



MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

I. OPENING BUSINESS

A. CALL PUBLIC SESSION TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 pm by Mrs. Chrissy Falk, Board President.

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

C. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: Motion to adopt agenda amendment to move Agenda Item #V.A.10 to VII.G:
Mendenhall: Second: Qualls: 5/0

D. IDENTIFY CLOSED SESSION TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

1. *Personnel – Superintendent Mid-Term Report*

E. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Don Fowler led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance

F. REMEMBRANCE: On January the 8th our Board and the foothill community lost a very special person and colleague, Bert Weldon. Bert is survived by his loving wife Marilyn, his daughter Samantha, his grandson Austin, his mother Eunice, and siblings Rosie, C.J., Robbie, and Abe. A prayer was read by Chrissy Falk, which was included in his obituary and a moment of silence was honored. He will be so dearly missed.

II. RECOGNITIONS

A. Foothill Elementary

1. Dee Crosslin

Dr. Harris was really honored and excited to recognize someone very special. Three years ago, and three weeks after he had been formally announced as Principal of Foothill, the 1st email he received from anyone was from Dee Crosslin, Clerk Typist at Foothill, inquiring about how exactly he would like her to handle the ASB budget. He hadn't worked a day at Foothill yet, but Dee needed him to make a decision that evening about how he would like to organize the Foothill budget. His response was, "I don't know and we'll decide about that later." Three weeks later, he had the good fortune to meet Dee, as well as two other wonderful ladies in the office. He asked them what was the thing that gave them the most anxiety in the day and what they were most proud of. Dee said that it was just one thing, the dang bus pouches, and went on for about 30 minutes to explain to him, a city boy, how bus pouches work. In the office, they get about 100 notes every day, sort them, decide what kid is going on what bus because they were going to another kid's house, and then get those notes back to the teachers in the afternoon, and then sit white knuckle by their desks hoping that the radio didn't call saying that a child was dropped in the wrong place and no one was there. They did this every day. They felt if he could help them with just one thing, it's the dang bus pouches. He shared this story because Dee is the type of employee that every successful organization needs to have. She is that person who is willing to ask you the hard question when it's not really convenient to ask. She's the one that you want doing your budget because it's going to be accurate, and she's got the guts to say you don't have the money to do that. She's the one that you want because she is willing to take the time when it's necessary to get that little extra thing done. Another reason is because of the joy she brings and the love that she has for the kids and for this community. When there is a loss in the community, Dee takes the time to know and takes the time to care. More than anything at all, she loves children. That is evident when she'll say, "Mr. Harris, we have a very important decision to make. How many ninjas do you want to buy for the kids?" She knows how much it means to the kids to get a little ninja when they've done something right. Dee helps him be better and helps the staff be better, and makes Foothill Elementary a better school. It's an honor to recognize Dee Crosslin.

B. Alternative Education

1. Margaret Knowles

Mr. Keledjian recognized Margaret Knowles, Teacher at Sandy Bluffs Alternative Education, but she had called in sick, not feeling well. The reasons he wanted to recognize her are because of a couple of attributes. She works terribly hard to develop integrated lessons, incorporating Art, Science, and History in just about every single lesson she prepares. If she's teaching Science, there will be an Art component. If she's teaching Social Studies, she'll tie Science into it somehow. This is part of her creativity in regards to meeting students where they are. So, while she's doing this, she looks at each individual student, knowing what their interests are, and then attacking that interest, aiming the lesson plan for that student. She has been seen presenting the same lesson in three different ways, for three different students. She'll be at home thinking about how best she can reach this specific student. She also goes out of her way to meet the student's social/emotional needs. This is another place where she works very hard to meet them where they are, so that she can bring the best out of each student. She loves every child. The one's that make themselves difficult to love, she loves them more. For these reasons she is being recognized.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

India Saude with Sierra Unified Teacher's Association and Sierra High School Teacher, thanked Chrissy Falk for coming to our School Board member's dinner last week. It was a nice dinner with great conversation. She also spoke about the retirement incentive on the agenda for the evening. The request for the incentive came strongly from the staff and it is hoped that it will be strongly considered.

