



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SARATOGA UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Regular Board Meeting  
May 22, 2007**

**M I N U T E S**

Present: Michael Gipe, Cindy Ruby, Pragati Grover, Jack Chang, Shinku Sharma

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Board President Michael Gipe. The public was given the opportunity to make comments on any item on the closed session agenda.

There were no comments from the community.

**2. Closed Session**

Board members met in Closed Session for:

- 2.1 Personnel Report
- 2.2 Classified and Certificated Negotiations: Conference with Labor Negotiator Lane Weiss
- 2.3 Superintendent Contract Discussion/Negotiations

**3. Open Session**

Board President Michael Gipe called the meeting into Open Session and announced action taken in Closed Session.

A motion was made by Cindy Ruby and seconded by Shinku Sharma to approve the Personnel Report.

AYES: Gipe, Ruby, Grover, Chang, Sharma

NOES: 0

ABSTENTIONS: 0

**Personnel Report**

**New Hires**

Grace Jens is being recommended for the Noon Duty Relief position at Argonaut Elementary School effective May 9, 2007.

Racquel Rendon is being recommended for the School Psychologist (substitute/temporary) position effective May 16, 2007 to June 15, 2007.

**Resignations**

Micah Cohen, Copy Aide at Redwood Middle School is resigning effective May 31, 2007.

Melanie Knight, teacher currently on leave of absence is resigning effective June 15, 2007.

Jennifer Li, SDC Instructional Aide at Foothill Elementary School is resigning effective June 15, 2007.

Melissa Mizell, 1 on 1 Instructional Aide at Saratoga Elementary School is resigning effective May 18, 2007.

**4. Action/Consent Items**

- 4.1 Approval of Agenda
- 4.2 Approval of Minutes for May 8 and May 15, 2007

A motion was made by Shinku Sharma and seconded by Cindy Ruby to approve the Action/Consent Items including moving agenda item 6.4 to the June 12, 2007 board meeting.

AYES: Gipe, Ruby, Grover, Chang, Sharma  
NOES: 0  
ABSTENTIONS: 0

**5. Communications**

5.1 Community Comments

- There were no comments from the community.

5.2 Comments from Employee Groups

- There were no comments from employee groups.

5.3 Comments from the Superintendent

- There were no comments from the superintendent.

5.4 Comments from the Board

- Shinku Sharma reported on the Saratoga High School decision not to offer French I for 2007-08. Fifteen students have been impacted by this decision. This was agendized at the last high school district board meeting where parents voiced their concern. Strong articulation and a study of trends is needed between the districts.
- Pragati Grover commended Redwood Middle School Principal Beth Polito and Vice Principal Jason Robertson for their work on the block schedule information presented at the Board workshop on May 15, 2007.
- Michael Gipe announced Superintendent Lane Weiss was ill tonight and that he has provided information which will be shared with the board later in the meeting.

**6. Action/Report Items**

**6.1 Math Report – Math Program for 8<sup>th</sup> Graders at Redwood Middle School - Algebra and Geometry – Report**

Board President Michael Gipe thanked the community, staff and students for all the input that has been received on this topic. Tonight the board will set the direction for Algebra for 2007-2008. The process will include hearing recommendations from Superintendent Lane Weiss, board deliberation and time for clarification of questions and information.

Superintendent Recommendations

Full Course – Algebra I for 8<sup>th</sup> graders – I am of the belief that we need to offer the widest access possible to our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to a full course of Algebra I and to provide a program and system of support to increase each students' proficiency and mathematical understanding.

To accomplish this goal I recommend the following:

For the 2007-2008 School Year

1. Have RMS staff expand the criteria currently in place to place students in a full course of Algebra I.
2. If parents wish to appeal their child's placement in the full or partial course of Algebra, they may meet with the principal to discuss the data that supports the placement decision. If the parent, student, and principal cannot agree on a placement decision, the parent may sign a waiver, which will allow their child to be placed in a full year Algebra I course during their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year.

