

**SAUSALITO MARIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
March 11, 2014**

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present: William Ziegler, Caroline Van Alst, Thomas Newmeyer, Joshua Barrow
Shirley Thornton Ed. D.
Superintendent: Steve Van Zant

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board and Superintendent convened closed session at 5:31 p.m.

RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

Open session reconvened at 6:03 p.m.

Report Out from Closed Session

Trustee Ziegler announced that the board decided to non-reelect a certificated administrator. No other action was taken in closed session.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Trustee Thornton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The agenda order was changed to move Personnel items 8.02 and 8.03 to be taken up right after Oral Communications.

Newmeyer/Van Alst/All to approve the change in the agenda order.

The regular meeting of the Sausalito Marin City School District Board of Trustees was recessed at 6:10 pm for the Sausalito School District Financing Corporation Board of Directors Meeting.

The regular meeting of the Sausalito Marin City School District Board of Trustees was resumed at 6:15 pm.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

Trustee Thornton said that she went to see the undefeated Bayside/MLK basketball team win at Ross. The Superintendent at Ross complimented the team on its sportsmanship. It was a great game, she reported.

Trustee Newmeyer said that the California Department of Education will be distributing money for technology to schools as a result of the settlement of a Microsoft lawsuit. It appears that both Bayside/MLK and Willow Creek Academy will be eligible to receive around \$20,000.

SMCTA Report

Susan Cassidy said that the teachers' union has not endorsed any statement that may have gone out from the faculty. The union would like clarification on the loss of Spanish and Art positions in the district. If this is a funding issue, why were new teachers hired with the impression that they were on track for a permanent job? If there are to be changes in requirements for faculty, teachers would like to be informed as the change is occurring and they request that due process provisions be observed. She concluded with a personal statement: Our school has been in transition forever, it seems. If there are changes to be made, we would like to have it done as smoothly and as carefully as possible because our children are affected.

CSEA

Julius Holtzclaw said that CSEA is reviewing the preliminary 2014-2015 school calendar and will give a report on the subject at the next board meeting.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Van Zant reported that talks with the Marin City Community Services District about the ball field and a facilities use-agreement are moving forward. We will report on the financing issues by next month, he said.

The district is working with summer program providers such as Aim High and the Hannah Project to finalize arrangements for this year and make sure that any shortfalls in funding for these programs are restored from outside sources. Trustee Thornton said that she has spoken with the superintendent at the Tamalpais School District who said she believes summer school is not necessary and that schools should be preparing students adequately during the school year so that they do not fail. Can we get data on our students and what percentages of them are successfully completing the year and how many need to go to alternative schools, she asked. The Superintendent said he would find the information and relay it to the trustees.

Superintendent Van Zant then addressed personnel issues. Replying to a point raised by Susan Cassidy, he said that the tenure-track hiring of two teachers who are now subject to layoff occurred before he was hired. These positions were grant-funded and should not have been permanent. Next year, with the Transforming Schools and Pre K-3 grants ending, \$330K in grant money will be eliminated. Positions relying on that money should have been temporary. Now we are reacting to what happened. We also transitioned from two sites to one, a K-8 school that requires most of its teachers to have multiple-subject credentials so that they can have the flexibility to teach more than one subject and work with students in electives. We will work with our teachers who have single-subject credentials so that they can acquire the necessary skills. Because of the March 15 deadline, we have to notice the teachers two months before the budget is finalized. This is unfortunate, but we have to make clear that our intention is to have our teachers be credentialed in multiple subjects.

Trustee Newmeyer said we have an obligation to give notices 60 days prior to a layoff, but our budget must be done by June and things may look different by then.

Superintendent Van Zant said that we want to work with our single subject teachers, but in case they cannot or will not get the required credentials, we must be adequately prepared and send out these notices now. He continued: There is also the matter of the supplemental payments to Willow Creek Academy; I want to point out that we are working on ending the supplement in two to three years. This personnel issue is not related to the supplement. Reducing the custodial positions by 1.8 FTE, so that WCA takes on its custodial duties in-house, will save the district \$55K. Despite these personnel cuts, we are committed to having one class per grade. We will still have small class size of 13-14 students. As the grants go away, we will have to have a better articulated system in which teachers are able to meet the changing needs of the students as they move to higher grades. We will work on building options in subject areas like foreign languages so that students can choose to fulfill their high school foreign language requirement by their sophomore year. He continued: We are working on having all of our students have access to Wi-Fi and the internet no matter where they are in Marin City – that would be a transforming event not just for our school but for the entire community. We are also working with

Community Action Marin to develop a program for three and four year-olds, so that children come to school ready to learn and we get a head start in closing the achievement gap by getting to the children as early as possible.

