



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 5:30 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 as amended with Agenda Item VII.B as approval of Resolution #14-18/19 and VII.C as Resolution #15-18/19: Eldridge: Second: Qualls: 6/0

D. IDENTIFY CLOSED SESSION TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

1. *Personnel*

E. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Chrissy Falk led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. A moment of silence followed in remembrance of some special people in our Sierra Community: Amy Wyman, Rosemary Nagle, and Gene Crosslin.

II. PRESENTATION

A. Sierra High School Jazz Band

The Board and audience were treated to a performance by the Sierra High Jazz Band.

III. RECOGNITIONS – None

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Maryl Millard shared her concerns regarding Wi-Fi systems and their utilization of microwave radio frequency radiation (RFR) and electromagnetic (EMF) fields, and the long-term effects of exposure to RFR. She requested an agenda item at the April 8th Board Meeting for discussion of minimizing the risks.

Larry Kasparowitz, Maryl Millard's husband and grandfather to three students in the District, asked the Board to keep an open mind regarding the possible solutions, addressing the risks of exposure to RFR.

V. COMMUNICATIONS

A. Reports

1. ASB President – Brooke Kuball
Miss Kuball reported on ASB and other activities taking place at Sierra including: participation in Kid's Day for Valley Children's Hospital when \$2,500 was raised; the planning of a Volunteer Day to go work in Valley Children's Hospital; volunteer hours at Poverello House; planning of the Spring rally; and transitioning into planning for Prom and Chieftain Days.

2. Site Reports

- a. Sierra Junior/Senior High Schools, Sean Osterberg – Principal
Mr. Osterberg spoke about the honor of at least one student in the past three years receiving the Smittcamp scholarship at Fresno State, one of the top Honors pathways with a full-ride. This year, out of the 50 students selected, Sierra had two students receiving the honor, Ian Rodriguez and Elaina Meininger. Last week they got to be part of this new team and went on a tour of the Smittcamp Alumni House and Fresno State. They came back wearing their Fresno State gear, very excited. It's awesome to see two out of 50 students in the valley be chosen from Sierra. Our SAT prep courses have started again. There are usually about 12 students who are a part of it. Four of those students are taking it a second time because it helped so much. Our girls' basketball team, with head coach Bobie Begaye, finished in the Elite 8 in the State playoffs, with a play-in game against Tulare Union beating them 59-56 in our gym. We then travelled to South Central LA and played Locke High School who won the LA City school section, beating them 71-25. The next game was in Coalinga, who hadn't lost a game in their gym in almost 2 years. Our girls won 62-60 in overtime. We then traveled back down south to play Ramona in Riverside where we lost 61-52. Ramona made it to the Finals where they lost to Caruthers. All of this happened in 5 days. It was a fun and intense ride, as exciting as it gets. It was magical to see how much the girls supported each other.
- b. Foothill Elementary School, Alan Harris, Ph.D. – Principal
Dr. Harris spoke of a couple of things on the Foothill campus. Last week we had our SOAR awards where our teachers at each grade level recognize students who have most improved their reading and their math. The teachers connect with the students so well, but they also build a sense of belonging. The students who don't receive an award are so supportive of those who do. It's one of the great traits that we develop at the school. Added this trimester, and the brainchild of Mrs. McQuoid, 4th grade teacher, was recognizing all students who had grown 2 levels in the 2nd round of the DLA's. In grades 3-6, we had 64 students grow 2 levels, about 18%. What's unique about what we're doing is that it's a learning assessment developed by the teachers mapped around what is important for students to learn. This sets us up for how we as a school learn how we're growing and getting the students where they need to be as creative, courageous, competent learners. In April we will be having a meeting with parents and teachers to reassess our report cards. It is critical in this era that parents know how children are doing related to the learning and how their doing related to their work as a learner. There is not confidence with our teachers and with our parents that it is a good tool. So we will be reassessing that, and have meetings that Tammy will assist to create a tool that does a more effective job in communicating with our parents on how their children are doing. In fall of 2017, as part of the Eaglefication, our PFA recognized that there wasn't a basketball hoop for our 1st and 2nd grade kids to play with. PFA supporters quickly got a portable basketball hoop which is now one of the most used by all. This winter the plastic base cracked and is no longer useable. About 7 days ago, our maintenance worker Danny Hand thought we should cement it out and put in a post instead of replacing it. Today there are 1st and 2nd graders playing basketball again. Our maintenance crew, under Jim's leadership, see things that need to happen with the kids and make it happen. This is part of what makes us special.
- c. Sandy Bluffs Alternative Education, Ara Keledjian – Director
Mr. Keledjian shared that we are going to provide CPR training for both our adult welding students and our pre-school parents. Sign-up sheets showed just about every pre-school parent interested. We should see this happening sometime in April. Regarding the update to the pre-school, all of the furniture will be replaced by the end of the school year. We were able to complete our DLA's. Something new this year, is the physical fitness testing for our Independent Study students in grades 7-9. We're working to update our Independent Study curriculum. US History, World Cultures, and Economics is complete. Tammy Montgomery and Terry Nagle have been very helpful with this. A suggestion came from community member to somehow tie Mountain Wear more closely with our district. This would involve creating a small room or closet within the school system that Suzie Souder would keep stocked up for us with supplies and clothing. This way, a Counselor or Administrator, recognizing a need, would be able to take the student directly in the school and get them what they need. A place has been identified and will be cleaned and prepped for a school location of Mountain Wear.

