



**VENTURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
May 11, 2021
MINUTES**

Call to Order

In accordance with Governor Newsom's executive orders of social distancing due to the COVID-19, the Regular Board of Education meeting was held on Tuesday, May 11, 2021, as a teleconference/video conference meeting where one or more members participated. The public had the opportunity to submit their public comment via the public comments email address or live via the Zoom platform. The public streaming of the special Board meeting was made available through the Ventura Adult and Continuing Education, TDC Studios YouTube Channel. Those in attendance were:

Board President	Ms. Velma Lomax
Board Vice President	Mr. Matt Almaraz*
Board Member	Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez
Board Member	Ms. Amy Callahan
Board Member	Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Superintendent	Dr. Roger Rice
Asst. Supt. /Bus. Services	Ms. Rebecca Chandler
Asst. Supt. /Ed. Services	Dr. Antonio Castro
General Counsel	Mr. Anthony Ramos

Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: Mr. Matt Almaraz. Abstain: None.

Public Comment on Closed Session Items

None.

Motion to go to Closed Session

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve to go to closed session at 5:01 p.m.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: Mr. Matt Almaraz. Abstain: None.

*Trustee Matt Almaraz was absent for the first two votes.

REGULAR SESSION - Ron Halt Classroom - 7:00 p.m.

At 7:00 p.m., Board President Velma Lomax called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

Report of Actions Taken in Closed Session

It was moved by Mr. Matt Almaraz, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the public employment/appointment, pursuant to Government code 54957(b) of Dr. Audrey Asplund as Principal of Buena High School for the upcoming 2021-22 school year.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

Superintendent's Report

11.a Good News

Dr. Rice shared his excitement for bringing on Dr. Audrey Asplund as the new Principal of Buena High School for the upcoming 2021-22 school year and looks forward to introducing her to the community at our next Board meeting.

Dr. Rice introduced the new Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Mr. Brett Taylor, who will begin his new position on June 7, 2021. Mr. Taylor thanked Dr. Rice and the Board and shared that he is honored to be joining the VUSD team.

Dr. Rice introduced Mr. Pavel Escobedo-Garcia, the new Principal of E.P. Foster Elementary School for the upcoming 2021-22 school year. Mr. Escobedo-Garcia thanked Dr. Rice and the Board and shared his excitement for his new position, then took a moment to introduce his family,

Dr. Rice gave a shout out to Ms. Carolyn Vang-Walker, Principal of Ventura Adult and Continuing Education (VACE), who recently received notification from the Council on Occupational Education (COE) that their application for distance learning Medical Front Office program has been approved. In addition, VACE will continue to be accredited by the COE to provide distance learning programs beyond the "provisional pandemic," allowing them to continue offering on-campus, hybrid or distance learning to their students.

Student Board Members Ms. Dailyn Thompson (sub for Elizabeth Ferris) representing Foothill High School, Mr. Emanuelle De Jesus representing Pacific High School, and Ms. Carys Garvey representing El Camino High School, gave updates on the exciting things happening at their school sites. During this meeting, Dr. Rice presented the Student Board Members with a plaque in appreciation and recognition of excellent service. The respective Principals then took a moment to thank their students for their service. The Board Members asked the students for feedback regarding their experience and suggestions for the program in the future.

Correspondence

Dr. Rice received a letter from the Sunrise Optimist Club of Ventura celebrating all VUSD teachers in honor of the Day of the Teacher 2021.

Public Comments

The following individuals gave a public comment via e-mail or live via Zoom*:

- John Caravello urging the Board to reallocate the funding for School Resource Officer's (SRO's) towards the well-being and enrichment of our youth.
- Michele Quain requesting that the Board take SRO's out of our schools and invest in other resources for our students.
- Rebekah Hinckley requesting that the Board reallocate funds for SRO's towards more mental health resources for students.
- MarCia Richardson asking the Board to reimagine school safety and defund our SRO's.
- Lauren Cohen urging the Board to remove the mask mandate for our students.
- George who would like to know if VUSD will be teaching critical race theory.
- Kari Aist* urging the Board to reallocate funds from SRO's to more mental health resources and restorative justice practices.
- Emma Aist urging the Board to reallocate funds from SRO's to more mental health resources and restorative justice practices.
- Dan Nelson sharing his appreciation for all VUSD Teachers in honor of Teacher Appreciation Day.

