



## MINUTES OF REGULAR 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 (A), Vice President; Ron Eldridge, Clerk; Jason Schroer; Wes Qualls; Connie Schlaefter; Don Fowler (A).

**C. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:** Motion to adopt agenda: Eldridge: Second: Qualls: 5/0

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

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

**E. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** – Alan Harris led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

A moment of silence was held in recognition of the life of Charlotte Gordon, and the one year anniversary of the loss of fellow Board Member, Bert Weldon.

### II. RECOGNITIONS

#### A. Sierra Junior High School Teachers

Mr. Osterberg had the privilege of recognizing the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade staff at Sierra Junior High School (in attendance were: Laura Heeger, Chris Dearden, Terry Villegas, Gina Riley, and Andrea Marjala). He shared that as a group the last three years they have worked to collaborate across curricular areas, to meet the students' social needs and academic achievement of ALL students. In education, we are always looking for way to improve. As a district, we have to look to find solutions to the ongoing challenges in chronic absenteeism. It was the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels, that last year, showed promise with work done in connecting with students through advisory, and a culture focused on belonging. As a team advisory, lessons were designed to focus students on goal setting, academic understanding, citizenship, self-accountability, and managing self-care. This is a group of adults who come to work every day to make a difference. Dr. Harris added "A necessary growth in our district has been chronic absenteeism. The one set of grade level in our district has shown improvement, particularly in chronic absenteeism, has been in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and the work done last year connecting with students. Throughout the fall, a minimum of 10 parents who have stopped me specifically to say that they have a 7<sup>th</sup> grader or an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, and how lucky they feel that their child is at Sierra Junior High School, because they feel like they belong and they connect. The parents are talking to their friends in other districts who have kids who are struggling because the school feels too big and they don't feel like they have a place. Our parents are saying that their kids feel a sense of belonging every day. It's a credit to your work...I personally believe you are the lucky ones (to teach Junior HS) because I think those ages are just so full of life and that you embrace that and embrace the children, and let them know they're loved and belong. We are really, really fortunate to have the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers that we have in our district. Thank you."

### III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Caydin Simonian, Sophomore at Sierra High School, spoke about her hopes that at the next Career Fair, there will be more diversity in jobs presented.

## IV. COMMUNICATIONS

### A. Reports

1. ASB President – Sarah Page  
Miss Page reported on ASB and other activities taking place at Sierra including: Field trips, one this Thursday to a NAMI on Campus Club Conference, raising awareness of mental health and reduces the stigma on campus through fun activities and education; an ASB field trip to Chowchilla HS to learn from each other ASB groups; working on talent show; and the winter formal.
2. Site Reports
  - a. Foothill Elementary School, Heather Wheeler, Ed.D. – Principal  
Dr. Wheeler was not present due to illness.
  - b. Sierra Junior/Senior High Schools, Sean Osterberg – Principal  
Mr. Osterberg shared that they are at half time in the school year. The first DLA's have taken place. We are able to see how our team of students are doing, but like every good coach and teacher, we need to make adjustments and look for ways to get better. The second half of the year is the most critical because no one ever remembers how you start. It is how you finish. We have our WASC visit coming up in March and we know we are doing great things to help all of our students achieve. We look forward to the opportunity to show it. This next half is going to be great and the focus by staff is intense and ready.
  - c. Alternative & Extended Education, Ara Keledjian – Director  
Mr. Keledjian reported that the WASC visit has been postponed until January 27<sup>th</sup>. The next Student Attendance Review Board (SARB) is coming up on January 21<sup>st</sup>, one of our ways to address chronic absenteeism and truancy. We are working with Big Sandy Rancheria, through Sue Carter, in putting together a CTE type adult school program, ages 18-25. We will be visiting a similar program in Fresno. Tom Zizzo and Sue have a vision of what it would look like, to help tribal members and community members to not only get their high school diploma, but also to get some CTE training, and attaining ready-to-go jobs within the tribe or outside. It's very exciting. Jami Smith, Native American Program Advocate at Foothill, wrote and received a grant from Fresno County Office of Education for an outdoor classroom, highlighting Native plants. This was recently on Education Matters. A link to that will be on our website in a day or so. She, and Candice Corn did a wonderful job talking about the project and how it will help the community.
3. Superintendent Report - Alan Harris, Ph.D.  
Dr. Harris spent some time over winter break speaking with some consultants in regards to Proposition 13, to understand the implications if it passed for being able to get matching funds, related to the money that we have from Auberry Elementary. Later tonight will be an announcement the architect firm that is being recommended for our Long Range Facility Plan. In the January workshop, when we talk about buildings, facilities and maintenance, we will also have an update on the bond and its implications, and what it might look like for us.
4. Department Reports
  - a. Facilities, Maintenance and Transportation – Craig Barnes, Supervisor  
Mr. Barnes spoke about earlier this year taking a facilities tour with Dr. Harris of the elementary site where it was discovered that we need to address our security, site cleanup, vandalism, and ongoing maintenance needs. A recommendation has been drafted to deal with the issues, and will be presented at the January Board Workshop. He then shared some pictures of the last month at Facilities and Transportation.

