



On The Board

THE SALINAS VALLEY FEDERATION OF TEACHERS
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BOARD HIGHLIGHTS FROM APRIL 2016

Reported By J.J. Campos

Now That's Class!

The April 12th Board meeting was running really late but we must give credit where credit is due. Our Board respects attendees' time and RARELY starts a meeting late. Believe me when I tell you, that IS NOT typical at other Districts. Trust me. Trustee Patty Padilla-Salsberg alerted those in attendance that they would be running late. At one point, the Board realized they were going to need even more time and unanimously decided to reconvene for closed session after the regular meeting, so that those in attendance wouldn't have to wait any longer. NOW THAT'S CLASS! Who does that?! Know who? Our good Board does! On behalf of everyone in attendance, we want to thank them for being considerate. More importantly, they realized I was missing my novela.



Thanks, really. For the record, the rich guy dies and the poor girl loses her job. So sad. ☹

Now, on to the nitty gritty. Promise I'll be nice...r than usual.

It's A Two Way Street. Or Is It Three?

As you know, there has been much debate over the additional STRS contribution our District is requiring its employees to pay. SVFT President Kati Bassler spoke to the Board on April 12th and began by giving Board members, as she put it, "a history lesson." She stated her "Focus is to send a clear message for 2016-17. I commend the Board for its financial strength. \$22 million in unrestricted reserves, not counting other funds. I have seen how SVFT and the District have worked together to solve issues, including the salary formula." She added that when the District needed help while in dire straits, SVFT was there to help. "The formula was mutually agreed upon." Nevertheless, Bassler pointed out that the District has increasingly tried to avoid the language in the contract that effectively benefits teachers." She added that if teachers were required to pay additional STRS contribution, THAT benefit, would essentially disappear. Hmmmm, Forget the history lesson, let's hope the Board likes economics! ☺ "Increases are based on a formula that can be anticipated. It provides certainty." She



continued by saying that any raises simply reflected the cost of living needs in the area. People, have you seen the rent



prices?! I saw a listing on craigslist for someone's closet the day!

True story. For the record, it did have plumbing. ☺

Reply sm8kx-3749479019@hous.craigslist.org [2] flag [1]: miscategorized prohibited spam best of

\$1500 pay my rent

I want you to pay my mortgage so you can sleep in my walk-in closet and pay me \$1,500 a month. I hope that you won't be home much, the less you are in town the better. I hope you have no furniture. You can have 1 shelf in the fridge. No parties, no pets, no smoking, no parking, no music, no candles, no meat, no breathing. If you have friends or snore please don't respond.

- cats are OK - purrr
- dogs are OK - woof
- it's NOT ok to contact this poster with services or other commercial interests

Posting ID: 3749479019 Posted: 2013-04-17, 11:42AM PDT [email to a friend](#)

Finally, Bassler summarized her remarks this

“It is unfortunate the District has proposed changing the formula in a way that disadvantages its employees. Your formula applies the onus on SVFT. Teachers are almost making less than last year due to health care costs and housing increases. The maintenance of this formula is key to attracting teacher and retaining them. When the 3 year projection shows a negative, talk to us. It’s a two way street”

way:

..But You Knew That Already, Right?

Fast forward to April 26th, when an influx of teachers flooded the Board room.....flooded the conference room, the lounge....the bathroom. You can probably guess why teachers showed up to the meeting and folks, the emotions were running high that evening. Money,.....or lack of it, will do that to people. There was a sense of indignation in the air and from the looks of it, teachers wanted to know why this fight was being had to begin with. Bassler was first to speak and she referenced all of the requirements and skills students fulfill at each and every site. “These

skills are dependent on the work that our Middle School teachers and counselors prepare them for everyday.” She cited a Mr. Marino, her Middle School teacher, as inspiring her to become a teacher. “He brought some sense and order to the chaos of the Middle School years.” She cited the irony in the fact that originally, SVFT and SUHSD retired Superintendent Jim Earhardt had negotiated current contract language to “avoid these demonstrations so they would not have to take place.” More importantly, when they



DO take place, the room gets stuffy and some guy with a bad toupee always sits in my chair! Thanks a lot Board. ☺ Buuuut, I digress. Several

teachers were on hand to speak on SVFT's behalf and the facts were pretty sobering. One after another, teachers explained the obvious. Stop me if you've heard this one. It is hard to survive on a teacher's salary in the Salinas Valley; the cost of living is high; housing is in short supply yada yada.....In total, there were 12 teachers, including yours truly, who spoke on your behalf. This Eye On The Board is already long, so for a minute, let's pretend we're really trendy and pretend every teacher who spoke had a twitter account, you know...for brevity's sake ☺ So, ehem, allow me to summarize everyone's comments using twitter speak:

Disclaimer: These aren't real twitter accounts!....in fact, I'm not even sure most of us know how to use twitter.....that's not the point.



