

REDWOOD CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Redwood City, California

APPROVED MINUTES OF BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

November 18, 2015

1. Call to Order

President Dennis McBride called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. at the District Office, Redwood City School District ("RCSD"), 750 Bradford Street, Redwood City.

Present at the Board Meeting: President Dennis McBride, Alisa MacAvoy, Hilary Paulson, Shelly Masur, María Díaz-Slocum and Superintendent John Baker.

Others present: Chief Business Official Wael Saleh, Executive Director of Educational Services PreK-5 Linda Montes, Executive Director of Educational Services 6-8 Wendy Kelly, Leslie Crane, Heidi Chávez, Dennise Stewart, Alice Lane, Courtney Ophsang, Janine Zacharia, DJ Waldow, Heather Andreini, Christine Sochoux, Dan Walker, Dennis, Hussley, Doug Blankenship, Geoger Milionis.

2. Welcome

President McBride welcomed those present. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Changes to the Agenda

No changes were made.

4. Approval of Agenda

The board approved the agenda as submitted, (Masur/Paulson; 5-0).

5. Community/Staff Recognition

5.1 "Meet RCSD" videos

Naomi Hunter, Director of Communications, presented to the School Board a video "Meet RCSD". The video included interviews of students and staff.

5.2 Recognition of Trustee Shelly Masur

Senator Jerry Hill's Office and Assemblymember Kevin Mullin's Office presented Trustee Shelly Masur with a resolution to honor and celebrate her 10 years of service and dedication to the Redwood City School District.

The Redwood City School Board, together with Superintendent Baker recognized Trustee Masur and presented her with an honorary trophy for her 10 years of serving in the Redwood City School District Board.

The School Board, Superintendent Baker, and administration thanked Trustee Masur and wished her the best of luck as the newly elected Redwood City Council member.

## 6. Oral Communication

Heidi Chávez, parent at Hoover Community School, addressed the School Board about her concern regarding her son's behavior. Ms. Chávez commented that other's students' behavior in the school bus has had a substantial impact on her son and she believes her son's social development has been impaired as a result of other students' behavior. Ms. Chávez commented that she struggles every morning to get her son to ride the bus, as he refuses to go to school. Ms. Chávez urged the School Board to provide assistance with this matter.

In response to Ms. Chávez's testimony, Superintendent Baker assured her that Director of Special Education Carla Crenshaw would give her a call the following day.

Dennise Stewart, former Kennedy Middle School teacher, addressed the School Board about her concern regarding Roy Cloud's class sizes. Ms. Stewart stated that she has two sons who attend Roy Cloud and believes their needs are not being met due to the rise of students in every classroom. Ms. Stewart asked the School Board to consider the reduction of classroom sizes.

Alice Lane, parent at Roy Cloud, addressed the School Board about her concern with the increase of students per classroom. Ms. Lane expressed that she believes teachers do not have the time to communicate with each and every one of their students as they have to transition from one activity to the next. Ms. Lane expressed that her first grade son is struggling in his classroom and it is impossible for his teacher to provide one-on-one support when he has questions. Ms. Lane urged the School Board to consider their enrollment numbers in every classroom.

Courtney Ophsang, community member, addressed the School Board about her child starting kindergarten next year. Ms. Ophsang expressed she is disappointed at how classrooms are operating, thus far.

Janine Zacharia, thanked the School Board for the opportunity to address her concerns as a soon to be Roy Cloud parent. Ms. Zacharia stated that she is distressed about the 31 to 1, student to teacher ratio. Ms. Zacharia expressed that she would like for the School Board to recognize and acknowledge that 31 students per classrooms is a high number. Ms. Zacharia added that an ideal student to teacher ratio would be 20-24 to 1. Ms. Zacharia offered to work collaboratively with the School Board in order to brainstorm solutions to help resolve this problem at Roy Cloud.

DJ Waldow, parent at Roy Cloud, stated his concern about the high number of students per classroom. Mr. Waldow commented that having classrooms with such a high

number of students takes away time from educating children effectively. Mr. Waldow asked the School Board to reconsider lowering classroom sizes.

