

**Board of Directors' Meeting Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Tuesday, October 25, 2016**  
**Room 304 at 6:00 P.M.**

OPEN SESSION

- 1) **CALL TO ORDER** by Board President

*Meeting called to order at 6:03 PM.*

- 2) **ROLL CALL:**

Meg Rydman (MR), Board President (2018)	X
Mark Swanitz (MS), Secretary (2019)	X
Heather Fletcher (HF), Treasurer (2018)	X
Melanie Sutton Hodgdon (MSH), Member at Large (2018)	X
Robert Feinberg (RF), Member at Large (2019)	X
Elizabeth Dowhower(BD), Member at Large (2017)	X
Roxanne Usher (RU), Middle School Teacher Rep. (2016)	X
Linda Mayer (LM), Elementary Teacher Rep (2017)	X
Jim Brown (JB), Superintendent College School District	X
OTHER ATTENDEES:	
Mark Palmerston (MP), Executive Director	X

- 3) **APPROVAL OF AGENDA** for October 25, 2016

*Motion to approve the agenda: MS*

*Second: MSH*

*Discussion: None*

*Vote: Approved 9-0-0*

- 4) **PUBLIC COMMENT**

*Jim Neary spoke about two concerns he has: one is a communication issue and the other is that the goals for the LCAP are not congruent with the activities of the school. His concern is that all communication is routed through Mark without checks and balances. With regard to the LCAP, he felt that Goal 4 of the LCAP which has to do with parents helping the school is not being implemented. He claims that his help has been offered and has not been accepted on several occasions. He went on to discuss other examples of disconnects with other individual goals of the LCAP. He also expressed dissatisfaction with the P.E. program and the lack of opportunities for children to be physical with one another in healthy, productive ways. He offered suggestions on how the curriculum could be adapted to include physicality in academic instruction and that we should pursue that kind of innovation.*

- 5) **CONSENT AGENDA**

- a. Approval of Minutes for Meeting September 27, 2016

*Motion to approve the consent agenda: MSH*

*Second: BD*

*Discussion: None*

*Vote: Approved 9-0-0*

- 6) **STANDING REPORTS**

- a. Teachers' Report

**Primary Grades**

*Kindergarten: Kindergarteners are learning about the life cycle of a pumpkin and will be taking a field trip to the Solvang Pumpkin Patch this week. In Math, they are working with the numbers 1-20 and are focusing on "less than," "greater than" and "equal to." This month, they covered the letters Ff, Oo, Pp and Hh. The student are learning to properly form the letters and to listen for beginning and ending consonant*

sounds. The students are particularly enjoying their 8th grade buddy time and their garden time with Ms. Caydi.

1st Grade: First graders are enjoying the Halloween season with art and writing projects. They are learning drawing techniques and writing spooky Halloween stories with skeletons and haunted mansions. They are also working on expository writing as they write narratives describing how to carve a Jack O'Lantern. In math they are working with learning to add and subtract within 10 using number racks. They are also exploring measuring lengths with non-standard units. In science, the students are learning about solids and created tower structures, while in social studies, they are completing self-portraits and name interviews. They are also beginning to write their autobiographies. They recently visited Lane Farms in Santa Barbara and learned more about pumpkins and picked out their pumpkins while they enjoyed a hayride and petting baby goats.

2nd Grade: 2nd graders have been learning about place value through the use of manipulative and measurement through hands-on learning activities. They have been reading stories involving the theme "nature walk" and practicing writing, speaking and listening skills related to the theme. In social studies, they have been learning about "goods vs. services" and "needs vs. wants." Students have been enjoying their Arts Outreach program, "Cool Moves, Funky Grooves"; have loved developing their fine motor skills on their "Crochet Castles"; and are looking forward to their field trip to the Avila Valley Barn.

3rd Grade: 3rd graders recently finished a science unit on rain forest habitats and researched 23 threatened and endangered rain forest animals. In addition to some fun, food-related activities, the students have raised \$300 which will be matched by Mrs. Mayer for a total of \$600 to help protect the endangered Javan Rhino. The next unit will be the native Chumash. In math students are exploring measurement and learning their multiplication facts. In language arts, they are just finishing a unit on traditions. Students have made their own traditional quilts. They are also learning about proper nouns and how to make nouns plural. Last week, the students donned pioneer attire and took a field trip to a one-room school house where they got to experience school as it was in the 1800s. The students are enjoying their Arts Outreach ceramics program and are looking forward to starting to learn their lines for the holiday play.

4th Grade: 4th graders are in the second unit in the Math Bridges program. Ms. Ackermann also successfully implemented Factswise to help the students with their numeracy. In language arts, they are focusing on inferences and comparing and contrasting. They have also started their first research project for the informative writing unit. They will be learning the writing process as they conduct research on their favorite author.