Samantha Weldon, Bert Weldon's daughter spoke about how her life has changed considerably since his death. She asked for all to be considerate of the messaging and announcing of situations such as hers. She also spoke about how proud she is of her father, and that she hoped to carry on his legacy of giving back to this community.

Brent Kehn, Bus Driver/Custodian thanked everyone involved in the Pennies for Paradise campaign.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Reports

1. ASB President – Brooke Kuball

Miss Kuball reported on ASB and other activities taking place at Sierra including: the Digital Video and JHS Leadership team making the video Pennies for Paradise to raise money for the victims of the Paradise fire; Winter Formal with a great turnout of over 100 students; NSL Talent Show with the winners going to all the other high school in our league to compete against each other; and volunteering at Valley Children's Hospital next month.

2. Site Reports

a. Sierra Junior/Senior High Schools, Sean Osterberg – Principal

Mr. Osterberg shared some exciting news. Last Friday the Ag Department, Tammy Montgomery and himself met with the Reedley Community College Dean of Agriculture, and the Department Chair of the welding shop/Ag Mechanics to develop a partnership with dual enrollment in Welding and Ag Mechanics. This would be developed in to a Natural Resources pathway. They toured our welding and wood shops, and other facilities and were really excited about this partnership. They're looking right now to be starting with an Intro to Welding class that is already offered through ROP. It's amazing how many of the skills the students are already learning in ROP and how those skills match up to Reedley's Intro to Welding. There are some things that have to be done to get to the next level, at Reedley College's expense. Ag Mechanics will require a few other projects to be brought in. The District will have to sign an MOU with Reedley. One has already been signed with Clovis Community, in partnership for Academic courses. Currently there are about 17% of our students taking dual enrollment courses and have had a very successful first semester. This Reedley pathway will be based more around CTE. We're looking also to do a Natural Resources in the Science fields, which could be the beginning of a pathway that would lead to countless things, from Forestry to Biologist. It's a nice entrance point. They will be coming up again to meet with us. The Dean of Agriculture will bring the Natural Resources Department Chair. The Dean says we're doing it the right way. It's very exciting for our students and our community. Also, Mr. Osterberg is looking in to the possibility of changing 8th period PE. Currently it is Sports PE. We have struggled with this because there are a lot of walk-on

coaches who are challenged to get to the school at the start of 8th period PE. We're exploring the possibility of have an Athletic Conditioning class during 8th period with the student's being assigned to classroom teachers, and rotated through athletic workouts leaning toward conditioning of athletes. Two weeks ago, our Robotics Team went to Daly City for their maiden voyage in their first Tech Challenge. They walked away with the Judge's Choice award. The students were very proud of this, and also for the fact that the majority of their team are girls, unlike most schools. Another event is taking place in Daly City sometime in May and they will try to fundraise to attend. That will be a Maker's Space with a Junior HS element and Robotics. We're also looking at having a District Athletic Director, which will be a great leadership opportunity for an individual to help our district grow. Currently we have a JHS Athletic Director, and a HS Athletic Director who are only assigned a couple of periods to perform their duties. The District AD would be working with Elementary, Junior HS, and High School, and will help to develop our elementary students and to grow into our JHS and HS from there. The fostering and developing of the program from elementary up is an exciting thing for our district and a great opportunity. Mr. Osterberg handed out a paper outlining the Interventions for Junior High Ineligibility which will give them the tools to succeed. Please click [here](#) to review.

