



# On The Board

THE SALINAS VALLEY FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

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## BOARD HIGHLIGHTS FROM JANUARY 2017

Reported By Juan Jose Campos

### Keep 'Em Happy!

Nothin' like money issues to start the year out right, wouldn't 'ya say? The folks at Vavrinek, Trine & Day presented our Board with its Annual Financial report and as you'll recall, most of us go cross-eyed when hearing about balances, funds, actuals etc...too many to mention here. So they did and eventually



they got to the "fun financial statements on page 16." Their words, not mine.

Major and non-major funds were discussed, and they overviewed the long-term debt of \$147 million our District took on for future and current construction. And you thought YOU had debt!

SUHSD Business Manager Ana Aguillon addressed some recommendations with regard to

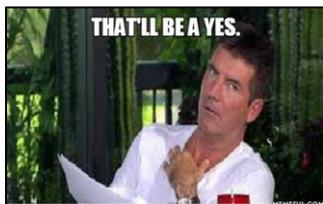


management of ASB funds. As you may or may not know, this is a bit of a sore subject with the Board, as they gave the impression that ASB groups throughout the District were a little loose on their accounting. They'd like to see more systems in place to keep everything on the up and up. Trustee Padilla-

Salsberg asked if they had audited all school ASB programs? The auditor said that audits were done on a rotating basis yearly, but noted that if they had reason to believe there were inconsistencies, they would return to the site and "see them again." Ah, nothin' like being audited a second time to warm the mood. ☺ Trustee Padilla-Salsberg insisted, "We've had concerns with ASB, we need strong criteria and training, perhaps if we audited all sites, we would be able to prevent issues." Trustee Martinez asked for, at minimum, a quarterly accountability to catch problems early and to obtain a certain level of uniformity throughout the District. Trustee Cann added that, due to high overturn in personnel, she wasn't convinced those taking on Athletic Director/ASB positions, were qualified to do the job? Aguillon responded that site personnel had in fact participated in ASB job-alike training, where they had received the necessary tools to carry out the post. "We have accountants educated in ASB, and we send our accountant out to train them from A to Z, on all processes." Regardless, Cann said that upon visiting student stores throughout the District, she didn't "see a lot of recordkeeping. They need training." Trustee Tabera agreed with Martinez on the idea of a quarterly report. "That's probably in order. It bothers me, if we implemented procedures, we would see these issues a lot sooner." Aguillon asked for clarification on having the District accountant go out and



perform the audits. Tabera simply responded in the affirmative.

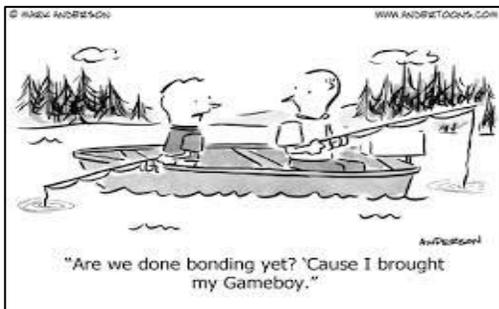


Finally, Trustee Ramirez capped those comments by saying, “We should fix this....my

daughter who is treasurer is just asked to sign things. I think we can do better. Maybe we can bring ROP students with inventory and recordkeeping skills. It’s still our students’ money, and it directly impacts what they like.”

### Board Reports

Trustee Cann took a moment to brag about SUHSD’s ASB students, who in her view (and nearly everyone else’s for that matter), did wonderfully during their recent forum with newly appointed Salinas Police Chief. Adele Frese. “They are talented young people with professionalism and handled themselves well with police chief interviews.” She also commended SHS’ Activities Director, who coordinated the event. She then went on to discuss the recent Immigration Forum at Alisal High, which Cann stated was extremely well attended. “Over 600 were present and it relieved a lot of the anxiety...parents asked good questions. We were asked if we would hold more workshops. I’m very proud of our District for that.” Finally, she invited everyone to the Equity Project, advocating for more training for our instructional coaches. “Our Board would benefit.” Trustee Ocampo dittoed Cann’s comments and on how students approached the Chief of Police. Ocampo insisted that the collaboration between our District and the City was helping



