

Fountain Valley School District
Superintendent's Office

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

10055 Slater Avenue
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

January 8, 2010

MINUTES

President Pro Tem Tony McCombs called the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 8:30am. **CALL TO ORDER**

The following board members were present: **ROLL CALL**

Mr. Tony McCombs	President
Mrs. Judy Edwards	President Pro Tem
Mrs. Christine Allcorn	Member
Mrs. Nicola Weiss	Member

Not yet arrived:
Mr. Ian Collins Clerk

Ms. Hansen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PLEDGE OF
ALLEGIANCE
AGENDA APPROVAL**

Motion: Mrs. Edwards moved to approve the meeting agenda.
Second: Mrs. Allcorn
Vote: 4-0

There were no requests to address the Board prior to closed session.

Mr. McCombs announced that the Board would retire into closed session. Action was not anticipated. The following would be addressed: **CLOSED SESSION**

- Property Negotiations: *Government Code 54956.8*
Real property negotiator Paul Burkart and legal counsel Andreas Chialtas will speak to the board about the negotiations concerning the properties at 9191 Pioneer and 10251 Yorktown Avenue, Huntington Beach, CA.

Mr. Collins arrived at 8:30am.
The public portion of the meeting resumed at 9am.

STUDY SESSION

Dr. Ecker initiated the discussion on CA's Race to the Top by **STUDY SESSION:**

CALIFORNIA'S RACE TO
THE TOP

presenting a PowerPoint detailing the national grant and the timeline. He explained that Race to the Top is a national competitive grant totaling \$4.35 billion. As part of Phase I, the state deadline for participation is January 18th and submission is to include the total number of Local Education Agencies (LEA) participating. The LEAs in turn must submit a signed MOU to participate by January 8th. Phase II will occur in June 2010. There are currently 31 states that have indicated interest in participating in Race to the Top and at the end of March or early April, the State should know whether or not it has been awarded a portion of the grant. Participating LEAs are asked to make a "good faith effort" in the following areas: transition to enhanced standards and assessments; enhance data systems to support instruction; improve teacher and principal effectiveness; turn around lowest achieving schools; commit to supporting one or more voluntary initiatives. State and LEA plans are to be put together collaboratively and will be established within 90 days after the establishment of funding. As Dr. Ecker explained, LEAs may withdraw without penalty prior to funding. The award is one time money that will be disbursed over 4 years, with funding ending in 2012-13. Dr. Ecker further explained that statutory relief and local support are being developed on parallel tracks, with Assembly Bill X5 8 and Senate Bill X5 4 both having recently passed. Dr. Ecker clarified that local plans do not have to be completed prior to the State submitting its application. And Dr. Ecker emphasized that a lot of the discussion surrounds what Fountain Valley School District is doing currently and how that meets the State's plan already, as well as how much the Fountain Valley School District will have to do in order to meet the State plan.

Mr. Collins questioned the group as to why we would not do this, given that there are means to get out in place if the board decides that it does not like the State plan.

Dr. Ecker offered that there has been some hesitation from other districts due to a lack of trust in the State, relating politics and issues with bargaining units.

Mr. Collins noted that from the teachers' point of view, everyone is facing very little monies to negotiate with and under Race to the Top, they would then need to be evaluated under a new structure, potentially causing additional work for principals as well.

Mrs. Weiss noted the importance of evaluating how this would affect those that will have to implement the program.

Dr. Ecker noted that at this time this is unknown.

Mr. Collins noted that it would be foolish to not find out the unknowns and opt out since there is the option for further evaluation after the State has its plan and still opt out. He expressed interest in hanging in until more information is available.

Dr. Ecker noted the argument that it may be difficult to carry out some elements after year 4, when funding has ceased. He explained the point that a lot of initiatives have been started and continued after one-time funding has ceased. He explained that these sort of programs should be considered as our plan is developed.

Mr. McCombs agreed with Mr. Collins that this seems to be no risk issue and that until the board is able to look at the State plan, he sees no current risk.

Mr. Collins noted that he knows Dr. Ecker, Mrs. Eadie and Mr. Burkart have undoubtedly spent a lot of time researching the Race to the Top. He noted the importance of considering the human element when the time comes to put together the district's plan.

Dr. Ecker explained the estimated funding for Fountain Valley School District as between \$64 and \$192 per student, over four years.

Mrs. Weiss agreed that it would be foolish not to sign on right now, especially given the option to opt out after reviewing the State plan. She emphasized the importance of evaluating how the plan would affect the sites and the staff, like Mrs. Eadie, charged with implementing it. She explained that it will be important to evaluate whether or not it is worth it when considering these effects.

