VENTURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
May 10, 2022
APPROVED 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 10, 2022, 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 Regular Board meeting was made available through the Ventura Unified School District's YouTube Channel at https://www.youtube.com/c/VenturaUnifiedSchoolDistrict . Those in attendance were:

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

Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Ms. Amy Callahan, seconded by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg and passed on a roll call vote of 3 – 0 to approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: Ms. Velma Lomax*. Abstain: None.
*Trustee Lomax was having technical difficulties

Public Comment on Closed Session Items

None.

Motion to go to Closed Session

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 3 – 0 to approve to go to closed session at 5:03 p.m.

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

REGULAR SESSION - 7:00 p.m.

At 7:23 p.m., Board President Sabrena Rodriguez called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

Report of Actions Taken in Closed Session

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve the public employment/appointment, pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b), of Dr. Deborah Martinez, as the new Principal of Montalvo Elementary School.

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

It was moved by Ms. Amy Callahan, seconded by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve the public employment/appointment, pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b), of Ms. Melanie Morrow, as the new Principal of Poinsettia Elementary School.

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

It was moved by Ms. Velma Lomax, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve the public employment/appointment, pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b), of Mr. Thomas Gaeta, as the new Principal of Sunset School.

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

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Ms. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve the public employment/appointment, pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b), of Ms. Bertha Villa, as the new Assistant Principal of Ventura High School.

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

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve the public employment/appointment, pursuant to Government Code Section 54957(b), of Ms. Terri Allison, as the new Director, Maintenance and Operations.

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

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Dr. Roger Rice, introduced Dr. Lorelle Dawes as the new Director of Expanded Learning. Dr. Dawes took a moment to thank Dr. Rice and the Board and expressed her excitement for beginning this new role.

Dr. Rice took the opportunity to recognize the VUSD Gratitude Award recipients for the month of April. The Gratitude Awards were designed to recognize exceptional VUSD teachers, employees, volunteers, students, and administrators associated with VUSD. There were a total of 23 submissions who will receive a certificate of acknowledgement. Four individuals were randomly selected to also receive an Amazon gift card.

Dr. Rice gave a shout out to all VUSD principals in honor of Principals' Day on May 1, 2022.

Dr. Rice gave a shout out to Mr. Eric Reynolds, Director of Risk Manager, who was awarded the Central Office Administrator of the Year by the North Ventura County Chapter of the Association of California School Administrators.

Student Board Members Ella Haas, representing Buena High School, Logan Bobis, representing Ventura High School, and Nina Segura, representing VACE, gave brief updates on the exciting things happening at their school sites. Dr. Rice then presented each Student Board Member with a plaque in appreciation and recognition of excellent service. The respective principals took a moment to thank their students for their service.

Correspondence

None.

Public Comments

The following individuals gave a public comment via email or live via Zoom*:

1. Elizabeth Aguilera regarding the Healthy Schools Program.
2. Alyssa Baarstad regarding the Healthy Schools Program.
3. Alise Echele regarding the Healthy Schools Program.
4. Ashley Pope regarding the Healthy Schools Program.
5. Kelliann Kimura regarding the Healthy Schools Program.
6. Jamie Goodenough regarding the Healthy Schools Program.

7. Jenny Jacobs regarding the Healthy Schools Program.
8. David White regarding the Healthy Schools Program.
9. Jennifer Brickey regarding the Healthy Schools Program.
10. Michelle Johnston regarding exceptional leadership & extreme behavior.
11. Jenn Coffman regarding concerns about a student.
12. Ruben Galindo* regarding HR issues.
13. Dan Nelson* recognized the "Day of the Teacher" and the "Day of the Nurses," and the hard work they put in every day.
14. Carol Peek* thanked the VUEA teachers for always supporting the ESP's and for their collaborative working relationship; she also thanked the nurses and health techs and shared her appreciation for them.

ACTION ITEMS

14.a Consideration for Review of History Social Science Instructional Materials for Grades K-5 (First Reading)

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 3 – 1 to approve the History Social Science instructional materials for grades K-5 as presented.

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

14.b Consideration of Resolution #22-15, "California Day of the Teacher"

It was moved by Ms. Amy Callahan, seconded by Ms. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve Resolution #22-15, "California Day of the Teacher" as presented.

