

SAN BERNARDINO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Education
Community Room
Board of Education Building
777 North F Street
San Bernardino, California

**MINUTES
ADOPTED
06/27/17**

April 12, 2017

Present: Board President Margaret Hill (arrived at 6:17 pm), Vice President Abigail Medina, Board Members Barbara Flores, Mike Gallo (arrived at 6:17 pm), Gwen Rodgers; Danny Tillman and Scott Wyatt; Superintendent Dale Marsden; Deputy Superintendent Harold Vollkommer; Chief Business Officer Jayne Christakos; Assistant Superintendents Perry Wiseman, Kennon Mitchell, Rachel Monárrez; Executive Director Ginger Ontiveros; School Police Chief Joseph Paulino, Communications/Community Relations Director Linda Bardere and Superintendent's Assistant Carla Cross. Absent Assistant Superintendent John Peukert, Student Board Members Kristen Bacarro and Danielle Quezada. Minutes recorded by Administrative Assistant Karen Cunningham.

SESSION ONE

1.0 Opening

1.1 Call to Order

Vice President Medina called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm and asked for a moment of silence on behalf of North Park Elementary student Jonathan Martinez and his teacher Karen Smith who were both tragically killed on April 10, 2017. Mr. Tillman commented that the moment of silence was also for student Nolan Brandy who was injured during the incident and for the staff, parents and community.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

Student Board Member Isabel Cholbi led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1.3 Adoption of Agenda

Upon motion by Member Flores, seconded by Member Wyatt, and approved by the affirmative vote of Members Flores, Medina, Rodgers, Tillman, and Wyatt (Noes: None), the agenda was adopted.

Dr. Marsden and Board members shared that thoughts and prayers were with North Park -- the students, staff, parents, and the families of Karen Smith, and Jonathan Martinez and Nolan Brandy.

SESSION TWO

2.0 Public Comments

Several North Park Elementary School teachers and staff were in attendance. Joyella Beuler, teacher, read a statement on their behalf, saying that they wanted to remain at North Park. They will move Ms. Smith's class from B-1 to C-1 and requested that classrooms in the A, B, and C wings have doors (which they currently do not have) that lock. Also additional safety measures be put into place. Ms. Beuler commented that it was important that the entire North Park

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community be able to heal together. She said their school did a phenomenal job and are proud to be North Park Coyotes. Staff appreciates the support of the Board, Cabinet and Superintendent. She went on to say that they could not let what happened conquer them; they must conquer it – and they will. They believe that Karen would want them to carry on at North Park and she will be forever with them. She thanked the Board for allowing them to be part of the next step process.

Terrie Beltran Osburn commented on several things to make campuses safer: background checks; if an employee has a restraining order they need to notify the office; if there are policies and practices in place, all staff needs to adhere to them; and the site's perimeter needs to be secured.

SESSION THREE

3.0 *Closed Session*

Anticipated Litigation

Conference with legal counsel pursuant to paragraph (2) or (3) of Subdivision (d) of Government Code 54956.9

Number of Cases: One

SESSION FOUR

4.0 *Open Session*

4.1 Board Discussion Regarding North Park Elementary School Next Steps

Dr. Hill reported that staff will keep everyone informed, we will be very transparent with everything that will be done and asked that if they have any suggestions to please let them know.

Dr. Marsden thanked District School Police, the first responders, Sheriff's Department, the Crisis Team, volunteers, staff and all divisions for their assistance and support. Their actions, and especially those of North Park's staff, were heroic. Dr. Marsden said that the Board and staff will continue to work collectively to support actions that are necessary and consider together how we will proceed with the next steps. He shared that they will be meeting with North Park staff on April 13. Parents of students from B-1 had expressed that their children would like to get together with each other and that will be arranged; counselors and staff will be available. For all North Park parents and students, they will be meeting later at 5:30 pm on April 13 at Bob Holcomb Elementary; the Board will be present. This will be a chance for everyone to talk and discuss next steps; together as a community. We will consider the idea of return and re-entry to the school on Monday with students and staff that want to. Dr. Marsden said that this crisis will not dissuade us from what we do every day. Additional staff will be deployed to assist you – counselors, 10 resident subs will be assigned to your site for the entire week and at least 5 will remain for the rest of the year. We will talk to the staff about the additional security measures that will be put in place; your voices will be the primary ones that will drive this process forward.

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Several parents and community members commented:

Malinka Edwards thanked everyone that helped her children. She said she would speak more at the April 13 meeting.

Tim Prince, attorney and parent, shared that you cannot make everyone 100% safe but they could have been safer than they were. He commented that there should be no reason anyone would be able to check in and go without pre-arrangement go to any classroom without a teacher's knowledge and permission. It might add 20 seconds to contact teachers and ask if someone could come to their classroom. He said he has spoken with members of the San Bernardino Police and other people and the consensus he got is that it might have reduced the probability of loss of life.

