

**SAUSALITO MARIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
November 15, 2016**

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present: Caroline Van Alst, Thomas Newmeyer, Joshua Barrow, Ida Green

Absent: William Ziegler

Superintendent: Will McCoy

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

Trustee Van Alst pointed out that the agenda incorrectly identifies this meeting as special. It is a regular meeting of the Board.

Pledge of Allegiance

Trustee Barrow led the pledge of allegiance.

Trustee Van Alst suggested moving the WestEd and Impact Educational Consultants proposals, as well as the and Superintendent's Education Plan, to a workshop so that each entity will have the opportunity to make a presentation to the Board. Superintendent McCoy said he would arrange a workshop, which would be agendized like a regular board meeting and open to the public.

Van Alst/Newmeyer/1 Absent to move the above items to a workshop meeting at a later date.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Gayle Mills, an educator and Marin resident, said that she had read the Superintendent and Impact Educational Consultants' proposals and found that both emphasized teacher-centered instruction. She asked the Board to consider a plan based on a mastery-based and child centered instruction where children choose their work when they enter the classroom in the morning and have up to three hours to work alone or in a group, with the teacher as a guide and on the side rather than the center of class activities.

Barbara Killey, a volunteer, said that she has a concern about the requested expenditure for more consultants. She asked if there were not direct student needs that were more urgent than whatever the output of the consultants might be. She added that she could not find much of a track record for the Impact Educational Consultants and suggested that \$73K could be better spent for direct classroom needs.

Bettie Hodges, director of Saving a Generation, read from a letter that she had presented to the Board. She said: Earlier this month, a coalition of parents and community activists held a demonstration protesting the SMCS D Board and administration's failure to correct a host of inequities at Bayside MLK Jr. Academy. Prior to the start of school, we had written to the interim superintendent Bob Ferguson, warning of the consequences of starting the school year with so many unresolved issues. We have not received a response to the letter or the demonstration, nor have we been invited to discuss these concerns with the Superintendent. This month's agenda includes proposals by the administration for new contracts with consultants totaling almost \$100K, without any community input or consultation. The proposed contract with WestEd is in part about parent engagement, yet no parents or stakeholders were asked to comment on the proposal. If this is a community school as the district suggests, we insist on being active partners in the transformation of Bayside MLK Jr. Academy. The proposed education

plan, aside from the expensive consultancies, seems scattershot and incomplete, and falls far short of the coherent, cogent and comprehensive approach that we feel would turn the school around.

Ms. Hodges concluded with a list recommendations that included the establishment of an Education Reform Committee to be directed by the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence and the County Office of Education, suspension of the WestEd and Impact Educational Consultants' proposals, and the engagement of PLAN (Parent Leadership Action Network) as the lead organization in the LCAP process.

Marilyn Mackel, a volunteer, said: One of our first concerns is that we do not have transparency. We have yet to see the contract for the superintendent. The hiring of an outside contractor from Los Angeles (Impact Educational Consultants) seems neither efficient nor well thought out. The proposal from this consultant was far from excellent. The Superintendent has chosen not to respond to the demands of the community, except via a letter to the parents, not the community. This is not the way we like to see things going. Direct services must be restored to our students. We need a full-time Licensed Clinical Social Worker at the school. We need a reset of the school year. This can be done, if you commit to the job, she concluded.

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Superintendent McCoy noted that Principal Griffin was absent and that Assistant Principal Minor would be giving his report.

Michael Tabb, a volunteer, said: We have a parents' roundtable every Tuesday followed by a meeting of the Marin City Parents Advocating for their Children. We are supporting parents to help develop their skills to be good advocates for their children and we hope that some will serve on the council. Mr. Tabb emphasized the need to hire a parent liaison as soon as possible. Trustee Barrow said we seem to be behind in forming the Parent Advisory Council.

