



On The Board

The Salinas Valley Federation of Teachers
931 Blanco Circle Salinas, CA 93901 Telephone: 831.214.6449
E-mail: president@svft.net

Board Highlights from October 2016

Reported By J.J. Campos

Boring, But Necessary

Get ready amigos, because this is a long one. Now, I'll admit that it's bad enough that we sit through meetings listening to an endless barrage of facts and figures, but we can all agree that they're a necessary evil. With that said, Associate Superintendent Randy Bangs gave an overview regarding contracts,



enrollment, the usual. Like I said, boring, but necessary. What's NOT boring at all, is the fact that extra-period

contracts are still through the roof and we all know why. The number of contracts continually rises year after year and it doesn't appear to be letting up anytime soon. It seemed as if a few Board members hinted that our District isn't doing enough to recruit Full-Time teachers. Bangs said that signing bonuses are in place but that the crisis is present and that finding new teachers is a challenge, especially in the science and math areas. You're kidding!? Gasp! Yes, it's true. There were still 8 openings in the District to be exact. "The sub problem is still prevalent, but "it seems to have gotten better". Ok, that's like saying, you know, our house is still burning to the ground, but on the upside, gray is in right now. Or worse, it's like saying even

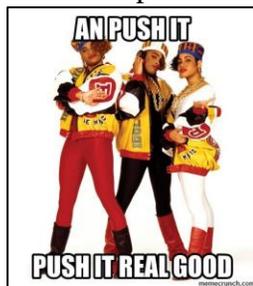
though we're in a terrible 10 year drought, it rained yesterday, so we're doing better. ☺ Ok, I'll stop. The fact is, finding professional, highly qualified, not to mention, SANE individuals to WILLINGLY enter the education field is only going to get more difficult. But what do we know? ☺ To add insult to injury, Trustee Eva



Marie Martinez wanted to know how the hiring with Classified was going. Bangs said we (the District) need to be more active and "attend job fairs....There's more that we can do." Martinez insisted, "When you hire new Classified, what do you do?" Bangs responded that the New Teacher Effectiveness Program will include classified employee training and orientations. Trustee Phil Tabera said that "if a school is down -93 students, and yet we have another school that has plus students, how are we dealing with that? Are we moving new teachers where we need them or where do we place them?" Trustee Lila Cann interjected and referenced the teacher shortage and that perhaps we should look at having our own job fair. "We need to do something like that." Trustee Patty Padilla-Salsberg agreed and Bangs said the District would look into it. Yes, look...reaaaaaal hard into that.....like, with a telescope.

Successes...One Meeting At A Time
SVFT President Kati Bassler addressed the Board to give an overview of progress in our

District in a variety of areas. First up, Bassler said that Randy Bangs, Daryl Hershberger and newly appointed Associate Superintendent Blanca Baltazar met with teachers in the Transitions program to discuss student and staff needs. According to Bassler, the meeting was cordial and that the Federation looked forward to more open and honest dialogue in the future. Next, the Federation's push to well, PUSH, the District into providing more balanced meals is going well at Wellness Committee meetings (wait, wait, is that a double positive? eh, who cares). Anyhow, Bassler alluded to several barriers in the approval process to providing nutritious snacks for our students. A solution is on the horizon and all we can do in the meantime is hope that the Wellness Committee reaches a solution that makes the current snack practices in our District a little easier to swallow. See what I did there? ☺



Thirdly, she stated ALICE training regarding active shooters preparation was, in Bassler's words, fabulous. And you know nothing is more fabulous than talking about the prospect of having a dangerous shooter on campus. Hehe. Buuut, I digress. The point is, good discussions are being had and as Bassler pointed out, District Administrators were on hand. Bassler added that though it's just a first step, it is an important first step nonetheless but asked the Board "What comes next?" And now for the bad stuff. Oh, yeah, that was the good stuff! Bassler stated negotiations would begin in November and that the suspension of the salary formula was only temporary in the hopes to give the District time to address a barrage of financial challenges that it faces (STRS, health costs etc...). "What will the Board do?" Next, Bassler shamed the School

Services report that the Board heard prior to the salary agreement which in the SVFT's eyes, was nothing more than scare tactics that aimed to hurt teacher salaries. "These figures led the Board to believe that the Federation would jeopardize the financial security of the District... So what did the Board learn from that presentation." I dunno, ask this guy on the right. Bassler closed with the following remarks:



"The Federation proposes a more honest and transparent discussion... would you like to hire consultants to the tune of almost \$9,000 to look at your budgets and present misleading information, or would working with the Federation to address mutual concerns be more sound? I'll bet you can guess my position."