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

14.c Consideration of Resolution # 22-16, "National Nurses' Day"

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve Resolution #22-16, "National Nurse's Day" as presented.

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

14.d Consideration of Resolution #22-20, "Classified School Employee Week"

It was moved by Ms. Velma Lomax, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve Resolution #22-20, "Classified School Employee Week" as presented.

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

14.e Consideration of Resolution #22-12, "School Communicators Day"

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve Resolution #22-12, "School Communicators Day" as presented.

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

14.f Declaration of Need for Fully Qualified Educators & Annual Statement of Need for 30 Day Substitute Teachers (First Reading)

It was moved by Ms. Velma Lomax, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve the declaration of need for fully qualified educators and annual statement of need for 30 day substitute teachers as presented.

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

14.g **Salary Schedule Principals**
It was moved by Ms. Velma Lomax, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve the Principal salary schedules as presented.

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

14.h **Ratification of the Declining Enrollment Committee Members**
It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve the ratification of the Declining Enrollment Committee Members list as presented.

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

14.i **Award of Bid C2-23 Atlas K-8 Conversion (First Reading)**
It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve Bid C2-23 Atlas K-8 conversion project to Tomar Construction as presented.

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

14.j **Award of Bid C6-23 Roofing at Various Sites (First Reading)**
It was moved by Ms. Velma Lomax, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve Bid C6-23 Roofing at various sites project to the lowest responsive bidder for each site as presented.

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

14.k **Consideration of Resolution #22-17, Continuing Board of Trustees Authority to Hold Virtual Meetings Pursuant to AB 361.**
It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve Resolution #22-17, continuing the Board of Trustees authority to hold virtual meetings pursuant to AB 361 as presented.

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

CONFERENCE - SUPERINTENDENT

15.a **Board Member Selection Process for Trustee Area 5**
The Board discussed the selection process for the current Board member vacancy in Trustee Ares 5. A Special Board meeting has been scheduled for May 18, 2022 and a total of six applications were received by today's 4:00 p.m. deadline. There was Board consensus to interview all candidates that meet the criteria listed on the application. The Special Board Meeting will take place in person and will not be livestreamed.

CONSENT CALENDAR

It was moved by Ms. Amy Callahan, seconded by Ms. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve consent items #16-20 as presented.

Item #19.a, Ventura High School Dolores Huerta Mural, was pulled for discussion. Mr. Mateo Navarro, ASB Vice-President of Ventura High School, shared information about the mural and noted over $14,000 was raised in only three weeks.

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

CONSENT- EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

16.a California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Applications for Renewal of Multi-School Membership

16.b Overnight, Out of the Tri-County and Ratification Field Trips

CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Certificated

17.a Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment of Adult Education Teachers

17.b Certification of Temporary Athletic Team Coaches

17.c Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment and Reemployment of Substitute Teachers for the 2021-22 School Year

17.d Ratification of Administration's Approval of Resignations, Retirements and Release for Certificated Personnel for the 2021-22 School Year

17.e Ratification of Administration's Approval for Leave of Absence for Certificated Personnel for the 2021-22 and/or 2022-23 School Year

17.f Approval of Administration's Recommendation of Employment Status Changes for 21-22 School Year

17.g Ratification of Administration's Approval of Miscellaneous & Part-Time Certificated Assignments for the 2021-22 School Year

CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Classified

18.a Classified Position Changes

18.b Release of Probationary Classified Employee

18.c Classified Personnel Changes

CONSENT - BUSINESS SERVICES

19.a Ventura High School Dolores Huerta Mural

19.b Award of Request for Proposal for Guard Services

19.c Ratification of Purchase Orders and Contracts

19.d Ratification of Check Payments

CONSENT - SUPERINTENDENT

20.a Consideration of Board Meeting Minutes

BOARD REPORTS

Trustee Velma Lomax shared that she is on the Declining Enrollment Committee and the biggest focus right now is a survey to all parents to find out why they are leaving VUSD. Ms. Lomax noted her passion for robotics, and shared that Team 4414 went all the way to the World Championships. She also noted that Cabrillo Middle School's First Lego League Team is currently trying to get their invention patented.