Trustee Van Alst asked that a representative of the Parent Advisory Council be in place and ready to report by the next board meeting. Bettie Hodges said that it is more important to have the Site Council in place, as that is a body which has the authority to weigh in on the LCAP process. Mr. McCoy said he has talked to Principal Griffin about a School Site Council and a report should be ready for this meeting. Turning to the parent liaison question, he said that he sent out an email to a few organizations in the community and requested a reset. Originally the plan was to go to Bay Area Community Resources, an organization outside the community, which is providing this service to eight other districts. Community members were not happy with this and wanted to use someone within the SMCS D community. He said that he reached out to Marin Housing, the Marin City Community Development Agency and Alberta Erickson.

Mr. Tabb said the message to those who are interested in helping us become a better community is that this is about economic empowerment as well. We should not create more dependency by hiring outside agencies.

DIRECTOR OF MAINTENANCE

Alan Rothkop said that during the Thanksgiving holiday, we will finish the cleanup work at BMLK, as well as strip and seal the floors. The bird abatement system seems to be working at the entrance to the school.

MR. DAMIAN MORGAN

Mr. Morgan said he is forming a foundation for Bayside Martin Luther King Jr. Academy to raise money from donations and grants. Our school is well positioned to receive grants from Marin and beyond, he said. He asked if it would be possible to use the school's address as the Foundation's business address. Superintendent McCoy said that he would have to consult legal counsel for the answer. Mr. Morgan said that depending on how much money is raised, his organization may have a small paid staff, but he made clear that he would not receive any funds for himself. We hope to have an MOU that states that any money raised will be solely for BMLK, he told the Board.

Trustee Barrow said that he recalled that a few years ago Dr. Thornton started a foundation. Dr. Thornton clarified that her organization, the Center for Excellence, concentrates on raising money for the arts at BMLK. Trustee Van Alst thanked Mr. Morgan for his efforts and said that at some point, it might be useful to work with the school to figure out which of its programs might be attractive to prospective donors.

PRINCIPAL

Assistant Principal Minor said the school has been meeting twice a month with Don Carney and Juanita Edwards to work on Restorative Justice. She continued: We have interviews scheduled for a prospective math teacher on Friday. We received a \$1000 grant from Wells Fargo. Four of our teachers (Edney, Banks, Matto and Thompson) received a \$300 grant from the Rotary Club of Sausalito. The Glass Door organization will be sponsoring some clubs for our students including coding and music clubs. Jennifer Banks, the 1st grade teacher, organized a successful poetry recital in her classroom and had a farmer's market yesterday where students sold some of the produce from the garden.

Ms. Minor said that ELAC's report states that good instruction is happening in the elementary grades. The School Site Council met in October and discussed Robert's Rules of Order and the roles of various officers. Trustee Green asked about homework. Ms. Minor said that students who have not completed their class work or homework spend the time after lunch in the multi-purpose room to complete their work. They are supervised by the yard-duty paraprofessionals. Trustee Green also asked why a math teacher is still needed if Ms. Minor was originally hired to teach math. Superintendent McCoy said that it was felt that someone with more experience in the subject was needed. Trustee Barrow asked about Ms. Minor's perspective regarding student behavior. Ms. Minor said that Dr. Griffin has created a matrix so that teachers are sending children to the office when necessary. She explained: We are using the lunch recess as a time for reflection as well as getting Restorative Justice underway and putting the Positive Behavior Intervention System in place. We are also using the school rules that were put together by the previous administration. We are still in the process of aligning these various elements into one coherent school culture. Trustee Green said that she is hearing that even Kindergarteners are being sent to the office for behavior problems. She asked what is being done to get extra help for the teachers so that we can stop these incidents from escalating. LaDonna Jones, a Yard Supervisor, said what our students need is a good education, with the right teachers and the right books. Our children want to learn as much as anyone else, she said. Natasha Burton, a resident, said that the children need consistency and to be able to develop a relationship with teachers. Jhontay Wills, a local resident, compared the district's situation to Flint, Michigan and said that the disparities here are unacceptable.

Trustee Barrow asked if there is inconsistent staffing in any other area besides Math. Superintendent McCoy said the same teachers have been in place in the elementary grades.

