



## MINUTES OF ORGANIZATIONAL SESSION OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### I. OPENING BUSINESS

#### A. CALL PUBLIC SESSION TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Mrs. Chrissy Falk, Board President.

**B. ROLL CALL:** Board Members: Chrissy Falk, President; Tom Mendenhall, Vice President; Ron Eldridge, Clerk; Jason Schroer; Wes Qualls; Connie Schlaefer; Don Fowler (L).

**C. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:** Motion to adopt agenda: Eldridge: Second: Schroer: 6/0

#### D. IDENTIFY CLOSED SESSION TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

1. *Personnel*
2. *Potential Litigation*
3. *Negotiations*

**E. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Wes Qualls led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### II. RECOGNITIONS

A. Fall Sports  
John Hendrix, District Athletic Director, recognized Fall Sport Athletes.

Sarah Page, in the North Sequoia League Individual Tennis Championship, had an 8-2 League record. She made it to the Valley Divisional Finals Tournament with an 11 seed out of 13. This was quite an accomplishment. Congratulations!

Girls Water Polo Team went 13 out of 16 overall, with a 9 and 3 record in League, winning our League Championship. This is something that hasn't happened in the last 5 years. Congratulations on a really great season.

Boys Water Polo Team, coached by Matt Rothe, had a 24 and 6 record overall, with a League record of 12 and 0, undefeated. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row that they are League Champs with an overall League record in the last 3 years, of 33 and 3. They were very awesome, dominant and an amazing team.

### III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Margie Davis spoke of the CSEA Sunshine Proposal in the agenda. "We are grateful that the District has turned some of the classified positions into full time with benefits. Thank you for raising stipends to be competitive with other districts. We are asking for the 2 ½% cost of living raise, along with adjustments to the salaries of the following job classifications, bringing them up to the 50 percentile range according to the current state salary compensation survey results: (1-Full time) Safety Officer, (2-Part time, 1-Full time) Clerk Typist, and (1-Full time) Bi-Lingual Instructional Assistant. We would like to see the pay scale be competitive with other school districts and to help Sierra Unified be a Destination District.

#### IV. BOARD ORGANIZATION

##### A. ACTION ITEMS: Organization of the Board of Trustees

1. Election of the Board President  
Motion to elect Chrissy Falk: Eldridge: Second: Fowler  
Motion to elect Connie Schlaefer: Qualls: Second: None  
2020 SUSD Board President: Chrissy Falk: 5/1 – Qualls voted no
2. Election of the Board Vice President  
Motion to elect Tom Mendenhall: Eldridge: Second: Schroer:  
2020 SUSD Board Vice President: Tom Mendenhall: 6/0
3. Election of the Board Clerk  
Motion to elect Ron Eldridge: Schlaefer: Second: Qualls  
2020 SUSD Board Clerk: Ron Eldridge: 6/0
4. Establishment of the Time, Day and Place of 2020 Regular Board Meetings  
([Proposed Calendar](#) Enclosed)  
Motion to approve Proposed Calendar: Eldridge: Second: Mendenhall: 7/0
5. Election of California School Board Association (CSBA) Legislative Representative to the District  
Motion to elect Connie Schlaefer: Eldridge: Second: Qualls  
2020 SUSD CSBA Representative: Connie Schlaefer: 6/0
6. Appointment of [Board Member Voting Representative](#) for Fresno County Committee on School District Organization Elections  
Motion to elect Wes Qualls: Mendenhall: Second: Schroer  
2020 SUSD Fresno County Voting Representative: Wes Qualls: 5/1 – Eldridge voted no

