

**SAUSALITO MARIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
June 21, 2012**

ATTENDANCE

Board Members: Thomas Newmeyer, William Ziegler, Karen Benjamin, Mark Trotter and Shirley Thornton, Ed. D. listening via phone
Superintendent: Valerie Pitts, Ed. D.

President Thomas Newmeyer called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

M/s/c Trotter/Benjamin/all to approve the agenda order

PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD PRIOR TO CLOSED SESSION

There was no public comment.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board and Superintendent went into closed session at 6:16 p.m.

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

Open session was reconvened at 7:10 p.m.

President Newmeyer announced that there was no reportable action taken during closed session.

Trustee Benjamin led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PERSONS WISHING TO ADDRESS THE BOARD PRIOR TO OPEN SESSION

There was no public comment.

MAINTAIN SOUND FISCAL DISCIPLINE AND OPERATIONS

Public Hearing 2012/2013 State Categoricals – Tier III Program

President Newmeyer called the public hearing to order at 7:12 p.m. Superintendent Pitts explained the requirement for an annual public hearing prior to approval of 'flexing' categorical funds. There was no public comment.

Tier III Categorical Flexibility, Resolution #663

M/s/c Ziegler/Benjamin/Roll Call – Ayes 4 Noes 0 Absent 1 (Thornton for the purpose of voting) to approve Resolution #633, Tier III Categorical Flexibility

FACILITIES

Facilities Bond

Superintendent Pitts began with a Power Point presentation, titled Guiding Principles for 21st Century Facility Design, which included information on:

- Powerful Learning Experiences
- Powerful Learning Themes
- Fears and Hopes
- Social Costs of Inadequate Education
- The Price We Pay
- Schools as Centers of Community
- Classroom of the Future
- Designing for Achievement
- Tenets of Improv – Our Norms for Today
- Guiding Principles for Design
- Guiding Principles Workshop
- SMCS D Guiding Principles
- Needs Analysis, Bond Decisions and Process
- Conceptual Drawings.

Superintendent Pitts introduced consultant, Victoria Bergsagel of Architects of Achievement, who discussed in more detail:

- Schools as centers of community
- Fears and hopes in meeting the needs of the students
- Guiding principles for design workshops
- SMCS D guiding principles
- Site plan charrettes
- Combining ideas.

Superintendent Pitts introduced Mark Quattrocchi, Quattrocchi Kwok Architects, who discussed in more detail:

- A conceptual master plan
- Committee input and comments
- Approaches to transforming the campuses.

Victoria Bergsagel continued with discussion of:

- Needs, bond analysis, decisions and process
- Conceptual drawings
- The board's need for open conversation and input from all stake holders
- Community input at this meeting.

Before audience input on facilities bond needs, the board requested that Willow Creek Academy present its 2012/2013 preliminary budget.

MAINTAIN SOUND FISCAL DISCIPLINE AND OPERATIONS

District Budget 2012/2013

The District's presentation and discussion of its 2012/2013 Preliminary Budget was ultimately deferred to June 28 due to the lateness of the hour following other discussions.

Willow Creek Academy Budget 2012/2013

Clark Warden, Treasurer, presented an overview of the budget approved by the WCA board on June 20 and requested the district board's acceptance of it when board action is taken on June 28. Mr. Warden called on Jeff Knowles, WCA parent and board member, to give a Power Point presentation, titled Willow Creek Academy 2012/2013, which included information on:

- WCA has a Mission
- As part of SMCS Community
- Core Initiatives Improve Outcomes
- While Supporting Diversity
- In a Diverse and Growing District
- Different Address but One Community
- WCA Success = District Growth
- WCA Supports the Majority of Students
- With a Fraction of the Funding
- Despite a Fraction of the Budget
- In a Relatively Well Off District
- WCA Has Proven Academic Success
- Thanks to a spirit of involvement and results
- WCA Has Asked for a Base Level Budget
- WCF will have to cover a \$280K gap
- Including Some Core Curriculum
- We hope the District will support WCA growth and will share local property tax revenue with WCA
- WCA's Budget is Minimal, Reasonable and Responsible
- The 2012/2013 Budget is NOT Sustainable
- We Need Your Help!

WCA Budget Discussion

Trustee Benjamin asked whether the textbooks WCA uses need to be improved upon. Carol Cooper responded that several math textbooks are being looked at as they relate to common core; WCA is also looking at adding iPads. Trustee Benjamin noted that WCA's budget for textbooks seems not to change over projected years. Ms. Cooper explained that WCA is trying to look at how to get along with less; iPads may help.

Trustee Benjamin asked whether there is a way to ensure WCA carefully screens students proposed for special education services or interventions. Tara Seekins, Assistant Head of School, reported that of all team assessments, half of the students tested required services. Trustee Benjamin recommended WCA seek ways to bring that number down.

Trustee Benjamin believes that WCA is getting good results for little money, comparatively speaking.

Trustee Trotter would like to see a proposal from WCA to close their achievement gap.

Two mothers each spoke in support of no cuts to special education which is helpful in their families.

Julius Holtzclaw believes that WCA is a wonderful charter school but that it should not continue to come to the district requesting funds beyond what is required. Mr. Holtzclaw believes that WCA parents need a greater understanding of what it means to fund a charter. He also pointed out Bayside's reputation as a safe school, that it too has earned a distinguished school designation and has much to offer.

