

**CONEJO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING****March 18, 2008
MINUTES****CALL TO ORDER – CLOSED SESSION**

The Board meeting of March 18, 2008, was called to order by President Dorothy Beaubien at 5:00 p.m. Mrs. Beaubien asked if there were any public speakers for the Closed Session agenda items; there were none. The Board adjourned into Closed Session at 5:00 p.m., where the following items were discussed:

- A. Public Employee Appointment-Employment-Evaluation-Leaves of Absence-Retirement-Discipline-Dismissal
Pursuant to Government Code §54957
- B. Consideration of Student Discipline
Pursuant to Education Code §48918
- C. Pending Litigation
Pursuant to Government Code §54957.1(a)
- D. Labor Negotiations
Pursuant to Government Code §54957.6
- E. Real Estate Negotiations: Kelley Road Site
Pursuant to Government Code §54956.8
Dr. Joel Kirchenstein, Sage Industries, Negotiator

The Closed Session ended at 5:43 p.m. There were no announcements from Closed Session.

CALL TO ORDER – OPEN SESSION**OPENING PROVISIONS**

President Beaubien called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m., led the Pledge of Allegiance, and read the procedural announcements for the meeting.

Present were Board members Dorothy Beaubien, Dolores Didio, Mike Dunn, Pat Phelps, and Dr. Timothy Stephens. Administration: Mario V. Contini, Superintendent, Jo-Ann Yoos, Assistant Superintendent, Personnel Services, and Janet Cosaro, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional Services. Bob Iezza, Director, Elementary Education, Max Beaman, Secondary Education, Carol Boyan, Director, Curriculum, and Phil Nelson, Director, Planning & Facilities, were also present.

Mrs. Beaubien announced the following additional procedures for the evening:

1. All speaker cards must be turned in prior to the Agenda item you wish to speak to, and all speakers addressing the school closure issue was asked to speak at that agenda item after the presentation by Dr. Baarstad and the committee. All other public speakers were welcomed to speak during Public Comments.
2. Due to the number of speaker cards received (240), Mrs. Beaubien stated that all speakers would be offered two minutes instead of the traditional three minutes to speak.
3. The Board will listen to 24 speakers, chosen at random, from the March 4 meeting. Then, we will begin with speakers from this evening.
4. The Board will stop public speakers at 9:45 p.m. so that the Board will have a chance to discuss the school closure item.

Approval of Agenda

Mrs. Didio moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Dr. Stephens. Motion carried 5-0.

Recognition: Marmonte League Champions

The Board congratulated and acknowledged the Thousand Oaks High School Girls Volleyball and Westlake High School Girls Golf teams for their accomplishments.

Comments from the Superintendent

Superintendent Contini announced a 5-district budget forum being held on Wednesday, April 2, 4:30 p.m., at the Thousand Oaks High School Performing Arts Center. The other districts are Simi Valley, Las Virgenes, Oak Park, and Moorpark. Mr. Contini encouraged parents and community members to attend to hear more about the Governor's and district budgets.

Comments from the Public

One public speaker spoke to the issue of the district's budget, and one spoke about a sales tax initiative.

Comments from Individual Board Members

Dr. Stephens commented on the speakers at the March 4 Board meeting, and thanked them for their passion and commitment.

Mrs. Phelps discussed the fun she had reading to students during "Read Across America" week and thanked the schools that invited Board members to read to students.

ACTION ITEMS - GENERAL**Board of Education****A. Approval of the CSBA 1312 Board Policies and Administrative Regulations – First Reading**

Mrs. Phelps moved to adopt the CSBA 1312 policies and administrative regulations regarding complaint procedures, seconded by Mrs. Didio. Motion carried 5-0.

Instructional Services**B. Approval of High School Science Courses of Study**

Dr. Stephens moved to approve the High School Science Courses of Study created by district teachers, seconded by Mrs. Phelps. Motion carried 5-0.

Business Services**C. Health Benefits Consulting Services Agreement with Poms & Associates**

Mrs. Didio moved to approve the attached Consulting Services Agreement, seconded by Mr. Dunn. Motion carried 5-0.

D. Acceptance of Cash and Equipment Donations

Mr. Dunn moved to accept the donations as listed and extend appreciation to the donors, seconded by Dr. Stephens. Mrs. Phelps pointed out the many contributions that our schools received from parents and businesses within the Conejo Valley. Motion carried 5-0.