3. Superintendent Report – Melissa Ireland, Ed.D.
 Dr. Ireland shared the LCAP Timeline with the Board (see following link) as well as the proposals to SUSD from Granville Homes regarding transfers listed below. The Board agreed that, as in the past, they are not interested in pursuing a transfer agreement with Granville.
 - a. [Timeline for LCAP](#)
 - b. Granville Homes Proposal
 1. A renewable 5-year agreement (per this Ed. Code section: http://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=EDC§ionNum=46600) with Clovis Unified to allow free-flowing transfers to/from either district from within the Ventana Hills neighborhood (or CSA 34/any similar geographic area agreed upon by the two districts). Or,
 2. An agreement with Granville to permit a territory transfer of the Ventana Hills neighborhood, and adjacent, uninhabited parcels required to connect to CUSD (excluding Brighton Crest), with the understanding that every time Granville pulls a permit for a new home, SUSD receives a lump sum, the amount of which will be negotiated prior to finalizing the territory transfer.

4. Department Reports
 - a. Facilities and Maintenance - Jim Harris, Supervisor
 1. [SUSD Real Property Removal](#)
 Mr. Harris shared quotes from David Knott Incorporated (DKI) for asbestos abatement and demolition of district owned house structure @ 27587 Tollhouse Road. Quotes can be viewed in the above link.
 - b. Transportation – Craig Barnes, Supervisor
 Mr. Barnes reported that the previously discussed California Energy Grant has still not released any of the proposed awards. CHP inspections are ongoing, but should be wrapped up tomorrow. This weekend we will be transporting for the Heavenly Half Marathon.
 - c. Business Services - Janelle LaBerge, Assistant Superintendent
 1. [Budget Report](#)
 Ms. LaBerge spoke of receiving a call from Christina Azevedo from the Department of General Services (DGS), the organization handling the purchase agreement for the sale of Auberry Elementary School. All testing is complete. Auberry is not a historical building. They will attend the April Public Works allocation meeting to hopefully have it all approved. There is one more step for Sierra involving capping some old wells. We should have the sale by early July. Ms. LaBerge also reviewed the Budget Report with the Board, which can viewed in the link above.
 - d. Education Services – Tammy Montgomery, Director
 Mrs. Montgomery reported that DLA 2 is successfully complete at all sites and that the scores will be reviewed with the Board at the April meeting. There was a much appreciated concerted effort in Alternative Education for all students to take part. Last Tuesday night was the Parent Night for dual enrollment. It was very well attended by the public with lots of questions and interest.