Other Recommendations for Math Education in SUSD:

3. Have RMS staff continue with expanded placement criteria for incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders and 7<sup>th</sup> graders to increase enrollment in Geometry in future years for 8<sup>th</sup> graders who have demonstrated proficiency in Algebra I by 7<sup>th</sup> grade. I believe it is realistic to open 1 to 2 more sections of Geometry to 8<sup>th</sup> graders who are ready for this course in the next few years. Communication and understanding of the criteria must be greatly increased via multiple modes of communication, which allows for two-way communication.
4. Direct staff to re-design the current math course offerings and structure, grades 6-8, to prepare for having 8<sup>th</sup> graders take either a full year of Algebra I or Geometry during their 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, beginning in the 2008-2009 school year. Staff will bring a recommendation to the board for approval during the 2007-2008 school year for board approval. Plans will include the support and instructional strategies of the K-5 instructional program offered to our elementary school students to prepare them for middle school mathematics.
5. Alignment and articulation with Saratoga High School is an essential component for our students' success. SHS and RMS staff should continue their efforts in this area and clearly communicate this work to both boards and to the parent community.
6. Involve parents in the upcoming math instructional materials adoption process by communicating about the criteria for selection, the planned use of materials, and gather input from the parent community about the materials that are on the state approved list for adoption.
7. I recommend that curriculum maps and course outlines for all grade levels be available to the board, students, staff, and the parent community to communicate standards which are covered by each grade level/course and the time frame and sequence in which they will be covered. A general map of the math curriculum standards, K-8, is currently on the SUSD website.
8. I recommend that more effort be made to help parents help students. Communication of the standards, the sequence in which they will be taught, an explanation and orientation to the instructional materials being used, and feedback from assessments should be shared as expeditiously as possible.
9. Develop more communication tools regarding math education, our assessment results, homework help strategies, and online resources to support our parents helping their children. Use of listserv messaging, parent meetings/math forums, a new and improved math link on the SUSD website, and a monthly district math newsletter are examples of communication tools which could be effective in increasing parent understanding and knowledge of math programs and progress being made in SUSD schools.
10. I recommend that staff develop and implement additional student support structures (and the resources necessary for their implementation) for success in mathematics. Examples of support structures suggested by staff and parents include:
  - possible math elective
  - homework help before, during, and after school
  - online resources for homework help and parent information
  - peer tutoring opportunities

11. I recommend that all members of our learning community work together to build community, trust, understanding, and an environment which is positive for our educators to do their important work, positive for our parents to help their children and support our schools, and a place where we keep “*Three Dimensional Success*” our focus and goal for all students.

In closing, I would like to thank the board, the Redwood Middle School staff, the Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School administration and staff, the many parents who have spent time studying and discussing mathematics with us, the Noyce Foundation for helping us with our desire and efforts to improve and provide high quality professional development to support the work of our teachers and the success of our students, our math advisory committee members, and lastly our students, they are our greatest treasure and are the future.

Board Discussion:

- Support Superintendent Weiss’ recommendation in terms of placement of students and parents being given an opportunity to make an informed decision.
- Discussion tonight is focused on 8<sup>th</sup> grade for the 2007-08 year. Beth Polito indicated interest in exploring expanded criteria for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade in the future.
- How much will the criteria be expanded for 8<sup>th</sup> graders? Beth Polito answered that this will be similar to what was done at the semester.
- Potential drawbacks –
  - (1) students who end up in challenging class and not doing well
  - (2) increases the challenge of teaching with a more diverse class
  - (3) increased support will be needed before and after school
- Too restrictive in the past and would like to challenge students
- A process needs to be communicated to parents if students placed on a waiver are not successful. Sample documents from other districts will be reviewed. Rigor of the course will not be reduced for these students and must be maintained in the Algebra I course.
- California Standards are moving toward Algebra for all students – important we plan for this, but not necessarily be there next year. Agree with recommendation for Algebra for All in 2008-09 – we are continually moving toward a higher percentage of students in a full course of Algebra.
- A proactive approach and fall back plan is needed for students having trouble. Schedule conferences to include students – does not want waiver to be hard and fast to the detriment of the student and possibly not graduating.
- Clear and transparent communication is needed with parents as partners.
- Provide a six week conference with students.
- A number of parents have asked for slower paced Algebra classes to stay next year. We will start now to work towards modifying curriculum beginning in the lower grades so all students are ready for full a course of Algebra in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- What is the Redwood Middle School math department’s reaction to this proposal? Beth Polito answered that there are some logistical concerns and clarification is needed about the math elective/math lab. There is concern for staff and support for teachers. Mardi Kambish, math coach, seconded Beth’s concern regarding the responsibility falling on teachers when students are placed outside of a recommendation.
- What could the board do to help teaching staff? Staff will need more time to work out logistics and there may be a need for additional staffing.
- Appropriate checks and balances need to be in place for this proposal to ensure a quality program and if students are not able to prove themselves there will be an appropriate fall back plan.
- A proposal was made to support this plan in concept and at future board meetings come up with a timeline, staffing needs, support structures and budget.

- Education is a partnership between parents and teachers in the best interest of students and requires open, transparent communication. It is not solely the responsibility of the teacher.

