

San Mateo-Foster City School District
Minutes
SPECIAL MEETING~BOARD OF TRUSTEES
April 02, 2020, 6:30 PM

Teleconference Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/185075341>(to participate in the meeting)

+1 669 900 6833 (to listen to the meeting)

1. CALL TO ORDER: 6:30 PM

The Special Board meeting was called to order at 6:36 pm

2. ROLL CALL

All Board members were present:

Kenneth Chin
Noelia Corzo
Rebecca Hitchcock
Alison Proctor
Shara Watkins

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: April 2, 2020 (v)

Motion Passed: Passed with a motion by Alison Proctor and a second by Kenneth Chin.

Yes Kenneth Chin
Yes Noelia Corzo
Yes Rebecca Hitchcock
Yes Alison Proctor
Yes Shara Watkins

4. STATEMENTS

4.1. Public Statements related to agenda item(s). Please limit statements to three minutes

Public Comments:

#1 Fernando Lorenzo offered a platform for online classes for teachers to use as a way of communicating with students as the District transitions to Distance Learning. He asked the District to consider americanteachers.com as a main platform. He added that this platform provides the ability to host commencements or graduations. He gave his email address for answering any questions: fernandoglorenzo@gmail.com

#2- Elizabeth Wood has three children in the District. She spoke to the need of a learning structure for the students to have more interaction with teachers as the schools have transitioned to Distance Learning. She proposed that in Phase II the District moves to an interactive model for at least the majority of a school day. She feared that without proper structure, the students will be disengaged during the rest of the school year.

#3 – Palu appreciated the work that was done in such a short amount of time. However, she was wondering why other schools are already implementing interactive classes. She felt that there is no consistency among the schools. She asked for a plan after spring break and support for parents and students.

#4 - John Ulloa, appreciated the Special Board meeting to discuss next steps. He is a parent in the District and an online educator at Skyline College. He spoke about the need for more effective teaching as he felt that his child's teacher is not engaging and that his child is not learning. He expressed disappointment and hoped that the district would improve in Phase II.

#5 - Jennifer Aquino thanked the District for pivoting quickly and spoke to the need of parent engagement and Distance Learning. She felt that there is a lack of communication between teachers and students and wanted more teacher and principal feedback. She asked the District to do a parent survey like what was done in San Carlos. She also asked that the District set directions and expectations for a long-term plan with parent feedback.

#6 - Randi Paynter spoke about the construction projects going on at the school sites and asked the District to read the guidelines for what is considered essential business as she felt that the current District's projects do not fit the

criteria. She stressed that is not worth spreading the virus and that is impossible to work in construction and maintain 6 feet distance.

#7 – Jasper Sorenson has two children in the District. He was concerned that the current teaching system is not sustainable. He shared that he has multiple jobs and that is challenging for him to find time to teach his children. He suggested using Zoom for teacher/student interaction and learning.

#8 – Andrew is also a parent in the District. He asked for more teacher/student engagement and for an academic plan. He shared that he and his daughter do FaceTime with other students for math and language but there are no classes via Zoom or Google Suite as other districts do and he is concerned that students will fall behind. He hoped for more communication regarding a plan for Distance Learning.

#9 – Jonathan Koop is a parent at Bowditch Middle School who offered help to teachers with technology. He reminded everyone that flexibility will be needed during these unprecedented times. He spoke about inconsistency in teaching in elementary and middle schools. He recommended that the teachers offer recorded lessons and use Zoom. He also encouraged teachers to engage students with fun interactive activities such as virtual coffee or virtual happy hour as students miss the aspect of socialization. He thanked everyone for facilitating the meeting.

#10 - heinzp57 is a parent at Park Elementary School. She spoke to the need of more guidance from the teacher and more teaching time. She thought that videos would help the parents and keep students engaged. The packet that her child received did not have many directions. She thought that teachers needed to have more interaction and that parents are looking for extra help and guidance from the District.

#11 - Brad Immuel appreciated the meeting as the District has shown leadership. He too asked for parental engagement. He shared that he works at Stanford University and that he knows that teaching online is doable and that help is available for teachers. He encouraged the District to reach out for help. He was disappointed to report that his son has not received compacted math and found it unacceptable. He requested a better study plan in the future.

#12 - Anqima is a parent at Brewer Island Elementary School who spoke about security issues while accessing Google classroom. The functionality is working for his daughter who is in kindergarten but there are security concerns as the ID and password are very generic and anyone can figure out the credentials. Currently, only the teacher has access to the account.

#13 - Rocio Alegria is a parent at Brewer Island. She shared that her son is in Special Education and that she is grateful that her son meets with his teacher and other students in the IEP program for ½ hour daily. However, she feels overwhelmed with too much homework and cannot help her son. She requested additional resources as she feels that her son is falling behind. She also advocated for the Spanish speaking students that are in Special Education and do not have the proper technology.