Principal's Report

Principal Daniel Norbutas said that he was deeply saddened by the Board's decision to release him from his position. I appreciate the opportunity I was given to work here; I love this school and these teachers, he said.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Math teacher Jan McDougal said: I am the only credentialed math teacher at our school. It's a terrible idea to replace single subject teachers with multiple subject teachers at the middle school level. Only a credentialed math teacher can provide the support that students taking high school level algebra need. I was blindsided by the proposal that was posted on Friday. It was done in such a way that it made it difficult for parents to learn about it in a timely manner. I would be happy to add the multiple subject credential, but it is not possible to obtain that by June 2014. I ask that you change the requirement to June 2015. Do not dilute our students' education.

Frank Gold said that he has been a math teacher and worked with students in this community for 48 years. He added: In 2005 I was hired as a Math coach at MLK. At that time there was no principal at the school; it was a mess. I have been in Jan McDougal's classroom every week for almost the entire school year and I can tell you that you are lucky to have her. She is a strong, credentialed math teacher. In 2005 there was no learning going on at the school. Today there is learning going on. I hired Daniel Norbutas in 1993. He was an outstanding teacher. The way you can tell how good a job a principal is doing is by the tone of the school. The tone at MLK today is completely different from what it has been in the past. I recommend that you invite people in to understand the budget and see if there is a way to avoid making these cuts. Keep the credentialed math teacher. Retain and commend your principal. Involve parents and faculty much more than at present. Work to reestablish trust with your community.

David Wetzel, teacher leader for Math at Tam High School said: I have worked with this district for nine years. I came to MLK to coach students so that they would come to the high school more prepared. We found that the problem was with the structure at this school; when we changed the structure and gave the students the support they needed, they excelled. During the three years that the program was in effect, they did well at Tam and many of them received scholarships to go to college. The Superintendent at the time decided that the program was no longer necessary. Immediately, student performance declined and students were again coming to Tam underprepared. Jan McDougal came to Tam to see why that program had stopped. When she received her credential, we asked her to teach at Tam but she turned us down to come and work here with Marin City students. My professional opinion is that Jan McDougal is the best thing to have happened to this school. The idea of running a math program without a credentialed teacher is absurd.

Curt Gebhard said that he has been a math teacher at Tam for past 13 years. He said: Jan McDougal is among the top teachers in the subject. I have seen a lot of the students who come from this district, and I see a definite uptick in their performance since she has been here.

Marlies Zeisler said that her daughter teaches language arts at MLK. She said: I have been volunteering here and I am impressed with the students and how well the school is run. I feel you are making a huge mistake in insisting on multiple subject credentials. Please don't make this decision lightly.

Denni Brusseau, director of Bridge the Gap which has been serving Marin City for 18 years, said: This Bayside MLK team has transformed the school and prepared it well to be a K-8 campus. I have seen the positive spirit that the school has created in the community. The level of academic proficiency is much higher. Transitions here

have been very frequent, especially at the principal level. I appreciate budget constraints, but are there any alternatives that can preserve the team? Continuity is so critical to the well-being of the students.

Hennessey Knoop, mother of two students at MLK and WCA said that this has been an amazing year at MLK. Ms. McDougal has inspired her daughter to excel in math. I am very upset by your decision to dismantle what this team has created; it is shameful, she said.

Remy Rosenberg, a student at MLK, said that Ms. McDougal and Ms. Zeisler are inspiring teachers. All the teachers really care about us and want us here. It would be tragic to have them leave.

Richard Rosenberg, a parent, said if this is a budget question, why are we keeping a Ferrari in the garage? Perhaps Mr. Van Zant is the greatest, but we can't afford him. As a comparison, the Superintendent of New York City schools receives \$212K in compensation and oversees 75K teachers and over a million students. When you start cutting a certified math teacher, test scores will go down and people will not send their kids here. This school has turned around in the last few years and it is clear why. This action is unfair to the people who have given their lives and passion to the school.

Fourth grader Rachel Gutierrez's mother said we finally have a school that we are proud of. My daughter is so excited about the school. Her test scores were low; she needed help and she has improved so much. Please think about these decisions. This is a community and a family. I feel so blessed that my daughter is in this school. Please do what you can to keep the principal and teachers.

Rocio Novoa said that she is really sad that this proposal was made with such short notice. She said: This indicates a lack of commitment to our children. They are struggling. We have a team that really cares about our children. I transferred my children from WCA to MLK and they are doing a lot better. It's hard to find teachers who really care about our children. Mr. Norbutas really cares. My impression is that you are not thinking about our children.

Veronica Cortez said that she has two children at MLK. She said: You guys are going to ruin what the middle school will be. Mr. Norbutas is a leader in this school. My kindergartener is talking about college. This school is providing the fundamentals that my kids need to fulfill their destiny.

