

Fountain Valley School District
Superintendent's Office

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

10055 Slater Avenue
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

January 31, 2012

MINUTES

President Ian Collins called the special meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 6:30pm.

CALL TO ORDER

The following board members were present:

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Judy Edwards	President
Mr. Ian Collins	President Pro Tem
Christine Allcorn	Clerk
Sandra Crandall	Member
Jimmy Templin	Member

Motion: Mrs. Crandall moved to approve the meeting agenda.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Second: Mr. Templin

Vote: 5-0

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Collins announced that the Board would retire into Closed Session. No action was anticipated. The following would be addressed:

CLOSED SESSION

- Personnel Matters: *Government Code 54957 and 54957.1*
Appointment/Assignment/Promotion of employees; employee discipline/dismissal/release; evaluation of employee performance; complaints/charges against an employee; other personnel matters.

The public portion of the meeting resumed at 7:10pm.
Mrs. Crandall led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PLEDGE OF
ALLEGIANCE

BOARD REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mrs. Crandall enjoyed school tours of Newland, Tamura, Oka and Plavan. She noted that it is wonderful to see the hard work of our students and the efforts of the teachers at all of these sites. She presented the latest Community Volunteer Academy for parents on math for Kindergarteners and 1st graders. She also attended the Chamber of Commerce luncheon where the State of the City was discussed.

BOARD REPORTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Templin noted that along with his new responsibilities at work he has been enjoying the continued emails and phone conversations regarding the proposed school boundaries. He noted that this is a new experience for him and apologized for getting carried away at the last meeting. He explained that he was excited to have a candid conversation about the options and get feedback on them and he did receive a lot. He noted his understanding that Brookhurst remains a concern for a lot of parents.

Mrs. Edwards enjoyed site visits with Mr. Collins and Mrs. Crandall and noted that Plavan has amazing things going on including Authors' Day and their ST Math Lab. She noted that two 5th grade boys led their tour and did a wonderful job.

Mrs. Allcorn enjoyed Dr. Feldman's presentation and noted that indeed the Fulton teachers are putting these practices in place. She also enjoyed participating in the Fresh 'n' Easy fundraiser noting that it was great to see the community and raise money for the school.

Mr. Collins also enjoyed tours of four schools and noted that it is a joy to see the kind, caring and loving attitude of the teachers. He also attended an SPC meeting noting that it is good to hear from the leadership of our PTO/As and what they are doing at our schools. He attended a Masters in Governance class on student learning as well as the PTO meeting at Talbert School.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

4 members of the community addressed the Board of Trustees on the proposed school boundary revisions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS**LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Mr. Collins noted that he would like to hear the Board's thinking

SETTING OF NEW

on each option. He reminded the Board of criteria used for basing the setting of new school boundaries for the district including long-term relative population equity; and to the degree achievable, geographic equity in the district; to provide room for inter-district transfers, and to mitigate the negative impacts for families.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE BOUNDARIES

Mr. Templin noted regarding option 1, his concern over what this option does for one fifth of any elementary school, in that they will not be able to go to same middle school as the rest of the school. He noted that it is for this same reason, amongst others, that he does not care for option 2 as this same thing occurs but instead shifting the problem from Courreges to future Gisler students.

Mrs. Crandall noted that option 1 is problematic in that it does not accomplish the long-term goals of the district, as well a possibility of over-enrollment at Talbert under this option, and the feeding of all elementary schools to multiple middle schools is also somewhat of a drawback. She noted her understanding of trying to balance the north and south and finding a midpoint, but noted that she does not feel that this option accomplishes our long-term needs. She noted her willingness to take this option off the table.

Mrs. Edwards agreed noting that she felt this option is too limiting. She noted that while she does feel the committee did a lot of good work, this option is creating more problems than it is fixing.

Mrs. Allcorn agreed noting her feeling that all of the kids going to that same middle school is a valuable piece of the puzzle to look at and option 1 does not have this. She noted that she is also willing to take this off the table.

Mr. Collins agreed noting that in looking at the district, Ellis is the geographic dividing line and can see where the committee came up with this option with this idea in mind but, this doesn't meet the long-term goals of the district and is problematic with a small percentage going to a different middle school. He noted that he too was willing to take option 1 off the table.

All agreed to take option 1 off the table.

Mr. Collins asked for input on option 3.

Mrs. Allcorn noted her concern with what option 3 does to the numbers at Newland. She noted that this option reduces the numbers there and considering the long-term goals, we want to look to the south and to slowly feed families to Newland, Oka and Talbert. She noted her other big concern in that option 3 divides Moiola into four sites. If we can move all the Moiola students into one campus it would ideal. She noted her understanding of the safety concerns and added that when looking at our kids and what

is safe and best for them, a healthy district is what is best for them so that the State does not come in and take over the district; distributing the students equally is the best for them.