Heather Andreini, parent at Roy Cloud, voiced her concern about the high number of students per classroom. Ms. Andreini expressed her support of teachers and urged the School Board to work effectively in lowering the number of students to ensure an effective education.

Christine Sochoux, parent at Roy Cloud, addressed the School Board about the high classroom sizes at Roy Cloud. Ms. Sochoux expressed that for students who are English Language Learners; being placed in large classrooms poses more of a challenge, as they are unable to receive one-on-one support from teachers or teacher's aides. Ms. Sochoux advised the School Board to revisit enrollment numbers in each classroom at Roy Cloud.

Dan Walker, parent at Roy Cloud, commented that he had taught at RCSD for 9 years and as a parent of three Roy Cloud students, he has observed how students regress academically when they are placed in classrooms where the number of students is high. Mr. Walker expressed that teachers get burnt out and are unable to provide additional help to students who need it most. Mr. Walker urged the School Board to help resolve the high student to teacher ratio.

Dennis Hussley, parent at Roy Cloud, stated he moved to Redwood City in 2007. Mr. Hussley commented that over the course of his residency in Redwood City, he has witnessed how much Roy Cloud has changed. Mr. Hussley expressed that reducing class sizes would be beneficial to the Redwood City School District.

Doug Blankenship, parent at Roy Cloud, offered the School Board to work collaboratively with us to help lower the classroom sizes. Mr. Blankenship stated that offering additional support to teachers would be valuable in ensuring students' academic success.

Geoger Milionis, parent at Roy Cloud, stated that he participates monthly in Roy Cloud's Father's Club. Mr. Milionis offered his help and support to the Redwood City School District by agendaizing this item at their next meeting and create a dialogue, which would help provide possible solutions to mitigate the rising number of students per classroom at Roy Cloud.

In response to all testimony from parents and community members, Superintendent Baker stated that there has been continuous conversation about this issue with the School Board and RCSD's Human Resources Department. Superintendent Baker reiterated that an ad had been placed on Edjoin and Craigslist for instructional assistant positions. Superintendent Baker commented that the Redwood City School District has been unable to find qualified teachers and urged parents and community members to spread the word about RCSD's need for teachers and instructional assistants. Superintendent Baker assured parents and community members that the School Board and administration is working arduously to come up with a solution to the reduction of class sizes.

Trustee MacAvoy thanked parents for their advice and concerns and assured them that the School Board recognizes the importance of lowering classroom sizes and encouraged parents to contact any board members to continue this discussion, as well as contact any other parents or community members they might know to become volunteers or apply as teachers or instructional assistants.

Trustee Díaz-Slocum expressed that she is well aware of the needs of students and thanked parents for their support. Trustee Díaz-Slocum advised parents to work collaboratively with the Redwood City School District to help find solutions to this problem.

School Board President McBride commented that the School Board is not pleased with having 31 students per classroom, but is happy to work closely with parents and RCSD's administration to help reduce the student to teacher ratio.

## 7. School/Community Reports

### 7.1 Technology Department Report

Marco Baeza, Chief Technology Officer provided the School Board with an update on the Technology Department.

### 7.2 Climate Survey Update

Naomi Hunter, Communications Director provided the School Board with an update on the climate survey.

#### **2012-13**

The District worked with Education for the Future, a non-profit affiliated with Chico State University. RCSD used questions provided by Education for the Future. The survey was very difficult to administer: RCSD had to choose between conducting the survey on paper, or online, but RCSD could not take a hybrid approach. RCSD chose to conduct the survey on paper for parents, which resulted in uneven participation. Schools that have gone nearly paperless had a lower than usual participation rate, the opposite of the effect we often see. The survey was designed more for internal use than as a communication tool for parents and the community and the way results were reported made it inaccessible for review by members of the public, and difficult for internal analysis. 2,146 parents, 439 staff and 5068 students took the survey.