#14 - Jennifer Carlson, a parent at Abbott Middle School, shared that she helped distribute Chromebooks and hotspots at various schools in the District where she works and they learned that they needed more Chromebooks and hotspots than they expected. She noted that there is a lot of work to be done and that free connectivity services and free hotspots offered will not meet the District's demands. She also shared that she and her daughter are having a positive experience with Distance Learning. She thought having 6 periods a day would be a lot to undertake.

#15 - Lisa Warren is a parent at Park Elementary School. She shared her experience with Distance Learning and noted that her two children have frequent Zoom classes with their teachers. She felt that this is a good opportunity for everyone to learn new technology and prepare for the next step, as there are teachers who are using the technology and trying to engage with their students during these difficult times.

#16 - Sherri, a parent of twins in the District, was disappointed to hear negative comments, as it has been only 2 ½ weeks since Distance Learning took place. She was appreciative of the efforts being made to improve Distance Learning and shared that her twins' teacher has been meeting via Google and is constantly communicating with the students and parents. She thought that the teacher is very responsive on top of taking care of her own family.

#17 - Julie MacArthur, a teacher and SMETA President, reassured everyone that teachers are working longer hours than ever before, suddenly switching from in-class teaching to Distance Learning. She noted that school

during the Shelter-in-Place will not be the same as everyone has been accustomed to. She also commented that the COVID-19 situation is hard for everyone because not only do educators have to teach but they also have to care for their own families. She asked everyone to recognize that these are not normal times and teachers are doing everything they can. She noted that it is important to focus on communications.

#18 – Molly Carter’s daughter, who is not a District student, shared that she is having a positive experience learning online; however, she felt that her sister who is a District student is not learning enough as she only has two hours of instruction per day. She suggested keeping the school schedule as close to normal using Zoom or Google Classroom. Molly, the mother, requested to follow a normal schedule for all kids to have a good Distance Learning experience. She noted that she appreciates the teachers.

#19 - Douglas Edmund is a parent of two children at Bayside S.T.E.M. Academy. He shared his experience with Distance Learning and noted that he has split experiences as one of his children’s teacher is very engaging while the teachers for his other child have not been as engaging. He is hopeful for more structured Distance Learning after spring break. He applauded everyone for the effort made during these unprecedented times.

#20 - Fernando Figueroa, Teacher on Special Assignment, shared that the students in the Spanish Immersion program have adjusted very well using Google Meets. He noted that teachers, in order to recreate a physical classroom, have to think differently. He also noted that second language learners need technology devices and requested help with fulfilling this need.

#21 – Stephanie Pearlman, a parent at Fiesta Gardens Spanish Immersion program, stated that she is concerned about her child’s education during Distance Learning. She said that she is frustrated with the disconnect between the teacher and her son, the work packet that her child was given only contained enough work for one week and that her child needs Spanish language support.

5. SUPERINTENDENT SERVICES/BOARD

5.1. Consideration of whether current construction projects at school sites will be designated as "Essential Governmental Function" under the revised order of the Health Officer of San Mateo County, issued on March 31, 2020 (v)

Ilana Parmer Mandelbaum, County Counsel, and Dr. Rosas explained that under the recent order from the health Officer, construction projects may only move forward if they are considered “essential.” Ms. Manderlbaun described essential construction projects.

Public Comments:

Jennifer Aquino believed that the four site construction projects are not considered essential and asked the Board not to jeopardize the health of the workers and others.

Randi Paynter asked the Board to take the pandemic seriously and to show leadership.

RG stated that he understands the financial concerns of the Board but he also thought that the school site constructions were not essential. He was concerned about workers becoming infected.

Anquima also agreed with previous comments and thought that the District’s construction projects are definitely not considered essential business.

Board Comments:

Most Trustees felt that they could not categorize the four school site projects as being “Essential Governmental Function” under the Order given by the Health Officer of San Mateo County, which was issued on March 31, 2020. They were concerned about the cost of shutting down. However, they did feel that people’s health was a priority. They understood that the GC’s would need time to conduct a safe shutdown.

Trustee Corzo thought that there was ambiguity around the difficult decision. She believed that these projects should be categorized as essential because they are community buildings that can be available to the public should there be a need during emergencies.

The Trustees appreciated Trustee Corzo's perspective. They agreed that these are complicated and challenging times. In reviewing the language of the Order given by the Health Officer of San Mateo County, four of the Trustees still felt that the District's construction projects could not be considered essential business.

The Board did not take action, as the projects were considered not essential.

5.2. San Mateo-Foster City School District Response to COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place and Distance Learning Update

Dr. Rosas gave an update on the latest information of the District's response to COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place and Distance Learning.

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources Sue Wieser talked about the conversations with Union leaders in the district to finalize an MOU for Phase II Distance Learning.

Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services David Chambliss presented the educational planning for Learning Phase II.

Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Dr. Sarah Drinkwater provided information for Special Education, Mental Health Services, and counseling during Distance Learning Phase II.

Director of Technology Peter Cazanis spoke about the process for Chromebook and Hotspot distribution.