CONFERENCE - EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

15.a Expanded Learning Opportunities Grant Update

Dr. Antonio Castro, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, gave a brief update on the development of the Expanded Learning Opportunity (ELO) Grant process. Dr. Castro noted that at

the Special Study Session scheduled for May 13, he will review the ELO Grant, learning loss and acceleration, and the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP).

15.b Planned 2021 End-of-Year Student Celebrations Update

Dr. Rene Rickard, Chief Innovation Officer, and Mr. Joe Bova, Principal on Special Assignment - CTE, gave an update on graduations and promotions. Dr. Rickard shared that the planning process included collaboration among school sites to provide meaningful celebrations of important milestones in student's academic careers and that there was a strong desire to provide similar experiences across VUSD to ensure access and equity for all students.

Dr. Rickard noted that our Kindergarten, 5th and 8th-grade students will be honored by having a drive-by celebration with individual site traditions. Students will receive a certificate, VUSD tote bag and sticker.

Mr. Joe Bova shared that our high school seniors have already received yard signs, VUSD tote bags, stickers and banners. They will also be honored with academic signing celebrations that will take place via social media, and senior BBQ's and yearbook signing events, which are currently being planned. There will also be virtual Senior Award Nights between May 27 and June 4. In-person High School Graduation Ceremonies will be required to follow the CDPH guidelines. Students will receive four tickets to attend graduation if we remain in the orange tier and eight if our county reaches the yellow tier. All seniors will receive a mask with their school's logo on them and all graduation ceremonies will be live-streamed in partnership with VACE TDC Studios and CAPS TV.

15.c 2021 Planned Summer Program Offerings Update

Dr. Rene Rickard, Chief Innovation Officer, gave update on the 2021 planned summer programs. Dr. Rickard noted that there are three learning opportunities for students currently enrolled in Kindergarten through 11th grade: June Boost, Summer Session and August Enrichment. June Boost will be offered June 14 through July 2 and will include: online credit recovery for high school students via Edgenuity; online initial Health for incoming freshman; in-person and credit recovery for students enrolled at Pacific High School; in-person small groups for all grade levels; and in-person TWI Academy at Anacapa Middle School (for current Anacapa Middle School students).

Summer Session will be offered July 6 through July 30 for both general and special education students and will offer: in-person credit recovery and initial credit for high school including Drivers Education; online credit recovery for high school students via Edgenuity; in-person middle school bridge for incoming 6th grade students; in-person incoming 7th and 8th grade booster classes; middle school elective wheel; and in-person Elementary TWI.

August Enrichment will be offered August 2 through 13 for both general and special education students. Enrichment opportunities will be offered in areas such as art, music, and woodworking among others. Dr. Rickard shared that interest forms for these learning opportunities were due on May 7. Course selection forms will be e-mailed to families by May 14 and families will be notified of placement by May 28.

Dr. Rickard noted there will be a six-week special education Extended School Year (ESY) program for students whose IEP's mandate an offer of ESY this summer, beginning July 6 through August 13. ESY will be offered at the following school sites: Atlas EIC, Elmhurst, Balboa, Buena, and Ventura. if anyone has additional questions, please e-mail 2021summerprograms@venturausd.org

CONFERENCE - HUMAN RESOURCES - Certificated

**16.a Presentation & Approval of Resolution #21-09 "California Day of the Teacher"
(Action Requested)**

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve Resolution #21-09 recognizing May 12, 2021 as "California Day of the Teacher."

