

**CONEJO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**South Building Board Room**  
**1400 E. Janss Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91362**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL BOARD MEETING - DISCUSSION SESSION**  
**Monday, September 25, 2017**

Generated by Hyonchin Im-Turner on Monday, September 25, 2017

## **1. OPENING PROVISIONS**

### **Call the Meeting to Order and Roll Call**

Call to Order and Roll Call: President Dunn called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Board Members present: President Mike Dunn, Vice President John Andersen, Sandee Everett, Dr. Betsy Connolly and Pat Phelps.

Administration present: Dr. Mark McLaughlin, Interim Superintendent; Robert Iezza, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Victor Hayek, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services; and Hyonchin Im-Turner, Executive Administrative Assistant.

### **B. Pledge of Allegiance**

### **C. Discussion Session Procedures**

Dr. McLaughlin explained the process and purpose of the discussion session.

### **D. Approval of the Agenda**

Mrs. Everett made the motion to approve, seconded by Dr. Connolly. President Dunn asked if there was any discussion, which there was none. Motion carried 5-0.

### **E. Comments - Public**

President Dunn announced there were 18 comment cards submitted:

- The first speaker, Jon Cummings, spoke about a parent's responsibility to their own student and how those decisions should not impact other students.
- The second speaker, Deborah Baber, spoke about balancing parents' rights, free speech and community feedback.
- The third speaker, Bill Gorback, asked the Board to trust District professionals and teachers' rights to teach students.
- The fourth speaker, Lucia Lemieux, spoke about English teachers' current workload and that more requirements would create possible inequity amongst teachers.
- The fifth speaker, Colleen Briner-Schmidt, rescinded her card.
- The sixth speaker, Rolando Chinea, yielded time to Cathy Carlson.
- The seventh speaker, Cathy Carlson, suggested specific language to put in the policy, *Part-Time Indian* and community standards to consider when developing this policy.
- The eighth speaker, Silas Nesheiwat, spoke about his negative experience with alternative material selection as a parent.
- The ninth speaker, Gina Muscatel, spoke about her positive experience as a parent and trusting the District's teachers in opposition of a new board policy to allow parents to opt out.
- The tenth speaker, Randy Smith, spoke about lack of trust in teachers and his experience as a parent in working with teachers to accommodate the student.
- The eleventh speaker, Jennifer Eis, spoke about the importance of exploring specific themes that students may have experienced.
- The twelfth speaker, Austin Eis, read a letter from the National Coalition Against Censorship in support of *Part-Time Indian* and suggestions on how to create the policy.
- The thirteenth speaker, Nelson Buss, spoke about the impact on the District if the Board restricts lesson materials.
- The fourteenth speaker, Thomas Adams, spoke about using technology to be involved in this discussion.

- The fifteenth speaker, Lauren Gill, asked the board to not obstruct the needs of students to succeed in adulthood and policy is already in place to opt out.
- The sixteenth speaker, Amy Montaro, spoke about parents being wonderful advocates and how students grow when challenged.
- The seventeenth speaker, Dr. Amy Chen, spoke about parents being the best decision makers for their students and questioned ratings for content of movies but not of books.
- The eighteenth speaker, Mike Smith, spoke about his views on an authoritative state, social justice and politics.
- The nineteenth speaker, Tony Dolz, spoke about parents being the best decision makers for their children in support of giving parents the choice to opt out.
- The twentieth speaker, Michele Berson, spoke about her experience and questioned if teachers are trained on how to handle extreme emotional trauma.
- The twenty-first speaker, Pamela Lopez, spoke about her faith and concerns with religious beliefs pushing policy in the district.
- The twenty-second speaker, Mary Ann Van Zuyle, spoke about her family's positive experience in reading books that addressed difficult issues.
- The twenty-third speaker, Vadim Manzlios, spoke about his family's negative experience in reading books with content they don't agree with.

## 2. DISCUSSION SESSION

### A. New Board Policy and Administrative Regulation - Core Literature Material

Dr. McLaughlin began by acknowledging the teachers at the discussion table and invited them to share their thoughts. Each teacher, Jon Fleming, Lora Novak, Christine Hodson-Burt, Joanna Burns, Shannon Baranski and Jill Magnante, spoke about their professional backgrounds, experiences in the classroom, and suggestions on how to approach the core literature issue. Mrs. Everett then began by asking specific questions on process, including: choosing from an approved list of titles and how maturity level is categorized to which the teachers responded. They spoke about the process in which teachers carefully plan guided and facilitated discussions on numerous book themes in the classrooms. Dr. Connolly thanked the teachers and commented on having confidence in the process that is currently in place. The teachers and Board members went on to discuss declining enrollment, the local housing process, cutting of district programs and families leaving the district due to differences in curriculum. Lou Lichtl, Principal of TOHS, also joined the discussion and expressed his support of the teachers' process of handling challenging book content. The teachers, administration and Board discussed current policies, parent notification process and parent/student choice. Vice President Andersen thanked teachers and staff for preparing for and attending the discussion session. President Dunn suggested forming a committee to create a new core literature board policy, then asked Dr. McLaughlin to form the committee with two board members. The Board went on to speak about possible committee members including teachers and administrators. Board members then requested more clarification on the Board's direction, the current core literature adoption process and creating a new board policy. Mrs. Everett asked if a new policy is even needed, then Vice President Andersen read his request to the Board at the August 15, 2017, meeting. Dr. McLaughlin summarized by explaining the next steps, which is to start with Vice President Andersen's request as the framework and move forward to obtain what is and is not possible. President Dunn reiterated that there may or may not be a new policy created. Dr. McLaughlin spoke about the importance of specifying the type of committee due to the Brown Act and finished the discussion session by announcing that this topic will be on a future Board meeting agenda to further discuss.

## 3. ADJOURNMENT

### A. Adjournment

President Dunn adjourned the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

**The next regularly scheduled Board meeting will be Tuesday, October 3, 2017, 4:00 p.m. Closed Session, and 6:00 p.m. Open Session** at the CVUSD Board Room located inside Conejo Valley High School at 1402 E. Janss Road, Thousand Oaks.

Date: September 25, 2017 \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk

Date: September 25, 2017 \_\_\_\_\_ Superintendent