The Board thanked staff for the informative presentation and asked clarifying questions about allowing the teachers to access the school sites, the District MOU, the timeline for delivering the Chromebooks and hotspots, the plan for assisting students with the use of the devices in Spanish and English, as well as the date when the parent survey will go out.

Public Comments:

Randi Paynter thanked the staff for the work that they are doing. However, she was concerned about the transition to Spring break and then back to Distance Learning, having her children being engaged, in addition to dealing with family mental wellness. She requested extended learning opportunities from the District for Spring break.

Collen Harrington shared that she enjoyed hearing the report for Phase II. She wanted to know if there are any extended learning plans for the Spring break. She also asked what the plan is to meet the 180 days of instruction. She felt that one of the challenges for children is not having real time with teachers.

Heinzp57 shared an analogy of what is considered essential workers during a crisis and felt that during times of uncertainty we need to look at things from the perspective of what is good for all people, as we need to come together as a community.

Fernando Lorenzo commended the Phase II plan and asked the Board to consider exploring other applications for Distance Learning platforms. He noted that Americateachers.com can help with a platform that meets these needs.

Jennifer Aquino was disappointed that parents were not involved in the planning of Phase II. She mentioned that some teachers are not having much interaction with the students. She encouraged the District to form a task force and to include teachers, students, and parents to further plan Distance Learning.

Elizabeth Wood shared her thoughts about Distance Learning and noted that it is critical that students connect with teachers and receive live instruction.

J Ramirez wanted to assure the families that the staff at Fiesta Gardens is working together to connect with families to provide the necessary instruction support. She added that many families are going through difficulties worrying about their next meal and their safety. She is looking forward to Phase II.

John Gallagher is a parent and teacher in the District. He shared that he is impressed with the education services that they are getting. As a teacher he has found that Distance Learning is very different from regular classes and that he will have to conduct small groups of Distance Learning to make it work. He surveyed his parents and he is looking forward to providing the services that they need after Spring break. He spoke about the need for providing technology support to Spanish speaking families.

Fernando Figueroa, a parent and teacher in the District, thanked Mr. Chambliss for the informative presentation and agreed with the previous speaker about his experience as a teacher. He asked that the District establish etiquettes and guidelines for students and teachers regarding expectations for students and that these guidelines be available in English and Spanish. He noted that creating digital material is time consuming.

Lisa Reschke thanked Mr. Chambliss for outlining what Distance Learning will look like in Phase II. She noted that Distance Learning is not new and that it is important to figure out how to improve it. She felt that the District is in a much better place than other districts.

RG – was wondering about the process for implementing changes based on the comments made this evening and if those will be taken into consideration.

Jack Bachofer called in from Hollister, California, he is a grandfather at Sunnybrae Elementary School and he shared that his grandson is having a good experience with Distance Learning and using Google. He and his wife help his grandson with schoolwork, as they are both retired teachers. He asked the Board to maintain flexibility and to expect difficult financial times in the near future.

Board Discussion:

Trustee Corzo shared that as a parent and essential worker it is difficult for her to find the right balance. She understands that families are not feeling supported and that some teachers are not reaching out as frequently as parents would expect. She noted that we are living in difficult times and teachers have to balance work and family while delivering the best education possible. She added that she feels for the families that are hurting financially as they worry how they will pay their rent and have food on their table. She noted that there is a lot of work to be done and that the Equity Task Force will meet to further discuss the COVID-19 situation and Distance Learning. She shared that a survey will go out to gather feedback. She asked parents to stay connected.

Trustee Chin thanked the District for the update and for all the work done. He thought that the District is moving in the right direction in spite of challenges. He appreciated the collaboration with teachers and staff during these difficult times. He reminisced on the steps taken since the announcement of the Shelter-in-place and Distance Learning and the constant pivoting since then.

Trustee Watkins reflected on the importance of everyone being involved and a COVID-19 hierarchy of needs. She listed six basic needs and felt that the District has worked to meet those needs. She noted that she would like to provide parents with more information and thought that reading is a top priority. She asked the District to provide the students with the proper learning material, such as books, pencils, along with Chromebooks. She wanted to make sure that students have access to this material. She would like to see exemplars for each grade level, PD for parents/teachers, and resources for Spring break. She also supported further communication and feedback.

Trustee Proctor reflected on her experience with Distance Learning and shared that she had certain expectations but soon she realized that she had to adjust those expectations. She also shared that she has been impressed with the work that her children are doing and appreciated the District's hard work. She is looking forward to Phase II. She believed that getting parent's feedback will be crucial as she wants to make sure that no student is left behind.

Trustee Hitchcock is aware of prioritizing Distance Learning Phase II and thought that the District has a lot of work ahead. She asked everyone to practice patience during these difficult times.

6. ADJOURNMENT

6.1. Adjournment (v)

The Special Board meeting adjourned at 10:57 pm

Motion Passed: Passed with a motion by Rebecca Hitchcock and a second by Alison Proctor.

Yes Kenneth Chin
Yes Noelia Corzo
Yes Rebecca Hitchcock
Yes Alison Proctor
Yes Shara Watkins

Board Secretary

Date: _____

