

**SAUSALITO MARIN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
April 5, 2016**

ATTENDANCE

Board Members Present: Caroline Van Alst, William Ziegler, Thomas Newmeyer, Joshua Barrow,
Ida Times

Superintendent: Bob Ferguson

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 6:39 p.m.

REPORT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION

Trustee Van Alst announced that no action was taken in closed session.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Trustee Barrow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ORDER

The agenda order was approved.

Walking School Bus Program – Presentation & Recognition of Volunteers

Mr. Lewis Jordan, Director of the Marin Housing Authority, and Assistant Principal Dr. Shirley Thornton gave a presentation on the Walking School Bus, a program in which adults lead groups of children while they walk or bike to school.

Mr. Jordan said the program started with strong leadership from Dr. Thornton when she began addressing serious issues with student attendance, in particular among those who live in public housing. We have now created a student-school-parent triangle, and it is the people of our community who make our programs work.

Bernadette Stuart of Marin Housing introduced Saloma Anderson, Irene Anguiano and Monique Douglas, who lead the children to school every day. She said that 86% of children living in public housing attend Bayside MLK Jr. Academy. She continued: We held meetings in 2013 and, based on a Memorandum of Understanding with the district, created our school attendance policy, which we incorporated into our public housing admission criteria and procedures. Since then, there has been a marked decrease in absences and more of our children are eating breakfast at school.

Mr. Jordan said this is a foundation for a bigger effort in creating an advocacy boot camp to teach parents the small changes that they can implement, such as limiting TV time, and to encourage them to

check in regularly with the school. If we are successful, by the time kids are 18, they will have other options than public housing and will be better able to support themselves. But we will always be there as a safety net, he concluded.

Trustee Van Alst handed out certificates of appreciation to Mr. Jordan and the Walking School Bus parents. Parents also received gift certificates.

Marilyn Mackel commended Mr. Jordan and Principal Newton for spearheading the program and helping to connect the children with the community.

Special Education Program

Superintendent Ferguson said that most districts see the costs of their special education programs encroach upon their general fund. The challenge is to contain costs and still meet the needs of the children.

Special Education director Susan Martin said she has been with the district since 2013. We are driven by State and Federal law in providing services to our students, she said. The school district is responsible for children with disabilities from birth to 8th grade and must endeavor to educate all children with their peers. All eligible children get an Individualized Education Program, which specifies the details of the special education plan for each student. There is a continuum of services, going from general education, resource class, special day class, to non-public schools, residential facilities and services at home. Our priority next year is to have a stakeholder taskforce to determine how best to deliver services to our students. We would also like to establish professional development opportunities for our teachers, she told the board.

Trustee Van Alst asked if the district has the ability to absorb additional children in its special education program. Ms. Martin said that our staffing is adequate for the number of students we have and we would not be able to take on more students.

Pam Nieto, the school psychologist, said the district uses a three-tier approach to identify and respond to students' needs. Currently, 20% of students at Bayside MLK Jr. Academy have an IEP. We work with the Marin Wellness Clinic and other local agencies to deliver the best possible mix of services to our students. We have an issue with some parents who fear and mistrust the idea of counseling, she told the board.

Trustee Barrow said we have gone from \$1 million in special education expenditures to \$ 1.5 million. The extra money went largely to salaries, and it was justified based on increased classroom capacity. Now it appears that we do not have extra capacity. Ms. Martin said that although the initial goal was to take in students from other districts for more revenue, the district faced a higher enrollment of special needs students with particularly severe needs. Further, the students who were placed in the newly set up Special Day classes have improved greatly.

Jackie Dedrick, a community member, said some parents need to have the concept of counseling explained to them so that they will be less fearful about allowing their children to enter the program.

Parents have to be involved if they are to buy into the program, she said. Principal Newton said some parents believe that school administrators are mandated to report their children to Child Protective Services or other authorities.

Mary DeMund said that her experience as a reading specialist indicates that early intervention will reduce special education needs and help children with their behavior. We used to have a full-time reading intervention teacher. The data she collected showed that the need for special education services went down when we had that service and it saved us money. I encourage you to spend money on a full time reading specialist - it makes good sense, she told the board. We also had the Reading partners program which has a wonderful curriculum, although the volunteers only work with each student once a week.