- b. Foothill Elementary School, Alan Harris, Ph.D. – Principal
Dr. Harris spoke of the last year and half working with the staff in positive discipline, a method to get children to be disciplined in their life, and to have the character traits of success that we want for them. A lady by the name of Jane Nelson wrote the book, and raised 7 children. It is a practical way to become disciplined and successful in life. Deni Dayan, a consultant from Fresno County, has been co-teaching it with him. A 4-week parenting class is going on right now, childcare provided. We're excited to have more of them, because it really helps connect that link between the home and the school, and how we work at helping all of our children grow academically, socially and emotionally. We're very excited also about the number of clubs and activities taking place at Foothill. Today was basketball practice, as well as our gardening club and rocket club. From where we were a couple of years ago to now is a credit to the teachers and volunteers who come in and help provide opportunities for our students that go beyond the school day. This includes everything from the spelling bee to the Pine Needle Festival to rocket and dirt bike clubs. In the academic realm right now, it's an important time in the learning process that happens at the school. In the Fall you have your routines and organizations in place and you've created those foundations. From January through April is really the heart of teaching and learning where they are. Right now teachers are finishing the District Learning Assessments given on a trimester basis, wrapping up the semester that ends this Friday, and they're meeting with their teams to re-assign students to their REI (Reading Extension and Intervention). It's intensive work but is really exciting. We have many students who have grown 2 bands in their DLA, going from a 1 to a 3, or a 2 to a 4. Patience was asked for 2 years ago as the teachers developed ELA maps for the new curriculum, and then Math maps as we got new curriculum, and then to build District Learning Assessments. The fruits of that labor you begin to see in the way students and teachers and parents begin to dialog. In the parent meeting someone asked "are we going to be sure to get those DLA scores on the report card?" Two years ago parents didn't even know what that was, or how it would exist, or what to do with it. The scores aren't everything but they embody the idea that we want to know in a meaningful way what we're learning. It's an important step in the right direction. Also, some teachers went with Tammy Montgomery to a Publisher's Fair and came back very excited about the Science curriculum "Twig", as we work on Science adoption going in to next year. It really compliments our Language Arts and Math curriculum, but also will really complement what's happening in collaboration with Joni Lloyd and that inquiry based learning that's beginning to happen. This has ignited an excitement for learning.
- c. Sandy Bluffs Alternative Education, Ara Keledjian – Director
Mr. Keledjian spoke of the sharing of the County Therapists between Sandy Bluffs and Sierra. It's wonderful, with students at Sandy Bluffs who are asking when they're going to be there on their days, to seek these Therapists out. There is an ability for them to serve a small percentage of students who are receiving outside therapy with private pay. There is a process they are able to go through to absorb that. Thrilling is the connection between school and therapy. For those students who do receive outside counseling services, it is so far removed from the school, the school has no input, nor direction. Now the school-based therapists are able to gain input from the outside therapists. We're thrilled to have them. They are in the middle of K-12 DLA testing, including Lodge Pole Independent Study through

High School Independent Study, and through Oak Meadow and Sandy Bluffs. It gets a bit interesting making sure each of the tests are assigned to the students. Another SARB hearing is coming up in a couple of weeks. One just took place where several families were seen. We still have several referrals to the court system. Some families seem to need this SARB process, an ongoing, every couple of months, checking in with all the information provided. It's becoming more of a brain storming, problem solving session, with the panel members and the parents seeing what the school can do. Our interest is improving the student's attendance and grades through school connectedness. A couple of weeks ago, 9 students were able to attend a Job Corp orientation in Fresno. From that, there are 4 students who are very serious and gathering up their paperwork (ex. Birth certificates, social security cards). It can be a wonderful next step for some of these students, because from there it leads right to a trade, right to a living wage. The next Native American Parent Meeting is on February 26th at 5:30 pm in the Sierra Library.