Dr. Ecker explained the readiness of the Fountain Valley School District in considering the State's areas of focus. The current standards assessment is fair, data systems to support instruction are good and in the category of good teachers and leaders the district is fair. Turning around underachieving schools does not apply to the district.

Mrs. Allcorn noted that if the district does not do Race to the Top, some of the elements of the State's plan will still be required, and then without funding. She noted that when money again returns to the State, there may be strings attached to certain future grants for those that did not decide to participate. She wondered what the unseen outcomes will be and if the district will be put at a disadvantage.

Dr. Ecker noted that some have questioned whether or not this is the same as No Child Left Behind. In his opinion, it is not.

Mr. McCombs explained that the real question is whether or not the board believes in those items outlined in the initial MOU. In his opinion, the answer would be yes. He agreed that it is important to see the State plan but at the moment does not see a downside yet.

Mr. Collins explained that in the past, education has been seen as a local issue and in a lot of California, there are underperforming schools. He noted that Fountain Valley School District happens to be exempt from this situation and he agreed with Mrs. Allcorn of the importance of not cutting off one's nose to spite their face.

Dr. Ecker summarized the PowerPoint in saying that several funding elements may become law regardless of Race to the Top; the current plan is vague at present and there are a number of unknowns, including liabilities. In addition, he asked the board to consider if the required reforms further the existing plans for the district. He noted that data-based evaluations would help eliminate discretionary evaluations and would be based in concrete data. He noted that the bargaining unit has been told of their option to opt out after learning of the State's plan as well.

Mr. Collins stated that Race to the Top is at the heart of what the district is all about, the progress of students. He also noted that he can understand the trepidation of teachers.

Mrs. Allcorn explained her thought that most teachers would want evaluations to be based on student progress, especially given the great number of teachers that pride themselves on the success of their students.

Dr. Ecker agreed, noting that it is widely understood that the greatest impact on the success of a student is their teacher.

Dr. Ecker reviewed several materials that were made available to the board and audience, including a cost analysis, reasons why and why not to sign, including the point that there is insufficient personnel to carry out the task.

On this list, Mr. Collins noted the pro of revising standards to a global and national norm.

Dr. Ecker expanded on this and explained that the goal is to prepare students for college or career and that our standards need to reflect this as well.

Mr. Collins noted that he would like to wait and see the State's plan for those key questions explaining that he would like to

reserve judgment until more is known.

Dr. Ecker noted that it is reasonable for the board and the district to want to look at the State plan and the funding that will be available to the district. He reiterated that if the board signs the MOU, it indicates their intent to participate and only if there is a good reason to withdraw, the option will be there to do so. He noted that it has been stated that if a district does not have the good intention to participate, if it is not the direction that the district would like to go and it is only about the money, they should not sign on. Good faith means that this is the direction that a particular district is going and the message that they would like to give the community.

Mr. Collins stated that he does think the district believes in the basic content of Race to the Top and that it depends on the specific details in order to make an honest decision when all of the details are available.

Mr. McCombs noted that if it will cost the district more to implement than is received, then we should not participate.

Dr. Ecker agreed that this would be a good reason to opt out.

Mrs. Weiss asked what the effect of LEAs dropping out would be and if the fund would then be redistributed.

Mr. Burkart explained that if LEAs drop out, the pot of money would be adjusted and the Federal government could take away the grant entirely, based on the number of participants.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There was one request to address the board. A staff member from the District Office asked for clarification from the board regarding the process for reevaluation of participation once the board and senior staff reviewed the State’s plan.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Motion: Mr. Collins moved to open the discussion on the Memorandum of Understanding between the State of California and the Fountain Valley School District regarding CA’s Race to the Top.

Second: Mrs. Allcorn

No further discussion was needed.

Motion: Mr. Collins moved to approve submission of the Memorandum of Understanding between the State

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AND FOUNTAIN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT REGARDING CALIFORNIA’S RACE TO THE TOP

of California and the Fountain Valley School
District regarding CA's Race to the Top

Second: Mrs. Weiss

Vote: 5-0

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no requests to address the board.

NEW ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Dr. Ecker Thanked the board for their time and discussion **NEW ITEMS OF**
 on California's Race to the Top. **BUSINESS**

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Mrs. Edwards moved to adjourn the meeting at
 9:55am.

Second: Mr. Collins

Vote: Unanimously approved

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