E. Closure of University and Meadows Elementary School

Mrs. Phelps moved to a) pursue plans to place a sales or parcel tax initiative on the November 2008 ballot to keep all 20 current elementary schools open, as well as to significantly expand and upgrade access to technology in our schools; and b) identify \$1.3 million in recurring budget cuts, in addition to the estimated \$6 million in budget

cuts and revenue transfers necessary to balance the District Budget in 2008-2009 under the Governor's budget proposal for evaluation by the Board as an alternative to school closures in 2009-2010, and c) as a last resort close University and Meadows Elementary Schools, effective fall 2009, seconded by Mrs. Didio.

Dr. Baarstad offered comments about the school closure process, and thanked Principals Jeff Rickert, University, and Judie Tetzlaff, Meadows, for their strong and compassionate leadership during the process. It's been extremely difficult for the schools, the staff and families. Dr. Baarstad clarified that the school closure process was not motivated to balance diversity or the Governor's budget, but rather declining enrollment. The State of California public schools, including Ventura County, have been declining for three years. Over 50% of the school districts in Ventura County are experiencing declining enrollment including our closest neighbors, Las Virgenes and Simi Valley. Moorpark and Oak Park have been declining for the past three years, and seem to be balancing out this year. This is not a Conejo Valley phenomenon; it is a California public schools phenomenon. With respect to the average elementary school size, the average Ventura County elementary school in district's over 1,000 students is 535 students per elementary school; our average is 461 (eliminating Sycamore Canyon and Lang Ranch, it is 420 students), Simi Valley is 505, Moorpark 520, and Las Virgenes is 575. In an article on declining enrollment in the Ventura County Star on Sunday, Dr. Chuck Weis, Superintendent of Schools, commented on this issue. We are already out in front of most districts on this issue, but that's because we are behind about 20 students on average from most other districts. We don't get more and we don't get less sources of revenue than the other districts. We get the same. The Facilities Strategic Planning Committees looked at many different logistical data to consider – school size, distances parents would have to travel, boundary scenarios, and it was logistical data that made a lot of sense to us. We did not look at the perceived quality of programs, which proves to be an issue of frustration for many parents. However, based upon the logistical analysis that we did, we believe that University and Meadows are the best candidates to close, if we are going to recommend two schools for closure. The original process developed a year ago said that the board would have an opportunity to rescind a vote to close schools if that was the final vote. That decision would be based on enrollment. We will look at projected enrollment in the spring, and actual enrollments the first week in September. If our enrollment trends are doing much better, the Board will have an opportunity to rescind their decision. We will also look at a tax initiative in November. Dr. Baarstad has been in touch with legal council about this issue. A sales tax has never been done in California for a public school district. There seems to be many legal hurdles to overcome. We have also been in contact with City Manager, Scott Mitnick, and Jim Friedl, Executive Director of Conejo Recreation and Park District, regarding a community-wide tax initiative that would support parks, schools and city functions because we believe the possibility of passing this kind of tax will increase with more involved. The City is researching this now, but is concerned about legal issues. We cannot pass a sales tax without the City. We believe our best bet would be a parcel tax on the ballot. We will get our experts and bond advisors to help us get a parcel tax on the ballot. We are concerned, though, that there will not be a lot of community support for this. We feel that we need to add something to it to bring more schools into the mix, and we are constantly hearing about the need for better technology in our schools. We would like to pursue this potential too. Parents have indicated that we could “easily” find \$1.3 million to cut in our budget to keep the schools open. We don't agree that it is easy, but we do agree you can always make more cuts. Combined with the cuts in the Governor's budget and continuing declining enrollment, we will have to cut about \$8 for next year. We will begin our discussions with you at next meeting about those cuts, and a Study Session in May. If you act tonight, we will move aggressively to begin consolidation and transition programs.

Mr. Dunn asked for clarification: the \$8 million in cuts will affect the 2008/2009 school year, but school closure will not begin until 2009/2010? Dr. Baarstad affirmed.

Mr. Contini added that tonight there is an item on the City's agenda regarding working with the District funding to avoid school closures and address other important issues.

Mrs. Beaubien asked for speakers from the March 4 meeting to be called to speak first. A combination of speakers from March 4 and new speakers were called forward to speak. A total of 54 speakers spoke.

Mrs. Beaubien thanked all those who spoke and stated that it was time for the Board to discuss the issue on the Agenda. She asked Mr. Dunn if he would like to begin the discussion.