#### **2013-14**

The District hired Panorama Education, a new company with an ability to provide interactive, online results, to administer the survey. The Panorama survey offered RCSD the ability to give parents a choice of whether to take the survey on paper or online. As a result, for the first time, RCSD saw very high participation from schools that tend to have lower participation rates for surveys conducted online, and RCSD also had high participation rate from schools where high percentages of parents use email. Parents, staff and community members were able to easily study the reports, due to interactive format of the reporting. Panorama also offered the ability to track response rates and were able to remind families to turn their survey in. RCSD used the same

questions as in 2012-13, but incorporated the LCAP questions in the survey. 2,478 parents, 383 staff and 4870 students took the survey.

#### **2014-15**

The District once again used Panorama, but made changes to the survey. RCSD consulted with the Gardner Center and developed new questions for the parent and student survey, and RCSD worked with CSEA and RCTA to get feedback on the staff survey. RCTA did not request any changes and numerous suggestions from CSEA were incorporated into the survey. As in 2013-14, RCSD incorporated the LCAP questions in the survey. 2,502 parents, 387 staff and 3235 students took the survey.

#### **2014-15 Survey Results:**

Similar to 2013-14, results from a recent survey of Redwood City School District parents, staff and students that measured perception of the schools' academic strengths and weaknesses, and overall satisfaction with the district indicate that parent, staff and students are very satisfied with academics, safety and the atmosphere at each school. One hundred percent of the teachers who participated in the survey indicated that they "love to teach", and 98% of families indicated that their child feels safe in his or her classroom. 98% of families strongly agreed, agreed or were neutral that their child's school allows input and welcomes parents' contributions. 97% of parents feel the school keeps them well-informed about school activities, and 93% of parents feel their child is being adequately prepared for what he or she will do after this school.

#### **2015-16**

In preparing for administering this year's survey, RCSD have had several debrief meetings with Panorama staff to talk about several issues, including:

- Implementing the survey is very time consuming for DO district staff;
- Distributing paper surveys to parents creates a lot of work for principals and office staff;
- The November timing of the survey put a strain on school site staff who were pre-occupied with conferences and report cards;
- Incorporating the LCAP questions is slowing down and complicating the process;
- The survey is not aligned to the district's stated academic/educational goals;
- RCSD wants to use the results more effectively to improve instruction and school climate.

#### **Goals for 2015-16:**

- Simplify execution of survey for everyone involved;
- Adjust timing to avoid November crunch;
- Increase participation by parents and staff, if possible;
- Align survey to goals;
- Use results to improve school climate, improve instruction and provide important information to the community about the climate at our schools.

#### **Outcomes of Debrief Meeting with Panorama:**

- Panorama now offers a menu of questions organized into thematic "question banks" that were developed by educational researchers at Harvard University,

that are nationally benchmarked with 220 other clients. RCSD can pick individual questions or categories of questions from their bank of questions. (These questions are already professionally translated and available in multiple languages, including Spanish.) Using Panorama question banks will allow RCSD to compare its results with other districts who are using the same question banks. Using Panorama's question banks would streamline the administrative work; using its own custom questions created many layers of work in providing questions to Panorama, reviewing survey layouts out, translating, proofreading, etc.

- November to February is the ideal time to conduct the surveys; the only reason to administer in November is because the survey included LCAP questions.
- Using the survey bank will streamline administration of the survey and make this timeframe more attainable.
- Conducting the LCAP survey separately using a tool like Survey Monkey will provide flexibility in timing of the climate survey.
- Panorama is piloting a program to offer the survey via text message links on smart phones, in addition to offering it in paper. This would eliminate the need to send and collect paper surveys, which was very time consuming for principals and office staff, but would still allow for reminders to be sent to parents who had not yet participated. Parents who wanted to take the survey on paper would have the ability to do so on request. Paper surveys will be available in every school office.
- Involving the Director of Assessment and Executive Directors of Educational Services and a board sub-committee will ensure that survey is aligned with district goals.
- Panorama can provide support on how to analyze and use results for improvement. RCSD learned that a neighboring district devotes an entire day to this, and RCSD plans to investigate that further.