Board Comments

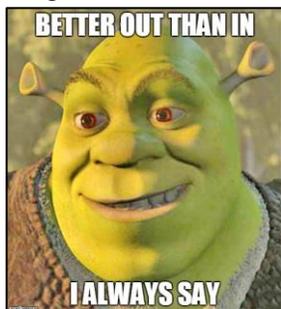
During Board comments, Trustee Lila Cann said she was pleased to see how many people had participated during Classified Staff Development trainings. "They were a success." Trustee Eva Marie Martinez agreed and was also happy to see the ALICE training take place, buuuut, that she wanted to "vent a little bit." Specifically, she stated Staff would like to see weekly roundups and training and "vented" about how Campus Supervisors were not badged and color coded. "We need to identify what campus supervisors should look like... what does the District need to do to enhance safety?" Venting on, she acknowledged Cafeteria staff was moving forward and that we (the Board) need to see how we are hiring and testing this staff. "Is it outdated? Some that were hired didn't even know that a test was waived. How do we retain paraprofessionals? There is a high need in this area and we need to look at that." Trustee Carlos Rubio spoke about a



productive retreat and it being “a treat to work with all of you there.” He touted AHS having a nationally ranked soccer program and not-so-subtly hinted that not enough was being done to recognize them. “I was hoping the District do a little more recognition for them. It needs to get out.”

Finally, shockingly, he thanked yours truly for having brought up the shameful lack of AC in the Board room for years. If you’ll recall, I addressed, er, shamed the Board after sitting

in meetings where it was so hot I was practically breaking out in boils. What’s worse, our Board’s only recourse is to open the windows and we’re forced to listen to the traffic outside, which is distracting, and no, we can’t really hear what they’re saying. So, a big thanks to Mr. Rubio for attempting to get the District to invest in such a “hot” button issue, er such a...heated topic. ☺ Trustee Patty Padilla took a moment to ask other Board members to report to each other when they attend committee meetings. “We should welcome each other to have an opportunity to discuss them here.” Trustee Phil Tabera also vented and said, “I believe we, as a Board, need to get a better handle to what’s going on in the District.” He asked they develop two-person committees for the numerous committees Board members have to attend in the hopes of reaching more



collaboration. Here’s a suggestion: have each Board member team up with another Board member they don’t like. Now, THAT, would be interesting. ☺ Finally, Veteran Venter Trustee Kathryn Ramirez reminded the Board that her role is to keep people on task and avoid discussing things not on the agenda. We

get it, we get it. But can you be a little nicer when you do? ☺ Ramirez shared that she and Trustee Cann “were at the Family Resource Center and wow, was it impressive.” She mentioned that they had toiletries for parents, backpacks, clothes, uniforms, laundry carts, food for students who attended Sherwood School. Interestingly, Ramirez found that half of the 3,100 students at that school were designated homeless and yet we only had 200 students designated homeless in our entire District. Say What?!! Apparently, she found our numbers too low to be realistic and if that’s true, we clearly have a problem identifying which students are in desperate need of help. Hmmm. Ramirez added that Sherwood had its own public information officer and was wondering when we’d get one too. She capped her comments by stating that basically, “we need to step up!”

Briefly...Sorta

Superintendent Tim Vanoli introduced Mark Tejada as Everett Alvarez’ newest AP. Tejada spoke a few words and stated, “My expectation is I will not disappoint you.” And our expectation is, uh...YOU BETTER NOT! Good luck! ☺ During the, Individuals Wishing To Address The Board part of the evening, student Anthony Rocha expressed his concern over the potential end of the school farm program. “This program keeps students off the streets. I look forward to the school farm issue to be put on agenda.” Now, hold your horses...we have a farm program!? Awesome! In other news, students Maria Barajas, Lilibeth Chavez and Salvador Castañeda from EAHS had a bone to pick with ranking methodologies and well, basically said they were being jipped. How, you might ask? Well, apparently another student had been jumped up to a #1 ranking due to a mysterious grade change approval for an older grade that, in their view, was malicious in nature. As Barajas put it, “The timing was terrible and malicious....it affected applications and I felt frustrated, sorrowful, and cheated. Because a student took a test for coursework from two years



ago.” She asked that the District review the challenge grade procedures that can easily affect ranking of other students.” Mysterious? Underhanded? Insert ominous adjective here