Board President Michael Gipe asked for a parent response to the question “What would you do if your student was not doing well in Algebra I? How would you provide an additional challenge?”

- A 7<sup>th</sup> grade parent said there is too much emphasis on kids who might fail or not graduate – her son has been bored. Parents should be responsible for their student’s success and provide tutoring or whatever is needed.
- Jan Smith said she would establish a threshold and give students a chance to make up work. At a point in time when a child is not getting it and it is in the best interest of the class, the student should be moved down.
- Susan Burgess suggested communicating with parents if a student is not doing well in a reasonable timeframe and get them extra help.
- Mr. Kolluri asked what happens to a student in 8A that is not succeeding. Beth Polito responded that some students decide to take Algebra I again the next year. Other services such as Student Success Team or tutorial are put in place to help the student pass the class and graduate.
- Mimi Mather suggested teachers send out grades, report on how the student is doing and ask parents to sign it. Communication is going to be key and many teachers are already doing it.
- Stayton Chock thanked Superintendent Weiss for open access to Algebra I. He shared thoughts about model schools, how they handle advancement and failing grades.
- Mr. Kolluri asked about accelerating students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and asked to hear recommendations being contemplated. Cindy Ruby responded that we will study placement criteria for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in the same way we have for other grades. Pragati Grover pointed out that item #3 in the superintendent’s recommendations clearly states that Redwood Middle School staff continue with expanded placement criteria for incoming 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> graders.

Shinku Sharma stated that the function of the board is governance; staff understands the logistics and benchmarks in place and we can trust them to do their job well. The board’s job is to set direction.

Michael Gipe suggested the board direct staff to adopt a set of procedures similar to those outlined in the superintendent’s recommendations. This would include: access to Algebra I based on teacher recommendation; the option of a waiver after discussion with parent and student; and funding necessary to support structure to help students succeed. He requested a report on budget from administration at the June 12<sup>th</sup> board meeting including budget and a broad outline of the plan by June 26, 2007.

Board President Michael Gipe invited additional comments with a limit of two minutes.

Ester Park, parent, shared reasons she moved to Saratoga and that all is not good at other school districts. Students can fall into two groups “academically charged” or “not academically charged”. Competition from students in other countries often leads them to have too long of a school day and stress. She appreciates a board and school administration that looks at the interest of students.

Diane Smalley, Saratoga School Principal, expressed concern about other school district models and asked if we are teaching to our students or if we are teaching to the curriculum? Offering a more rigorous curriculum may not lead to effective differentiation and learning.

Not one student has said if they were struggling they would want to be moved down. Please consider student understanding and teaching.

Kittu Kolluri, Redwood Middle School parent, appreciates the comments about showing sensitivity to parents; he thinks because parents are well educated and because of parent involvement our schools are among the best. He chose this school district for a well rounded education, not just for academics and that after graduation students will be competing on a level playing field. He asked the board to look at this problem in a holistic way.

Anna Sturge, Redwood Middle School parent, asked about the proposed block schedule. The Board President advised that this topic will be addressed at another time.

Mimi Mather, Redwood Middle School parent, asked about combining the math committee proposal and the superintendent's proposal to see how it looks for next year and what the financial dynamics would be.

A motion was made by Cindy Ruby and seconded by Shinku Sharma to accept Superintendent Lane Weiss' recommendations #1 and #2 for the 2007-08 school year for setting direction and to ask the middle school math department and administration to come back to the next two board meetings in June with more details and financial needs to support this recommendation.

AYES: Gipe, Ruby, Grover, Chang, Sharma

NOES: 0

Abstentions: 0

Board President Michael Gipe thanked all who have contributed to this process and would like them to continue to participate. The board welcomes their emails and will try to get as many people involved as possible.

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Projected date of board report/action</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Redwood Middle School Course Offerings for the 2007-2008 school year	May 22, 2007 Action	Discussion includes how SUSD will address algebra standards for 8 <sup>th</sup> graders and 8 <sup>th</sup> graders who are placed in Geometry.
Instructional materials and methods of instruction for math	Ongoing	
Staff report to board on math program	September 2007 Report	Report to the board on the implementation of action taken in spring 2007.
STAR testing and MARS math exam results	October 2007 Report	
Math instruction, assessment, and curriculum mapping – K-8	November 2007 Report	This discussion will set the stage for the instructional materials adoption process.
Adoption of textbooks/instructional materials	January 2008 Report Interim reports, 2008-2009 Action on adoption can Take place no later than June 2009.	The state board of education is scheduled to approve instructional materials for math in November 2007. School districts in California have 24 months to adopt and purchase textbooks/instructional materials for students.