Mr. Dunn stated that his comments were lengthy, and he would begin his then let others speak before he would make his final comments. Mr. Dunn asked staff to answer some of the speakers' questions, such as could the properties remain unleased until September 2009; Dr. Baarstad stated they would have to remain unleased until the transition was completed at each school. It was recommended that we have a hiring freeze. Mr. Dunn referred to an email from a parent who checked a website (www.ed-data.k12.ca.us), which stated that our district hired many administrative and pupil personnel positions, and lost two teachers, with only 33 new students in 2003-2007. Mr. Dunn stated that the Board was given other options to consider before opting to close any schools. Cutting the budget was one of those options. Mr. Dunn gave several scenarios about the reported new hires, showing how money could have been saved by eliminating those positions. He also mentioned a complaint from a parent regarding the EveryDay Math program, and that there have been many complaints about the program. He has heard estimates of 250-500 students that have left the District due to this math program. Eliminating the program and reclaiming at least 250 students would bring around \$1.4 million back to the district. Another theme he would like to point to why is this district is losing children when private and religious schools are not? Why is there a waiting list at La Reina and some of the other schools mentioned and we are losing students? Mr. Dunn stated he had more to say but wanted to turn the opportunity to another board member at that time. Mrs. Beaubien asked Dr. Baarstad if he would like to respond to any of Mr. Dunn's comments. Dr. Baarstad stated that the district has not added 27 administrative positions in the last several years and the figures are not accurate.

Dr. Stephens stated that sadly, this district has been hit with declining enrollment and a possible 10% budget cut from the state. This translates into an \$8 million shortfall for the 2008/2009 school year. Of course we would like to find other income streams, and hope to find something over the next nine months before we have to actually go to the school closure scenario. The Board needs to take responsibility for some of the issues that have come up in regard to school closure. The Board should have given more direction to the 25-member committee. It is not all on the committee's shoulders to address the problems. It saddens him that we have to close two National Blue Ribbon Schools. These two schools are also California Distinguished Schools, and one just received a nomination last week. The Board should have given the committee direction to take into consideration API scores and awards as they deliberated on which should be closed. The blame needs to be aimed on the Board, not the committee. Schools of excellence should not be closed. The potential loss of enrollment due to school closure is a reality. Meadows parents will be sending students to schools that are very different from Meadows, and because of that, we may suffer further loss of enrollment. If we lose tremendous amounts of children because of that, we are going to defeat what we are trying to accomplish. University will probably not lose as many students because those students are going to schools that are similar to University. He asked if out-of-zone transfers were taken into consideration? Dr. Baarstad stated yes, at the early part of the meetings this was discussed, but it did not end up as a selection criteria. Dr. Stephens asked about the disparity of loading capacity at Meadows; Mrs. Didio responded that class size reduction has had an impact on loading capacity and Dr. Baarstad stated that the capacity limits have been checked and rechecked, and are accurate. Dr. Stephens stated that diversity was the next issue he wanted to address. Staff was asked to go back and address this issue. He asked the question, "Will the District be more balanced if these two schools are closed?" Mr. Contini offered to respond to that question. When the discussion at the last meeting turned to put emphasis on diversity, there were several checks and rechecks to make sure the direction to the committee would be clear. His recollection was that the committee would place the criteria as the first layer, and diversity would be next. Dr. Stephens said he may be off base, but he remembered Dr. Baarstad displaying a chart that showed the correlation to ELL and SES students and API scores. Two examples in our District are Acacia and Walnut. These two schools have approximately 100-125 ELL and SES students. Their API scores are around 850. We see when we have small ELL and SES numbers, API scores hold steady. When the percentage of ELL and SES students are much higher, the scores are impacted. He was hoping that the committee would be able to address this issue and help the schools become more balanced. If we have to close two schools, it would be nice if we could do two things at one time, and closing these two schools just does not help the issue of diversity. When the committee went back the second time, the committee took the three primary criteria and applied those to all 18 schools (Ladera and Maple were taken out), and eight schools surfaced for potential closure. Why didn't the committee go back and reapply the three criteria to the eight schools? Dr.

Baarstad said the committee did not see any reason to do that. The primary criteria were to be used to flush out the potential schools in order to do a more in-depth study. Dr. Baarstad stated that all the scenarios that were offered from the parents and community adjusted the rankings favorably according to whatever school they represented. The committee tried a system they felt was the most fair. Dr. Stephens concluded by saying that closing two schools is the most challenging decision this Board has had to make, and he feels that they need to get it right.