3. Superintendent Report – Melissa Ireland, Ed.D.
Dr. Ireland reviewed her Mid-Year Update based on District 5-Year Goals and 2017-2020 LCAP Goals with the Board. Please see link below for details.
 - a. [Mid-Year Update](#)
4. Department Reports
 - a. Facilities and Maintenance - Jim Harris, Supervisor
No Report
 - b. Transportation – Craig Barnes, Supervisor
Mr. Barnes updated the Board on the attendance numbers for the late busses. See following link. He spoke about the recent late start on March 5th due to snow for the 1st time in a couple of decades. There are a number of things that go in to making that decision with many factors considered, but one we no longer have to worry about is communication. The new system put in place last year has worked fabulously. There were no complaints and even a few compliments. Also the annual CHP Inspection will be rescheduled until next week. The California Energy Commission Grant that was applied for in August scored us in 3 categories: age of the bus at 70%; low income at 10%; and disadvantaged community at 20%. We scored 0% on age of busses with our 2 oldest busses aged at 1968 and 1969. Most of the money being offered is weighted against us.
 1. [Late Bus Attendance](#)
 - c. Business Services - Janelle LaBerge, Assistant Superintendent
Ms.LaBerge reviewed the Monthly Budget Report, as well as the Governor's Proposal and the 2018-19 State Budget. Details can be found in the links below. In reference to the recent snow day, there was severely reduced attendance on that day at 72.3%. There is a process where you can take a day in either the month of October or April and insert that day for the day your attendance is down. A J13A Attendance Form would be filed. The average October day would increase us by about by about 362 funding ADA for that day. We'll look at the average April day and see which one is higher and file that paperwork. Leap Lab students sold hot chocolate and candy canes at the Christmas programs hoping to raise \$50 for OneHen.org encouraging donation to local charities. Actual money raised was \$756.29. They also sold ornaments at the programs raising \$301.50, and donated to the Sierra 4H.
 1. [Monthly Budget Report](#)
 2. [Governor's Proposal / 2018-19 State Budget](#)
 - d. Education Services – Tammy Montgomery, Director
Mrs. Montgomery updated the Board on High School Math DLA1. See link below. On January 28th there was a full day of Professional Development, including the escalation (verbal de-escalation) training led by Dr. Harris which was offered to both Certificated and Classified, as well as substitutes. Also taking place was Positive Discipline training, making us just about finished with training everyone in the district. Joining us this time were also members of Cold Springs and Big Sandy. There were also staff that were introduced to the California Online Library and Illuminate, led by Danielle Amundsen and Michelle Whaley. The goal was to get the elementary teachers more actively involved in reviewing their DLA's helping with alignment. The Twig Science Curriculum for elementary which was introduced at the Publishers Fair in Visalia will be on display for review. High school teachers will be

attending another Publisher Fair in Fresno for review of Science curriculum soon. After the Winter Break, they'll sit down and start tearing through it as a larger committee, looking at what the teachers and principals want to see, and start formalizing the adoption process. DLA 2 is in progress and will be finished up this Friday. Everyone has been invested in that time. You can expect to see some of those scores at the March Board meeting. On March 5th, from 6-7 pm in the PC at the high school, Clovis Community will be bringing our Spring Parent Night to us. Two dedicated Counselors will be talking to parents of current Sophomores and Juniors, letting them know what Dual Enrollment is all about, and what Sierra High School has to offer through this.

1. [DLA1 High School Math Detail](#)

5. Program Reports - NONE

6. Sub-Committee Reports – NONE

B. Board Reflections

Connie Schlaefer spoke of continuing her work with her Professional Learning Network which should end in May. They have a product that talks about a Board member's role in the LCAP process. A group of Board members and Superintendents from all over the state put it together and it will go to CCEE and to CSBA and will come out as a policy brief. She's hoping it will be helpful to especially newer people who have to learn about this process as a whole from scratch. She also signed up for Legislative Liaison Day in March.

Wes Qualls shared that he has had all kinds of fun getting reacquainted. There are a lot of great extra-curricular things that can be attended in retirement, sports, music, dramatic events, etc. He has also done site visits to Foothill and Sierra. As good as those visits were, it was like scratching the surface, so he'll be back. He's having a good time getting caught up.

Don Fowler spoke of some of the activities at the elementary school and his grandchildren's involvement in them. Next week they'll be taking a vacation as a family and his grandchild helped plan it through the LEAP Lab. These are wonderful exercises the kids are going through. This is where he sees the rubber hitting the road in education.