#### V. COMMUNICATIONS

##### A. Reports

1. ASB President – Sarah Page  
Miss Page reported on ASB and other activities taking place at Sierra including: the 50's /matching shirts themed Sadies Dance which went very well, with 150 students attending; the Winter Formal venue Elite; and the upcoming Talent Show on January 30<sup>th</sup>.
2. Site Reports
  - a. Foothill Elementary School, Heather Wheeler, Ed.D. – Principal  
Dr. Wheeler spoke of the excitement at Foothill gearing up for a wild ride with the Christmas programs coming up. Tomorrow will be the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders, Wednesday will be the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> graders, and on Thursday will be TK-1<sup>st</sup>. If you want to pass out on cuteness overload come on down. Sarah Seville, our music teacher has been working so hard to pull this together. We also have Santa and his elves on campus working on the workshop. Students can go by grade level to the library where it is located. Everyone is also hard at work at learning in the middle of all the excitement. Looking forward to coming back in January refreshed.
  - b. Sierra Junior/Senior High Schools, Sean Osterberg – Principal  
Mr. Osterberg shared that last week was the Winter music performance which was fantastic. They did an excellent job. Carly Ervin put a lot of work into her first program and is understandably exhausted. In October the parent/counselor conferences began. Currently 25% of the Sophomores, 20% of the 7<sup>th</sup> graders have had meetings. The second push will be at the 1<sup>st</sup> of the year. We have communicated the conferences through mass emails, Our Towns, and letter mailed home. Last week was the football banquet where Coach Kelly announced next year's football schedule. We will be doing a blended football year between 11 man and 8 man games. We're hoping that this will allow our players the best opportunities to compete and grow as players.

- c. Alternative & Extended Education, Ara Keledjian – Director  
Mr. Keledjian gave a brief overview on the WASC process. It begins with an application, then a self-study report, analyze your community profile, academic component, and instruction assessment. A template is used to follow this process. Then comes the visit, and once approved you begin the cycle, every 3 years. The cycle includes writing the report, another visit, recommendations from the committee, and creation of an action plan. The committee comes back to verify that what is in the report is accurate. Our visit is on January 13 and 14, 2020. Contact has been made with the visiting committee chair and the technical assistance person provided by WASC. All documents have been turned in and received by the committee chair, who sent it back with some requested changes. We're working on that to get it back to the chair. For this visit, there are 4 possible outcomes: probationary status; probation removed; accreditation withheld; and full accreditation. All communication lines are open, and staff members have been meeting often to go over the action plan.
3. Superintendent Report - Alan Harris, Ph.D.
- a. [Five Creative Marketing Update](#)  
Ron Nickel with Five Creative Group, shared with the Board, the Sierra Unified School District Brand Initiative Update. The successful development and implementation of an identity and brand strategy will clearly illustrate SUSD's differentiated meaning and promise and will solidify its reputation in a positive, forward-thinking manner. Details of the identity and brand strategy initiative can be viewed in the link above.
  - b. Master Facility Plan  
Dr. Harris updated the Board on the Master Facility Plan. We've received 2 bids, and interview dates are being arranged. A committee is being put together for the interviews. Our hope is to bring forward recommendations for discussion at the January meeting. Action should be taken in February, as both plans have a start date of February 11<sup>th</sup>. Both requests for qualifiers are at the District Office if you'd like to view them.
4. Department Reports
- a. Facilities, Maintenance and Transportation – Craig Barnes, Supervisor
    - 1. [Facilities Inspection Tool](#) (FIT)  
Mr. Barnes gave a brief description of the Facility Inspection Tool. Details of the process and the results of the facility inspection can be viewed in the link above. His resolve in this year's inspection was for the results to be accurate and transparent, knowing how difficult it would be for many to hear. Without accurate information how can any stakeholder be expected to understand the district's maintenance needs. Furthermore, how could our Board of Trustees be expected to make realistic decisions on how maintenance and operations fit into the larger picture and stay within budget parameters that must be considered? Lastly, in the spirit of transparency, it should be noted that this inspection was conducted based on the minimum criteria within the good repair standard. A truly comprehensive report to address decades of facilities deteriorating show is needed. Facility conditions will require nothing less than a Facilities Master Plan. The Board President expressed the Board's appreciation for the detail and the level of transparency in the inspection report, and the work put into it.
  - b. Business Services - Janelle Bryson, Assistant Superintendent  
Mrs. Bryson reviewed the monthly budget report, as well as the proposed staffing allocations for the 2020-21 fiscal year. She also reported the 2019-20 LCAP budget as compared to the actual. Please see links below for details.
    - 1. [Monthly Budget Report](#)
    - 2. [Staffing Allocations](#)
    - 3. [LCAP](#)