create a “strong bonding.” Trustee Padilla-Salsberg shared that she attended her first Sunrise House meeting, and although she

couldn’t stay for the whole thing due to some conflicts of interest, she joked she was still able to have lunch before leaving. Trustee Ramirez stated she attended the Women’s March held in Monterey and pointed out that women are still not paid the same as their male counterparts. “There is a disparity there. I would have liked to see more diversity. I didn’t get to attend the Immigration Forum because I was being a mom.” Trustee Tabera took a quick moment to note that he keeps running in to his former students from San Jose State as they take on SUHSD positions. Tabera has always been a keen supporter of getting more of our ex-students to return and contribute locally. Here here! As opposed to there there. Get it? In other news, Trustee Martinez attended the ROP Executive Board Meeting, despite the torrential rain. She capped her comments by stating she also attended the Equity Project. “It was phenomenal! I was on a high on Monday.”



### New Blood And...Weird

We welcomed Elizabeth Duethmann to our SUHSD brood as Salinas High’s latest Vice Principal. She hails from Minnesota (is that how you say it?), eh, either way, she mentioned the weather here is an improvement and well, I’m sure it hails there too. “Students are so polite...It’s been a great week and I’m excited to share what I’ve learned in Minnesota and happy to learn. Thanks again for the opportunity.” Good luck to you and I couldn’t agree more, we’re all about sharing here. Onto other weird news, I guess there was some question on the signing of High School Diplomas. Basically, if all Board members signed them, diplomas would end up with NINE signatures, which would make them look, a little, I dunno...weird. Not sure who took issue with that but Superintendent Vanoli addressed it and simply shared that diploma signing should be standard. “Currently the Principal,



Superintendent and VP sign, and if everyone signed, there would be nine sigs on a diploma.” Just then, Trustee Ramirez commented, “Just to be clear, we didn’t ALL want nine signatures.” Vanoli countered that he was only making a suggestion. Tabera implied he didn’t care either way. “The status quo is fine.”



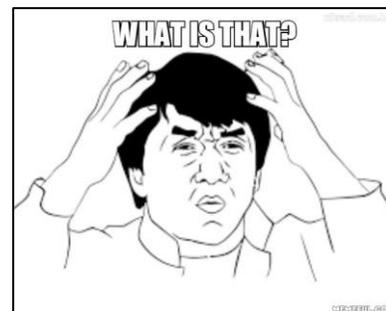
### Construction Dissent

A community member spoke to the Board to chide them for, according to her, not having had a reasonable response to members of the Bolsa Knolls neighborhood to address concerns with current construction of High School Rancho San Juan. “I had high hopes to meet with you, but no one has taken me up on my offer to walk around the new proposed high school, which is being built 5 feet away.” According to her, Bolsa Knolls community members were never informed properly and she added they had taken it upon themselves to hold two town hall meetings, regarding traffic and issues, to which no Board members attended. “You need to inform the community of what is going on.” She chided them for their “lack of communication to this neighborhood. I don’t think it’s a positive note and it’s not what the SUHSD wants to project. I ask this neighborhood be allowed to be one that is supportive as growth expands.”

### We’ll Just Do What We Wanna’ DO Anyway, Right?

During her most recent LCAP report, Associate Superintendent of Instructional Services Blanca Baltazar touted the online learning offering, PLATO, as a huge success. She then went on to recommend additional staffing to support the burgeoning Summer School demands in our District. “Given the enrollment increase, we recommend adding a teacher in charge, who is currently in an Admin program or who has an Administrative