Mrs. Edwards noted that she did not like the dividing of Moiola into four sites as well. She noted that while option 3 accomplishes some of our goals, it creates other problems and while initially she thought it was best, she is concerned with the issue of dividing Moiola.

Mr. Templin noted that he likes option 3; with 3 and 4 being his favorites. Option 4 does not have the issues of option 2. He noted his understanding of the transition plan that while we closed Moiola, and this is horrible, all of the Moiola students get to pick which school they get to go to. This is not to say that these boundaries do not apply to them but, if they all decide to go to a certain school, they can. He explained that this mitigates his concerns of what option 3 does to the Moiola families. He noted that looking at boundaries is more looking at the future while the transition plan is looking to the current needs of the current students. He noted his appreciation of the presented data on safety regarding option 3 and noted that he does not like being held hostage to Brookhurst and explained that option 3 has a lot of limitations with the long term stability of the district. He explained that our numbers are at a place to where we could look at closing two schools, but we do not want to have to do that. We typically draw the most transfers from the north and so we need to fill our southern schools with our resident students. He explained that if he felt that some of our southern schools were bad, then he could not say that but, these schools are great and we need to do what we can with our current population to prevent closing another school in five years.

Mrs. Crandall noted that the elementary boundaries of option 3 do not meet long-term goals in terms of Newland and Oka. She noted that the last time the district redrew boundaries was 21 years ago and the district has only had to do this perhaps four times in a century. By choosing option 3, we will be forced to look at redistricting again in two to three years to equalize this. So, she explained, this is a large concern. She noted that drawing from a large geographical area today is what the district is faced with. She explained that she spent three hours on Sunday driving the affected areas to see traffic patterns, distances etc. and noted that at this time, these are not things that we can change. We need a larger area to populate and utilize our schools effectively. But three concerns came from the parent community. She noted that the first was the Boys and Girls Club and after school care for those Gisler children attending the Kingston branch and if new boundaries would cause them to have to go to the Delaware

branch. She called the Boys and Girls Club and found that the busing pattern would cause these students to be reassigned to the Delaware branch, however, she found that the person that deals with the Kingston branch also deals with the Delaware branch and this same director does the hiring and firing at both locations. In addition, the programs are the same at both, although housed in separate buildings. Although, regarding the theatre program held at 5pm or 6:30pm, most of the participants are not Boys and Girls Club members. Regarding the performing arts, gymnastics, and martial arts programs, these are held off of Slater and the Boys and Girls Club transports the participants back and forth during their club time. Regarding the preschool program off of Slater, this program also draws from numerous cities and parents are responsible to get students to and from school. She noted that looking at all of this, she feels comfortable that while we are asking the 30 or so students involved in this program to move, we are not asking them to accept an inferior program. In addition, regarding property values, she called the realtor that spoke to the Board and asked how he arrived at figure of \$10,000 as a decrease in property value. He explained to her that this amount is an adjustment based on the market and can fall into a range +/- \$5,000. She explained that this is an estimate obtained when compared to a school that is inferior. She noted that there have been only two concerns regarding the quality of our schools throughout this entire process; every other comment has not challenged the quality of our schools. She then asked who and how is an inferior school determined to which he explained that it is not done by the realtor but by the public, based on the rankings from newspapers, word of mouth, internet, etc. and it is not the realtor's job to prove or disprove it, it is simply a market perception. She asked what percentage of buyers are solely school-centric, meaning that they buy just for the school in the area and he explained that this is impossible to know, but in looking at search patterns, it begins with the number one desire to live close to the water, creating concentric circles. However, he explained that if we are looking at 10 buyers that are school-centric, for example in the Courreges-Fulton area, he felt that they would favor the school over any other consideration in purchasing. She asked if it would make a difference if potential buyers knew of current student performance data regarding each school and while the realtor said yes, he stated that it is not something the public is aware of right now. She noted that perhaps this is something that we can look into in getting these perceptions corrected. She noted that the third issue raised by parents regarding new boundaries is safety and noted that the Board takes this very seriously. She explained that in her

research she started with the Public Works Director in Fountain Valley and looked for his counterpart in Huntington Beach to discuss the intersection of Brookhurst and Adams. She spoke with the Transportation Manager for Huntington Beach regarding the claim that the Board received from the public stating that Brookhurst and Adams was the fifth most dangerous intersection in nation. She noted that this claim is from a survey done 10 years ago by State Farm Insurance, based only on their own clients that filed claims as a source for their data. She noted that if this is the fifth most dangerous intersection in the nation, it certainly must be the most dangerous in Huntington Beach and sought research regarding this, finding that this is not the case. She noted that in Huntington Beach's most recent survey, the intersection of Brookhurst and Adams does not even show up in the statistics of the most dangerous intersections in Huntington Beach. She noted that there may have been mitigations to resolve the problems at this intersection, but the dangers seem to have gone away. She wanted to be sure that the public was aware that this concern was taken seriously and researched. As with the school closure, the Board has no preconceived notions of where this will come out; they simply ask the questions and see where it will come out. Regarding option 3, she noted that she does struggle with its addressing of the long-term goals of the district. Mrs. Edwards asked Mrs. Crandall if in her research she found that it is true that the District now pays crossing guards, rather than the City.