Gail Henrickson said that the budget shows that 30 Willow Creek Academy students are in the Resource Specialist Program, but the money is coming out of the district budget. Terena Mares, Deputy Superintendent for Business Services at the Marin County Office of Education, said payments depend on how the charter is set up, and how the charter negotiates those terms with the district. Typically when a charter is a school within a district, the district picks up the cost and asks the charter to pay its share of the excess costs.

At 8:38 p.m., Trustee Van Alst announced a break of 2 minutes. The board meeting resumed at 8:40 p.m.

Willow Creek Academy

Tara Seekins, assistant head of school, said continuing professional development for teachers is ramping up ahead of the testing period in May. The Willow Creek Academy Walking School Bus will begin tomorrow, spearheaded by a parent who is involved in the Marin County program "Safe Routes to School."

Superintendent

Grand Jury Report

Superintendent Ferguson said that the Grand Jury had two main areas of concern: One is the issue of concussion in sports and the other is transparency on the web. Regarding transparency, 14 out of 19 school districts got a D or F from the report authors, indicating that information that the public may want to see is not readily available on their web sites. We are working on our web site to make it more readable, he said. Trustee Van Alst said that we will have to post all salaries to be in compliance. Superintendent Ferguson agreed.

Principal Selection Process

The interviews for the principal position will take place April 18. Superintendent Ferguson said that he is vetting 22 applications with the help of staff. The interview panel will be made up of 13 staff and community members. We have a list of desirable attributes from the community which we are culling to a one-page list that we will share with the interview team, he told the board. We hope to make a decision by April 19.

Public Agency Retirement Services Update

Superintendent Ferguson said that three teachers attended the PARS meeting. A decision on early retirement will have to be made by May.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Ellen Franz said that the O'Hanlon Art Center in Mill Valley has agreed to allow our students to exhibit their work at their gallery during the month of May. Students are busy making and framing their paintings in preparation for hanging their artwork at the gallery. On May 21, there will be a fundraiser at the gallery to support our school arts program. She invited all to attend and show their support for our students.

CONSENT AGENDA

Roll Call/Ziegler/ Barrow/5 Ayes, 0 Nos, to approve the following consent agenda item:

Minutes of the March 8, 2016 Board Meeting

Quarterly Report on Williams Uniform Complaints

Personnel Action Report

Payment of Warrants – Batches 34-38

Superintendent Search Firm Selection

Superintendent Ferguson said that the district asked three firms to send proposals for the superintendent search process; two responded. All the firms are fairly similar. Among them, McPherson & Jacobson is affiliated with the California School Boards Association and has a retention rate of 85%. They have developed a five-tier selection system that is transparent and involves the community. He recommended them to the board.

Trustee Ziegler said that he would need some time to research the firms and would prefer to make a decision after a careful due diligence process by the board.

Newmeyer/Barrow/All to approve a special board meeting on May 2 to interview the firm of McPherson & Jacobson and decide on the selection of a superintendent search firm

Resolution 726 – Authorization of Budget Transfers to Permit Payment of Obligations within Current Fiscal Year

This is a yearly event which allows the district to transfer money between funds without affecting budget balances.

Roll Call/Newmeyer/Ziegler/5 Ayes, 0 Nos, to approve Resolution 726 – Authorization of Budget Transfers to Permit Payment of Obligations within Current Fiscal Year

Keenan & Associates Fire Repair Study

CBO Paula Rigney said that the district will receive approximately \$3.7 million from the insurance company. Of this amount, \$3.4 million is for the building at 33 Buchanan and \$100K has been spent for fencing and cleanup at the site. This leaves approximately \$200K to pay for leasing a temporary district office space and replacing lost equipment.

Newmeyer/Ziegler/All to approve the Keenan & Associates Fire Repair Study

Trustee Barrow proposed the following for future discussion:

Future district office location

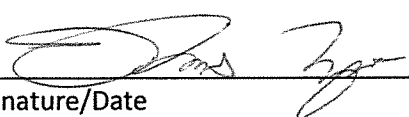
Use of fire study money

Grand Jury Report

Quarterly special education report

ADJOURNMENT

Ziegler/ Times/All to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m.

 5/31/16

Signature/Date

Cherk

Title