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

16.b Declaration of Need for Fully Qualified Educators & Annual Statement of Need for 30 Day Substitute Teachers (Action Requested)

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Mr. Matt Almaraz and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the adoption of the declaration of need for fully qualified educators and the annual statement of need for 30 day substitute teachers.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

CONFERENCE - HUMAN RESOURCES - Classified

17.a Presentation & Approval of Resolution #21-11 Classified School Employee Week (Action Requested)

It was moved by Mr. Matt Almaraz, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve Resolution #21- 11, recognizing Classified School Employee Week from May 16 through May 22, 2021.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

ACTION ITEMS

18.a Administrative Recommendation for Student Re-Admission from Expulsion/Suspended Order

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Mr. Matt Almaraz and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve as Amended, pulling student #21/01, to approve the administrative recommendation regarding student re-admission for student #20/13.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

18.b Ratification of Contract for Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to ratify the employment contract for the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources beginning June 7, 2021.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

It was moved by Mr. Matt Almaraz, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve consent items #'s 19-23 as presented.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

CONSENT- EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

19.a Administrative Recommendation to Waive Board Policy 6146.1

19.b Consideration of Elmhurst Elementary School Butterfly Garden Mural

19.c California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Applications for Renewal of Multi-School Membership

CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Certificated

- 20.a Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment and Reemployment of Substitute Teachers for the 2020-21 School Year
- 20.b Ratification of Administration's Approval for Leave of Absence for Certificated Personnel for the 2020-21 School Year
- 20.c Ratification of Administration's Approval of Resignations, Retirements and Release for Certificated Personnel for the 2020-21 School Year
- 20.d Ratification of Administration's Approval of Miscellaneous & Part-Time Certificated Assignments for the 2020-21 School Year
- 20.e Certification of Temporary Athletic Team Coaches

CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Classified

- 21.a Classified Position Changes

CONSENT - BUSINESS SERVICES

- 22.a Aurora Vista Del Mar Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) 2021-22
- 22.b Student Enrichment and Credit Recovery (Learn 4 Life) 2021 Summer Program Agreements
- 22.c Ratification of Final Settlement Agreement and Release of All Claims Case No. NT202104
- 22.d Award of Bid C1-22 Lemon Grove (Blanche Reynolds) Classroom Conversion
- 22.e Reject All Bids for C3-22 Sa'aliyas Ranch at Pacific High School
- 22.f Ratification of Change Order #2, C10-21 Ventura High School Cabling Project
- 22.g Disposal of Obsolete and Surplus Equipment
- 22.h Checks for April 2021
- 22.i Ratification of Purchase Orders (April 14, 2021 to April 27, 2021)

CONSENT - SUPERINTENDENT

- 23.a Consideration of Board Meeting Minutes

BOARD REPORTS

Trustee Dr. Jerry Dannenberg noted his attendance the Parcel Tax Oversight Committee meeting, where they presented an audit that tested 63% of expenditures and found that all expenditures were appropriate and reported no negative findings. A formal presentation will be brought to the June 22, 2021 Board meeting where they will be addressing Measure R and discussing the new Bond Measure H for next year. Dr. Dannenberg also attended the Special Board Meeting tour of Washington School.

Trustee Amy Callahan noted her attendance at the final PAC meeting of the year on May 4, where they discussed the So Cal Gas Issue, end of the year events, summer school and human resource updates. Ms. Callahan thanked Dr. Rice for having this forum for parents to be able to share their opinions and ideas, and is hoping that we will have more PAC Members attending next year. Ms. Callahan also attended the Washington School Tour last week. Ms. Callahan reminded everyone that the LCAP meeting is tomorrow and encouraged parents to come. Lastly, Ms. Callahan attended the Buena versus Ventura varsity soccer game and really enjoyed it.