Music: Students continue to explore the world of music. This month's Composer of the month is French composer, Georges Bizet, and students are being exposed to some of his works. Kindergarteners and first graders are exploring the different elements of music such as sound, pitch and rhythm by clapping and playing percussion instruments and the Orff instruments. Second graders are learning about the different musical forms and rhythms on the percussion and Orff instruments. They are also learning to read and write notes in the treble clef. Kindergarten through second grade are also singing folk songs and songs about the Autumn season. Third graders are learning to play the recorder and have learned several songs and are working on a couple more. Fourth graders have been writing, analyzing and playing songs, as well as melodic and rhythmic accompaniments on the Orff instruments. They are also continue to master the notes of the treble clef and reading rhythmic notation.

Genius Hour: Students have brainstormed a variety of topics they are interested in studying. Next they will be developing research questions, researching and deciding on a project to share their findings.

### **Middle School**

Language Arts: 5th graders are finishing a mini-unit on Native American folktales and legends. After reading numerous legends, they are now researching a chosen tribe and creating informative posters. Students will then write a legend for their chosen tribe. 6th graders are reading the novel Breaking Through and exploring its themes. 7th graders are reading Crispin, The Cross of Lead and learning to use inferences and predictions to discuss what is happening or may happen in the story. 8th graders are reading The Adventures of Ulysses and discussing how something written so long ago is still relevant today.

Social Studies: 5th graders are in the middle of a large unit about Native American tribes that live in the different regions of the country. They are also working on a book showing tribal artwork. They are also working on their State Reports which are due in November. 6th graders have just finished a unit about ancient man and a mini-poster of man's ancient ancestors. In their next unit, they will learn about the development of societies in Mesopotamia. 7th grade just finished a unit on Ancient Rome and completed research reports and creative projects. Their next unit is on the development of Islam. 8th graders are studying the Revolutionary War and are working on a research project about twenty important people of the Revolution

Science: 5th graders recently finished a project and gave presentations on physical vs. chemical changes and are now learning how to balance chemical equations. 6th graders recently completed a unit on soil types and layers and are becoming familiar with the different types of erosion and how they affect those soil types. 7th graders are learning the principles of osmosis and diffusion. They are in the middle of a week-long lab activity to view osmosis and diffusion using vinegar, corn syrup and eggs. 8th graders are learning about atoms and atomic theory. They have learned to read the periodic table, as well as how to compute the number of protons, electrons and neutrons for specific elements.

Math: 5th graders are starting a unit on fractions using everyday applications of time and money. They will be adding and subtracting fractions will be learning about ratios using ratio tables. 6th graders are learning to determine the best graph to use to represent particular types of data. They will then focus on area and perimeter and the relationships to multiplication. 7th graders are starting a chapter to revisit decimals and fractions before moving into the study of integers. The last section of the chapter focuses on using a coordinate plane to represent data. 8th graders are using algebra tiles to represent algebraic expressions which will lead to using tiles to model algebraic equations. Students will follow basic rules to remove tiles and symbolize the removal of tiles with math symbols and numbers to fully simplify expressions and solve equations.

Physical Education: All middle school students recently finished a football unit and will be moving on to a soccer unit next.

Dragon Families: Dragon Families have written stories together this month.

b. Foundation Report

MP reported that the Foundation is undergoing a reorganization as some of the original founders step back. They are currently looking for a new president and an auction chair.

c. Report

HF delivered the treasurer's report. MP and HF discussed briefly some potential changes to future treasurer's reports that they will further discuss at a later date. MP pointed out that the PayPal reports were included in this month's board packet. He noted that we have had \$1800 so far in donations and that having the account has cost us \$40 to maintain. He also indicated that the button to make a gift recurring needs to be highlighted as it is easy to miss. So far only the sixth and eighth grade families have been explicitly referred to the site to donate towards class field trips. A schoolwide rollout and annual appeal is coming in November.

d. Director's Report

MP shared with the board three articles that have recently been in the newspaper. Two articles had to do with the ACLU's list—one about SYVCS and one about Orcutt Academy Charter; the third was about the Valley Schools Conference.

MP updated the board about the Valley Schools Conference which featured guest speaker Jon Corippo, Director of Academic Innovation for CUE (Computer Using Educators). The event was covered by the Santa Maria Times and was an excellent opportunity for Charter teachers to engage with other Valley

teachers on teaching and learning. Some teachers are already implementing what they learned in the classroom.

He also discussed the lunch program, stating that a committee to review the food program is being formed and that the November menu will be reviewed by Pam, along with a select group of students, staff and parents. Key questions are being developed for the committee to consider as part of a community survey. MP also noted that the meals being prepared this year include a clear focus on low-sugar and healthier preparations. This includes using baking in place of frying whenever possible. He further emphasized that it is his belief that the lunch program is providing students with healthy, child-friendly meals, along with a salad bar. Several board members asked for additional information about the committee. The board asked him to put out a broader call for members. MSH asked for a report from MP about the committee's first meeting at the next meeting of the Board of Directors. She also asked if parents who are unwilling or unable to attend the meeting could be provided with another means to give input. MP reported that Jason has suggested that the committee consider sending out a survey. MSH asked that when the call for membership on the committee is sent out that it also include a way for those parents to provide direct feedback.