Trustee Amy Callahan noted that she was a chaperone for the CIMI outdoor education program. Ms. Callahan attended the CSBA/ACSA Coast-2-Coast conference last month in Washington D.C. Ms. Callahan also attended the last parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting of the year at Sa'aliyas Ranch. Lastly, Ms. Callahan attended the ACSA Region 13 awards where several VUSD staff were honored including Dr. Rice who received the Superintendent of the Year Award.

Trustee Jerry Dannenberg shared that he attended the ELL Reclassification event on April 19 at Buena High School. Dr. Dannenberg also noted his attendance at the PAC meeting at Sa'Aliyas Ranch, Teacher of the Month Celebration at Will Rogers, and FTHS AVID program.

Trustee Sabrena Rodriguez attended the VEP Launch event and thanked all of the organizers. Ms. Rodriguez congratulated VHS & BHS theater programs on their musicals sharing that she was able to attend the musical at Buena and it was incredible. Lastly, she attended the Coast-2-Coast conference in Washington D,C. and noted that it was incredibly valuable.

COMING EVENTS

- AAPC Meeting: May 25th at 5:30 p.m.
- VHS Spring Music Concert: May 26th at 7:00 p.m.
- BHS Spring Music Concert: June 1st at 6:30 p.m.
- Teacher of the Month Celebration: June 1st at Balboa
- VUSD District Art Show: June 2nd at 5:00 p.m.

FUTURE BOARD ITEMS

- Board Priorities - May 17
- Board Candidate Interviews - May 18
- LCAP & Budget - June 7 & 28
- Board Travel & Conferences - July 12
- Healthy Schools Program - TBD
- Parcel Tax Committee Update - TBD

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

Superintendent Dr. Roger Rice, shared that earlier tonight during closed session, he shared with the Board that he has summited his letter of retirement effective September 3, 2022. He noted that he is extremely proud of the things that our District has accomplished and knows he is retiring leaving a very strong team to lead the way. Board President Sabrena Rodriguez shared that the Board is grateful for his hard work, passion, dedication, and incredible problem solving that he has brought to VUSD over these past three years. Ms. Rodriguez shared that the Board looks forward to celebrating his retirement in the near future.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ms. Velma Lomax, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve to adjourn the meeting at 10:23 p.m., until the next Regular Scheduled Board meeting to take place on May 24, 2022.

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

APPROVED _____ President

_____ Secretary

[redacted]

From: Elizabeth Aguilera <glizaguilera[redacted]
Sent: Monday, May 9, 2022 6:18 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment regarding the Healthy Schools Project

I would like this comment to be read at the Board meeting on May 10, 2022 regarding the funding for the Healthy Schools Projects:

Dear Board Members,

I am writing this email to request your support to continue funding the Healthy Schools Project.
My child attends Elmhurst Elementary and is a student in SPED. With this program my child has gotten to enjoy gardening and cooking classes. In the garden, him and his classmates weed, rake, cut the fruit and veggies from the plants, and participates in cooking lessons at his school site which are all valuable life skills. Him and his classmates benefit so much from this program as they're able to use their time in the garden to work with fine motor tools, expand vocabulary and create an engaging activity for them. Over this past school year, my child's teacher has sent photos of him and his class gardening, and participating in their cooking lessons and I loved seeing how much they all have enjoyed this program. It would be heartbreaking for this program not to continue as I have seen how special it is for my child and his classmates.
All students on the Elmhurst campus have benefited from this program being on campus and deserve to continue to benefit from it. After the many blows COVID has thrown to our students, they do not need something else taken from them and I urge you to please allow the program to continue at the school sites it is currently at. I hope you will stand by this program and not take it away from the students.
Thank you for your time,
Elizabeth Aguilera

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Baarstad, Alyssa
Sent: Monday, May 9, 2022 9:19 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Public Comment RE: Healthy Schools Project