Trustee Sabrena Rodriguez shared that she attended a Ventura High School (VHS) Staff meeting where they were acknowledge the important work that Mr. Carlos Cohen has done there and announced that Mr. Cohen will be leaving to become the new Principal at DATA Middle School and Ms. Marissa Cervantes will be coming to VHS as

their new Principal. Ms. Rodriguez presented at the College Area Community Council meeting regarding the re-opening of schools. She also attended the Special Education Department Advisory Committee (SEDAC) meeting last Friday and gave kudos to Marcus Konantz and Kerry Newley, sharing that she always learns so much. During this meeting, a presenter from Ventura College Educational Assistance Center (EAC), spoke on supports they offer for students with disabilities and learning challenges. She attended a Climate Change Task Force meeting for the California School Board Association (CSBA), where they are working on creating draft policies that school boards can adopt. Lastly, she attended the Washington School tour.

Trustee Matt Almaraz noted his participation in the Latino School Board Association virtual member mixer. He attended the California Board of Education, Creating Brave New Spaces in Early Childhood Webinar. Mr. Almaraz watched the virtual Lincoln School talent show on April 28th and shared it was phenomenal. He attended the Buena versus Ventura rivalry basketball game and enjoyed watching his nephew play. Mr. Almaraz had a café chat with Mr. Dan Nelson, President of the Ventura Unified Education Association (VUEA), and Ms. Carol Peek, President of the Ventura Education Professionals Association (VESPA). Lastly Mr. Almaraz shared that there is a missing lottery ticket and if not found by this Thursday, 19.2 million dollars will go back to the schools.

Trustee Velma Lomax shared that she attended a DATA Middle School Staff meeting where they announced that Ms. Marissa Cervantes would be the new Principal of VHS and Mr. Cohen would be the new Principal of DATA. She attended the Westside Community Council where they discussed the So Cal Gas issue and the motorhomes that are parked off Highway 33. Ms. Lomax learned that the city gave out 200 permits to individuals needing to temporarily park their motorhomes due to losing their home and are working with them to get back into housing; to date, only 75 individuals are still there. During this meeting, a question came up regarding homeless students and Ms. Lomax shared that VUSD has a department specifically to help homeless families and if anyone is in need of assistance, to please reach out to us. Ms. Lomax shared that this meeting is open to anyone in the public and encouraged people to attend. Lastly, Ms. Lomax stated she has been busy trying to raise funds for our County's robotics teams from the Department of Defense (DOD).

COMING EVENTS

- LCAP Advisory Committee Meeting: May 12th at 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
- Special Board Meeting: May 13, 2021
- Expanded Learning Opportunities Grant and LCAP Development
- African American Parent Committee (AAPC) Meeting: May 19th at 5:30 p.m.
- Ventura High School Wind Ensemble Outdoor Concert: May 20th at 6:00 p.m.
- Ventura High School String and Percussion Ensembles: May 21st at 6:00 p.m.
- Special Education District Advisory Committee (SEDAC) Meeting: May 21st at 9:00 a.m.

Board Members shared the following coming events:

- Ms. Rodriguez will be attending CSBA Board of Director's Meeting this Friday and will get the opportunity of welcoming Trustee Almaraz to his first Delegate Assembly Meeting this weekend. She will also be attending the EL graduation celebration at Buena High School next Tuesday.
- Trustee Almaraz will be attending a Mental Health Committee Meeting on May 18th and the City/College/VUSD Committee Meeting on May 19th. Lastly he will be attending the VCREA Board meeting on the 20th.

FUTURE BOARD ITEMS

- Fall Reopening - TBD
- Study Session on District Properties - July
- Facilities Update - July
- Reviewing Board Policy-Naming of Facilities - July
- Human Resources Updates - August

BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS - (No official action will be taken)

Dr. Dannenberg shared the exciting news that his daughter was recently named as the new Director of Personnel for the Rio School District.

Ms. Callahan shared she is looking forward to all of the graduations and extended her thanks to all of the teachers and education support professionals for all they have done this year.