@teacherperryriosdominguez tweeted:
#pleaseconsiderstudentsuccess
#fairpayattractsteacher

@kylesamuels tweeted:
#donttortureteacher
#there'splentyofmoneyincalstrs
#legislaturewillendupreversingthisanyway

@nicolejefferson
#teachersareleavingcounty
#theycantaffordlivinghere

@stacyzavala
#wecantpayloansandrentwithourcurrentsalary
#california17%inflationinlasttwoyears
#youneedtoofferlivablesalaries

@janstory
#weneedtokeepqualifiedfolkshere
#IimploreyouIbegyoukeepawesometeachers
here

@tarabell
#weloveourjobs
#keepformulaasis

@anabarrera
#medicalcostsarehigh #singlemom
#howamigoingtoputmykidsthroughcollege?
#icantaffordahomehere
#imgoingtorentfortherestofmylife

@pategan
#imoneofthedinosaurs ☺
#communitywouldsupportteachers
#attractandretainnewteachers
#thefixforthisstrsproblemisinsacramento
#keepformulaasis
#wecanaffordit

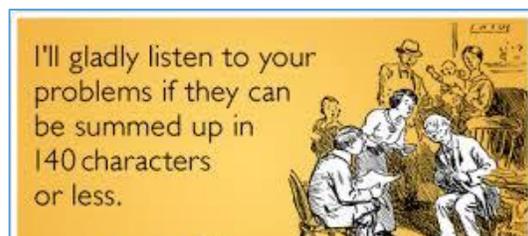
@allanrosenberg
#idontwannafight
#butIwillifIhaveto
#ilikeyouguys
#imoneoftheguyswhowillgoonstrike
#dontthrowthisout

Cue Tina Turner:



@juanjosecampos
#bestfriendsellscellphonesmakesmorethanido
#thatsright...cellphones!
#whatwegetpaidisatravesty
#publicperceptionwillnotbeinyourfavor
#worstteachershortagein30years!
#dontputtheonusonteachers
#mytwitterskillssuck!
#eyeontheboardisgreatestpublicationinthehist
oryofjournalism ☺

@amandalisenbee
#studentdebtishuuuuuge!
#gettingahomenotanooptionforme ☺
#becomingateacherisfinancialsuicide
#feweryoungpeoplewillingtobecomeateachers
#MANYdistrictsofferingnicebenefits
#whatwillyoudotogetustostay?



Without question, the most emotional, gut-wrenching, tug-at-your-heart-strings testimony came from Ana Barrera, who represented an all-too-common reality in America. Single parent and educated, yet



despite that fact, struggling to make ends meet. Her tearful account reminded us that inherently, teaching requires passion. It requires integrity. It requires patience and understanding. But most importantly, it requires a love for the craft. But our Board knew that already, right? So remind me, why are we here again? Hmmmm.

Board Reports And Other Awkward Moments

During Board reports, Trustee Phil Tabera stated that 40% of teachers at Alisal are ex-students. “It was nice to see that.” We think that’s nice, too. See article above. Trustee Sandra Ocampo thanked everyone for their comments while Trustee Patty Padilla-Salsberg made mention of the fact that our Governor had made changes giving Districts local control under LCAP. Apparently, Tabera got under her skin a little when he mentioned our District was “rubber stamping” certain items. She stated, “We don’t do that. I simply want to fully understand the process. We really need to ask questions. They’re numbers (referring to LCAP reports) and none of us are accountants. How do we do that if we don’t fully understand a budget.”