#### **Next steps:**

- Form a Climate Survey Board Sub-Committee to review and select questions that are aligned with district goals. In addition to two board members, committee would include Superintendent Baker, Executive Directors of Educational Services Linda Montes, and Wendy Kelly, Director of Assessment Antonio Pérez and Director of Communications Naomi Hunter.
- Decide on a timeline for administering the Survey.

#### **Survey Participation**

RCSD worked with an independent organization, Panorama Education, to ensure a high-quality, confidential survey program. Panorama's team members are experts in surveying students, parents, and school staff, and Panorama has worked with school districts in 31 states on similar surveys programs.

Panorama offers a flexible system that allows the parent survey to be completed either online or on paper. Paper surveys were provided to parents who do not have access to email, reminders were sent out to parents via email, text message and phone calls. Parents who received a paper survey could still take the survey online by using a custom code that was provide to all school office managers. Likewise, any parent who

received the survey online, but preferred to take the survey on paper were able to do so, if they preferred.

All staff took the surveys online, and students took the surveys in the computer labs at their schools.

The School Board, together with Superintendent Baker thanked Ms. Hunter for her arduous work and collaboration.

### 7.3 Presentation of the Timeline to Review and Update the Local Control Accountability Plan for 2016-17 and an Update of the Monitoring Process of the 2015-16 LCAP

Wendy Kelly, Executive Director of Educational Services 6-8, provided the School Board with an update on the Local Control Accountability Plan.

The LCAP is a critical part of the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Funds are used to support the success of English Learners, Foster Youth and Low Income students.

In monitoring the 2015-16 LCAP, Principals engaged in a discussion about how they were including the actions and goals at their sites through the development of the Single Plan for Student Achievement and discussion in Site Council Meetings. Many of our action steps are in progress as outlined in the attached LCAP Monitoring Tool document.

Furthermore, Ms. Kelly added that in anticipation of the 2016-17 LCAP development process, RCSD is planning to engage parents, educators, employees, students and community to revise and update the 2016-17 LCAP.

School Board President McBride suggested that an intermediate presentation on the LCAP and LCFF be conducted before May 2016.

The School Board and Superintendent Baker thanked Ms. Kelly for her hard work!

## 8. Discussion Items

### 8.1 Discussion of Possible Soil and Air Contamination at Proposed Site for Rocketship Education Charter School

Steve Turner, Planning Manager for the Community Development Department of the City of Redwood City and Rob Bartoli, Planner for the Planning and Building Department of the County of San Mateo provided the School Board with information regarding the soil and air contamination at Rocketship Education Charter School's proposed site.

Mr. Turner commented that he, together with Rob Bartoli, Superintendent Baker, School Board President McBride and Trustee Paulson had a prior meeting to discuss the soil

and air contamination 860 Charter Street and felt it was important to share the information discussed with the rest of the School Board.

Mr. Turner explained that 860 Charter Street is a very unique site, as the building lies within the City of Redwood City's jurisdiction and the parking lot lies within the County of San Mateo's jurisdiction. Mr. Turner further added that the City of Redwood City and the County of San Mateo have been working closely with Rocketship Education to complete an environmental review and to resolve the parking and traffic challenges. Mr. Turner commented that chemical solvents were found through testing of the site's soil and the City of Redwood City, as well as the County of San Mateo have developed a remediation plan to start cleaning up the chemical solvents.

Mr. Turner further added that the City and the County are not making a decision until the chemical solvency testing has been completed. Mr. Bartoli explained that the Department of Substance Control could provide the School Board with a presentation of their findings at the beginning of the 2016-year.

Trustee MacAvoy asked if the Department of Substance Control was only testing soil for contamination or also ground water.

In response to Trustee MacAvoy's question, Mr. Turner replied that the Department of Substance Control is looking at the soil contamination, which can affect the ground water and air contamination.

Trustee Masur asked if there could be other potential air quality concerns, since 860 Charter Street is located in an area surrounded by businesses.

In response to Trustee Masur's question, Mr. Turner replied that the findings of the chemical solvents test would be available at the end of the first quarter in 2016.

Superintendent Baker commented that he and attorney Janet Mueller have been working closely, reviewing and drafting a response to Rocketship Education's Proposition 39 request.