Mrs. Crandall noted that yes this is true. She noted that both Huntington Beach and Fountain Valley follow the same procedure regarding crossing guards. For example at Brookhurst and Yorktown, there are only 8 students crossing. So they do not have a crossing guard. But they put in a left turn signal that mitigates the concern at that intersection. She noted that it simply takes a call from the school district to the city to have them agendize this and look at this for specific intersections.

Mr. Collins noted that he received 50 or so emails from Gisler parents with a passion for their school, wanting to continue at their school. He explained that Dr. Ecker and Mr. McMahon presented last night at Gisler and stated that no matter what boundaries are selected, transfer requests would be honored. Regarding safety, he explained that as a former principal, he lobbied for a crossing guard. He noted that the City comes out unannounced twice in response to the request and if they do not have enough students crossing at the intersection, they will not put a crossing guard there. He noted that those living south of Yorktown transport their kids to Gisler because they have to cross Yorktown and then Garfield to get to Gisler. He noted that he

toyed with option 3 but noted that he must side with his colleagues regarding the long-term goals of the district and the goal of equity in population in the district. He noted that some people have put out perceptions of individual schools in the district, something that really upsets him. He noted that Oka is a Blue Ribbon school. He noted that Gisler is also a wonderful school, noting that his grandkids went there and had a wonderful experience. He also has grandkids at Masuda and Talbert, all speaking highly of their school. He noted that this perception that one school is better than another must stop. We need to do our job here to educate our public as to how great all of our schools are. He noted that one thing that came up with the closure of Moiola was the idea that certain programs are there that are not elsewhere, but this is not the case. Those that are at Gisler that have sent their kids to Talbert have had wonderful experiences. This is also the case at Fulton and Masuda. He noted that no one has addressed this issue and it must stop. The long-term goal is equity at our schools, and providing room for inter-district transfers is a fiscal reality that we cannot just brush aside. He explained that given this paired with the Moiola kids going four ways, he cannot vote for option 3 with good conscious despite the many positive arguments that parents have made. He asked if there was any other interest in option 3 staying on the table. Mr. Templin noted that he does not want to remove option 3 yet, as he likes option 3 better than option 2 and therefore would like to keep option 3 alive.

Mr. Collins noted the recommendation of superintendent for option 2 or 4.

Dr Ecker suggested that as the board has not yet had a full discussion of options 2 and 4 they might want to explore both of these options more and after this discussion call for a motion and vote.

Mr. Collins agreed and opened the discussion of option 2.

Mrs. Allcorn noted that option 2 and 4 are similar except that with option 4, one portion of the former Moiola students would go to Gisler, and all of Gisler will go to Talbert and all of Courreges will go to Fulton. She noted that she likes option 4 because it does not split any elementary schools into different middle schools, as well that option 4 does a better job in distributing our population to the various elementary schools and allowing us to maintain our long-term goals of equity and freeing up spots in the northern schools for inter-district transfers.

Mrs. Edwards noted that regarding option 2, it is this quartile that she has trouble with. She noted that we have to be careful about our southern boundaries and keeping our numbers high. She noted her opinion that option 4 is better.

Mr. Templin reiterated that we are not placing numbers over children's lives, and the board is taking this very seriously. He noted that it would be worth reaching out those in the community that feel this way to see what we can do about making crossing intersections safer. He noted though that if the board does chose option 3 for concerns of safety, we will end up closing another school in 5 years.

Mrs. Crandall noted that option 2 and 4 both help with Moiola in that students from there are not split into four separate sites. She explained that in option 2, Gisler students go to both Fulton and Talbert, although this could be mitigated by the inter-district transfer policy if necessary and noted that currently Gisler is split between Masuda and Talbert and there have been no complaints about this split over the years. She noted that option 2 and 4 recognize the original committee's effort for a midpoint for the district but with option 4 there is a much larger geographical area feeding Talbert. She noted her concern about this putting Talbert at 693 students, 60 over the enrollment capacity. She noted that option 4 does have all elementary schools feeding into only one middle school which does give continuity for the students. She noted the concern for Talbert students and the potential 70/30 split regarding the high schools that they would go to, pointing out that option 4 would make the split more equal as far as who went to southern high schools versus Fountain Valley High School. She noted that option 2 increases the enrollment at Newland and Talbert as well as allowing for space at all of the schools for parents to select alternatives. She noted that this is one of big advantages to option 2 over 4 however; the district also has 18% of our students coming from outside the district. She explained that although we do need this, she feels strongly that that district parent community needs to come first and because of this, if we need to release any, it should be the inter-district transfers. She noted that although the two options are close, she favors option 2 for its more efficient operations of our schools. Mr. Collins noted that he is also leaning toward option 2, as it best serves the needs of the district both long-term and at the middle schools. He noted that the only thing he does not like about this option is Gisler students having to go to both Fulton as well as Talbert but, as Mrs. Crandall said there is an opportunity for transfers. He noted the previous concerns about students going from Talbert and then onto Fountain Valley High School and noted that he does not understand this concern. He explained that there is the option of going to either high school; both are excellent schools and many at Talbert have done this in the past. He noted that the students adapt quickly and this is a part of growing up. He noted that he is leaning toward option 2.