BREAK: 6:48 – 6:52 pm

5. Program Reports
 - a. Special Education – Teresa Page
 Ms. Page spoke briefly about the evolution of Special Education. Back in 1983, the Supreme Court decided the Rowley case which set the standard for special education to “some educational benefit,” and rejected “maximization of potential.” This standard stayed in place for more than 3 decades. In September, 2016, the Supreme Court decided the case of Endrew F. In this ruling, the court did not overturn Rowley, but gave lower courts the language of, “IEPs should be reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances,” and stated that each child’s IEP must be “appropriately ambitious.” Now, two years’ worth of court cases later, we have more clarity on the impact of this ruling. The standard didn’t change, but because many parents think that it did change, the court system is hearing a lot more dispute cases between parents and school districts. What is actually changing as a result of these lower court cases, is the way we think

about Special Education in relation to General Ed. The terms “Full Inclusion” and “mainstreaming” are indicative of the thinking that the courts and CDE are finding problematic. These terms are coming from a mental framework that, once a student qualifies, places a student in Special Education first, in general education second. In the past, IEPs were written such that once a student is “awarded” Special Ed, the student then is designated an amount of time back included with his or her peers. Research conclusively shows us that time away from typically developing peers decreases the quality of a student’s outcomes in proportion to the time spent away from peers and the General Ed teacher. Restricting a student’s educational setting through Special Ed must only be considered when all other interventions prove insufficient; if the student qualifies, **and** if Special Education supports and interventions are needed in order for the student to make “adequate” progress. Sierra Unified has, over the past few years, greatly expanded the scope and effectiveness of interventions that are available to students. Some of this is in the area of mental health. More advanced technological tools are also proving helpful in increasing students’ access and independence. Our tasks, now that the systems are mostly built, are to improve communication, match each student to the correct intervention, and to ensure that we use each intervention completely and with fidelity. Constant compliance review is standard for special education. Our current area of concern is that the district’s Special Education population is performing way too low in the statewide standardized tests that occur each spring. The team is aware of this significant problem, and we are taking steps to address it and ensure all our students are as successful as possible. In our district, the overall numbers of students that we are serving has been staying consistent over the last few years. We have fewer students with moderate to severe cognitive disabilities, while we are experiencing an increase in the number and severity of students demonstrating behavioral and social emotional challenges. We have more than doubled the number of students who qualify for Special Education under the category of Emotional Disturbance since 2016, and to show the direction of the trend, 83% of the students who currently have behavior support plans are elementary age or younger. Even as we build the supports for students in elementary school, we have been scrambling to address the emotional and behavioral needs presented in our youngest children. We are not unique in seeing these trends, they are challenging to all school districts

- b. [Native American Education](#) – Gavin Begaye
Mr. Begaye, Native American Program Mentor, updated the Board on Program. See link to successes and data shared above.

6. Sub-Committee Reports

- a. [Facility Renovation Committee](#) – Ron Eldridge [Report](#)
Mr. Eldridge reviewed the final report from the Facility Renovation Committee which can be viewed in the links above. This item will be brought back for further discussion.

B. Board Reflections

Connie Schlaefer spoke about the fun of judging at the spelling bees and helping with the Pine Needle Festival. She thanked Dr. Ireland for the list of the LCAP meetings and encouraged the Board members to attend to hear people first hand. Tomorrow she’ll be going to Sacramento for Legislative Action Day. She’ll be meeting with Andreas Borges and Jim Patterson. She’ll report back on how that goes. She has been working with Marilyn Weldon to help set up a scholarship in Bert’s name.