Ellen Franz, the former art teacher, said that the biggest challenge is that the administration has been stripping away the staff and replacing them with part-time contractors. She said: Last year I was the art

teacher and I was on campus the whole day. Now we have a teacher who comes in for one day and returns a week later. It is the same for music, PE and science. This is a big problem, because you have taken away the opportunity for our children to form relationships with teachers.

Barbara Killey said: Today the PE and art teachers were not available. Fortunately, Mr. Edney is here to provide consistency for our middle school students. That is the big piece that is missing in the school now. Our offer to pay to have Ellen Franz and Jonnette Newton teach art and music was not accepted because they do not have single subject credentials. The sooner we do something about this instead of hiring consultants, the better it will be for our students.

Beverly Freeman, a resident, said that she feels the Board of Trustees is not doing its job and allows the failures at school to happen. She continued; I am new here and I can see there is a problem. If you are not dedicated to educating all children and giving them a quality education, you should resign. You sat and watched it come to this. Those who have a lot of money decide what happens - those of us who don't have money – who is watching out for us?

Mr. McCrary, a parent, said that he brought his children here for the social aspects of the school. The leadership team that was in place here last year- Ms. Newton, Dr. Thornton, and Ms. Franz - is gone, and there was no official explanation for their departure. The kids miss them. Now, when they visit, the children are happy to reconnect with them. The powers that be did not take into consideration how this change would impact the children. The common sense approach would have been to transition slowly.

Binta Manneh, a parent, said: I am from Ghana and went to one of the poorest schools in the country. Yet, we had many things, such as clubs and extra-curricular activities, that are missing here. I thought that the schools here would be so much better. Yet I have to explain to people back home that my son is in a school without a math teacher. Ghana, despite its poverty, managed to have so many amenities in its schools. I am able to speak English to you because we were taught English as a second language. I can speak six languages. America should do way better. I wish this school would do better, listen to the parents and do something about its problems.

Trustee Barrow said that the Board must figure out how to address the communication gap with the community. He said that he joined the board to fix the district's problems and he is fully aware that there is still a lot of work to do to achieve the goals for our students.

Referring to the letter from Ms. Hodges, Trustee Van Alst asked what steps the district can take to further engage parents. Maybe we need a parent workshop or perhaps more board members should be attending the Tuesday parent meetings, along with the superintendent and principal, she suggested.

Trustee Green said many people feel that the Board has not stepped up to the plate. Over the years, the Board took the advice of administrators to go in directions which have resulted in the current situation. Going forward, we have to spend our money wisely and we have to listen. We must create a space for classified and certificated staff to speak their mind and let the administration know what is happening.

Trustee Van Alst said she will commit to attend more meetings in the community to help her make decisions.

Debra Turner, the incoming Trustee, said the middle school students have had a pretty dismal year so far, despite the heroic efforts of their only teacher. We should plan for a summer school program for them right now, she said.

Trustee Van Alst said that she has read about an after school/summer school grant called 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant which will give between \$50K and \$150K for after school enrichment activities. This might be a good resource for a possible summer school, she said.

Ms. Turner said that she feels that the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence is not getting what it needs to make an impact. Sujie Shin of CCEE said: Our approach is one of listening to make sure the priorities that we choose are those of the community. We were at the school in October and met with the leadership, as well as classified staff and parents. Last Thursday, we met with all the teaching staff. We have been sitting in on the Tuesday parent meetings to get a better idea of the community's priorities, needs and obstacles. You have to focus on building internal capacity, asking where you would like to be in three to five years. We will be happy to give regular updates in the future. We will not come in with a set of findings and recommendations for change. Rather, we will give some collaboratively developed recommendations and break them down into incremental steps.