_____ We’re all about participation here at the Eye. ☺

Annual Foodservice Report- yum

Christina Varela manager of food services gave an Annual Foodservice Report. She began by showing a video of students going through a lunch line at Alisal. It included a couple of student testimonials, and they went something like this...”So like, the food is actually pretty good”.....”Yeah, it looks kinda’ weird, but it tastes good.” Ah, nothin’ like a strategic student testimonial to put us at ease. As long as it tastes good right?! ☺ Varela said the food was "bomb". Oy. She reviewed the state guidelines and various menu improvements including filtered-water fountains. Trustee Ramirez wasn’t convinced and hinted that dissemination of food offerings was lacking by stating neither of her kids knew that the salad bar was free. She also said she had spoken to the Food Service head at Alisal to complain about that very issue. “I don’t know why schools are not telling students that the salad bar is free. Those numbers will come up more”. She alluded to the lines being so long at NSHS that some kids didn’t even bother to eat. And if things couldn’t be worse for Varela, Ramirez chided Food Services for not filling a whopping 14 vacancies! “Why can’t you set something up at the mall? People don’t know how to go on Edjoin and apply. We need to do a better job. I don’t think it would be hard to find 14 people that would want to work.” You’d be surprised. Especially when the average food service position is a four hour, non-benefitted position. GASP! Could that be why?!



SVFT

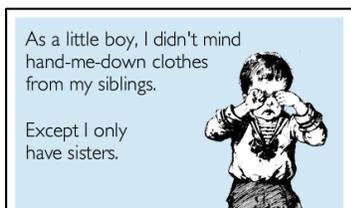
At the October 25th meeting, Bassler once again addressed our good Board and expressed her gratitude to Christina Varela, Ana Aguillon and Jill Cameron for working together with SVFT in what she touted as a genuine partnership. She mentioned they went over a variety of topics that included, but were not limited to, (I should be a lawyer) exploring funding sources, the free and reduced lunch program, deadlines, tasks and accountability. She also explained that both the Federation and the District would be attending a workshop in San Jose “to gain exposure to the new rubrics the State will be creating to help Districts evaluate and analyze their LCAPs.” She addressed several vacancies in the paraprofessional field, which are highlighted specifically by LCAP. “What is the progress on addressing the needs of these very valuable employees?” Then, she casually dropped an uncomfortable truth regarding said positions when, as Bassler put it, “the District has included in the LCAP a new position (Public Information Officer)...I cannot understand the logic in creating a new position to communicate with the community and stakeholders when the District hasn’t addressed the needs for its current programs.” You gotta’ have the horse before the cart.not that we’re all horses. Although there are days..... ☺ As a segue, Board reports came soon after in the meeting and Trustee Martinez insisted that a SPED committee be formed “to get more structure movement and momentum” to address their issues “in a timely fashion.” Trustee Lila Cann reiterated that the “District has heard about SPED department needs” and added that she disagreed with the Public Info. Officer position, which according to her, had not been properly discussed. Trustee Tabera asked everyone to vote on Election Day. “Don’t make a bad decision!” Trustee Ramirez said she was impressed with improvements at various sites and thanked Kati Bassler for letting them know about the issues with the Free and Reduced Lunch



Program. "We need to do a better job as a District to get people in the program." Superintendent Tim Vanoli introduced our new Director of Educational Services Antonio Garcia who stated "I am excited to serve Salinas" and "truly felt welcomed by staff. I am grateful and here to serve kids and teachers." Good luck to you!

Coincidence?? Hmmm.

SUHSD Associate Superintendent Blanca Baltazar overviewed the LCAP goals with our Board and folks, apparently showing up and speaking up at Board meetings works! Trust me, I've tried it. Remember last month how parents of Alisal High School complained that their kids were getting hand-me-down Chromebooks from Salinas High? We-he-hell, it worked, 'cuz boy lemme tell ya,



Baltazar casually stated that our great and equitable District recommended replacing

\$300,000 wortha' Chromebooks. Just like that. I wonder which Chromebooks they're going to replace? ☺ In other news, she spoke about teacher vacancies as being an ongoing issue they seek to address. Trustee Lila Cann asked how many vacancies we had. Associate Superintendent Randy Bangs stepped in and said 2-3. Cann was not convinced and insisted, "How many current math positions are interns?" Bangs said he'd get back to the Board with that info. Cann then commented on the 10 EL teacher vacancies and asked yet again, "What are we doing about it? Other schools got 107 hires." Ouch. Bangs said our District would extend recruiting efforts.