To VUSD Board of Education,

I am writing regarding the potential cutting of funding for the Healthy Schools Project and the on campus gardens. I am a mod/severe special education teacher at Elmhurst Elementary currently teaching grades 1-3. Elmhurst is lucky enough to have an on campus garden and cooking room that we utilize regularly. Our staff is being told that the district feels that due to the creation of the farm behind Pacific High School it eliminates the need for the on campus gardening programs. I personally do not feel that this is realistic. Our class/school has daily access to these gardens and monthly gardening/cooking lessons with Ms. Ashley Parrish Decker. This would not be the case if the program was eliminated and we had to wait for a scheduled field trip to the district farm. Our class has benefitted greatly from this program! Being able to prepare soil, plant different foods, weed and water our gardens, harvest and then prepare the food that comes from our garden is a valuable life skill and wonderful sensory experience. The sensory exposure from the garden alone is wonderful! Getting to get their hands in the dirt, digging, raking, weeding, as well as touching different types of plants, smelling (we have cilantro, mint and onion growing) different smells when we pluck some leaves of the plants is a fun experience. Tasting new foods has also been fun and for students with moderate to severe special needs can be quite a challenge. Ms. Ashley guides our students in such a gentle way that we have had many students who typically do not try new foods, explore new foods in the garden or cooking classroom. Then there is the aspect of using scissors to cut the plants (we did this last week when we harvested flowers to dry and make tea) and the tasting and cooking lessons where we learn to try new foods or experience them using our 5 senses as well as practical knife skills are experiences I do not want our class, program or school to lose. We are also being exposed to new words that we typically wouldn't be using in the classroom. So this program is not only benefitting our class in terms of life skills but also OT/PT skills as well (cutting, digging, pulling, raking) and as a Speech skills (new word acquisition). I feel that the cutting of this program would be a disservice to our students in our mod/severe program as well as all of the students at Elmhurst. Many of our students do not live in homes where they can have a garden to explore the way we do on campus. Many of our Elmhurst students eat mainly fast food, ready-made and processed foods and do not have the opportunity to try the foods that are grown in the garden in any other location other than the garden/cooking class.

My hope is that this program would be allowed to continue and that our students would still be able to experience all that this program has to offer.

Thank you,

Alyssa Baarstad, M.Ed.
Educational Specialist , Moderate/Severe
Ventura Unified School District

Elmhurst Elementary School
[redacted]

For the future of every student

[redacted]

From: Public Comment
To: Alise Echele
Subject: RE: -EXTERNAL SENDER- May 10th Board Meeting: Public Comment

From: Alise Echele <alise.echele[redacted]
Sent: Monday, May 9, 2022 9:23 PM
To: Public Comment <public.comment@venturausd.org>
Subject: Re: -EXTERNAL SENDER- May 10th Board Meeting: Public Comment

Sunday, May 8, 2022

Dear Ventura Unified Board Members and District Administrators,

I am writing to share my support for the Healthy Schools Project. As a collaborator in Ventura County Farm to School and former VUSD Registered Dietitian/Healthy Schools Project Coordinator from 2011-2022, I have had the privilege of leading and working alongside a team of Nutrition Specialists, teachers, principals, and food service staff to implement a robust school garden, nutrition and cooking education program serving 5,000 students at 14 schools. Ashley Parrish-Decker, Rose Wagner and Laura Wilson, the stellar Nutrition Specialist team, have continued to lead and collaborate with each school site to implement a robust program while meeting a diversity of grant objectives from the following four grant funders: Ventura County Public Health, Sage Garden Project, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and Sprouts Healthy Communities Foundation. Ventura Unified is without a doubt lucky to have them on the team.

This team values the program because it has and continues to positively impact the whole child. I saw the impact first hand when 5th graders tasted kale for the first time in a garden-fresh salad they learned to prepare while practicing the use of fractions as they measured ingredients. Students' enthusiasm rose to pure joy and glee as they practiced being scientists in the outdoor school garden classroom during a soil and compost exploration lesson. What is soil made of? What is decomposition? Students investigated these questions through hands-on learning and the garden is the perfect outdoor classroom to engage this inquiry. English language learners thrive in the outdoor garden classroom because all the content language presented in a lesson is physically present in the garden waiting for students to explore and observe. These real-world outdoor school garden experiences fuel students' interest and desire to write, speak, listen and read.

