



BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
2309 TULARE STREET
BOARD ROOM, 2nd FLOOR
FRESNO, CA 93721
board.fresnounified.org

MINUTES – BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP

Fresno, California

April 29, 2024

Fresno Unified School District, 2309 Tulare Street, Fresno, CA 93722.

At a workshop of the Board of Education of Fresno Unified School District, held on April 29, 2024, there were present Board Members Cazares, Islas, Jonasson Rosas, Levine, Thomas, Board Clerk Davis, and Board President Wittrup. Superintendent Robert G. Nelson, Ed.D. was also present

Board President Wittrup CONVENED the Board Workshop at 5:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Paul Idsvoog led the Flag Salute.

For the record, Superintendent Nelson set the context for the workshop. A summary is as follows:

Superintendent Nelson reminded all that the purpose of the workshop is to discuss how to create a priorities list and lead up to a potential bond as the Measure M project is beginning to close out. The intent is to bring a discussion item for the first board meeting in June with a resolution to the second board meeting in June.

Superintendent Nelson shared the Bullard fence item will return to the May 22 board agenda and commented there are other items people would like to address as well such as the Hoover and Fresno High scoreboards and the Edison paint project, and there will be time at the end of the presentation.

For the record, Paul Idsvoog took a moment to express appreciation for and to introduce those at the table.

The presentation addressed topics as follows: Bond Program Overview; Negotiated Language; Community Survey; Initial Ballot Measure Options; Election Scenarios; and Next Steps.

During the presentation Board members had comments/questions. A summary is as follows:

Member Jonasson Rosas asked if the Board could expect districtwide distribution of the proposed community survey.

Member Islas commented that often times the Board learns about deficiencies in facilities from teachers, whether it is ADA compliance, heating/cooling, sanitation, rodents, or bugs. So, if there is any information that you have already obtained that begins to pinpoint areas of need that would be useful for informing us. So, I am asking FTA if there is existing information that they have already compiled. I am sure there are complaints that have come in via the work order process.

Member Levine referenced slide six of the presentation and the 33% language in the description and recognizes it is a bit generic and asked FTA to confirm that it is not just adding new classrooms and facilities but also to upgrade existing facilities as well.

Member Cazares referenced slide six of the presentation, commented that adding the 33% to negotiated language was a great idea, and requested clarity that it did not preclude the Board from using the remaining 66% for class size reduction, classrooms, and music spaces, that it is not only for maintenance.

Board President Wittrup asked if declining enrollment is a consideration in relation to class size reduction.

Member Davis referenced slides 16 and 17 and asked if the same people took the survey.

Member Levine referenced slide 19 and asked what the asterisk next to retaining and attracting qualified teachers referenced. Referenced slide 15 and requested clarity as to the initial breakdown of the seven-in-ten voters support the measure on the initial vote, asked if there is a reference point, a percentage comparison of how voters thought about the measure before the election. Member Levine expressed appreciation for the team's recommendation to conduct another survey to get an update.

Member Islas pointed out a subtext on slide 19 that did not get elevated for discussion regarding schools with the greatest need receiving top priority for funding from the measure. Member Islas stated it was a call out personally on the importance that the Board ensure equity in the allocation of dollars.

Member Islas referenced recent board communications and commented can see where the \$325 million comes from but what Member Islas did not see is the \$55 million in maintenance service and asked where the support for that would come. Member Islas asked if there was an opportunity to test for more than the \$325 million, as there will never be enough and there are additional maintenance needs as well.

Member Jonasson Rosas asked if there were a lot of bonds on the ballot because Member Jonasson Rosas has heard there is bond fatigue and people are worried about the success of bonds being approved.

For the record RSS Consulting provided a presentation for the Board on Facilities Planning Through an Equity Lens. Board Members had comments and questions during the presentation as follows:

Board President Wittrup asked if the expectation is for all projects to be measured by the tool even those such as a leaky air conditioner.

Member Islas commented on valuing how the metrics are laid out coupled with the intent of how the Board can support greater student achievement. Commented on there are instances where the Board has failed specifically for students with disabilities and how facilities are central to how resources are organized to serve students, whether students are in a wheelchair or medically fragile. Member Islas asked if there was factoring of those needs in the analysis. Member Islas asked people to keep individuals with disabilities at the forefront given it is a population that the Board does serve and needs to be accountable to.

Member Islas commented on conversations held regarding placing resources within a school region to avoid the necessity of students traveling on the bus for prolonged periods of time to their needed program.

Board President Wittrup echoed Member Islas' above comment.

Member Jonasson Rosas asked if the tool presented had been run against the remaining Measure M list. Commented the Board is contemplating where to place funds and there are still projects not fully expended or past the design phase and asked if scenarios had been run for those projects, if not, commented it would be helpful.

Member Jonasson Rosas commented that the Board has been talking about investing worst first for some time and seeing the different scores would help to make informed decisions and unfortunately decisions will have been made without the use of the tool before the next Board meeting.

Member Levine commented on support of incorporating this tool on projects moving forward as soon as possible. Referenced declining enrollment and asked how the tool could be used to mitigate declining enrollment in the district.

For the record, Board members were asked to read cards with community priorities listed as reflected in a voters' survey, as reflected in a survey by RSSC specifically asking parents of schools with low scoring facilities what are the resources they need. Next, Board members were asked to write down any priorities they thought to be missing, then sort the cards into categories of, Extremely Important, Very Important, and Important. Board members then divided into small groups to decide as a group how their combined cards would be categorized. One person from each group then presented the priorities.