WILLOW CREEK ACADEMY

Head of School Tara Seekins said that at the last Parent Council meeting, she gave a presentation on the LCAP and shared the current goals and metrics for the school. She said that WCA is developing individualized math learning plans with the Marin City Math Challenge acting as coach. Fall report cards will be mailed in December, and MAP testing will also begin in December. The school's referral and suspension rate is set to go down by half relative to the same time last year. The Restorative Justice program is in its fourth year. WCA is sharing strategies and lessons learned with BMLK and will continue to do so. Five teachers received the \$300 Rotary grants – Ms. Seekins thanked Dr. Thornton for facilitating the program. Current enrollment is 402.

Trustee Green asked about the availability of scholarships for after school lessons in music and sports. Ms. Seekins said that scholarships are indeed available.

SUPERINTENDENT

Superintendent McCoy said: I was brought here to improve instructional outcomes for kids. The best work I can do is to listen and ask what if our critics are right? There is at least a nugget of truth in even the angriest of opinions. Beyond the adult noise we hear, the paramount concern should be academic achievement for the children. I believe that the education plan I have proposed is the best approach we can take to improve outcomes for our students, and these will not get better until we have high expectations of both teachers and students. That is my reason for going to Impact Educational Consultants, so that we can offer the best possible one-on-one coaching to our teaching staff. We have good teachers here, but we can all be better.

Trustee Green said the "adult noise" started because the Board went with the recommendations of previous administrators and cut staff and dismantled so many programs. She thanked trustee Van Alst for pulling the proposed consultancies from the agenda and said she welcomes the opportunity to study them further.

A parent said, using the term "adult noise" devalues our input and makes our valid concerns seem irrelevant.

At 8:12 p.m., Trustee Van Alst said that the Board would take a short break. The Board reconvened the meeting at 8:18 p.m.

Review of Tennessee Woods, Tennessee Glen and Attendance Agreements

Superintendent McCoy said that these are ongoing agreements that have been in place since 2000. The agreements before the Board include a provision for renewal every two years. Currently there are 11 students who reside in our district and attend Mill Valley schools. At this time, the Mill Valley School District is not a Basic Aid district, so the attendance agreement is not needed, but would be reinstated as necessary.

CONSENT AGENDA

Trustee Green asked that the minutes and payment of warrants be removed from the Consent Agenda.
Barrow/Newmeyer/1 Absent to Remove the Minutes and Payment of Warrants from the Consent Agenda

Roll Call Van Alst/Barrow/4 Ayes, 0 Noes, 1 Absent to approve the following consent agenda item:
2016-2017 Agreement with Marin County Office of Education – Business Services

Minutes of the October 13, October 28 and November 9, 2016 Board Meetings

Trustee Green said that she was present at the meeting of October 13, 2016 whereas the minutes show her as absent. She asked that the record reflect her presence.

Newmeyer/Barrow/1 Absent to Approve Minutes of the October 13, October 28 and November 9, 2016 Board Meetings

PERSONNEL ACTION REPORT

Superintendent McCoy said that a paraprofessional was moved to Bayside MLK Jr. Academy in response to increased need, which necessitated the hiring of an aide for the special education class at Willow Creek.

Barrow/Newmeyer/1 Absent to approve the Personnel Action Report

Consideration and Approval of Budget Revision #1 for Fiscal Year 2016-2017

Trustees Van Alst and Newmeyer said that they appreciated the format of the budget presentation and thanked Ms. Prescott for her hard work.

Interim CBO Amy Prescott said that the following adjustments have been included in the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 portions of the Multi-Year Projections:

1. A 3% projected increase in property taxes.
2. An increase in the in-lieu property taxes paid to Willow Creek Academy due to their anticipated enrollment growth.
3. Slight increase in special education funding.
4. End of the Pre K-3 Grant in June 2018.
5. Reimbursement for the fire at 33 Buchanan for the 2016-2017 fiscal year only.