Orlando Lobo clarified that WCA is a public school.

Another mother believes WCA is an incredible school and asked for support of its budget.

Paul Maury asked whether trustees have a strategy to market these ideas to the community, including those who do not have children in the school system.

Someone asked what could be done to close the gap of the average spent per student between the charter (\$8,000) and the district (\$22,000).

Alexis Wise complimented the work of WCA. She asked why the gap is so wide – how can we come together to close it and dispense a comprehensive education equitably? 94965 should come together as one community; why is there such separateness here? I support MLK and Bayside too. [WCA parents,] come more often so we can work together now; our children are all going to be together one day.

A mother credited WCA for keeping her child out of special education. She feels confident that her children are getting the attention they need; the teachers are working the best they can with budget restrictions and many parents help in the classroom. Imagine what they could do with more than they're entitled to have.

Trustee Ziegler thanked everyone for attending and asked them to keep coming. He will do all he possibly can to see that WCA succeeds and gets all it needs. We have two campuses with major inefficiencies that we are working on; bear with us; support us on the bond issue; that will resolve the inefficiencies. WCA has advantages and can operate on less money. We don't have the success we should have for the dollars spent; WCA has helped us in that area. The budget and bond are complicated. We have your interest at stake along with everyone in the community.

Trustee Benjamin thanked everyone for their input; she expressed concern about the amount of funds WCA must raise on its own and that the budget requested may not be enough; you can only raise so much in funds in this economy. The per student funding differences and keeping teachers in this district also concern Trustee Benjamin.

President Newmeyer thanked everyone for coming out; he acknowledged that all schools are feeling pinched - local tax dollars are flat; Marin Community Foundation is cutting back approximately 20%; the state is giving 'Armageddon warnings' about the state budget - we are trying to do our best budgeting for a dire scenario. President Newmeyer does not like the per-pupil differences either but clarified that the district needs to provide certain things that WCA does not, plus the district is unionized. It hurts to see WCA have to rely so heavily on fundraising; he supports WCA's budget. He supports the programs for Bayside and MLK that the superintendent has been talking about. He will not support duplicate inefficiencies beyond the 2012/2013 school year. He strongly advocates for this bond; it is needed for every student in the district.

Continuation of Facilities Bond Discussion - Public Input

Victoria Bergsagel facilitated the discussion.

A woman acknowledged that she was not prepared tonight to give any feedback but posed several questions. When will the community be involved in discussion of what they want? Have presentations been made to the WCA board and Parent Council? What other public outreach is being done? Is there bond language written yet? When can we get more involved? There is a lot of negative feeling in this district about the prior bond; we need to know what we are supporting. Plan A of Valerie Pitts' presentation – where did that come from?

Phil Kerr spoke of the bond as opportunity we collectively don't want to lose to bring money into the district to improve facilities and take care of deferred maintenance. The key is in how the bond language is written; WCA has several persons who would be willing to work on that and protect the interests of WCA too. The priorities of the WCA board include:

- Facilities to accommodate growth; we will need a full campus
- Facilities for eating lunch
- Facilities for indoor athletics
- Deferred maintenance
- Retrofitting of some of the rooms.

The WCA board has a list of wants; meet with the WCA board and the Parent Council.

Jeff Knowles spoke of the need to see before voting on a bond how much, where and when money would be spent. WCA would want a commitment for a long term use of the campus; there are key priorities on each campus.

Julius Holtzclaw restated his understanding that when the charter school and bond came onto the scene, campuses were going to be K-5 with a shared middle school. He does not believe anyone has deliberately omitted WCA from joining the community.

Trustee Ziegler strongly disagreed with Mr. Holtzclaw about two campuses merging at the middle school level, stating that he was there when the bond was proposed by the district and rejected by WCA. He believes that having two K-5 schools feeding into one middle school is no more than an idea once discussed.

Superintendent Pitts explained that the district's board has been having conversations for quite some time at their monthly meetings. She acknowledged that having two boards is sometimes difficult. She encouraged people to come to board meetings as frequently as they can. The district is acutely aware of the times; most of the projects are laid out with projected costs. Design can continue beyond the passage of the bond. The district board has also been spending time on race and isolation, which is historical and which will continue. Bond language will include a project list; it will not include the details; the district must conform to the project list. The real decisions are: will bond language say we need to consolidate campuses or not; will it say what we want on each campus? This discussion has been going on many, many years and takes time.

Alexis Wise clarified that, as stated by Superintendent Pitts, race and isolation for Marin City has been added to the conversation of having a K-8 school in Marin City. Ms. Wise encouraged people to come to more meetings so they would not be surprised when they do come and to pass the word to others to come and support their district. Similar things are being heard from both campuses. Support your children and community. Ms. Wise thanked Superintendent Pitts and expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to come together.

Caroline Van Alst reported that she has been regularly been attending meetings and that she is encouraged by the workshops that include WCA parents.

A man recommended that the bond needs to be sold to persons who believe there is complete consensus on the board; he is still not feeling that with the SMCS board.

PROVIDE SAFE, HEALTHY, POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

School Site Safety Reports

Superintendent reviewed a report of dramatically decreased suspensions and no expulsions in the 2011/2012 school year. Restorative Justice training has been partially credited.

ADJOURNMENT

M/s/c Benjamin/Newmeyer/all to adjourn the meeting at 9:52 p.m.

 8/23/12

Signature/Date



Title