Ms. Rodriguez congratulated Dr. Dannenberg for his daughter's accomplishments and shared they are lucky to have her. She also expressed how grateful she is for all of the hard work that has been put in to this year and hopes our students finish strong.

Mr. Almaraz congratulated the Cabrillo Middle School *Rusty Sailors* on their first Lego League Invitational Robotics and Innovations Championship in Greece, to be held virtually; they will be competing the top 200 teams across the world. Lastly, he extended a Happy Mother's Day to everyone.

Ms. Lomax congratulated Dr. Rice on the building of his team with Dr. Castro, Mr. Brett Taylor and Ms. Rebecca Chandler, and is excited to see everything they will accomplish together.

CLOSED SESSION

At 9:47 p.m., the Board went back into closed session. At 10:13 p.m., the Board returned from closed session where no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to adjourn the meeting at 10:14 p.m., to the next Regular Board Meeting to be held on April 27, 2021.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

APPROVED



President



Secretary

[REDACTED]

From: Humility <jcaravel1@ [REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 2:46 PM
To: Lomax, Velma; Almaraz, Matt; Callahan, Amy; Rice, Roger; Dannenberg, Jerry; Rodriguez, Sabrena; Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment

Dear Ventura Unified School Board Members and Superintendent,

My name is John Caravello and I reside in Ventura. I work at Channel Islands as a lecturer in philosophy. Many of my students are former VUSD students.

I email you to urge you to reconsider: the implications of having cops in schools, the stated intent of their role in schools, and the various other services that might be funded with the money used to fund SROs. The funding, I believe, should be redirected towards the well-being and enrichment of our youth. I won't repeat any data here, as I am sure you are inundated with statistics. Instead, I want to frame my comments around the (unfortunate) coupling of the concepts of "police" and "safety."

The implementation of the first police officers in schools was in 1953, in Flint Michigan. Hiring School Resource Officers (SROs) is now a widespread practice. As the populations of "urban" schools sharply increased in the 50s, predominantly middle-class, Anglo-Americans pushed for the implementation of school-police partnerships in an effort to "deter delinquency." But in doing so, they disrespected students' rights and continued to marginalize students of color and the poor. When a population composed of people with shared interests increases, their chance of organizing and agitating for positive changes increases. Cops were not originally there to keep students safe - and studies show that they continue to fail to keep students safe - but instead were implemented to challenge the rights of students who continued to be marginalized because of their race and/or socio-economic status.

It is pretty clear from the youth at your schools that SROs negatively affect their learning environment. One common demand is the need for more culturally competent staff, faculty and services. Such a demand is easy to get behind, and I'm sure each and everyone of you on this board agrees.

The existence of cops in schools, as a matter of fact, not only reinforces the school-to-prison pipeline, and not only negatively affects the psychological well-being of some of our most vulnerable youth, but it reifies the punitive practices that we all know disproportionately harm our Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Neuro-divergent, and LGBTQIA students. All of this is backed up by peer-reviewed studies, and yet all of the studies are meant with vehement denial. What gives?

We are failing our children because we are too afraid to shake up the status quo. Early education through high school should be a place where students learn how to treat one another with respect, not because they fear the repercussions of wronging someone, but because they understand that everyone has dignity. With so much discussion of "divisions" being made in politics, why is it that so few of us - especially those of us who are educated - do not stress the importance of a form of justice that does not rely on shame and guilt, on harm and violence, on suspensions, expulsions, and incarceration. It's time to try an alternative framework - a framework that respects the autonomy of individuals, that presupposes the dignity of each and every one of us, that restores and maybe even transforms the way we relate to each other.

For those of you who like arguments:

P1. The best reason for the practice of employing SROs is that they make schools safer.

P2. No studies show that employing SROs make schools safer.

P3. The best reason against employing SROs is that employing SROs makes schools less safe.