MP advised the new teacher representatives to the board about the annual requirement for Board members to fill out and file a Conflicts of Interest Form 700.

The Jog-a-Thon fundraiser was a huge success for the PTSSO and the school. The goal was to raise \$14,000, and the event actually raised over \$15,000. Students were awarded prizes and MP ended up having a dragon shaved on the side of his head and had to submit to a Silly String attack. Mrs. Mayer's class won the class prize of a piñata party, while Ms. Beerman won a gift certificate to have her classroom cleaned before Open House. MP publicly thanked the PTSSO for their support of the school through this annual event.

## **7) BOARD BUSINESS**

### **a. Review and Approval of Bylaws Changes-Terms of Service for Teacher Representatives**

The board discussed two proposals to change board bylaws relative to the term of board service for certificated employees. Consideration of a change to the bylaws was prompted by the difficulty in finding teachers willing to serve on the board of directors either because of lack of interest or because staff turnover has left us with many newer teachers who don't feel qualified to represent their colleagues at the board level. Thus, the board has repeatedly allowed teacher representatives to serve more than the currently permitted two successive terms. The first proposal discussed would extend the number of successive terms from two to three. The second proposal discussed would extend the length of the term of service from one year to two years and extend the number of successive terms from two to three.

RU and LM stated that they would like to table any action by the board at this time, because they would like to include it in negotiations this year. They also requested that negotiations begin in January. MR responded that contract negotiations is an inappropriate forum to discuss board bylaws. MP stated that in his mind all topics related to how to make our school better are appropriate to discuss in negotiations. HF asked the teachers to further clarify why they wanted to wait. RF said he saw merit in waiting until the teachers have had sufficient time to consider their opinion.

Motion to table and changes to board bylaws until after MP has met with the teachers in negotiation: MS  
Second: MSH

Discussion: BD asked how the process would work. MP explained that whatever the teachers proposed in negotiations would be brought back to the board for further consideration.

Vote: Approved 9-0-0

## **8) INFORMATION/DISCUSSION**

### **a. Discussion of School Culture as it Relates to School's Mission and Vision**

In response to Jim Neary's letter to the board last month and in preparation for this discussion MP provided data gathered from parents last year about school culture. HF asked how the data provided in

the board packet was gathered. MP explained that the survey was a single, open-ended question sent out by former board president Leah Warson to address a specific interest the board had in advance of their winter retreat. RF asked if there were any actionable items that came out of the board's retreat from this information. MP expressed several things they did and gave the example of the Spanish language course as one example. HF noted that improved technology is another example. MR asked if there was an end goal of this discussion or if the discussion should just be ongoing. BD opined that we need to always keep it at the forefront of our discussions and that maintaining an appropriate balance between high-level academics and remediation for students who need it should inform our decision-making. RU touted the benefits of our PE program and that it gives classroom teachers the opportunity to be more innovative. RF felt that the parent who spoke during public comment didn't feel heard and that he didn't seem to know what he wanted. Other board members agreed. MP and MSH pointed out and MS confirmed that our students compare favorably to other Valley schools in their academic placement at the high school. HF asked if the board would be sending out a similar request for input this year. BD said she would prefer something more objective that can be compared year-over-year as opposed to an open-ended response. MR suggested that developing a survey might be the work of a committee. MP said there were two ways to do that: he could form a director's committee of himself and less than a quorum of the board or the board could form a committee which would be subject it to the requirements of the Brown Act. The board directed MP to form a committee to develop the agenda for the board retreat and task them with developing a survey.

b. Discussion of Business Services

MP updated the board about his discussions with Mercedes around Charter taking over some of our business services from the District. MP and JB will be meeting with Denice Cora from SBCEO next week. MP looked at possible outside providers of business services and decided that he didn't believe it was in our best interest to leave the County Escape system. He will continue to discuss with JB what District services we may continue to use and which we may not and possible timelines for any change.

**9) ACTION ITEMS**

a. Acceptance of Unaudited Actuals for fiscal year 2015-2016

MP gave a PowerPoint presentation providing the board an overview of the Unaudited Actuals. He highlighted and provided explanations for several noteworthy items.

*Motion to accept the unaudited actuals report for fiscal year 2015-2016: MS*

*Second: BD*

*Discussion: None*

*Vote: Approved 9-0-0*

b. Review of Updates to Spending Plan for Educator Effectiveness Funds

MP asked the board to re-approve the spending plan for the Educator Effectiveness Funds that the board previously approved last year.

*Motion to approve the spending plan for Educator Effectiveness Funds: BD*

*Second: MSH*

*Discussion: None*

*Vote: Approved 9-0-0*

**10) BOARD ADVANCED AGENDA**

The board discussed the Board Advanced Agenda. The advanced agenda shows upcoming meeting dates and agendas and gives board members the opportunity to add agenda items to future agendas.

**11) ADJOURNMENT** by Board President

Meeting adjourned at 7:41 PM.