BREAK: 7:28-7:40

- c. Education Services – Teresa Page, Director  
Ms. Page spoke about the goal in special education to set up systems that are capable of responding to all types of challenges, while being able to meet student needs confidently. Two situations tend to crop up this time of year and put a special strain on the system. One is when students with moderate to severe disabilities or behavioral challenges move into the district with the need for constant staff supervision, and another is when one of our students are accepted into a county program down in the valley. Our district has made the decision to fully act on research and legal guidance that tells us that students learn best when in the least restrictive environment – that is, a general education classroom with same age peers. Some students, especially young ones, need constant adult supervision from someone with specialized training to help the student learn to manage their emotions and regulate their behavior. When a student moves into the district with this level of need, putting a supervision team together so quickly is a shell game that doesn't have a winner. If a team of trained support staff is too small, administration is forced to pull support from students that are making progress in order to support a student with greater challenges, which usually sends the now unsupported student into a tail spin, until the problem is so bad that the supports are again pulled, now the other way. This crisis management model is not only ineffective, it can really set kids back who might otherwise have been able to progress away from the supports because they had time to learn the skills they needed. The second type of challenge that often comes at this time of year is when a student shows us that all supports that we have provided are insufficient, and we must make a referral to a county program. Fresno County SELPA provides services and programs that most small school districts do not have the critical mass to provide themselves. It is a natural and unfortunate outcome of our local geography that these programs are all very far away, since both Clovis Unified and Fresno Unified divide us from all the other county school districts. If a student is accepted to one off these programs, the responsibility of transporting the student falls to the district. We are currently transporting students to a variety of programs located in the valley that we cannot provide ourselves. While there are about a dozen students that are currently being transported, with one exception, the students are all single students going to different programs. We have one more Volt and one Captiva still available to transport students. There is one referral accepted by the county that we will start transporting when we come back from break, and one referral submitted to the county. Since all the routes are at driver capacity, it is likely I will need to use at least one more driver and vehicle. It's easy to say, get every student what they need – it's expensive to do that.
  - d. Curriculum and Instruction – Tammy Montgomery, Director  
Mrs. Montgomery reviewed the [2019 School Dashboard Preview for Sierra Unified](#) with the Board. See link for detail.
- 5. Program Reports – NONE
  - 6. Sub-Committee Reports – NONE

## B. Board Reflections

Don Fowler expressed that as usual, everyone comes back excited from the Annual Education Conference. Most exciting was the session led by Ron Suskind, author and creator of a movie based on his autistic sons. The takeaway from this as a School Board member, as a parent, and as a member of the community, is that each of our children have value. We don't always realize just how much value or what type of value, because we tend to look at them from a linear, outside perspective, not recognizing that each kid sees the world just a little bit differently than we may or may not. His son was not able to experience the world other than through animated film. He was able to relate to his son through that and break through after several years of not being able to communicate with him. Each child has their own strengths and abilities and we need to look past the surface and appreciate that.

Wes Qualls thought the session "Sex education without heartache" from Fremont School District was very good. They initially rolled it out at the schools with news cameras, etc. and it caused a lot of negativity. They had to go back to square one and do it all over again. What made it successful on the next attempt was communication to parents. After the Native American presentation he went up to the presenter to express his anger. It was presented from such a negative perspective. They were good people trying to make a point, talking about boarding schools for Native Americans in the early 1900's, to re-program kids, trying to take the Native culture out of the kids. They presented the program in a very negative manner. We're doing some great things in our district and it would be nice for the presenter to see that. Some legal symposiums were really good. It seems that we are not following the Brown Act in some instances. Lastly, Mr. Qualls really enjoyed the last day of the conference. There was a panel on stage discussing issues at schools. Accountability will be a big part of this administration with Gavin Newsome. Prop 13, a fifteen million dollar school bond measure that will be on the March ballot. The view of the panel was that this is going to pass. There is no organized opposition. A lot of this bond measure is designed for small schools and will be an opportunity. We should pay attention to that going forward.