P4. Many studies show that employing SROs is harmful and unsafe - in particular for our Black and Brown youth - because it leads to a disproportionate harm to youth of color and it significantly contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline, a structurally racist complex of decisions and events that disproportionately harms youth of color compared to their white counterparts over time.

P4. When the best reasons for a practice lack evidence for the practice's efficacy and the best reasons against a practice is supported by ample evidence, then the practice ought to be abandoned.

C. Therefore, we should abandon the practice of employing SROs.

Once we've abandoned this practice, we'll have some extra funding for what our students really need: *support*. When we support each other, we keep each other safe.

Thank you,
John Caravello

[REDACTED]

From: Michele Quain <atomicquain [REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 2:55 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- SROs Out of Schools

Hello,

I would like to submit a public comment for tonight's board meeting. Thank you.

VUSD Board Members,

VUSD's allegiance should be to the students, not to the SROs. How can VUSD show they're listening to the experiences of Black & Brown students? How can VUSD show they care more for their students than for police?

Studies show that SROs aren't effective at preventing violence in schools, but their presence leads to higher rates of discipline among Black, Brown, and working class students. The presence of SROs has the potential to escalate situations, leading to arrests, which then feeds into the school-to-prison pipeline.

There are better ways to serve VUSD students than officers on campus. I ask that you instead consider investing in resources to create better futures for our students. They deserve it.

Thank you,
Michele Quain
Ventura, CA
93003

[REDACTED]

From: Rebekah Hinckley <bekahhinckleyis@vUSD.org>
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 3:02 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment for Today's Meeting, 3/11/21

Dear VUSD School Board Members,

I am writing in support of community demands to reallocate funds currently used for School Resource Officers toward supporting more mental health resources for all students in the district. Over the last decade, we've seen an astounding loss of funding for public education in general. Class sizes are larger and our art and music programs are starving. It is disheartening to see the district prioritize armed police presence on our campuses instead of enrichment for students. I understand SROs on campus provide security and discipline, but I and many others in the community believe our young people will be happier and experience fewer problems in school if police officers are not present.

The approach of seeing our students as "problems" rather than children with problems is backwards. Rather than criminalizing Black, Brown, Disabled, and Queer students, our tax money would be better spent providing services to these vulnerable populations, including restorative justice practitioners, nurses, therapists, and unarmed campus aids that reflect the diversity of our community.

I 100% support any push for more diverse and culturally sensitive curriculum, transparency surrounding discipline and hiring practices, and student self-determination. We need to listen to our youth about the concerns they have in schools. Thank you for your time. Please divest from school police forces and invest in student wellbeing.

Thank you,

Rebekah Hinckley

From: MarCia Richardson <richson5 [REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 3:47 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: Lomax, Velma; Almaraz, Matt; Rodriguez, Sabrena; Callahan, Amy; Dannenberg, Jerry; Rice, Roger; Dahm, Amy
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Re: **PUBLIC COMMENT at VUSD Board Meeting 5/11/21 - Reimagine School Safety & Fully Defund VUSD SRO's **

May 11th, 2021

Dear VUSD Board Members and Superintendent,

I am a Ventura County resident and I have beautiful Black children who have been negatively impacted by SRO's on school campuses in Ventura County. I am also a community organizer.

It is a FACT that ***SRO's in schools lead to the criminalization of Black and Brown youth.***

Today I beseech you to immediately end your MOU /contracts with the SRO's who are in our VUSD schools. I believe that it is incumbent upon you to immediately redirect funding spent on SROs towards resources that will help Black and brown students succeed and thrive. VUSD spent \$391,016 in FY 2019-2020 for half the salary of three SRO's individually made over \$200,000 annually in overtime and benefits.

A brief history of School Resource Officers (SRO's):

1950's SRO programs started in Flint, Michigan

Under the subterfuge of improving relationships between local police and youth. SRO's were placed in schools on a full-time basis for the first time ever.