Mr. Collins opened the discussion of option 4.

Mr. Templin noted that option 2 and 4 are the same, except for option 4 and the one quadrant discussed. He noted that he is more comfortable with option 4. He noted that good points have been made, and one reason that he prefers option 4 is due to the good feedback that he received.

Mrs. Crandall noted that she did not have anything more to add as she already discussed option 2 and 4 at the same time.

Mrs. Edwards noted that she prefers option 4 to 2 although that she could go with either one.

Mrs. Allcorn noted that she likes option 4 as it maintains the unity of the elementary schools going on to the same middle school but noted her understanding that kids make new friends. She explained that at the welcome 5th graders orientation last year at Talbert there were a lot of Newland and Oka kids, but only 6 or so Gisler kids and while the Newland and Oka kids were cheering together, the Gisler kids were somewhat left out. She noted that she is sure that Mrs. Robinson would attest that that this gone and now all consider themselves Talbert Thunderbirds. She noted that she could live with option 2 but that she likes option 4 better.

Dr. Ecker provided suggestions as to how to go forward from here and with this Mr. Collins asked if there was any board member willing to go forward to make a motion on any one option.

Motion: Mr. Templin moved to approve Item 1: Setting of New Attendance Boundaries, **Option 4**

Second: Mrs. Edwards

Vote: 3-2 (Crandall, Collins)

Mr. Templin noted his concern that some board members may have been leaning more towards option 2 and that he did not want this to be about who moved first. In response, Mrs. Crandall noted that as the public watched the board in its discussion, it was clear that options 1 and 3 had the majority of the board concerned and it was down to options 2 and 4. She noted that although she would prefer option 2, she is happy to support her fellow board members on their majority win for option 4.

Mr. Collins echoed her sentiments noting that it is obvious that the superintendent and staff feel the same and so the board can work with them going forward on option 4.

Dr. Ecker explained that staff brought forward options 2 and 4 because either one meets the goals stated earlier; they are very close together and one just a corollary of the other. The reason for the development of option 4 was simply because there was an

interest in keeping the elementary schools together going to one middle school, despite knowing that with our inter-district policy this does not always happen. He explained that staff feels good about implementing either of these options consistent with our goals.

Mrs. Crandall thanked the public for doing something quite noble in delaying speaking of boundaries issues until the closure decision was made, noting that this was extremely respectful. She noted her concern prior to this meeting as to whether a board can achieve community-wide support for a proposal where community members can accept the option as fair knowing that no plan will be without opposition and she expressed her hope that tonight the board achieved this and made an intelligent decision that meets our long-term goals.

Mr. Collins noted that prior to the meeting he did not know how his colleagues would vote and he thought the discussion tonight was open and honest and the board made the decision that is best for the students in the district.

NEW ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Dr. Ecker Thank the board for a difficult decision. He noted that at the beginning of the process he stated that the more difficult decision would be on boundaries. He thanked Mrs. Crandall for her research and Mr. McMahon and his illustrious School Boundaries and Closure Committee for the difficult job that they took on. He extended again appreciation on behalf of Board to them and noted that they worked hard and their report stimulated a lot of discussion. He noted that regardless of how anyone felt, the Board needed to act in the best interest for the district today and long-term. He noted that the decision is softened by the fact that we have had a very liberal intra-district policy, noting that a great percentage of students at any site do not live in that site's boundaries. He explained that now that the decision has been made, staff can begin to implement our transition plan. He noted that letters will go out explaining what each student's school will be for next year and the procedures for transfer requests. He noted that this is a part of a long-term plan and as the years go on, we will be able to see equity come

more and more into focus in the district. He noted that there will be a Community Information Meeting on Thursday night at 7pm to talk through how the transition plan will be implemented. He congratulated the board on reaching a decision that he thinks is a good one and takes the district where it needs to go in the long-term.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion: Mrs. Edwards moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30pm.

Second: Mr. Templin

Vote: Unanimously approved

/rh