Katherine Tillman, parent, commented that North Park is a family. She said it was a safe campus. Ms. Tillman said she did not want students sent to other schools. Close off B-1 for the rest of the school year.

Eddie Mejia, parent and active volunteer, commented that every year he has to be fingerprinted and a background check done. The staff allowed his older son to be with his little sister the entire time. Mr. Mejia wants his kids to remain at North Park. Some more security measures should be implemented but nothing extreme.

Debra Natera, parent, wants her son to return to North Park. She said the office follows safety protocol when it comes to allowing visitors. Many times she has had to bring something for her son and she has never been allowed to go through to his classroom, he is brought to the office. It is a safe place. Please do not move the kids to another site, they need the comfort of their friends during this time.

Tyrone Edwards, parent, commented he understands post-traumatic disorder. These kids need love and support from their families, teachers and staff at North Park.

Esmeralda Negrete, parent and employee, commented that teachers and staff are committed to do whatever it takes to protect their students. She has asked in the past for security at elementary schools, as our elementary kids are the most vulnerable. She asked that the District be clear to everyone what the protocols are because there was a breach. As a wife when visiting her husband who is a teacher, she is not allowed to go to his classroom, she has to wait for him to come to the office. Mrs. Negrete also shared a photo taken on Tuesday of an open gate at Golden Valley Middle School. This is unacceptable after what just occurred on Monday. Mrs. Negrete also said that she reached out to Wildwood Neighborhood Association regarding possibly doing a big welcome on Monday, April 17 at North Park.

Elsa Valdez commented that she had hoped this meeting would be about sharing a plan for how the District would strengthen security at all our schools but it is good for the parents, staff and community to be able to come speak. Dr. Valdez said she has spoken to numerous parents and

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although they love North Park their children are terrified to go back. She commented on the confusion of where parents should go to pick up their kids, Cal State or Cajon, and it took hours to reunite them, causing trauma to both parents and students. She said this event has affected everyone even those staff at other school sites and Cal State. Dr. Valdez recommended that the Board move as quickly as possible to develop a plan that could be presented to the community. The District needs to look at current procedures and policies to see what can be strengthened; some sites do not have fencing around the perimeter; and the visitor procedures need to be re-examined.

Erica Reed, parent, thanked the North Park staff especially her 4th grade son's teacher. All her kids have gone to North Park. Her son wants to remain there and not be moved to another school. This did not just affect North Park students, it also affected students from Cajon where her other son attends and where North Park students were brought to be reunited with their parents. Ms. Reed said this affected them in such a way that their musical ensemble, the San Bernardino Percussion, are dedicating their performance in the finals on Saturday, April 15 in memory of those lives lost at North Park and the Inland Regional Center on December 2 tragedy.

Janet Carpenter, parent, commented on what some consider their vulnerability, we consider our heart. She said no one knows the amount of heartache Ms. Elisa (front office staff member) has gone through and she does not believe that any of the parents doubt she followed the procedures that were known to her and that she could do on that day. She said the kids need to remain at North Park, to heal together.

Mary Valdermar, resident and San Bernardino Valley college employee and her children attended SBCUSD. She spoke about domestic violence and how it is a spectrum of issues (child abuse, molestation, any violence that affects children) that are impacting children and contributing to trauma of entire families. There are three priorities: healing; understanding abuse and how situations such as this happen; and prevention. Policies and safety measures can be implemented, but the actual prevention is preventing the abuse before it happens. The violence has to be the priority and unfortunately, that is something that is not talked about much in schools. Ms. Valdermar said there was no doubt there were signs but they are invisible to most people. We need to ask hard questions such as how can school systems break these cycles. Domestic violence is a Board issue; the cycle starts to show with the children in our schools – with bullying, mental health issues, oppression, racism, and sexism. You have the power and knowledge to fight this at the earliest stages in preK-12. The Board, community, city, and parents can do this together to break the cycle.

Maria Ochoa, parent, asked not to take her kids teachers away from them. The students want to remain at North Park. They need to remain with people they know.

Ms. M. Ochoa commented that parents at Cajon High School were confused about the lockdown and wanted to know where their kids were. This confusion should be a lesson to the District to make sure there is a plan to help the parents know where to go in situations like this. There was also not enough staff at Cajon to deal with the incident. We need more personnel and more

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police.

Teresa Alba said that three months ago parents came to the Board and commented that there is a lot of pain in our community. Our teachers and administrators need workshops, support to take that pain away. Teachers could express what they are going through in their lives and know what's going on around them to avoid situations like this. For years we have come to the Board when we have heard of shootings in other states. We said we wanted fences at schools but were told it was too expensive, and now we have two less lives. The community is tired of being in meetings after meetings and not seeing results. She was hoping that at this meeting the District would have a plan. Ms. Alba said she hopes there will be another meeting where a plan will be brought forward and the District will tell us there will be security in our schools, because not only are the children of North Park living in fear, but those in our community are too. They don't want to go to school because they are afraid. What is the plan for all children; how will we take that fear away? Our children come first; they pay for the salaries of everyone at the District. This could happen at any school; please do something.