**6.2 Public Hearing to Sunshine Tentative Agreement with Saratoga Teachers' Association and the Saratoga Union School District for 2007-08**

The Saratoga Teachers' Association and the Saratoga Union School District have reached tentative agreement for the 2007-08 school year on the following:

- Staff Learning and Collaboration Time (SLCT) Days/Calendar and revised schedule for spring parent teacher conferences
- Contract Language: Paternity Leaves
- Compensation: Health and Welfare Benefits

Board President Michael Gipe opened the public hearing at the board meeting on May 8, 2007 and the public was invited to comment. Copies of the agreement have been available for review at [www.saratogausd.org](http://www.saratogausd.org) and at the District Office.

No comments have been received from the public. Board President Michael Gipe closed the public hearing at 8:21 pm and the Board was asked to vote on the agreement.

A motion was made by Shinku Sharma and seconded by Cindy Ruby to approve the tentative agreement for the 2007-08 school year on the following:

- Staff Learning and Collaboration Time (SLCT) Days/Calendar and revised schedule for spring parent teacher conferences
- Contract Language: Paternity Leaves
- Compensation: Health and Welfare Benefits

AYES: Gipe, Ruby, Grover, Sharma

ABSENT: Chang

NOES: 0

ABSTENTIONS: 0

**6.3 Budget Update**

Chief Business Official Ellen Tipton presented a draft of the district budget for 2007-08 and recommendations from the district's budget advisory committee. The Board was asked to give final direction to staff in preparing the budget for approval on June 26, 2007.

Budget Documents presented:

- Summary of General Fund Income/Expense History and Forecast, 5/22/07
- 2006-07 District Budget as of 5/22/07
- First draft 2007-08 District Budget as of 5/22/07

Board Discussion:

- Ending balance is the same for 2007 and 2008 at this time because additional expenses have not been included.
- Discussion of differences between budgets and forecasts
- Santa Clara County Assessor's estimate of 6.5% is a good estimate for 2007-08
- Based on this forecast, how much funding can be allocated for open access to Algebra? CBO Ellen Tipton answered that historically we end up with more of an ending balance but it is too early to tell at this time. She will refine this information for the board. Expenses for May will be available at the next board meeting.
- SEF has taken off the K-5 counselor and the 6-8 art aide for 2007-2008.

Budget Advisory Committee

On behalf of Superintendent Weiss CBO Ellen Tipton thanked the members of the district's Budget Advisory Committee including: Debra Elerath, Pragati Grover, Bill Hunt, Anne Kolb, Faithe Liu, Nancy Ondrejka, Julie Peck, Kym Plaing, Beth Polito, Melinda Robertson, Mary Thomas, Katherine Tseng, Sandy Waite-Lopez, and Patti Wareham for their hard work.

Budget Advisory Committee Documents presented:

- Budget Advisory Committee Brainstorm List – sorted by category, 5/22/07
- Budget Advisory Committee Brainstorm List – sorted by rankings, 5/22/07

Board goals will be taken into consideration when reviewing these items. High priority items include the K-5 counselor, increase district nurse from 60% to 100%, math coach, early intervention program, technology and Powerschool.

Budget Committee Input:

- Faithe Liu would like to see science materials increased in the instructional materials budget.
- Mary Thomas reported there was general consensus for an increase in instructional materials.

Board members requested timelines and priority dates for decisions that need to be made fairly soon and those that can take place later. CBO Ellen Tipton will provide a timeline for the board at the June 12, 2007 board meeting.

**7. SUSD Committee Reports**

**7.1 District Leadership Team (DLT)**

- Louise Levy reported the DLT meeting was very successful and included a review of SLCT days and highlighting successes of the year.

**7.2 Science Instructional Materials Task Force**

- Louise Levy reported K-8 staff will work tomorrow to decide which publishers to pilot for science adoption.

**7.3 Health and Welfare Task Force**

- Kym Plaing reported rates for Kaiser increased 20.4% and that Open Enrollment will take place May 15<sup>th</sup> -June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

**7.4 Technology Advisory Committee**

- There was no report from the Technology Advisory Committee.

**8. Communications**

**8.1 Community Comments**

- There were no comments from the community.

**9. Future Agenda Items**

The Board discussed items for future agendas.

June 12, 2007, Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Redwood Middle School Library

- Budget
- Report on 2006-07 SLCT Days
- Board Policies – 7000 Series - Facilities

June 26, 2007, Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m., District Office Conference Room

- Budget – Approval of J200

**10. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

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Clerk of the Board