Mrs. Didio stated that she took a lot of time to gather and consider all the emails and phone calls and discussions she's had regarding this decision. She first thanked the Superintendent, Mr. Contini, Dr. Baarstad, Mr. Nelson, and the committee for the dedication, hard work and responses to all the hundreds of emails and phone calls. Staff and committee members put in their time with the best intentions. The entire Board voted to adopt the two-phase process to consider school closure. In September, Phase 1 was adopted, and that was to have an average range of 475-500 students at every elementary school. All Board members voted to close two schools in order to balance the budget. In Phase II, the whole Board approved the Primary Criteria identifying schools for closure. At that time, there was plenty of opportunity for the community to step forward with suggestions and ideas. On March, 4, the committee announced its recommendation to close University and Meadows Elementary Schools. The direction to the staff was to bring forth the recommendation to close these two elementary schools. In addition, proposing a sales or parcel tax to the community, and an additional \$1.3 million in budget cuts were to be identified, for a total of \$8 million in cuts. When we begin to start talking more cuts needed, then it will go into the quality of education in this district. We were told over and over that enrollment projections will be reviewed in April, and if they are high enough, then we can rescind the school closure vote, or anytime before the 2009/2010 school year. There are options that hopefully we can explore: 1) we can look into a preschool program; 2) we can consider magnet schools or special programs, i.e. the International Baccalaureate program at Newbury Park High School; 3) and we can revisit the home schooling program. We did try it, it was not very successful, but we can try it again. We have one year to work on ideas to save our schools. Selling the schools and/or the property is not an option. The following are Mrs. Didio's ideas about closing Meadows and University Elementary Schools: 1) Regarding University, we must minimize the amount of schools that those students will attend, and assure that Child Care will still be available to them. There are also concerns about these children crossing busy roads to attend new schools. We would have to address their safety, and perhaps speak with the City about cross walks and crossing guards. 2) At Meadows, take the entire school program and place it in another school. In order to be an arts magnet, there will be more traffic and a need for a larger facility, and Meadows may not be the best place for that. Sending students to three different schools from Meadows is also not an option. 3) Regarding a sales or parcel tax, this needs to be planned by a unified community. We need adequate and stable funding. This district has a history of doing things locally – establishing developer fees for schools long before it became a state law, building schools with local dollars rather than state dollars, and attempting class size reduction before the state thought about it. Adequate, stable funding is a necessity and would avoid the ups and downs that school districts experience over the years. Unfortunately, we have not been able to depend on the state. 4) Regarding establishing a charter school, it would add to the problem of declining enrollment and not be to the benefit of this district. If you are really interested in this being a unified district with quality education, this is not the way to go. There are companies interested in coming out here to set up charters, but they are interested in the financial side of the business. 5) Boundary changes and school choice cannot be left out of the equation, and need to be addressed in the near future. People have been attracted to the community because of the high quality of education our district provides. That quality is attributed to the excellent teachers, support staff and parent volunteers at all levels that serve our students. There is a direct correlation to quality education and high property values, and it is our goal to maintain the high quality.

Mrs. Phelps stated that she made the motion and Mrs. Didio gave the rationale behind each issue. She stated her concern that continuity of child care be available to families, and that the children are safe to and from school. She asked Dr. Baarstad if some of the students would be eligible for bussing; Dr. Baarstad responded if they qualify under the current Board policy they would. Mrs. Phelps mentioned talking to the City regarding crossing guards and cross walks. Dr. Baarstad stated that the City has been very cooperative with all the studies that have been conducted, and if there are new pedestrian paths needed, he is sure the City will cooperate. In regard to crossing guards, our City is much more careful than what is required by law. They will do the studies wherever

we ask them to. Mrs. Phelps restated that magnet schools will be a wonderful opportunity for our District. We have a year to work on everything, and she hopes that the energy will continue toward finding solutions. Mrs. Phelps stated that many people in the audience over the past couple of meetings were not here when the Board addressed budget issues earlier: a hiring freeze has been put in place, staff has been cut, employee benefits have been cut, and we need to find more areas to cut. When you begin to cut more staff and programs, the quality of education will decline. Whether we have 20 or 15 schools, you cannot cut personnel and programs and still have a quality program. Mrs. Phelps asked that when it was stated that, for instance, “all 5th graders would be sent to the same school so they can stay together,” what would happen to siblings? Dr. Baarstad stated that some of the issues would have to be given priority status.