These outdoor school garden and kitchen classrooms are an essential component of student engagement and learning at the school-site level. Students have the opportunity to engage in this learning on a regular basis because it is woven into the curriculum and connected to content standards. The programming implemented by the Healthy Schools Project for the last 20 years is without a doubt an essential educational component. As the school garden and cooking education movement builds across the state and country, we should be asking ourselves how we can strengthen and expand this type of education, not eliminate it. I urge you to continue the Healthy Schools Project and provide support to the Nutrition Specialist team, so they continue to invest their time, energy and expertise into this essential program. Our students deserve no less from us.

Sincerely,

Alise Echele
Member, VC Farm to School Collaborative
Former VUSD Registered Dietitian & Healthy Schools Project Coordinator

Dahm, Amy

From: Ashley Pope <ashley[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2022 6:04 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- FW: Healthy Schools Program

Hi Dr. Rice and Team!

I came across a flyer around cutting the healthy kids program at VUSD title 1 schools. I don't know the details of this discussion, and I feel like the flyer doesn't tell the full story, but I'm writing to say that losing the campus gardens would be very disappointing.

My son is 9 years old and is in the mod/severe program at Elmhurst, and the Healthy Schools program gives him consistent access to the garden. This includes trying new foods, cooking, and sensory input all in an integrated setting with his peers. Having the garden on site makes the program accessible to him. The stimulus would be too much for him if he were to need to take a field trip to pacific high school to access the garden. Accessing the garden daily and cooking classes monthly adds tremendous value to his educational experience at Elmhurst. At home, Gavin will not try new foods, or even touch them! At school, he sees his peers touching, tasting, smelling, and is willing to give new things a try.

The gardens on campus also give kids a chance to take a deep breath and engage with nature. I know mental health is a focus for us all. I hope the district can find a way to keep gardens on campuses across the district. Thank you for your consideration of special education students in these decisions.

Ashley Pope
Membership Development Manager
Ventura Chamber of Commerce
[redacted]
Ashley@[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Kelliann Kimura <kkimura@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2022 9:20 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment on Healthy School Project

To whom it may concern:

School gardens are more than patches of dirt and soil, they are outdoor classrooms that provide a critical intersection between a diverse range of subjects. They provide a place full of immersive and hands-on-learning about topics that go far beyond the impact of indoor classroom spaces. School gardens are a place for everyone of all ages to learn in and learn from.

Gardens are a critical site of learning that students should be able to accumulate knowledge from on at least a daily basis, not an annual basis through field trips. The cultivation of a school garden not only teaches students important academic lessons, but they also teach ownership and responsibility. They create children who are more willing to try new foods and new experiences.

These spaces provide the opportunity to think about and explore so many potential career pathways from health and nutrition to agriculture to alternative education. They are critical sites of learning in science, math, and nutrition. As climate change creates the need for active changes, school gardens allow students to develop a stronger connection to the land. They are able to develop a sense of responsibility and connection to the land, and from there they are better able to understand how their everyday actions, like eating locally grown foods, can positively impact the world they live in. School gardens are also influential for ELD students as they are able to engage with each other through hands-on learning. It is so much more engaging for students to learn another language through actions instead of books.

It would be a devastating loss to the students and the community to get rid of the Healthy Schools Project, especially as other districts' programs continue to grow. The resulting loss of the program would only cause your district, your kids, and your community to just fall further behind.

Sincerely,
Kelli

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Jamie Goodenough <jamgoodenough[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2022 10:10 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Healthy Schools Project Request for written comment

Dear District Leadership and Board Members,

I am the mother of 2 boys at Sunset School, a kindergartner and a second grader. Everyday when I pick my boys I ask them how their day was. They usually respond "Good". Then I try to draw more out of them, "I need details!" or "What was your favorite part?" I say. The most I usually get out of them is about PE or recess. I usually only get to hear about the physical parts. They are very physical and they love to move. Unless, it was a day they got to go to the garden. They both absolutely love their time learning outside. And I love hearing about what they learn. They tell me about the bugs and the different plants in the garden. They fight to tell me what they saw out there. My kindergartner will say to the second grader, "Did you see the vegetables growing in the garden?" My second grader will respond, "Well did you see the orange butterfly?"

