



On The Board

The Salinas Valley Federation of Teachers

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Board Highlights from MARCH 2018

Reported By Juan Jose Campos

You're Great!

SVFT Prez Steve McDougall addressed the Board and commended the many great teachers throughout the District that work so hard to make our schools great. "Last week I was able to take part in teacher of the year. What an enriching activity. These are exemplars of great teachers, even for those who may not be recognized."



Addressing the national walkout on March 14 to protest gun violence, he suggested the Board help students making "that day an appropriate expression of their first amendment rights, giving students options." He also gave a shoutout to teachers Jan Story, and Sonia Gutierrez who were in attendance that evening. Thanks!

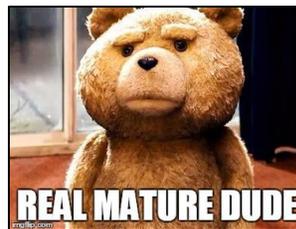
Kinda' Scary

Trustee Tabera asked that we reevaluate security plans for our schools. "I have faith in our staff." Referring to the recent bomb scare incident at North High, he remarked it "makes us look at what we're doing a lot closer." Trustee Ramirez was not as kind and noted a great many faults at North High, particularly with robocalls, or lack of them, alerting parents to the situation. "Speaking as a parent and Board member, lots of parents didn't receive robocalls. Thank goodness it wasn't an

actual shooter. I have been promised by our Superintendent it won't happen again."

Referring to some parents who opt out of robocalls, or who are simply fatigued by attendance calls, "All robocalls don't mean parents don't want information, but they have PTSD from attendance office calls. I do want to know when there's an issue on campus." She offered a couple of alternatives such as having parents log-in to Home Access Center and being able to get up to the minute updates. "I want to see how robocalls work". Here's the kicker, she mentioned Staff didn't know what to tell parents. "Students were informing staff and not vice versa. Lots of parents were upset." Meanwhile, Ramirez was annoyed that a side conversation was happening between Trustees Tabera and Padilla-Salsberg during her comments. Although Padilla-Salsberg later apologized.

Perhaps, just to prove a point, Ramirez began a side conversation while Padilla-Salsberg



spoke during her comments. Moving on, Padilla-Salsberg gave special praise to Rachel Torres who put on the International Day of

Women at AHS. And, in yet another weird twist, she stated that it was common practice for past Board Presidents to forward emails to other members of our Board. "I forward messages from the Monterey County Office of Education in the process of being transparent. You have the right to delete them.



Anything that comes my way I will send.” Ok, so the Board has Spam problems? Or is it just one member? Burns commented it was great to see Alisal High School soccer win yet another championship. “Eight years ago we won CCS and shut the street down with a huge parade. Not sure if it will happen again.” He also said that while EdCode indicates that we “can’t endorse walkouts, we have worked with each principal...and encourage civil discourse and 1st Amendment right practice.” He also referenced rules and how some students would refuse to follow them. “If they choose to leave, don’t fight them. Let them leave, they will be marked with an unexcused absence. It will be a learning experience.” Alluding to the NSHS incident and the speed at which threats spread, he lauded the extra support from SRO’s at the site when it occurred. These SRO’s were pulled away from the Santa Rita School District.

Briefly: LCAP Update

Associate Superintendent Blanca Baltazar-Sabbah reviewed some actions we as a District have not reviewed yet. The most pressing items were money for extra work agreements and hiring a new CTE Coordinator. And while teacher shortages are rampant throughout the state, she said it’s getting better. We hope so. ☺ Finally, she stated that a parent engagement plan is something that was being looked into and that they (the District) wanted to see what other Districts are doing to reach out more effectively.

Reelin’ Em In
New Teacher Support Specialist Danny Green and Induction Specialist Beth Roybal addressed the Board to highlight their job duties, and they made it sound really



complicated. “We just help teachers.” Yeah, that’s complicated enough, right? ☺ “BTSA is the word we used to use,” said Roybal. “We don’t utter that word because it brings negative connotations.” Green cited retention and New Teacher Recruitment as priorities and that yup, you guessed it, there just aren’t that many teachers available. “The pond is smaller and our District has to get smarter with how we recruit. Some of our strategies are working.” Said strategies include



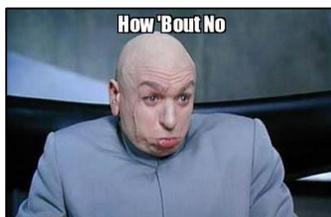
reaching out to CSUMB which has worked particularly well, according to Green. He touted a \$20,000 stipend for Education Specialist teachers in residency, as well as, paying for their healthcare costs. “Student teaching and internships are an important component. Roybal capped their comments by emphasizing that reaching out to new teachers and easing them into their new positions is at the core of her job.