Judy Shills said that she started the Conscious Kitchen program at Bayside MLK this year. I have never seen a school this magical, she said. I worked with Daniel Norbutas from the first. He brings this community together. He is ever present. I am stunned that you have decided to let him go. Think twice. Keep the principal and the two teachers.

Anne Harper said that she was a volunteer at Bayside. She said: Ms. McDougal has devoted her career to the children in the district. The assumption must be that you are trying to starve out MLK and help WCA. You have heard what the community feels about these teachers.

Marilyn Mackel said that given everything she has heard so far, she is very concerned about stability for the children. I have heard a lot about issues that exist, but they can be resolved so that we don't have instability. It takes focus. It takes time and commitment and a willingness to change, she concluded.

Donald Smith, a community member said: 55 years ago I was first grader here and went to high school with a seventh grade education because as a black student, I had attended an inadequate institution. Now I see the same thing going on. I have been coaching in the county for 40 years. In the past three years, I have seen black kids from Tam participating in sports which shows that this school is producing kids who are academically prepared and therefore eligible to participate in sports once they get to high school. I think it's a shame to cut out the teachers who are helping to bring about this change.

Kelly McKinley, parent outreach coordinator at Bayside MLK, said: I was very disappointed to hear about the decision to let Mr. Norbutas go. It's like losing a family member. First they took away Bayside, now the principal. It's loss after loss for this community. Our children matter.

Paul Mawry, pastor of Sausalito Presbyterian Church said: This is a no brainer. The core of education is great teachers. Most crucial is having people who have a lot of strategies to be able to reach each student; that is what is irreplaceable. There have to be other places to pinch and save, rather than take the heart out of the school.

Alma Lucas, a parent, said: I have two children at WCA and one at MLK. I am here tonight because I am very sad. Last year WCA took over Bayside. This year you want to fire an extraordinary principal. When Bayside is growing you want to cut it. Jonnette Newton was an excellent principal and she is gone, this year it is the turn of Mr. Norbutas. Parents at WCA can afford different activities for their children; we cannot. Our kids are working hard in art and math, and you want to take it away from them. This is not justice.

Bettie Hodges, head of Hannah Project, said that she has been very concerned over the last year and a half about what would happen to kids at Bayside and MLK. I applaud all the parents who have come to stand up for them. No matter what happens, there are lessons here for the board and superintendent, and even the teachers. It is important for parents to be involved. I hope that level heads will stop a difficult situation from getting worse. Kids have been damaged in the last few years, it behooves us to work through this in a way to make kids win.

Julie Wheelan, a community member, said she went to school with Jan McDougal, who was one of the smartest people in graduate school. She chose to forego lots of money to work with the children here. I am crying for these children; I ask you to think about the cuts you are making, she said.

Tyra Duffin, a parent, said she was shocked to hear of this. You are making the wrong decision; my daughter loves to go to school here, she said.

In response to queries from the Board, Superintendent Van Zant said this is a preliminary notice of layoff until a final decision is made in May. But we must notify people who could be affected. Trustee Newmeyer said that when the Marin Community Foundation gave the district grants that totaled about \$1 million in 2009, they were clear that these monies would be going away. Trustee Ziegler said that we have a half million dollar hole in our pocket, mainly due to grants that are ending. Trustee Van Alst said there are two separate issues, one is the end of the Arts grant this year, which affects two positions, and the other is the Transforming Schools grant, which is ending next year and affects three positions and the implementation of the multiple subject credential proposition.

Trustee Ziegler said that we were in this spot last June and we voted to make cuts and we did not, so we are in this situation today. I don't think that we can go into June without resolving this issue, he said. I want to see something concrete, because the hole will be deeper next year. Our number one duty is the financial viability of this district. We should have made the cuts last year.

Trustee Barrow said that we have heard fair criticism of our process of engaging parents and community regarding the changes we are proposing. Is there any flexibility regarding the deadline for the multiple-subject credential, he asked. Superintendent Van Zant said that the board can direct him to work with the teachers to get their multiple subject credentials by 2015.

Explaining the two resolutions before the Board, he said that the first addresses the number of potential layoffs and the services affected. The second resolution sets out the tie-breaking criteria should the need arise.

Trustee Ziegler said that he wants to give the teachers an additional year to obtain multiple-subject credentials, but would like to know whether this is feasible, given the budget situation. Superintendent Van Zant said that he could not say whether that is possible today, but that he would be coming to the Board by May with a concrete recommendation.

Trustee Thornton asked: Is it possible for community members to interact with the Marin Community Foundation to let them know what the cut in grants will do to our community? Superintendent Van Zant agreed that this should be done. Trustee Barrow said that we ought to figure out how to communicate better with parents and the community. Trustee Ziegler agreed. He added: we are losing funds and we don't have other sources to carry us. We must cut our budget going forward.