I think it's so special that there is a space to learn outside. I was lucky enough to visit the garden when helping out in the classroom. They have logs for the kids to sit on under the trees and listen to their lessons. They have raised beds where they get hands-on experience to plant and garden. I am so grateful for this program. Please reconsider pulling funding from this amazing learning experience. The kids love it. They have had so much taken from them these last couple of years and to rob them of the joy of this program would be wrong.

Sincerely, Jamie Goodenough

[redacted]

From: Jenny Jacobs <jenny@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2022 11:07 AM
To: Almaraz, Matt; Callahan, Amy; Dannenberg, Jerry; Lomax, Velma; Rodriguez, Sabrena; Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Please read and I urge your INCREASED support for the Healthy Schools Program and Garden/Nutrition education for all VUSD elementary students
Attachments: Reinstate the Healthy Schools Project -Parent Letter 2022-1.pdf

Dear VUSD board members,

As an outdoor educator, and parent of children who attend Will Rogers elementary, I strongly urge you to support the Health Schools Project and NOT let go of the incredible employees that have been running this program, Ashley Parrish Decker, Laura Wilson, and Rose Wagner. Contrary to some of the information that has been shared, the Healthy Schools Project has been fully self-supported by renewable grants for the past 3 years, with another large grant in the works! And the only reason that their grants have possibly been retracted recently is due to lack of leadership from the administration - which is completely unfathomable! (Please see the attachment summarizing the incredible work that this program has accomplished.)

I am aware of the Sa' Alyiyas Ranch ("The Ranch") being built at Pacific High, and the intentions of VUSD to create a centralized farm program, but this WILL NOT replace the local, more individualized education programs that HSP has brought to many elementary schools in Ventura. And while one of the arguments in support of the new Ranch program is that it will reach all elementary schools, not just T1 schools that are the only schools to receive HSP programming, if HSP were financially and intellectually supported by the VUSD administration, HSP programs could be given at all elementary schools! But due to lack of district support, HSP has had to rely solely on grants and it is often easier to obtain grants for T1 schools. VUSD says that elementary classes will visit the Ranch on a field trip for their garden/nutrition education instead of receiving multi-week, on-site education at each school. One field trip, per year, for one class to this future ranch facility, will not come close to providing the local, high-quality garden/nutrition education program that HSP has been providing for years at many elementary schools.

Much research has been gathered over the years on the positive benefits of school gardens and nutrition programs - the results are only positive! (Our state government fully supports this, please see here). In a time of increasing mental and physical health problems across our student population, VUSD should INCREASE their funding and support of HSP. Many other districts in Ventura County are increasing their support of garden/nutrition programs at schools, and especially in the Rio District and Oxnard High School district where garden/nutrition programs are flourishing. VUSD used to be the shining light in this area of programming but most unfortunately, and especially with the current administration, that support has disappeared. And why? Nobody knows and it just doesn't make sense. For VUSD to cut a program like this, they are moving backwards and not following modern trends and needs in education. Again, The Ranch will be great for more advanced farming business training, but it will NEVER be able to replace elementary school garden and nutrition programs where students can have year-round and hands-on learning experiences.

Thank you for your time, and I urge you to, at the very least, hold off from cutting the financially independent and successful HSP and vote to INCREASE the VUSD district support of garden/nutrition education at the elementary level.

Many thanks,

Dahm, Amy

From: David White <david@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2022 11:18 AM
To: Almaraz, Matt; Callahan, Amy; Dannenberg, Jerry; Lomax, Velma; Rodriguez, Sabrena; Public Comment
Cc: [redacted]
Subject: [redacted] Vote today to keep the vibrant VUSD Healthy Schools program alive

Dear VUSD board,

Please do not layoff the Healthy schools program staff. This is such an important and vibrant program, connecting our students to nature and teaching them how to grow and prepare healthy food. An ever increasing number of studies show that students participating in their school garden programs have increased grade point averages and reduced behavioural issues. This much needed grant funded program is sure to receive funding as it continues to successfully engage students.

School gardens are a refuge for our students. They provide social and emotional support as they are non-competitive safe places for reflection and inspiration by nature. These on-campus garden experiences, full of biodiversity and wonder, cannot be replaced by bused visits to a monoculture citrus and avocado ranch. Please do **not** vote to eliminate the classified position of nutrition specialists in the Healthy Schools program.