Trustee Eva Marie Martinez lauded Baltazar with the way she was presenting LCAP information to the Board. "You're not only showing us the good stuff. We want to see where we're deficient." Martinez then stated

ROP was looking for a Campus supervisor for a 5.5 hour non benefitted position, to which she strongly objected. Can we blame her? Being a Campus Supervisor can be a dangerous proposition, no? Martinez continued, "I hear 'we're hiring.... we're working on it' ...I want to see a plan....and a weekly report. This puts our student safety at risk." Double-ouch. Trustee Ramirez agreed and stated our schools don't have after-hours supervisors, and that parents are forced to find janitors to open and close facilities. "I shouldn't have to go to a janitor to get a student where they need to go. Is there another way students can get in....Can we pay for after hours (supervisors) to ensure students are safe? Kids at EAHS have been jumped after football practice and it's probably happening at AHS and SHS too." And if that wasn't enough, she added, "Why are LCAP meetings always at 9 pm? Can we ask parents?" Not that she's one to stick the knife in further on the issue, but Trustee Ocampo put it bluntly, "The reason we don't give supervisors enough hours is because of the benefits. I think we need to see that through LCAP money." Furthermore, she also agreed that the proposed Public Information Officer was unnecessary. Trustee Ramirez quickly jumped in, and seemed to be annoyed because, as she put it, "this (the P.I.O positions) was brought forth because people wanted it and the Board felt it was important." Trustee Tabera disagreed. "As far as I'm concerned, this is not a pressing issue.....I can see SPED and staffing as more important.... getting supervisors benefits." Trustee Carlos Rubio believed that bringing in a P.I.O. was a good idea because "A lot of employees do good things.....Good management and staff. We spend \$140 million a year and the taxpayers should know what we're doing. I don't believe it should be tabled." Again, Martinez said there was a time the Board wanted a PR position. "Timing is everything. Right now is



not the time. Perhaps we should get a couple of high school kids to run a twitter feed and believe me, that'll get out faster than any press release." Chuckle. Cann insisted the P.I.O. position be tabled. "We have a Director of HR who could do that until he learns more duties." Aaaaand just when we thought it couldn't get any hotter in the room, with respect to SPED's deficiencies in our District, always the optimist, Ramirez said, "I don't know if we're ever gonna' get SPED fixed." Wait...she didn't just say that did she? Say whaaaa?! #%\$&^% Changing gears, Trustee Cann suggested they take a vote on the P.I.O. position while Ramirez explained they could not, because the position was presented as an information item. Finally, with respect to the contentious P.I.O. issue, both Ramirez and Rubio did their best Frozen impressions and..... "let it go, let it goooo." ☺ However, Rubio insisted he didn't want it to disappear while again, Ocampo believed the P.I.O. duties should be handled by Administrators. Martinez echoed her sentiment.



EVEN-YEAR ELECTIONS

A Senate Bill was signed by Governor Brown, moving school board elections to even-year elections. What that means is that a few Board members will get an extended stay on their respective thrones. Why the move, you might ask? Superintendent Vanoli stated that even-year participation in elections is higher. For a moment there, the air grew tense because while he sought to comment, Tabera stated he felt snubbed by Ramirez when he raised his hand for comment. According to Tabera, Ramirez was ignoring him. Ramirez said she kept seeing Martinez' hand go up first. Sigh. Who needs novelas anyway? Anyhow, we saw his hand first, but whatever. Like I said, I'm tired. Shortly after, Tabera

stated, "I think we should adopt a plan to even years no later than 2018. Where do you see it says at next meeting?" He said voter turnout was higher and could save money. In short, he wanted the adoption faster. Trustee Ramirez said it's not nothing to be upset about to which Tabera replied, "I'm not upset." Before speaking next, Martinez cautiously asked Tabera, "Are you done?.....I supported Tabera two years ago." Tabera said do it now. All members wanted the adoption to change to even years right away. Of COURSE they did ☺.



Don't Mickey Mouse It Man!...Whatever That Means

Karen Luna eventually recommended the Board actually build Barns for our Farm Program rather than Mickey Mouse them with cheaper, as she termed them, hotels. No, not those kind. Animal Hotels. Well, apparently the hotels haven't received a five star rating in like, never. "They are made with materials which have to be rebuilt every few years. They don't hold-up well under weather." She agreed that if the structures were....moooved, (get it?), it would help, but we didn't do it soon, someone would havea cow. I kill me, I really do. She then demonstrated the benefits of actual barn structures and folks, by that time, everyone was tired and clearly not in the....mooood to talk about



it. The current structures cost roughly \$900,000 vs. a barn, which costs about \$1.4 million to build. We get it, it doesn't make sense. Trustee Ramirez asked if any capital improvement funds were available for the project, and Ana Aguillon said that while Fund 25 was there, using it was "iffy". Tabera



said he wasn't convinced and wanted to see how a long term plan would look in 25 years. "My vision doesn't include a barn at the moment. I see bigger, different plans. We can go up. Let's invest properly. I'm not convinced." Trustee Rubio added that his son raised hogs along Constitution Blvd and that he'd like to see things improved with respect to Ag in our District. Let's just hope that no one ends up... 'milking the issue'or "hogging up resources" or "gutting the" ok, I'll stop. Aaand, that's a wrap. In the meantime, stay warm, be cool and see you soon!