Resolution 696 to Eliminate and/or Reduce the Number of Certificated Employees due to a Reduction of Particular Kinds of Services

Roll Call Barrow/Newmeyer/ All, 5 Ayes, 0 Nos, to pass Resolution 696 with the modification that the deadline for teachers getting their multiple-subject credential be changed from June 2014 to June 2015.

At 8:27 p.m., Trustee Ziegler announced that the Board would take a short break. The meeting resumed at 8:40 p.m.

Resolution 697 – Criteria for Determining Order of Seniority for those Employees with the Same Date of First Paid Service

Superintendent Van Zant said that if we do have to issue layoff notices on May 15, and there is a seniority tie among the teachers who must be laid off, this resolution will determine the criteria for breaking the tie.

Roll Call Thornton/ Barrow/ All, 5 Ayes, 0 Nos to pass the above resolution.

CONSENT AGENDA

Roll Call/ Thornton/ Newmeyer/ All, 5 Ayes, 0 Nos to approve the following items:

Board Minutes of December 11, 2013. Board Minutes of February 11, 2014.

Contract Services Agreement with Marin County Office of Education for School Nurse Services for 2014-2015

Personnel Action Report

Payment of Warrants – Batches 35-39

Field Trip

Sausalito District Teachers Association Sunshine Proposal

The proposal by the teachers' union to begin negotiations was brought to the Board for its information.

Memorandum of Understanding with Marin Housing Authority-Action

Mr. Lewis Jordan, director of the Marin Housing Authority, said that this memorandum came about because community members said we need a better outcome for our students, and the better outcome begins with regular attendance. The final agreement is a voluntary process to get kids to school and it is in three parts: How do we get kids to school, how do we identify barriers that parents may have in getting their children to school,

and what kinds of rewards do we want to have in place to encourage the right behaviors. He said: This summer, we held our first ever “Back to School Rally” and we made sure that kids understand that our aim is their education. We are asking you to approve this memorandum that allows voluntary data sharing between the school district and our organization, so that we can properly support those parents and children who have difficulty with attendance and reward those who come to school regularly. It is important to show our kids how important education is. At the last attendance assembly, we had 18 kids in public housing with perfect attendance. Last Christmas Eve, we gave out gift cards and it was exciting to see other kids asking how they could participate. Our vision is to go beyond attendance and talk about grades.

Superintendent Van Zant said that he would like to publicly applaud Mr. Jordan for everything that he does for the children in the community.

Newmeyer/Barrow/All to approve the above memorandum.

Master Agreements with Non-Public Schools

Superintendent Van Zant said these are agreements with non public schools for children with special needs. Eventually, we would like to have the capacity to educate them in our school, so that we do not have to use non-public schools in the future.

Master Agreement with Spectrum Center

Van Alst/Newmeyer/All to approve the agreement with Spectrum Center

Master Agreement with Anova School

Newmeyer/Thornton/All to approve the agreement with Anova School

2013-2014 Second Interim Budget Report

Business Manager Paula Rigney gave a Power Point presentation of the budget. She said that the second interim report is a snapshot of the school year finances to the end of January; it will be our benchmark for budget development going forward. She pointed out that the encroachment of special education expenses into general funds is over \$700K for the district. If we had an in-house program to serve all but those in the “severe” category of special education, our costs would decrease by about \$300K, she said. The district has received a positive certification from the Marin County Office of Education; this means that the district’s budget is expected to be sustainable for the next two years.

Roll call Van Alst/Barrow/All 5 Ayes, 0 Nos to approve the 2013-2014 District Second Interim Budget

2013-2014 Willow Creek Academy Second Interim Budget Report

Royce Conner, Willow Creek Academy head of school, gave a report on the charter school budget.

Newmeyer/ Barrow/ All to accept the 2013-2014 Willow Creek Academy Second Interim Budget Report

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Thornton/Barrow/All to approve the following board bylaws:

Board Bylaw (BB) 9100 – Organization

Board Bylaw (BB) 9110 – Terms of Office

Board Bylaw (BB) 9011 – Disclosure of Confidential Information


Board Bylaw (BB) 9012 – Board Member Electronic Communication
Board Bylaw (BB) 9121 – President
Board Bylaw (BB) 9122 – Secretary
Board Bylaw (BB) 9123 – Clerk
Board Bylaw (BB) 9124 – Attorney

The following bylaws were brought to the Board for a first read:


Board Bylaw (BB) 9200 – Limits on Board Authority – First Read
Board Bylaw (BB) 9222 – Resignation – First Read
Board Bylaw (BB) 9223 - Filling Vacancies – First Read
Board Bylaw (BB) 9224 – Oath or Affirmation – First Read

ADJOURNMENT

Thornton/Barrow/All to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

 4/8/14

Signature/Date



Title