Credential and would like to help. We’d like to add clerical support for the teacher in charge, as well as two campus supervisors, and one middle school supervisor. Also, we would need increased hours for counselors.” The bill added up to \$153,384.” I guess in the grand scheme of things, that’s not a lot is it? Trustee Padilla-Salsberg commented that our District had changed how Summer School was handled. “Has that been considered? Would there be a savings?” Baltazar said there were reasons to add support if enrollment has increased. “We currently have 1200 attending.” Padilla-Salsberg asked for clarification on if every school site would get additional support. Baltazar said the numbers she mentioned were for each site. She also recommended an additional \$640,000 to replace or purchase Chromebooks. Here’s where it got interesting. I think. Trustee Ramirez asked how Chromebooks were classified in the expenditures bracket. “Are they classified as books or technology?” Trust me, it matters. Baltazar asked for clarification and Ramirez repeated the same question. Superintendent Vanoli jumped in and said it was treated as a textbook for inventory purposes but Ramirez was unconvinced. “I don’t know who is in charge of, well, you know how you like Chromebook switching.” Ouch (in reference to the SHS, AHS crappy Chromebook vs, new Chromebook fiasco). “Who is responsible in this LCAP for these, what do you call them, Books or Tech?” Baltazar said they categorized them as media. She added, “Students need to be served first.” Trustee Martinez also wanted to know if they were considered textbooks, what they would do with old Chromebooks. Baltazar responded they would be donated to a nonprofit where students would be able to later purchase. Trustee Martinez lauded the idea and went further by asking if Chromebooks could be used as a training tool



for ROP students? Trustee Cann said she was confused. "Originally, we bought them because we were told our IT Department could update them. Now we're talking about donating them." Alluding to the fact that technology doesn't last forever, Baltazar said the department does, in fact, do that, but that "tech moves quickly." Don't believe her? When's the last time you used your Blackberry? .....egggcxactly. Trustee



Ramirez changed gears and was emphatic in her stance that security for students during after school activities needs to be addressed, yesterday. She called on coaches and interested parties to get on the ball to address the issue. But wait, there's more! Ramirez had harsh words with respect to LCAP parent participation, or lack of it. After the District swore up and down last year during former Associate Superintendent's Dan Burns' tenure that they were going above and beyond, the results have been lackluster. "I blame that on the District," said Ramirez. She wanted to know specifics on just how exactly the District was reaching out to parents to tell them what LCAP was, exactly. "You got 600 community members to attend an immigration forum and only 15 attend a meeting that can help ALL students? I feel disenchanting getting this information a week ahead of time. I didn't receive any robo-calls. Salinas City Elementary sends me robo calls and I'm not even in their District!...Reporters got no press release. Do we really want parents to tell us what they want.....or are we going to do what WE want?" Probably the latter, buuuuut I digress. She pressed on, "This needs to be agendized and rescheduled....these meetings

where only 200 parents gave input in a District with 14,000 students?" Ouch. "It's not enough. We need to do more. Parents know best ...that's why we have LOCAL control." Is that enough for ya'? Ahem, may I make a suggestion? When you send the flyer out, don't call it an LCAP meeting. Call it "Meeting to address safety issues meeting"....or "tell us how to spend YOUR money-meeting"....Oooooor, how about we simply force parents to attend the meeting when they pick up their children's schedules? I dunno, whatever. Just don't call it LCAP. I hate acronyms, and you know what? I bet parents do too. Or maybe that's just the point. Evil isn't it? Hmmm.

### Off The Grid

The good folks Opterra Energy gave a presentation on potentially making our District just a little greener, and helping to save some major green in the process. It all began with a group presentation by Chuck Felice and a cohort of Salinas High students who had the opportunity to spend a couple days at a site in Cambria, California that was, as Felice called it, "off the grid." As you might expect, the prospect is exciting and as you also might expect, with that excitement, comes potential costs. But Opterra insisted that no upfront capital would be needed and that over the long haul, the project would pay for itself with potential savings in the millions. The first year, the District could save \$439,000 alone. While they're still in the exploratory stages, it sounds interesting. They showed a pic of the MCOE parking lot filled with solar panels and all you have to do is walk across the street to see that everyone is jumpin' on the bandwagon because Hartnell has them too. Trustee Tabera



liked the idea and said he could see a future with solar and wind educational tie-ins for our students, with the possibility of an ROP Pathway. Thanks to Chuck Felice and the folks at Opterra for “lighting the way.” See what I did there? ☺

