

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

March 30, 2010

Closed Session: 6:30 p.m.
District Office, Conference Room 1

Open Session: 7:00 p.m.
Madison Multipurpose Room*

The Board of Education of the San Leandro Unified School District met in special session on March 30, 2010, in the Madison Elementary School Multipurpose Room, located at 14751 Juniper Street, San Leandro, CA 94579.

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by President Mike Katz-Lacabe.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Trustee Pauline Cutter
Trustee Morgan Mack-Rose
Trustee Diana Prola
Trustee Carmen Sullivan
Trustee Hermy Almonte, Clerk
Trustee Lisa Hague, Vice President
Trustee Mike Katz-Lacabe, President

DISTRICT STAFF PRESENT

Cindy Cathey, Interim Superintendent
Mike Potmesil, Assistant Superintendent
Song Chin-Bendib, Assistant Superintendent
Debbie Wong, Interim Assistant Superintendent
Linda Pollard, Administrative Assistant

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

CLOSED SESSION

At 6:33 p.m., the Board went into Closed Session for Public Employee Performance Evaluation, Title: Interim Superintendent, Conference with Labor Negotiator, and Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation – Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to Government Code Sections 54957, 54957.6, and 54956.9(b).

The Board returned to open session at 7:10 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. President Katz-Lacabe said that the Board had been in closed session where no action was taken.

CONSENT ITEM

Educational Services

3.1-C Resolution #10-22 “Art IS Education 2010: Ten Years and Growing”

On a motion made by Trustee Mack-Rose and seconded by Trustee Sullivan, the Board adopted Resolution #10-22 “Art IS Education 2010: Ten Years and Growing” by a 7-0 vote.

PRESENTATION

- * The Board of Education seeks to continue examination and discussion of the first through third grade staggered reading schedule.

Staff provided a brief review of the February 9, 2010, Board meeting where the Board received a presentation regarding the elimination of the first through third grade staggered reading schedule. The presentation included data from surrounding districts, requirements of Program Improvement, loss of instructional minutes, and impact on the District’s ability to implement tiered intervention at the elementary level. In addition, the following four scheduling options were presented:

- Option A: Full Day (All Students)
- Option B: Jefferson Elementary School Model – (modification of the full-day schedule)
- Option C: Modified Jefferson Elementary School Model
- Option D: Current Schedule

At that time, the Board directed staff to get teacher input on three of the alternatives (Options A, B, & C).

Tonight's presentation included additional information that has been obtained since the Board presentation on February 9, 2010, which was broken down into the following areas:

- Teacher survey results regarding the three original proposed scheduling options
- Additional school site alternative scheduling proposals
- Analysis of each school site proposal
- Criteria for evaluating options and proposals
- Response to additional questions

Results of the survey indicated that:

- Of those who chose from Options A, B or C only, Option B (Jefferson's current schedule) was the preferred schedule
- Of the teachers who voted for staggered staying in some form, the preferred second choice was Option B
- Comments clearly showed that keeping some form of staggered reading was the clear choice of teachers. Many advocated phasing out staggered more gradually.
- Options A, B, & C met the criteria for evaluating additional proposals from sites; however the full day Option A does not allow for systematic, focused intervention time

Staff reviewed and analyzed the following four additional proposals that were submitted by the sites with respect to the criteria for evaluating options and proposals:

- Changing the school days' start and end times
- Reducing staggered to 45 minutes
- Phase out staggered
- Keep the current staggered schedule

Staff also shared their responses to the other questions/concerns related to the following areas:

- STAR Data Analysis
- Research on instructional time
- Other districts' class size and schedules
- Impact on proficient and advanced students

Ruben Aurelio, Principal of Jefferson Elementary School, shared his school's experience utilizing a restructured schedule without staggered reading. He walked the Board through the school's journey which began in the fall of 2008 when Jefferson entered year three PI status, adding that initially only two-thirds of the teachers supported the change. When the plan was revisited in August 2009, teachers unanimously supported the current schedule.

Two of Jefferson’s teachers, Lupe Ornelas (1st grade) and Sallie Caraballo (3rd grade) offered their perspective on some aspects of their schedule such as:

- “All students arrive at the same time which makes it easier on families to drop off their students, some have all students get out at the same time too.”
- “We have group flexibility...we can add students as needed (particularly new students to Jefferson) and students who no longer need intervention based on Edusoft scores...”
- “...Of all of my intervention students, only one did not make gains, and she had very significant attendance problems...”
- “Based on using Houghton Mifflin (HM) Extra Support as the focus for intervention, we do a lot of frontloading so the students who get intervention are more prepared and are able to serve as leaders when we start the HM stories. They are more prepared for the skill activities as well, which means whole class instruction moves faster.”

In addition, Mr. Aurelio noted that a team of Garfield 3rd grade teachers, compelled by the urgency and necessity of the task before them, were proposing to end 3rd grade staggered reading during the 2009-2010 school year and implement an intervention only model similar to the one at Jefferson.