Mrs. Beaubien stated that she is very interested and intrigued with a couple of Mrs. Didio’s suggestions. For one, taking an entire school, placing it into another, and making that school a magnet. Parking has always been a problem at Meadows. She asked how we could minimize how many schools University students would be sent to? Dr. Baarstad stated that could be accomplished. Also, in order to put one entire school onto another campus, classrooms would have to be added. She asked how it would be determined where each child at the closing schools would be sent? Dr. Baarstad stated that each child’s address would be considered and they would be sent to the school closest to their address. Mrs. Beaubien also agreed on the issue of child care.

Mr. Dunn continued his statements about the information on the website he was referring to earlier. In 2003/2004, (it states) we hired three deans at the middle schools, 2005/2006 a coordinator for special education, 2006/2007 we hired a special ed management position and 2007/2008 a SEPAC position. He stated that there are a couple of compelling reasons why he will vote the way he will. A reporter from the Star (Marjorie Hernandez) did a story about the closing of schools in Pleasant Valley School District. They shut schools to help balance their budget, and unfortunately, after the closure about 300 students left to join a new charter school opened from parents and teachers from one of the shuttered schools. They lost \$1.7 million each year. Mr. Dunn stated, “The second reason is you. I was elected to represent you, not dictate to you. Since January, you, the parents, and citizens of this community, have sent emails and phone calls to keep the schools open. You are right, we should find other ways to balance the budget. I will vote ‘no’ to close schools.”

Mrs. Beaubien stated that if we do close schools, one of the school sites may be used for a preschool program. “This is a very terrible decision, and we have to take a vote.”

Motion carried 3-2: Beaubien, Didio and Phelps voting yes; Stephens, Dunn voting no.

ACTION ITEMS – CONSENT

Mrs. Didio moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Mrs. Phelps. Motion carried 5-0.

A. Personnel Assignment Orders:

1. Certificated: #8034-8049
Administrators, Teachers
2. Classified: C-4110 to C-4122
Bilingual Cross-Cultural ELD Paraprofessional Facilitator/Spanish, Child Care Assistant, Child Nutrition Assistant I, Custodian, Intermediate Clerk Typist, Paraprofessional/Special Education, Preschool Assistant Teacher, Senior Clerk Typist, Secretary, School Office Manager
3. Exempt: E-7793 to E-7823
Campus Supervisor, Coach, Proctor, Specialist, Student Helper, Student Helper – Adventures in Math and Science

B. Expulsions:

1. Thousand Oaks High School #30-07/08E
2. Los Cerritos Middle School #31-07/08E
3. Conejo Valley High School #32-07/08E
4. Sequoia Middle School #33-07/08E

- 5. Sequoia Middle School #34-07/08E
- C. Contract for Non-Public School Placement for Handicapped Student #30-07/08
- D. Preauthorization of Overnight Trip Request
- E. Overnight Trip Requests
 - 1. Newbury Park High School Journalism
 - 2. Thousand Oaks High School Journalism
- F. Purchase Order Report #720
- G. 2007-2008 District Audit Contract
- H. Quarterly Report on Williams Uniform Complaints
- I. Disposal of Surplus and Obsolete Equipment
- J. Change Order #1: Wildwood Elementary School – Phase 1 Modernization – SBS Corporation, Inc.
- K. Urgency Resolution #07/08-19: School Facility Fee Increase

INFORMATION ITEMS

Instructional Services

- A. Approval of Community-Based English Tutoring (CBET) Program Funding Application for Fiscal Year 2008-2009
- B. Approval of New High School VPA Pilot Course: Digital Photography
- C. Approval of New High School Pilot course: Sports and Entertainment Marketing
- D. Approval of Two New Core Literature Titles
- E. Approval of School Choice Capacity Limits for Secondary Schools 2008-2009

REPORTS AND CONCERNS

- A. Report from the Strategic Plan Committees: There were none.
- B. Report from the Superintendent: There were none.
- C. Reports from the Personnel Commission: There were none.

ADJOURNMENT

President Beaubien adjourned the Open Session at 10:00 p.m. The Board will reconvene on Tuesday, April 1, 2008, at 5:00 p.m. for Closed Session; 6:00 p.m. for Open Session at the CVUSD South Building Board Room, 1400 E. Janss Road, Thousand Oaks.

Date

Clerk

Date

Superintendent

ki