



On The Board

The Salinas Valley Federation of Teachers

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Spooky Highlights from October 2015

Reported By J.J. Campos

Talk About Scary.

Our Board recently reviewed a wee-bit, brief, 300 page report, on reducing emergency occurrences at school sites and there was much discussion on the state of current action plans at each site. The report was presented by Associate Superintendent Dan Burns and Pupil Personnel Director Michael Romero.

Given the state of the world and with campus shootings becoming more and more prevalent, it's making me consider finally pursuing my lifelong dream of becoming a bedazzling expert....Sigh, maybe in my next life.



It appears as if putting a good plan in place is of the utmost urgency and no one was more vocal than Trustee Carlos Rubio. "It makes me uncomfortable to know how many shooters there have been. Have we ever done anything to do a scenario and outline expectations?" The simple answer, according to Burns, No. He added that "two summers ago, administrators were trained. We're looking at hosting those types of activities partly because city police is understaffed, and on our side we don't think we're ready to host it. They're coming." Sooner than later wouldn't you say? Trustee Phil Tabera said it reminded him of the shooting at AHS, "It took a while to get a meeting with the Salinas PD, all over a shift change, if we're having those issues even now, what kind of

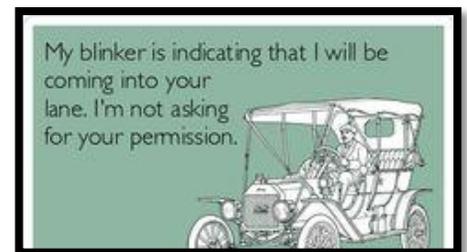
implications might that have, the meeting is good but I worry we're not even ready for anything. Nationally, very few districts are prepared for 'anything' I hope everyone understands what might happen."

Wehehell, that's reassuring..., for a moment I thought he was saying something bad might happen! Superintendent Tim Vanoli put it this way, "We're not ready today but we need to put the plan in place. We're having Districts look at us. It can't take three years, but we've gotta have a plan."



Trustee Lila Cann said she'd like to see the board get involved "when we set up these drills. The first place

we need to start is with students and who to report it (an incident) to." As always, Trustee Kathryn Ramirez approached the matter delicately :) and said, "SUHSD doesn't have a voice at the table. We want a voice in that room because they want to use our resources. We should be in those conversations. Don't ask." 'Hate to admit it, but once again, she's right.' She capped her comments by adding another little gem.



Apparently, school exit and emergency plans are posted online and she was adamantly opposed to the practice. With reference to a potential attacker, she had this to say, "If I want to execute an attack, I simply go online" and review a school's emergency exit plan." and added that this issue should be brought up with the Monterey County Office Of Education. In the meantime, I'm locking my door.

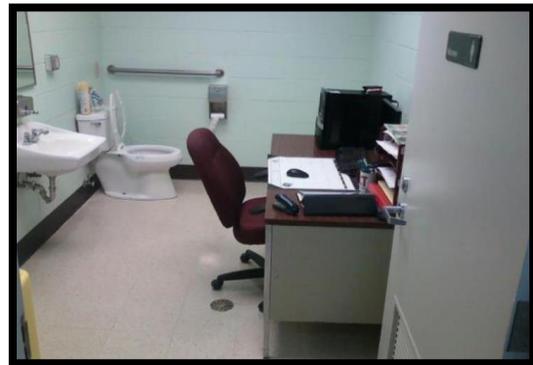
SVFT- Hello, Hello, Is This Thing On?