After the presentation, staff explained that beginning in the fall 2010, they were recommending the following hybrid schedule by combining the Options B/C which would mean:

- All students start the school day at the same time each day
- Overall instructional minutes would be increased by 25 minutes to impact academic achievement for all students
- An additional 30 minutes of support for students in need of intervention would be provided
- The schedule meets Program Improvement instructional time requirements

8:10-2:15	All students
2:15-2:25	Late Recess
2:25-3:00	ELA Intervention

The Board shared their concerns and posed clarifying questions with regards to the information presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Board heard public comments from the following regarding staggered reading:

- Dale Lew, Madison Elementary School teacher, explained how staggered reading benefits her students, attributing staggered reading to the gains that her students have made. Ms. Lew urged the Board to consider other scenarios on how to count the minutes of the day and try to keep small groups which are so valuable to not only the teachers, but to the students' success.
- Marianne Dilworth, District parent, voiced her concern that the District's focus was more on quantity rather than the quality of education, and failed to see how increasing instructional minutes without giving teachers adequate support either through instruction, assistance, or staggered reading would improve the District's scores. Ms. Dilworth was also concerned that non-PI schools (Roosevelt, Monroe, Madison) were being asked to adhere to a PI model.
- Johanna Normart was concerned about the District's timing around the recommendation and questioned how the District would provide support for teachers during the implementation.
- Bill Daniels, Madison Elementary School teacher, felt that the District was moving forward without certain pieces in place, describing how valuable that one hour of reading in the morning with his first graders and the afternoon hour with his second graders can be. Mr. Daniels mentioned that as an original member of the District Equity Team, we know that a "one size fits all" method of education does not work for our kids, and more time does not mean more results; however, he noted that "whatever the decision, teachers at Madison would make it work."
- Garry Grotke, Principal of Madison, addressed the District's challenge, stating that all schools are not in the same place, or have the same resources. Mr. Grotke suggested that the schools be given time and flexibility to effectively ensure that the same quality of program, education and nurturing continues.
- LaTrina Dumas was concerned that decisions were being made without a clear understanding of how eliminating staggered reading would impact daycare, before and after school programs, and proficient students.

Interim Superintendent Cathey briefly responded to two concerns raised during public comments, one was regarding support for teachers during implementation of the new model. Interim Superintendent explained that the current first through third grade Task Force will have their first meeting on April 15, and will continue to meet through the summer, to address all of the

questions, and identify and tackle staff needs to ensure that the District is ready for implementation in the fall of 2010. The second concern focused on Program Improvement (PI) for non PI schools. Interim Superintendent explained that while this was difficult to answer, the state did provide a response to the District's inquiry, stating that "all schools in a District contribute to a district's PI status regardless of whether the site is a Title I school or not," with the Interim Superintendent commenting that "we are all in this together."

CONFERENCE ITEM

Educational Services

3.1-CF Discuss and Consider 1st-3rd Grade Staggered Reading Schedule

The Board discussed and considered a 1st-3rd Grade Staggered Reading Schedule.

Trustees thanked staff for reaching out to staff and appreciated the parents advocating for their students.

Comments, suggestions and concerns that were raised included:

- Allow flexibility to the structure of the day for intervention, small groups, and support for some GATE acceleration during the day
- Consider computer labs (similar to Jefferson) at other sites
- As money becomes available look at instructional aides
- Due to the increased length of instruction hours, reduce the homework given to K-3 students
- Would have like to have heard from more teachers at Garfield and Jefferson
- Staggered schedules are sometimes based on parents work schedule
- Giving teachers the opportunity to visit classrooms that are experiencing this schedule might ease the uncertainties of the transition

The Board shared what options they preferred. Option B (Jefferson model) and the combined Options B/C (staff recommended) were the two preferred options that the Board felt would meet the needs of the entire District.

Trustee Sullivan appreciated Interim Superintendent Cathey's comment "we're in this together"; however, noted that she finds comments like "why my child, when our school is doing so well" to be very divisive in that the District is looking at the greater good for all students, and needs to be inclusive to help all schools and students, adding that because the District has been identified as PI, we are mandated to make these changes.

After a lengthy discussion, a motion was made by Trustee Mack-Rose and seconded by Trustee Hague to consider Option B for this year, and then revisit the issue next year; however, the motion did not pass by a 3-4 vote. Trustees Mack-Rose, Hague, Sullivan voting in favor of the motion and Trustees Almonte, Cutter, Katz-Lacabe, Prola voting no.

Another motion was made by Trustee Prola and seconded by Trustee Almonte to accept staff's recommendation of Option B/C; however, the motion did not pass by a 3-4 vote with Trustees Almonte, Katz-Lacabe, Prola voting in favor and Trustees Cutter, Hague, Mack-Rose, Sullivan voting no.

In an effort to break the stalemate, Trustee Hague suggested that the Board consider the teacher voices and experiences and support Option B, noting that the Board could revisit this at a later date.

On a motion made by Trustee Prola and seconded by Trustee Hague, the Board selected Option B, currently used by Jefferson Elementary School, by a 6-1 vote. Trustee Cutter voting no.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- Trustee Prola thanked staff for their work on the presentation and those who shared their comments and concerns.
- Trustee Sullivan asked for consensus to have Sanger Unified Superintendent Marcus Johnson share his experience and strategies on how he successfully moved his school district out of Program Improvement in a short timeframe.

Trustee Sullivan also asked for consensus to have Fred Finch Youth Agency speak to the Board regarding their services focusing on at-risk

students, noting that because the organization is funded through the state and the county, there is no charge for school districts.

Regarding the consensus items requested by Trustee Sullivan, Interim Superintendent Cathey noted that she would be happy to research the forgoing actions and return at a later time for Board consideration.

- Trustee Almonte reported that on Saturday, March 27, 2010, he attended the 10th Annual Latino Business Education Summit at Chabot College. Trustee Almonte was surprised that there were not any San Leandro parents or students in attendance, noting that he asked the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce to send invitations to the Board next year.
- Trustee Hague reported that she attended the March 24th District Band Festival, along with Interim Superintendent Cindy Cathey and Trustees Almonte, and Katz-Lacabe, where over 600 band students played simultaneously, adding that if you have an opportunity, please try and attend next year to experience this very exciting and amazing event.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Trustee Hague and seconded by Trustee Almont, the Board adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m. by a 7-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Hermey Almonte, Clerk