Chrissy Falk enjoyed going to the CTA sponsored dinner. It was refreshing speaking to the Union people and being able to talk about the great relationship we have. Apparently that is not as common as what goes on elsewhere. Huge credit goes to union leadership and to Melissa for their work. You don't often have people who see themselves as all in it together. In this District, everyone seems to have the attitude that we're all in it together. Thank you to all of you. She also enjoyed judging Oral Interpretation for 7th & 8th grades. It's always really fun. Being on the Alt Ed campus is always really impressive and enjoyable.

BREAK – 7:46 – 7:51 pm

V. CONSENT CALENDAR AGENDA

Motion to approve Consent Calendar Agenda: Mendenhall: Second: Schlaefer: 5/0

VI. OLD BUSINESS – NONE

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. DISCUSSION ITEM: First Reading of [Audit Report for 2017-2018](#)

Pursuant to Education Code 41020(i), a corrective action plan must be provided to the County Superintendent of Schools for any audit exceptions contained in the audit. There was one audit exception in the 2017-2018 Audit. The corrective action plan for the finding will be presented to the Board at the March 11, 2019 Board Meeting. Auditors will be in attendance to answer questions.

B. INFORMATION ITEM: [LCAP Update](#): Changes to the California Department of Education Accountability System and Information Regarding the College and Career Index.

- C. **DISCUSSION ITEM:** [Potential Retirement Incentive Offering to Members of the State Teachers Retirement System \(STRS\)](#)
Sierra Unified Teachers Association (SUTA) requested the district investigate the feasibility of offering a retirement incentive to its members. The requirement for offering the incentive, as stated by the STRS, is for the incentive to be either revenue neutral or revenue positive (result in savings) to the district. Details can be found in the above link.
- D. **DISCUSSION ITEM:** [Potential Retirement Incentive Offering to Members of the California School Employees Association \(CSEA\)](#)
Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) between Sierra Unified Employees and the District include a me-too clause wherein offerings provided to one employee group must be offered to other groups. For this reason a study investigating the feasibility of offering a retirement incentive to the members of the CSEA was also conducted. Details can be found in the link above.
- E. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM:** [Low Performing Student Block Grant \(LPSBG\)](#)
California Department of Education has allocated funds available to school districts in the form of block grants based on the districts' population of students identified as low performing on state English language arts and/or mathematics assessments who are not otherwise identified for supplemental grant funding under the LCFF, or eligible for special education services. The funds are to be used to address the persistent achievement gap in California's public schools, and to provide resources and evidence-based practices to initiate and sustain systemic change. Please see details in the above link.
- F. **DISCUSSION/ACTION:** [2019 Ballot for CSBA Delegate Assembly](#)
The Board voted for four (4) candidates in SubRegion 10 B. Motion by Falk to select the following Candidates: Daniel Babshoff (Kerman USD); William Johnson (Clay Joint ESC); Connie Schlaefer (Sierra USD); and Kathy Spate (Caruthers USD): Second: Mendenhall: 5/0
- G. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM: Job Description – Athletic Director** (Moved from Consent Agenda)
The Job Description and position of a District Athletic Director was discussed. Motion to approve Job Description-Athletic Director: Mendenhall: Second: Fowler: 4/1 with Qualls voting no.

VIII. ADVANCED PLANNING

- A. [Governance Calendar](#)
- B. Next Regular meeting date: March 11, 2019
- C. Next Special meeting date(s): February 13 & 14, 2019 @ 4:00 p.m.
Governance Leadership Workshop
- D. Requested Future Agenda Items:
 1. 5-Year Goals (Where are we?)
 2. Athletic Director Report
 3. Review of Board Policy for adding agenda items to agenda

IX. CLOSED SESSION The Board of Trustees went into Closed Session at 9:19 p.m.

- A. Personnel - Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release/Complaint/Employment (Gov. Code § 54957)
- B. Potential Litigation (Government Code 54956.9)

X. RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION The Board reconvened at 9:55 p.m.

- A. Adjourn Closed Session and Reconvene Open Session
- B. Report Action Taken in Closed Session - NONE

XI. **ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

Chrissy Falk, President

Melissa Ireland, Ed.D, Superintendent

Ron Eldridge, Clerk