Food Services Report

If you’ve ever wondered if there was a nice way to chastise someone, there is. Based on the huge cafeteria lines at your local schools, you already know we have a food service crisis. Our District hired FCMAT, the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team to address our Food Services department and er, give us a “taste” of where we need to improve. See what I did there? The audit/report was requested with the hope of providing not only better nutrition, but better service, to boot. Dianne Brannon and J.D. Stevens of FCMAT gave an overview to help our District “comply with fiscal accountability, but also management assistance.” Brannon’s first major observation was a lack of staff and pointed out that oversight and leadership was necessary. “You



have one manager at the central office, we recommend you add an Assistant Food Services Manager. One position in Food Services is just not adequate. The manager shouldn't spend too much time on clerical work...to ensure management visits school sites more regularly." Brannon also stated that while AHS and EAHS meet the state requirement of 30 meals served per labor hour, most of the others did not. For this, she suggested hours be transferred from low producing schools to address the rest. She also recommended Food Services Manager Cristina Varela be more heavily involved in budget development and monitoring as well centralizing the operation "with input from site managers." Additionally, she asked for monthly nutritional analysis with input from all sites. One supper program the District offered was out of compliance and as a result, our District was "not receiving all of the funds you could get. If you apply and are accepted in the supper program, you would get three dollars per meal vs. \$.88 currently." She categorized Alisal as a priority and requiring reorganization. Trustee Lila Cann, asked if we could switch to a different program that is less susceptible to constant changes from the state. Insert Dr. Evil laugh



here. Stevens replied it simply wasn't possible as each program was specific to its use. So, no. Brannon emphasized the importance of student intake and placing systems in place that ensures all new students fill out a form indicating whether they qualify for free and reduced lunch or not. To the contrary we risk losing LCFF funding and that definitely got the Board's attention. Trustee Ocampo asked Varela if a timeline regarding the reorganization was available. Brannon responded that it was up to the District how quickly they reorganize and make changes. Ocampo also agreed on the importance of addressing Alisal High

School's meal distribution issue. "I'd like to make a request that we expedite this issue." Brannon said that movement of resources over to Alisal would be the fastest solution.

Individuals Address The Board

Gary Brim, father of an NSHS student addressed the Board and wanted to let them know what he observed during the school threat. As a retired law enforcement officer, he referred to the ordeal as emotional and frustrating. "I don't know how robocalls work, but I didn't get a call. I understand some things get out of control, but when I got to school, I saw kids walking out different doors. A student was monitoring the front door. No teacher No administrator, nobody that was in charge. It looked like it wasn't in control. One kid was trying to get parents to sign in all the while others were leaving. Where's the accountability? It was scary." He wanted to know most of all what the plan would be to avoid the problem in the future. "How do you account for the kids?" During his comments, Trustee Ramirez left the meeting visibly upset. Also during the Individuals Address the Board portion of the evening, former SVFT President Kati Bassler addressed the Board. "I'm sorry all Board members weren't here to hear the nutrition report." Bassler, a fierce advocate for nutrition reform throughout our District thanked Superintendent Dan Burns for getting the ball rolling by hiring FCMAT to illustrate our nutritional trespasses. Deep right? 😊 She also agreed with Ocampo's urgent recommendation to address Alisal High School right away. "We've spent an enormous amount of money of CM, GRR.....you backwards map on all the steps you need in the classroom to accomplish this. We need to address food service at Alisal. We need to look at it, and backwards map." She attributed the issue also to our District's exponential growth. "We see that the State and Fed regulate food at a level that is unmanageable for us. We need to look at this report systematically and have a plan. Thank

you for supporting this report. It was in depth.”

Consent

During approval of Consent items, Ocampo was unhappy with the number of change orders in the construction of Rancho San Juan. She asked SUHSD CBO Ana Aguillon directly, “Why are we approving new change orders when some clarifications with the architect are not totally transparent?”

Aguillon clarified by giving an example for a change order for \$7,000 for that were unpredictable. Burns clarified change orders such as \$30,000 for lights under the canopy, were added for safety. Another example, \$15,000 added for a walking space so our custodians could service the fans “so they don’t fall through the roof. He added, “We should start seeing fewer change orders, but that doesn’t mean they won’t happen.” Ocampo



appreciated the clarification but seemed unconvinced. “When he’s talking about the need of why, unknown field condition. Why am I paying for an unknown field condition? Why am i paying \$8,945 for an unknown condition.? That’s my point. I need more clarification.” Ana Aguillon said that a budget for change orders was in place for a project this large. “It is unusual that a project like this not have change orders. We do take our time to review this.” Trustee Rubio asked if there was some sort of check and balance to ensure all change orders were legitimate. “Is there someone you can call if they get technical, for a second opinion.” Ghost Busters?

Aguillon said they refer to electrical engineers who work in conjunction with the architect but Rubio prodded, “Do these experts work for us or the architect?” Aguillon, “They work

with the architect...we have a structural and electrical engineer.” So, the operative word here is “with”? It sounded like Board members were looking to see who was on the District’s side to cross reference every change order. You be the judge. For the uninitiated, change orders are the notorious dark underbelly of the construction world and the subject of controversy, as well as ulcers all across America. They have to do specifically with unanticipated expenses, which of course, you can “anticipate” are always higher. It’s a mess. Burns assured that each one of these professionals’ reputation was at stake if they were to sign off on an unneeded change order, but therein lies the conundrum.

Board members such as Rubio were looking to see if the District had an impartial advocate and uh, it isn’t clear he got the response he was looking for. Thus, the apprehension. Burns continued, “The architect makes no money off of this, the rub might be from the general contractor, if in the drawings something wasn’t clear. There’s a new component, which has to be approved by engineers. Change orders account for 3 to 5% of any project. We’re way under that.”