In expenditures, she outlined the following:

1. Increase math teacher position to 1.0 FTE
2. Reduce .5 FTE certificated administrator
3. Reduce arts and PE contract, to replace with in-house instruction
4. Reduction in estimated special education expenses

5. Reduced legal fees in 17-18 and 18-19
6. Reduced outside contracts, including MCOE, School Services.

Ms. Prescott said that several big items contribute to the current deficit status of the budget. These include the requirement for a 5% economic reserve, which had been omitted from the last budget; the increase in Willow Creek Academy's enrollment since their June report, and the cancellation of planned reductions in teaching staff. Terena Mares said that the Board may choose to vote on individual items in the revised budget rather than the entire document. Trustee Barrow said that he could not approve the budget with a \$600K deficit looming.

Superintendent McCoy said that once the negotiations with certificated staff are finalized, it will be possible to plan the instructional day so that teachers remain with their students throughout the day, with art and PE specialists coming in as needed. This will be a better learning environment for students who will no longer be taught by consultants they see only once a week.

Similarly, as instruction improves, and we emphasize the social and emotional health of our students, it is hoped that the need for special education and non-public school placement will lessen. He said that the district's philosophy is based on the Multi-Tiered System of Supports, which looks at the needs of each student and strives to put together an individualized learning plan that will address the academic as well as social needs of every child.

Turning to the proposed WestEd agreement to assist the district with its LCAP, superintendent McCoy said he did not feel that he could manage the process alone, given his other commitments. Terena Mares of MCOE said that her office would be prepared to pay for \$15K of the cost of hiring WestEd. Trustee Newmeyer said that it would be prudent to push for a \$3.6 million bond solely to retire the current debt service, which costs the district \$300K every year.

Bettie Hodges asked about legal costs that the district is incurring. She asked if mediation could be used to mitigate complaints against the district. She said that if the district accepted the validity of the complaints and showed interest in fixing the issues, it could perhaps move away from a legal fight. We are more interested in seeing you fix the problems, rather than give your rationale for why they exist, she said. Superintendent McCoy said that this is a valid point and that Ms. Hodges had put it very well. But he did not see how the district could do without legal representation as an option. He said: I am trying to cover a lot of pieces myself that would otherwise have to be outsourced, and I am being drawn further and further into the legal challenges and away from our students.

Speaking of the bond issue, Michael Tabb said that we should be mindful of the burden of asking homeowners to pay more in taxes. He asked how the parent liaison position would be funded. Amy Prescott said that money for the parent liaison comes from the Marin Community Foundation, whereas the community school coordinator would be paid by the district - \$30K has been budgeted for this item.

Board members decided to further review the budget revisions at the next board meeting, when the interim budget will be presented. They directed CBO Amy Prescott to continue her work on the budget and bring any additional areas of possible adjustments to the next meeting.

Tentative Agreements with SMCTA and CSEA Bargaining Units

Trustee Barrow said that he could not approve the agreement as presented, given that the budget review had shown continued deficit spending of approximately \$300K each year, beginning in the current fiscal year. Trustee Van Alst said that significant new expenses, outlined earlier by Ms. Prescott, had occurred since the first presentation of the budget in June 2016. These changes have resulted in higher deficit spending and a significant decrease in the ending fund balance by year 2018-2019. Trustee Newmeyer asked whether the district would have to discuss with Willow Creek Academy the need for sharing the excess shared costs. The Board decided to table action on this item until the next board meeting.

Van Alst/Newmeyer/1 Absent to table the Tentative Agreements with SMCTA and CSEA Bargaining Units until the next Board Meeting

Payment of Warrants - Batches 15-18

Trustee Green asked about the division of the water bill between BMLK and WCA. Alan Rothkop said that the billing is based on the location of the meters. We are also disputing the use of an irrigation meter, which results in higher fees.

Barrow/Newmeyer /All to Approve the Payment of Warrants, Batches 15-18

FUTURE MEETING

The next Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees will be on Tuesday, December 13, 2016, in the Bayside Martin Luther King School Library

BOARD COMMENTS / CORRESPONDENCE

Trustees suggested that this item be moved to the top of the agenda, as had been the practice in the past.

ADJOURNMENT

Van Alst/Barrow/1 Absent to adjourn at 10:20 p.m.



Signature/Date

Clerk

Title