Ron Eldridge stated he was completely underwhelmed with the CSBA Annual Conference this year, perhaps due to choosing the wrong sessions. The best takeaway each year is getting together and being able to talk.

Chrissy Falk was very proud when she went to a session on special education, and realizing that everything they were saying we should be doing, we already are. The time as a governance team is also always very valuable.

## VI. CONSENT CALENDAR AGENDA

Motion to approve Consent Calendar Agenda: Mendenhall: Second: Eldridge: 7/0

## VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. **INFORMATION:** [District Re-Opener for California School Employees Association \(CSEA\) Collective Bargaining](#)

B. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM: Approval of the Tentative Agreement for Collective Bargaining Negotiations between Sierra Unified School District (SUSD) and the Sierra Unified Teachers Association** The Tentative Agreement entered into between SUSD and SUTA is contingent upon final approval by the SUSD Governing Board and ratification by Association Members.

Motion to approve the [Tentative Agreement between SUSD and SUTA](#): Fowler: Second Qualls: 6/0  
Eldridge abstained.

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. **ACTION ITEM: Approval and Certification of [First Interim Report](#) – Financial**

The first Interim Report provides the Fresno County Office of Education with the current year and subsequent two years budget, based on current data, as required by law.

Motion to certify the fund report and narratives as presented and adopt a Positive Certificate:  
Mendenhall: Second: Schroer: 7/0

B. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM: Application for [Exemption from the Required Expenditures for Classroom Teachers' Salaries](#)**

For the 2018-19 fiscal year, Sierra Unified School District did not spend the minimum percentage of its budget on classroom salaries as required by EC Section 41372. We are requesting an exemption from this requirement as provided by law.

Motion to approve the exemption from the required expenditures for classroom teachers' salaries:  
Eldridge: Second: Mendenhall: 7/0

C. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM: [Attendance Material Decrease](#)**

California Department of Education allows Districts to request an allowance for attendance due to emergency conditions when attendance on any particular day is less than 90% of average attendance. On October 28, 2019, our attendance was less than 85% districtwide due to a PG&E planned power outage. The attached form is filed with the California Department of Education when applying for an allowance. We compare an average day in both October and April and replace the power outage day with the higher of those average days. The Board of Sierra Unified School District must approve the request in order for the allowance to be granted.

Motion to approve the request to replace October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019 with an average day in the month of October:  
Mendenhall: Second: Schroer: 7/0

**D. DISCUSSION ITEM: [Proposed Cardiac Emergency Plan](#)**

Linked above is a draft policy for a cardiac emergency response plan for the District, based on the fact that we have Automated External Defibrillators in place throughout the District. The plan was developed in concert with our Risk Management firm and approved by our medical and legal counsel.

Motion to table the proposed cardiac emergency plan for further consideration and to bring back for further discussion: Eldridge: Second: Mendenhall: 7/0

**E. DISCUSSION ITEM: [Senior Center Application for CDBG Funding](#)**

The Sierra Oaks Senior Center has applied for a Community Based Block Grant through Fresno County to install solar panels at the Senior Center. On December 6th, an agreement was approved by the Fresno County Board of Supervisors between Sierra Unified School District and Fresno County to support the Senior Center in the grant. We would be required to oversee the project and provide documentation to Fresno County for contractors to be paid by Fresno County. In the event the project goes over the \$158,220 budget that was approved, we would be required to pay the overage.

**IX. ADVANCED PLANNING**

**A. [Governance Calendar](#)**

**B.** Next Regular meeting date: January 13, 2020

**C.** Next Special meeting date(s): January 27, 2019 – Facilities Workshop

**D.** Requested Future Agenda Items:

**X. CLOSED SESSION** The Board of Trustees went into Closed Session at 8:45 p.m.

**A.** Personnel - Public Employee Discipline / Dismissal / Release / Complaint / Appointment / Employment (Government Code § 54957)

**B.** Potential Litigation (Government Code § 54956.9)

**XI. RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION**

**A.** Adjourn Closed Session and Reconvene Open Session

**B.** Report Action Taken in Closed Session – NONE

**XII. ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

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Chrissy Falk, President

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Alan Harris, Ph.D, Superintendent

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Ron Eldridge, Clerk