Mr. Turner and Mr. Bartoli expressed that they would keep in close communication with Superintendent Baker and the School Board to provide information on 860 Charter Street, once it is made available.

## 9. Consent Items

The board approved the Consent Items (Masur/ Paulson; 5-0), taking the following action:

9.1 Recommendation re: Approval of Water Field Trip Request to Pillar Point Marine Preserve, Henry Ford School

9.2 Recommendation re: Adoption of Resolution 6, Resolution Honoring Barbara Pierce on Years of Exemplary Service

9.3 Recommendation re: Approval of EL Master Plan



9.4 Recommendation re: Ratification of Warrant Register, October 1, 2015 through October 31, 2015

9.5 Recommendation re: Approval of Agreement for Services, Rhythm and Moves, Clifford School

President McBride (Ayes)

Trustee MacAvoy (Ayes)

Trustee Paulson (Ayes)

Trustee Masur (Ayes)

Trustee Díaz-Slocum (Ayes)

## 10. Action Items

None.

## 11. Board and Superintendent Reports

### 11.1 Report from Board Members and Superintendent

Trustee Masur commented that she attended California State Superintendent of Public Instruction; Tom Torlakson's meeting last week. Trustee Masur added that she attended the Bay Area Science Fair in San Francisco at the San Francisco Giants' AT&T Park. Trustee Masur expressed that she encouraged the organizers of the science fair to bring this event to Redwood City. Trustee Masur reported attending the Redwood City Community School's Expansion meeting, together with Trustee MacAvoy and Superintendent Baker.

Trustee Díaz-Slocum reported attending the Food Committee meeting. Trustee Díaz-Slocum expressed that the meeting provided an update to the food committee on the pilots at Taft, Hoover and Roy Cloud.

Trustee Paulson reported attending the Connect 15 Conference, together with Trustee MacAvoy. Trustee Paulson commented that it was a well-attended meeting. Trustee Paulson also reported attending a Community Schools' meeting, participated in the Redwood City Education Foundation annual mailing and attended a County Committee on School Board Organization meeting.

Trustee MacAvoy reported attending the Redwood City Wellness Committee meeting and expressed that there was a conversation about providing more outreach for schools. Trustee MacAvoy reported attending a San Mateo County School Boards Association meeting. Trustee MacAvoy also reported attending the Family Connections and attended the Big Lift meeting, together with Edna Carmona. Trustee MacAvoy visited Hillcrest to drop off books and expressed that the students were enthusiastic about receiving books at their library.

President McBride reported attending Familias Unidas at Hawes School, together with Christina Huerdo. President McBride attended North Star Academy's Sleeping Beauty presentation. President McBride further added that he met with Peter Fortenbaugh.

Superintendent Baker reported attending the 2015 Wells Fargo Communication Connection Program and commented that three RCSD schools were recognized and received \$1,000. Superintendent Baker also attended the Executive Team meeting conducted by RWC2020 and added that there had been a discussion about mental health issues and the resources available to school sites. Superintendent Baker added that he will work with Amy Gernstein from the Gardner Center to look at ways in which students can benefit from mental health services.

11.2 Report Out on Closed Session for Public Employee  
Discipline/Dismissal/Release/Retention: Gov. Code §54957 (1 case),  
November 4, 2015

President McBride commented that the School Board received an update and no formal action was taken.

11.3 Report Out on CSEA Negotiations Update, November 4, 2015

President McBride commented that the School Board received an update on CSEA's sunshine proposal.

12. Information

12.1 Information on San Mateo County Investment Fund – October 2015

No questions nor comments from members of the School Board.

13. Correspondence

None.

14. Other Business/Suggested Items for Future Agenda

15. Board Agenda Calendar

15.1 Changes to the Board Agenda Schedule

Superintendent Baker commented that there have been no changes to the board agenda calendar.

16. Adjournment (Action Required)

The board adjourned the meeting at 10:21 p.m. (MacAvoy/Díaz-Slocum; 5-0).

María Díaz-Slocum, Clerk