After completion of the exercise, Paul Idsvoog asked for Board direction on FM3, knowing it will be a ratify.

OPPORTUNITY for Public Comment on agenda item

For the record, the Board received ten (10) requests to address the Board during Unscheduled Oral Communications. The individual's name with a summary of topic is as follows:

1. Councilmember Mike Karbassi: Commented on survey results specifically that 95% of respondents felt safe and clean schools were somewhat too extremely important. Referenced a 2020 Measure M Fact Sheet prepared by the district which listed fencing and gates as the number one investment under safety. Commented if the Board does not fund the Bullard High School fence it may appear to voters as a bait and switch and result in voters questioning the need for another bond measure.
2. Chuck Riojas: Commented on the polling information provided which addressed CTE and training for those positions. Commented that the building trades would support this bond measure and see it as necessary; but nothing is official until a vote. Commented that the \$500 million is on point.
3. Armen Torigian: Commented on taking the position as principal at Bullard not only to be an instructional leader but to protect the Bullard community, as Mr. Torigian has lived in the neighborhood since 1979. Mr. Torigian commented that times have changed and ten years ago the community did not see a need for the Bullard fence, but there is a need now as life has changed. Expressed hope that the Board would approve the Bullard fence project.
4. Melissa Rodriguez: Commented on understanding the needs of a district as she is a teacher and a parent, and it seems anything aside from the black mold mentioned that security should be a priority. Commented on the world being different now and the gate at Bullard is the equivalent of a baby gate. Safety and security are the bottom line and Bullard needs a fence that is tall enough that a person can not step over and with a single point of entry.
5. Kelly Petersen: Commented on teaching autism inclusion at Bullard High School and each year attends transition meetings for middle school students coming to the program and parents of the students are concerned about safety. Ms. Petersen provided examples of when people have hopped the fence to get on and off of campus, which bypasses safety procedures. Ms. Petersen commented that it is the job of Board members to lead Fresno Unified for the benefit of all students not just those in respective regions. Ms. Petersen asked the Board to approve the fence for Bullard.
6. Mark Gonzales: Shared personal experience of a lockdown situation at Bullard and commented that site administration supported staff, but the district failed. Mr. Gonzales commented on bottom lines, scoreboard, and promethean boards and shared that promethean boards and scoreboards do not save lives.
7. Sarah Ekhart: Ms. Ekhart commented on serving students in the moderate to severe program and at times the students try to leave. Sarah commented

that this is the biggest safety concern for Bullard's highest needs population. Sarah commented in a prepared crisis model step one is to secure the site and be sure of entry and exit points and with a 3-ft. high fence this will not happen. Sarah requested the Board take this to heart and secure the Bullard campus.

8. Melissa Irvin: Commented that parents trust the school personnel to keep their kids safe but with the low fence students are able to leave campus at will and it is difficult to keep them on the school grounds. Melissa commented that year after year the bond measure resources are not going towards the Bullard fence which staff have been asking for but is continually denied and commented that priorities are missing. Melissa asked the Board to not forget the invisible students because Bullard does not meet the criteria, all student deserve to be safe.
9. Jason Cruz: Commented that Bullard High School needs both equity and equality, as it does not have a gate to control entry and to support the Raptor System; equity and equality can be addressed by approving the Bullard fence. Jason commented that this is a rare moment to take care of something that the Board said they would do, and it will serve equity and equality.
10. Heidi Sagaser: Commented that as a school nurse the primary focus is on health and safety and no Bullard student is safe without a fence. Heidi commended does not want Bullard to be the next Sandy Hook or Columbine and the Board to say to themselves we should have had a fence.
11. Member Jonasson Rosas: Requested forgiveness for lack of eloquence due to the unusual circumstances of speaking about facilities at a Board Facilities Workshop as a member of the public. Member Jonasson Rosas did not realize the Board was not going to discuss facilities and current investments.

Member Jonasson Rosas commented as follows: a year ago safety and security was reduced by \$3 million and has not been increased; the amount to be spent on facility projects was reduced, for sites such as Calwa which has one of the worst facilities scores throughout the district; deferred maintenance had already been reduced by \$5.418 million, and again reduced by \$1.4 million for elementary and \$33,000 for middle schools with \$1.4 million added back to high schools. Member Jonasson Rosas commented deferred maintenance was a big topic; however, the Board reduced deferred maintenance in the district's highest needs schools.

Member Jonasson Rosas commented on high school facility projects which were bumped from the Measure M facility project list as follows: the Fresno High two-story cafeteria; the Hoover High administration building; the Roosevelt High second gym and administration space remodel with a total decline in the Measure M resources for the Roosevelt region at \$6.9 million.

Member Jonasson Rosas commented on advocating for equity and working on worse first through all the regions and having hoped to have had that discussion today but unfortunately was not able to.

OPPORTUNITY FOR UNSCHEDULED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

For the record, the Board received zero (0) request to address the Board during Unscheduled Oral Communications.

OPPORTUNITY for Public Comment on Closed Session Items

For the record, the Board received zero (0) requests to address the Board on Closed Session items.

Board President Wittrup ADJOURNED the Board Workshop to Closed Session at 7:24 p.m.

Board President Wittrup RECONVENED the meeting to Open Session at 9:00 p.m.

Reporting Out of Closed Session

For the record, Board President Wittrup read the following: As an update, we are developing a plan for the selection of an interim superintendent and will have a status report early next month.

D. ADJOURNMENT

Board President Wittrup ADJOURNED the workshop at 9:00 p.m.