SVFT President Kati Bassler addressed the Board and began by stating that she appreciated the efforts put forth by SVFT and our District to resolve a number of issues. A recurring problem is the lack of support our moderate to severe program was receiving at the Salinas Adult Center. She praised Associate Superintendent Randy Bangs and that all parties had an opportunity to learn from each other. "We too often rely on email to communicate, and email doesn't ensure communication. Face-to-face meetings help with buy-in." Secondly, she stated it wasn't clear if our Board, or District Administration for that matter, fully grasp the issue of the current substitute teacher shortage in our District and around the state. "I don't know if you understand how severe the sub problem is." Compounding the issue is the number of



Professional Development activities (not to mention their timing) being held in the face of

such a crisis. She mentioned teachers are exhausted and that many haven't had a prep period in quite some time. I mean, we appreciate the in-lieu and all, but we'd like to be able to go to the bathroom. Wait! Lightbulb! I have a suggestion! A Solution! You know me, I'm always seeking to offer tidbits of wisdom wherever I can and folks, I have a solution to all of this. Now, stay with me here. What if District installed retractable Desktops in our bathrooms!? Just think what you could achieve! Who needs a prep when you can well, prep... ☺ I know, I know, it's genius...you'll thank me for it later. I've



drawn up a few schematics, they're in the preliminary stages, but still what do ya' think? ! ☺ Sigh. All joking aside, teachers are as Bassler put it, well, "exhausted". While she insisted she wasn't beating up on the PD efforts, she pointed to the fact that in the month of November, which offers a whopping 15 instructional days, 9 of those have Professional Development activities going on. "There will be a disaster at these sites." To give us a better understanding, she gave an analogy...Oooh! Oooh! I love analogies! **"We are in this game and we're short players and no one's on the bench."** Finally, Bassler had some stern words about the way food is handled in the District. "It is absolutely atrocious." So how do you really feel about the food Kati? ☺ She added,

“We’re spending \$10,000 every two weeks on Domino’s Pizza.” Specifically, she said the District is charging students \$2 a slice, therefore making a profit while contributing to poor eating habits among our student populace. “The Cafeteria fund has a healthy reserve and I won’t expose the absurd balance.” Oh, do tell, do tell! Trustee Lila Cann voiced her concerns to District Food Service Manager Christina Varela. “There’s concern about Domino’s pizza and calorie intake.” Valera replied that as part of the quote, pizza must be whole grain and reduced fat cheese. It meets guidance by state.” Ah, well there you go. I feel so much better now ☺. I feel almost as good as the day when they announced we’d be getting Whole Grain Pop Tarts! They are delicious aren’t they? Varela added pizza was “an item students love” and that Domino’s had redone the recipe. And as if one analogy wasn’t enough, Bassler offered one more... “Cafeteria fund numbers are growing right along with student waistlines.” That’s clever, why didn’t I think of that?



“We are in the business of educating. We need to help provide nutritious food.” Bon Appetit.

A Foregone Exclusion? Only Time Will Tell.

For those of you who thought the PLA was already approved from previous EOTB articles, you’re just as confused as I am. No, it wasn’t. The vote for the PLA was simply to propose and discuss the PLA for a further vote during a special Board meeting. And folks, nothing is more special about a Special Board meeting that shouldn’t have been special ☺ Oh, the irony. No, no, this was such a hot issue it required its own forum...and air conditioner. Nix that, still no conditioner. On Sept. 29th, the Board held a meeting so that it would be FINALLY decided whether future construction for our new schools in the SUHSD would be subject to a Project Labor Agreement. Again, if you’ve forgotten and judging by the look on your face, you have, the aim of the PLA was to help ensure that most jobs related to the construction be awarded to local workers. And if you’ve been following along, Board Trustees, including Phil Tabera,



Lila Cann, Carlos Rubio and Patty Padilla-Salsberg and Kathryn Ramirez made it abundantly clear they would vote in favor of a PLA. After many meetings and much discussion, research, sweat and tears, the vote was finally held, but not without one final opportunity for the public to comment on its implications. As you might expect, the majority of attendees were local tradespeople and apprentices, but also in attendance were various members representing local contracting companies, tax payers associations or themselves. Aaaaand as you might expect, they were resolute when it