Wes Qualls shared that he attended a ‘Board Member Roles and Functions’ meeting with Legal Services in Fresno County. There are many rules, including posting of meetings at site when Board members call in remotely, Form 700’s, and the CA Records Act. Melissa Miller put together, as part of her Senior Project, inviting the Director and Jazz Band from Columbia Junior College. He has on a couple of occasions, had the opportunity to drive kids up to the Jazz Festival at Columbia JC. It was a great opportunity. It’s a tremendous opportunity for kids. The Jazz Band, as well as some professional musicians from the Bay area, performed with our kids in the small gym on Saturday afternoon. It was a great group of parents and kids there. We ought to have them back about every 60 days.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR AGENDA

Motion to approve Consent Calendar Agenda with amendment to February 111, 2019 Special Session minutes reflecting the vote to adopt the agenda as 5/0: Eldridge: Second: Mendenhall: 7/0

VII. OLD BUSINESS

- A. ACTION ITEM: Second Reading of Audit Report for 2017-2018 Audit Certification**
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 was presented to the Board. Brenda Daddino, with M. Green and Company, LLP, clarified points of the audit for the Board.

Motion to approve the Audit Report for 2017-2018: Mendenhall: Second: Fowler: 7/0

- B. ACTION 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.

Motion to approve Resolution 14-18/19 – STRS Retirement Incentive Offering: Mendenhall: Second: Schroer: 7/0

Board Member	In Favor	Opposed	Absent
Chrissy Falk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Tom Mendenhall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ron Eldridge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Jason Schroer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Wes Qualls	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Connie Schlaefer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Don Fowler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

- C. ACTION 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.

Motion to approve Resolution 15-18/19 – PARS Retirement Incentive Offering: Mendenhall: Second: Eldridge: 7/0

Board Member	In Favor	Opposed	Absent
Chrissy Falk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Tom Mendenhall	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Ron Eldridge	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Jason Schroer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Wes Qualls	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Connie Schlaefer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Don Fowler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. DISCUSSION ITEM: Budget Considerations for 2019-2020**
The Superintendent proposed that the Board consider adding the following items to the 2019-2020 budget.
1. Increase substitute teacher daily rate from \$103 to \$130.
 2. Increase the workdays of the Alternative Education Director by 5 days, from 205 to 210, equivalent to elementary principal.
 3. Change the current open position from a 4.5 hour bus driver, which has been open and unfilled since January, to an eleven month, full-time utility bus driver position.

B. DISCUSSION ITEM: [Copier Contracts](#)

Our current copier lease is able to be upgraded in the last 24 months of the lease. American Business Machines is proposing to offer the same number of copiers as the current contract, with a monthly reduction in the payment of \$329.01, annual savings of \$3,948.12. Ray Morgan Company is proposing to offer the same number of copiers as the current contract, with a monthly reduction in payment and annual savings of: Canon – \$447.98 and \$5,375.72; or Ricoh – \$452.22 and \$5,426.61

C. ACTION ITEM: Approval of Review and Certification of the [2018–2019 Second Interim Financial Statement](#) as of January 31, 2018.

The State-required forms, along with various schedules representing analysis used in the development of the Second Interim Report, were provided in the Board packet and online. The Second 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 Certification:
Mendenhall: Second: Qualls: 7/0

IX. ADVANCED PLANNING

A. [Governance Calendar](#)

B. Next Regular meeting date: April 8, 2019

C. Next Special meeting date: April 5, 2019 @ 4:30 pm – Superintendent Position Description Approval

D. Requested Future Agenda Items:

1. Report – District Progress on 5-Year Goals – May 13, 2019
2. Facility Renovation – April 8, 2019
3. Maryl Millard (WiFi in schools) – April 8, 2019

X. CLOSED SESSION The Board of Trustees went into Closed Session at 8:59 p.m.

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

XI. RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION The Board reconvened at 9:44 p.m.

A. Adjourn Closed Session and Reconvene Open Session

B. Report Action Taken in Closed Session - NONE

XII. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Chrissy Falk, President

Melissa Ireland, Ed.D, Superintendent

Ron Eldridge, Clerk