on a rotation basis
- Speaker forms to include protocols, rules, expectations

- Board calendar – year long planning (a sample of School District Governance Calendar was distributed)
- End of each meeting – quick 3 minute evaluation of our progress
- Other – committees play an important part in helping the trustees understand what is being presented at the meeting

6. Affirmations – Carousel Activity

Assistant Superintendent Potmesil provided a brief explanation of this activity; however due to the time, the Board agreed that an activity such as this deserved more attention and asked that it be included in the next agenda

7. Future

A. Topics for next Discussion Meeting

- Board will email future topics to the Board president and Assistant Superintendent Mike Potmesil.

B. Board Training Opportunities

- A list of training opportunities offered by CSBA for 2010 was distributed

C. Personal Commitment –

- To be an effective Board member you have to make a personal commitment and develop a leadership plan. A personal commitment form was distributed with a list of topics. The Board was asked to look at those topics and ask, “In which area is your team working well and how can you build on those”, and “Which areas could your team improve and how will you work with your team to improve?”

8. Evaluation – [+/^]

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Board took a moment to express their thoughts regarding the meeting format.

Positive comments included:

- It provides an opportunity to hear how Board members view their role
- In order to work well, it helps to know each other better, and this format effectively shapes and provides a better base for the discussions
- Provided a honest and cooperative participation in the conversation, which is not always easy to do
- It was nice to hear each members’ working styles
- Important to take this positive information and carry it forward to the Board meetings, and not leave it in this setting, and never revisit it
- Good facilitation

Suggested areas of change included:

- Each meeting, assign tasks to each Board member
- Consider the number of handouts and the length of the agenda, keeping in mind that “Less is more”

Overall, the Board felt this was a very successful first step and would like to continue scheduling these meetings at the District Office, agreeing that now that the stage had been set, they could begin focusing on the issues.

Assistant Superintendent Potmesil appreciated the honesty, the respect shown, and the participation, noting that he would be happy to continue in his role as facilitator, if the Board so chooses.

### **BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

- Trustee Sullivan commented that, in light of Board action taken earlier this evening, she reiterated her request to recognize a member of the Jefferson Elementary School PTA with a Certificate of Commendation as quickly as possible, adding that the person would appreciate the recognition given by the current Superintendent, and Board.
- Trustee Cutter asked for and received consensus to bring restructuring of the current Board committees to the Board for consideration on the next agenda.
- Trustee Prola asked that staff put together a calendar for the Board with a list of mandated and legally required deadlines (such as the sample that was distributed) so that special Board discussions and study session meetings could be scheduled.



## **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion made by Trustee Hague and seconded by Trustee Prola the Board adjourned the meeting to closed session at 10:20 p.m. by a 7-0 vote. The Board returned to open session. The Board returned to open session at 10:50 p.m., where President Katz-Lacabe reported that Board had been in closed session where no action was taken.

Respectfully submitted,

Hermy Almonte, Clerk