came to their disagreement of the PLA. Board President Lila Cann asked all in attendance to keep their comments within the three minutes allotted to each person. Yeah, that's like asking me to ONLY eat three cookies, I mean I'll try, but I 'aint makin' any promises. The support for the PLA was overwhelming. Former SVFT President Steve McDougall addressed fears over a PLA being mismanaged at other schools and capped his comments by stating "I do serve a special interest...working for a vote for a PLA. It's a vote for working families". Local laborer Sal Munoz stating voting for a PLA "ensures a prevailing wage is enforced." Current SVFT President Kati Bassler commended the Board for being proactive and for planning strategically. "This PLA is the beginning to an authentic investment to members of community; investing in families who are struggling in our community." Local contractor Don Chapin spoke to the Board and asked exactly who would be tasked with monitoring the PLA so that it would be enforced. Additionally, he cautioned that it would NOT improve local participation. Past President of the Salinas Tax Payers Association Richard Griffin, was a little more blunt and chided the Board with scathing remarks. I couldn't help noticing the several less than friendly references to 'you people' as he spoke. Let's count them shall we? "I don't need 50-60 people looking for applause. When you people (that's 1) ran for office, all you did was paint a beautiful picture, you people (that's 2) said nothing of an event like this. If you do this, cost will be much higher than straight labor out there. Tax payer money is being spent foolishly while you people (aaaand that's 3...man, that's a lot of people!) sit in your chair and decide what to do." I wonder which people he was referring to? He finished his comments with by stating that if

"people who put you in office knew what you were doing, you wouldn't be here." Regardless, the support for the PLA was pretty clear as visiting San Mateo School District Board member Peter Handley made reference to his District's successful implementation of a PLA. He shared his experience with PLA's in "various forms and have been positive for our District. We faced opposition too...none of that proved to be true for us. There has been no controversy and PLA's are in wide use in the bay area. It would improve quality of work and better compliance with labor regulations." Overall, the remarks were respectful on both sides of the aisle and it goes without saying that the conversation was both contentious and robust. The true implications of this PLA won't be known until, well, construction of these new schools actually takes place. That being said, Board members had their own say in the matter and Trustee Tabera added that the SUHSD was one of the most solvent in Northern California and that he would not be bullied. "No one should be treated like that...I haven't seen any of you (contractors and opponents) at our meetings in the last 15 years." Trustee Eva Marie Martinez stated a lot of work was put into this PLA. She wanted the apprenticeship program and despite the fact she voted against the PLA's passage, she stated, "it could potentially happen...This agreement restricts local businesses and I feel it is dividing the community. I hope the outcome tonight will be beneficial to the community." Trustee Carlos Rubio mentioned he had taken the time to speak to many individuals and that he had done his homework with respect to making a decision on a PLA. He concluded that a "PLA will be the closest we have to keeping people local. This at least gives us that. I'm looking at dollars and cents. Employers will have to



make changes if they want to get involved.” In reference to Tabera’s comments, Trustee Lila Cann stated that “as elected officials, we have to take that (bullying). It’s not right, but we’ve all gotten calls because of the PLA. It happens.” Cann echoed Rubio’s sentiment that the Board had done good research into deciding for a PLA. “Our concern is to keep it local... How many of those in our audience go to our schools?” Trustee Padilla also had comments and mentioned the Board had a right to make comments. According to Padilla, she had been plagued with threats such as recalling her, but that she was undeterred and was a proud supporter of the community.” Trustee Kathryn Ramirez said she had been speaking to residents in her District and that most don’t own businesses and are unemployed union members. “If we open bid this, a contractor from LA could get this job, and they’ll bring their stable with them. Only hotels and restaurants get revenue. They’ll (contractors) take the money and send it back with them where their families are living. I’ll take side with my constituents, and those who are unemployed, this project could infuse money into my community.” At long last, Board President Lila Cann called for a vote, which resulted in a 5-1 vote in favor of the PLA, with Trustee Eva Marie Martinez casting the dissenting vote. Again, the true impact, positive or negative, will not be known until we’ve finally treaded these PLA waters and we’ll keep you posted on its ins and outs as the projects take hold. In the meantime, hold on to your hard hats, IT IS DONE.