- UNJUSTIFIED EXPANSION of SRO's TIMELINE:
- [C] 1963: Tucson, AZ – SRO's in Middle Schools.
- [C] 1966: Siginaw, MI – SRO's in High Schools/ Middle
- [C] 1967: Cincinnati, OH – SRO's in High Schools/ Middle
- [C] 1968: Los Angeles, CA – SRO's in High Schools/ Middle
- [C] 1968: Tulare, CA – SRO's in 2 Middle Schools
- [C] 1969: Miami, FL – SRO's in High Schools/ Middle
- [C] 1972: Orlando, FL – SRO's in High Schools/ Middle
- [C] 1975: Hillsborough County, FL – SRO's started in Middle Schools

In the mid 1990's, The U.S. Dept. of Justice seized the opportunity of FEAR of school shootings, to massively fund SRO's in our schools by tens of MILLIONS of dollars. Former President Bill Clinton approved \$60-million of funding for "COPS in School," which helped pay the costs of placing SRO's in schools. This has led to the unfair and unjust criminalization of our Black and Brown youth as they fight for a fair, equal, and equitable education in our public school systems, such as Ventura Unified School District. Studies and surveys show that BIPOC students do not feel safer with the intimidating presence of cops on their school campuses.

Therefore, I urge you to immediately end your contracts with SRO's on the campuses of VUSD schools and immediately reallocate those funds to programs that will serve this underrepresented and underserved student population.

In community,
MarCia

[REDACTED]

From: Lauren Cohen <lsmith0417@[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 3:54 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Comment for May 11th Meeting

Make masks optional for our students. Districts, Counties and States across our country are relaxing their mask mandates for children. How are we still forcing young children to wear them on their face for hours and hours? More and more studies are being released with details on the harm that can come from long term mask wearing. The benefit months ago to mask wearing was to protect others. At this point those people are receiving their vaccines. So why are we still covering our children? We are failing our children right now.

How masks are harming our kids

-A team of Italian professors of plastic surgery warn that prolonged pressure from elastic straps could leave young children with permanently protruding ears.

-Children are no longer able to rely on facial cues. Teachers and students of all ages are more likely to misinterpret one another. A whole year of not developing social skills is detrimental.

-Researchers from a University in Germany developed an online registry for parents to catalogue side effects of mask wearing. Side effects included: headaches, difficulty focusing, reluctance to go to school, unhappiness, sadness, drowsiness and fatigue. A German court then decide that children's basic rights were being violated and declared the mandates damaged the well being of students while failing to offer any benefit for the children or third parties.

-Masks can be breeding grounds for infections from bacteria, mold and fungi. This is why the CDC recommends that masks should be washed daily or whenever it gets dirty. Have you seen a mask after a child wears it all day? Even with having an extra mask at school, my sons still comes back wet and brown. Yuck! He is not old enough to understand when to change it.

WHO recommends children do not wear a mask while playing sports or at recess. But yet you require kids to wear them while running around outside at recess in hot weather. How is that ok? A young child can not understand when to take off a mask if too hot. Plus, they've been so programmed to never take it off that they are too scared even if they don't feel well.

These are just a few why mask wearing is harmful. Take 2 min to google and you can find more.

We are no longer standing down. After just a couple weeks, we have a petition with over 200 signatures to make masks optional. We also have a rally planned for next week.

I have been in contact with many other parents who feel the same way but don't know what to do or who to talk to. I honestly don't know either. You as the elected members of our school board do know. You can also end this mandate or at least fight for our kids. Don't sit back and wait for someone else. Don't sit back and wait for next year. Stand up now for our kids. Take the politics out of it!

Its about the kids now, if you can not make this happen please let me know who I need to take the fight too.

Thank you for your time.

[REDACTED]

From: The US National American Party <theusnationalamericanparty [REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2021 3:57 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment

Importance: High

Hello,
Considering that "Critical Race Theory" in itself is racist, can the Ventura Unified School District confirm that it will NOT be taught within the Ventura Unified School District System?

Thank you,

George