She asked the Board for support in obtaining more training. Trustee Kathryn Ramirez emphasized the importance of Smarter Balanced tests, which

include graduated test items. Salinas Beauty College owner Jim Edwards addressed the Board on April 12th. If you’ll recall, the College lost its accreditation briefly and our Board made a stink about having to pay an outstanding balance. Please refer to previous EOTB for details. The short of it is he



defended the College’s outreach efforts and pass rates, relative to other colleges. “Side by side to other colleges, our pass rates are considerably higher.” He stated he spoke with ROP Director Sharon Albert and boasted the many low-income students the College served. According to Edwards, Albert said they didn’t have a problem with accreditation. and while he pointed out the brief lapse in accreditation, he reminded the District of the many impoverished students Salinas Beauty College served. “We have a Dream Act student, for example, and another student was the daughter of a prostitute whose father recently died...they otherwise wouldn’t be able to get served. It don’t get no poorer than that.” Finally, he asked them to review their decision to pay for the outstanding debt to the College. It don’t get no more political than that ‘neither. Yeehaa!



LCAP UPDATE

Associate Superintendent Dan Burns gave the Board yet another update on LCAP funding. The Board was a little confused when it came to estimated funding, and actual funding. He pointed to some “glaring items that stick out in the report” and an approximate \$2.6 million of unspent funds. Yeah, that’s a little more like blinding wouldn’t ‘ya say? He also stated that while it is not finalized, the money not spent in 2015-16, would be spent in 2016-17. Apparently, \$1.29 million had been allocated for 20 substitute teachers and not all of it was spent. I wonder why? (see current negotiation status for more information on that.) ☺ Burns proposed the noble prospect of using any excess funds for the purposes of getting our District closer to achieving a 1-1



computer ratio for students. "It sounds easy, but after studying internet usage, it's not.....(mobile) wireless access points will allow them to use the Internet at home. It will level the playing field." As you might expect, our Teachers also asked for access to devices at home to improve their practice. He gave them two options. Option 1, forward the excess \$2.6 million to next year and figure it out later. Option 2, using the funds to purchase technology (again, the 1-1 ratio). Option 3, teacher bonuses. Just kiddin', that was me. Can't blame me for askin'!

Trustee Padilla-Salsberg interjected and stated they had shared "concerns at our last meeting. The Administration recommends this, but we don't feel like we're part of the process. We have nothing to compare what was recommended vs. what is in the report. We need to know if this is what the stakeholders actually want." Burns said that the recommendation was in fact, based on input from last year's report from stakeholders. Padilla-Salsberg recommended delaying the decision for next year. Trustee Evamarie Martinez echoed the sentiment. "This is being brought to approve and this is incomplete. We still need to be fully staffed." Burns insisted that the District was fully staffed. "Those positions are already budgeted for." Martinez wanted the allotment for training and conferences increased. "It's such a low amount, we had lots of questions last meeting, were you given them?" Burns replied once again that the proposal was based on recommendations already approved by the Board. Echo, echo....echo....It felt like Groundhog's Day I tell ya'!

Trustee Tabera also shared Martinez' thoughts. "I voiced my concerned needing more classified training than \$12,000. I thought that message was translated back and it doesn't sound like that." Burns stated the Board needed to make a decision to buy



equipment soon. Tabera asked, "Do we have to do this now?" Burns replied in the affirmative. "We have to do it soon to order the equipment." Is it me, or does this seem to happen on the regular? It usually goes like this. The Administration allegedly drops something in the Board's lap. The Board gets angry with the Administration because they weren't notified properly. Then, a discussion ensues making it seem like an item will be tabled or outright denied and then suddenly, they vote to approve the item anyway! Just sayin'. Maybe it's just that side of politics I don't understand yet. Trustee Lila Cann wanted clarification, "What you want us to spend was already in the budget?" Burns' tone seemed to be bordering aggravation, "We were adding to what was already going to be spent. You are getting more." Trustee Ramirez implied she was for more technology. "I'd like to go paperless, no one likes to carry a bag of papers. I would like to see teachers have more." Burns insisted that there was a the Williams Act to consider. "If we can't have it for everybody, we can't have it for anybody. This bridges that gap." Trustee Padilla-Salsberg made it clear she supported 1-1, but that "before I'm comfortable using the money for this, I want to bring it to one more meeting." More importantly, she wanted to make sure there weren't other needs elsewhere before committing the money entirely to technology. Tabera finalized remarks by saying he felt comfortable supporting the approval of the LCAP as it was. "We have two months left buuut, in 2016/17, it's incumbent on us that if we have a concern, we ask the appropriate people. I'm not sure we're doing that."