James Albert spoke about domestic violence and bringing more awareness to that, as he believes it is the root cause. He questioned whether we do a good enough job spreading awareness, about the signs of domestic violence so we can catch it before it happens. Create a cultural of awareness on domestic violence and the issues affecting all our communities, not just San Bernardino, but our county, state, and nation. It affects 1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men. We need to start working on preventative measures and stop putting band-aids on them. Mr. Albert applauded the District's efforts to revisit their safety measures and policies, but urged the District to look beyond the four corners of the school building. We need to look at the deep roots of domestic violence and how it affects the community. It is not a private issue, but a public one. Work with staff and community to develop measures to expand awareness. Higher fences and more police would not have prevented this tragedy. We need to build bridges; have more counselors to mitigate these situations; and look at the root issue.

Richelle Capozio, guest teacher, commented that the North Park students were well trained in their emergency response practices as evidenced by their straight lines and holding of hands. She suggested sending a letter to all students in the District and she gave an example of a high school student in a class she was subbing in who asked her to shut the door because he was afraid someone might come in and shoot them. We need to reach out to all our students. Ms. Capozio also said that teachers should have a list of the students in their class so that they can call home in situations like this to let parents know they are okay. Ron Fletcher reported that there would be resident subs at North Park through the rest of the year so that if a teacher needs to leave their classroom for whatever reason there is someone who can step in.

Catalina Castillo, parent, said she spoke to her children about what happened at North Park and her daughter told her she did not feel safe at school anymore and nothing the District does will change that. Ms. Castillo said she does not know what to say to that and how to change it to make her feel safe again. School is their second home; what are we going to do together to make them feel safe again at home?

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Analit Mitre, parent and volunteer at different schools, shared that when she goes into sites staff doesn't know who she is and what her intention is. She would like metal detectors at every school and hopefully avoid more tragedies.

Maria Rodriguez, parent, said she is happy to send her children to North Park and knows the staff will do everything they can to protect them; her kids want to go back. There was nothing staff could have done; it's possible he may have killed more people. Ms. Rodriguez said that from personal experience if someone is in a domestic violence relationship, no one will know if you don't want them to know. There is no reason to point blame at anyone in the front office. She will continue to support North Park.

Dr. Marsden reiterated that they would continue to have counseling services available for any and all children in the District at 8:30 a.m. to end of school day at Del Vallejo Middle School. Counseling services will continue through Friday and beyond. It is our intention to work with the staff, parents and students to have a "soft" opening of school at North Park.

Dr. Wyatt thanked the parents and community for being here and said we will follow up with their concerns.

Dr. Flores thanked the staff for their courage and heart. Teachers are the second parents to students. We hear you and we will honor your requests and continue to support you.

Mrs. Rodger thanked the staff and teachers for their caring and said that we hear you and support you and want to continue to hear your voices. We will not rush; we want to make sure there is minimal damage to what has already happened to the students.

Mrs. Medina asked if there was a way to add the counseling information to the website so that anyone can access. She commented that domestic violence victims should be called survivors not victims. Mrs. Medina spoke about a conference presented by Assemblymember Eloise Reyes with Options House, Inc. and what they do is provide assistance for survivors. This is a real issue and she hopes we continue to work on this to ensure our kids early on learn how to love themselves and grow their self-esteem.

Mr. Gallo said it is evident that hope is alive at North Park and character always rises in the face of crisis. It is evident that parents and students want to go back to North Park.

Mr. Tillman reported that through FMLA you can use sick leave to take time off for domestic violence and stalking. He said the Board and District will do what we can to make things safer within our District. He read a letter from a 5th grader at Jones Elementary School in his daughter's class who wrote the letter to Jonathan Martinez's family.

Student Board Member Isabel Cholbi remarked how the incident affected the students at Cajon High School. She said that after the December 2 tragedy it felt like San Bernardino was going to

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be known as a place of violence. A teacher at her school passed out a handout that listed all the good things about San Bernardino and she said we cannot be defined by these incidents. We need to continue to remain strong. The Cajon students wanted to give something to the students at North Park and they decided to make a 1,000 paper cranes with the message that there is more to San Bernardino than what happened.

Dr. Hill thanked the North Park staff for their courage and caring. She thanked the parents for entrusting their children to us and said we will do our part to make sure they are safe.

SESSION FIVE

5.0 Adjournment

By unanimous vote of the board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:51 pm.

The next regular meeting of the Board of Education of the San Bernardino City Unified School District will be held on Tuesday, April 18, at 5:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Board of Education Building, 777 North F Street, San Bernardino.