- b. Business Services - Janelle Bryson, Assistant Superintendent
    - 1. [Monthly Budget Report](#)  
 Mrs. Bryson reported that on the 10<sup>th</sup>, Governor Newsome released his proposal for the 2020-21 state budget. There is an estimated COLA of 2.29%. In the adopted budget in June it was 3%. Newsome has offered some other categorical type programs to make up for money owed from previous years. The pre-school, special education funding that we got this year will be repeated in the 2020-21 year. It will not be unrestricted. He is also proposing an increase to the ongoing special education funding. No one in the legislature has voted on any of this. Many times what is proposed in January can be quite different than what is decided in May. Nothing is proposed to help with the increase in PERS and STRS, nor any discretionary funds proposed. There a pre-school facilities funds that will be available, as well as increases in the amounts per students served by those state funded preschools. On the federal side, there is proposed to be an increase in our Title 1 funding, and federal special ed money, approved in October of last year.
  
  - c. Education Services – Teresa Page, Director  
 Ms. Page gave the Board an overview of the counseling and therapist supports available in the district. There is a school psychologist on each campus that provides services daily in the areas of counseling, consultation, observations, and coordination of mental health services. Also, both campuses provide meeting space for students who receive therapeutic and court-ordered services from other agencies, including Turning Point and Fresno County Mental Health. The services at Foothill start with three rooms dedicated to daily student support: the SOAR center, Wonder Room, and Sensory Gym, each staffed either continually or as needed by personnel trained in Positive Discipline and de-escalation techniques. All 4 Youth is the agency that provides therapists through the county office - this is the program that Sierra has participated in as one of the first districts in the county in spite of our small size, due to our extensive dedication to improving mental health services for our students. There is one All 4 Youth Therapist available at Foothill 5 days per week from 8 - 4:30, and another therapist three full days per week to work with students and families who qualify with a diagnosable condition. The referral process is simple but takes up to 4 weeks for families to start being seen, so, although this service is not a quick fix, it is a good long-term option. Finally, mental health supports on Foothill's campus includes a district-contracted Mental Health Therapist who is available one day per week dedicated solely to therapy with students on Tier 3 Behavior Intervention. At the Sierra Campuses, I'll start with continuation: The school psychologist spends one hour daily at the Sandy Bluffs and Oak Meadow sites. She is also currently running a girls group at Sandy's and helping to design and implement a new behavior system at Oak Meadow. There is an All for Youth therapist on site 1 day per week for therapy, and Youth Care Specialist 1 day per week for case management and Preventative Early Intervention for students that have private insurance or are not yet Medi-Cal eligible. At Sierra, there is a room on campus designed as a safe space to regroup, supervised by the school psychologist, that they call the Calm Room. There is also a room staffed daily from 10 - 5 daily to support students on a short term basis with more academic focused issues, and to provide help with homework after school, just known as Room 3. In addition to the school psychologist, the Jr. High School Counselor provides behavior interventions at Tier 2 (Check in and Check Out). All for Youth provides a Therapist every day, and a Youth Care Specialist 1 day each week. If a mental health crisis occurs on any campus the school psychologist is immediately contacted and is able to determine which service is appropriate, and coordinates that service with the student and/or the family. In addition, the school psychologist at Sierra is fully trained to assess and help students at risk for suicide.
  
  - d. Curriculum and Instruction – Tammy Montgomery, Director  
 Mrs. Montgomery shared that we have contracted with Multiple Measures online assessment reporting service to pull together all of our state testing data, as well as our local testing data. They'll do their magic behind the scenes and spit it back to us in readable reports that are accessible by individual teachers for individual students. As a district, we'll be able to crunch that data across the board. We finalized Friday, so tomorrow the state data will be pulled and sent up to them and by the end of the week, we'll start having some reports starting to be generated. DLA 2 is coming up. Teachers are currently reviewing and revising their 2<sup>nd</sup> DLA assessments in English/Language Arts and Math. Those will start as early as January 28<sup>th</sup>. We'll have results at the end of February.
- 5. Program Reports – NONE
  - 6. Sub-Committee Reports – NONE

**B. Board Reflections**

Connie Schlaefer stepped down from her CSBA Legislative Representative to the District because it doesn't exist. She will be going to Legislative Action Day.

**V. CONSENT CALENDAR AGENDA**

Motion to approve Consent Calendar Agenda: Schroer: Second: Eldridge: 5/0

**VI. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. DISCUSSION/ACTION 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.

Motion to approve the Senior Center Application for CDBG Funding: Eldridge: Second: Qualls: 5/0

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. DISCUSSION ITEM: First Reading of [Audit Report for 2018-2019](#)**

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 were no audit exceptions in the 2018-2019 Audit.

**B. DISCUSSION ITEM: Recommended Architect for Master Facilities Plan**

SIM/PBK is the architect firm recommended by a panel of 8 for our Master Facilities Plan. We thank both of the firms who submitted proposals, SIM/PBK and Darden, both highly recommended. This will be brought back for final approval at the February 10, 2020 Regular Board Meeting.

**VIII. ADVANCED PLANNING**

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

**B.** Next Regular meeting date: February 10, 2020

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

**D.** Requested Future Agenda Items:

**IX. CLOSED SESSION** The Board of Trustees went into Closed Session at 6:57 p.m.

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

1. Superintendent Mid-Term Evaluation

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

**C.** Employee Bargaining Group Negotiations (Government Code Section 54957.6)

**X. RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION**

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

**XI. ADJOURNMENT** - The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 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