Thank you for ensuring that the school garden programs at VUSD schools continue to get the staffing they require to be the wonderful outdoor classrooms that they currently are.

David R White PhD
Program Director
Ventura Land Trust

[redacted]

From: Jennifer Brickey <jennifer.brickey@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2022 12:24 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Save the Healthy School Project

Hello, VUSD Board of Trustees-

I am writing this email to ask that you preserve the VUSD Healthy Schools Project. As a mother of a 1st grader, I appreciate that my daughter gets to learn about the benefits of eating healthy. Our family especially appreciates the family cooking nights where we get to learn about how to make healthy dinner options. It was a blessing during distance learning and served as an excellent bonding experience.

Additionally, as we celebrate Mental Health Awareness month this May, it is important for us not to ignore the correlation between eating well and the benefits it has on our mental health. Upon returning to school after distance learning, more and more students are faced with a myriad of mental health challenges. If our schools can support them with mental health intervention AND healthy eating, we are honoring the development of our community's children as a whole.

I hope you retain the Healthy School Project for VUSD.

Thank you,
Jennifer Brickey

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[redacted]

From: Johnston, Michelle
Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2022 2:10 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Exceptional Leadership and Extreme Behavior

Dear Board and District Administration,

Karin Just is a fabulous, outstanding, and hardworking administrator. I have had her support whenever I need her and she is tirelessly working for all students, families, and staff. She is to be commended for her leadership in the midst of some extremely challenging circumstances. This is only her third year at Citrus and she is an exceptional leader.

I am concerned about our school. We have a new student that arrived at our school a few months ago. He has caused extreme disruption and has extreme social, emotional, and academic issues. There have been numerous individuals who have come to our campus, but there have not been any positive changes. This child is a danger to himself, his classmates, and staff. He has hit adults, children, objects (like a glass door), and verbally assaulted staff and students on an ongoing basis.

Despite many interventions, it doesn't appear that there are any changes. I have a firsthand view of this issue due to the location of my classroom. It is taking a toll on the staff and morale to have this student disrupting and running amok on campus. We need support, have had many behavioral specialists out, but it seems like we don't have the proper resources to help this child. What can be done to protect staff and students and the student? Why are the needs of one placed above the needs of the whole?

One child is getting all the attention and we need additional support so our counselor can work with groups and our principal can do her job. We have had numerous specialists come to work with this student, but as of now there isn't a resolution.

Thank you for your support,

Michelle Johnston

Michelle Johnston, Teacher
Citrus Glen Elementary
[redacted]

For the future of every student

Ventura Unified
SCHOOL DISTRICT

[redacted]

From: Jen Coffman <ejsmommy100713[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, May 10, 2022 3:47 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Citrus Glen Elementary

My name is Jen Coffman. I have two children who attend Citrus Glen Elementary. The school as a whole (teachers, staff, principal) are truly wonderful. I am an active parent on the PTA Board and I honestly couldn't have asked for a better school for my kids to attend. However, in February of this year a new student was brought into my daughters second grade class (for privacy purposes this student will not be named). This student has been disrespectful to my daughters teacher, her peers and many other staff members at Citrus Glen and I'm beyond tired of it. This student has been physically violent with other students and staff as well. My daughter has watched her friends be physically assaulted by this student and this needs to stop. This has now caused my daughter to feel unsafe and uneasy in her classroom, at recess and at school in general. I have written to our principal and had discussed this with her in person. Our principal Mrs. Just I feel is truly doing everything she can to make this situation right. But I feel compelled to bring it to all of your attention as well. This one badly behaved student is ruining my daughter and many other's children school experience with his disruptive and violent behavior. When is enough actually enough? How many chances is one student given before god forbid something worse happens? Something needs to be done, and I don't mean for this child. I have a compassionate heart, however once a student has put his hands on multiple students and staff...this needs to be taken seriously. This students unacceptable behavior doesn't trump the safety of the other 25 kids in my daughters classroom or the other 500+ students and staff at our school. I certainly do not have a plan of action or a sure fire way of "fixing" this situation and that's why I'm bringing it all to you. I support my children's school as a whole and I feel it's my right to stand up for all those affected by this students unacceptable behavior. I'm happy to further discuss this if needed. Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,
Jen Coffman
[redacted]