



On The Board

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

Table of Contents

New Blood.....	1
Audit Schmaudit?.....	1
It Ain't Cheap	2
Just To Be Clear	3
Homeless Shelter	3
Connect The Dots.....	4
Wrinkles? Ruffles?	5
Procrastination.....	5
Board Comments	5
Leadership Elections	5
Money Matters...Or Does It?	5
How'd They Vote??	6

Board Highlights from October 2018

Reported By J.J. Campos
Hey everyone, so we're giving the EOTB a tiny facelift. We've included a Table of Contents so you can jump right to any topic that seems of interest. Also, we're adding a **How'd They Vote** section that will give you a quick look on how our Board voted on hot topics. Hope you like it. If not,...we'll live. Be well! ☺

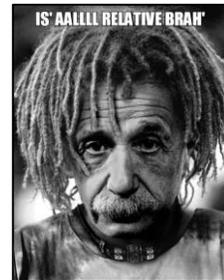
New Blood

Newly appointed Director Of Communications, Marcos Cabrera, addressed

the Board and thanked them for the opportunity. He mentioned he was meeting with stakeholders and "honored to be employed with the District...you've watched me grow up...within this community. As a stakeholder, I'm a graduate of this District and parent of a student in this District. I want to see this District thrive." Trustee Sandra Ocampo commented on his appointment and let him know she was pleased with this new position. Congratulations and good luck!

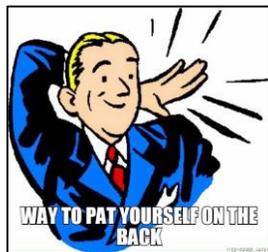
Audit Schmaudit?

Associate Superintendent Dr. Blanca Baltazar-Sabbah gave an update on the "progress" being made in addressing SPED needs throughout the District. If you noticed the word, "progress," is in quotes, it's only because it is ☺. It's such a subjective word, right? But it shines a light on the District's approach to said progress.



According to former SVFT President Kati Bassler, current President Steve McDougall and everybody else with a pulse, the District has fallen short. Baltazar-Sabbah referenced a 2017 report (audit?) of SPED and listed the District's efforts since then to address recommendations made as a result of it. Continued pressure by SVFT President Steve McDougall has pressed the District to, well, DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT! Ehem, pardon me. Baltazar-Sabbah acknowledged,

“We are by no means complete with the recommendations...it will take at least three years, if not more.” And that’s just it, right? It’s the “if not more” comment that’s making SVFT nervous, not to mention Special Needs students and parents who aren’t being served adequately. As Trustee Padilla-Salsberg pointed out, “The report was vague and lacked dates...It just says what the next step is, but when? Is it this school year next?” Still, Baltazar-Sabbah rightly pointed out that, “Our SPED students require the support of the entire District. It is not the sole responsibility of the SPED department. For that reason, we have 3 Directors to present.” Student Support Services Director Jennifer Smith also presented and shared the “progress we’re making to achieving our goals.” She said we “are preparing Administration with Professional Development regarding coteaching and exclusionary practices.” According to Smith, Administrators were given an overview of SPED and what their role as Administrators was in supporting that area. Human Resources Director Richard Moreno gave an update on SPED Department recruitment. “We have a Residency program...students from CSUMB who are intern eligible.” Moreno stated the goal was to get interns to stay with the District for at least two years. Baltazar-Sabbah closed by saying, “there are many components that make up SPED. What we have done is commendable given the realities of the job.” She added that she was committed to helping develop communication protocols among departments that “while it is easy to say it is only the responsibility of one Department, it is the responsibility of everyone.” Trustee Cann enjoyed the report but asked to hear from more teachers and paraeducators, “Let’s see what their roles are and see what has been achieved.” Trustee Cann, please refer to



SVFT. Trustee Tabera spoke on the disproportionate number of Autistic children in our District. “The issues of data exchange...it’s important for us to be able to establish a working relationship with other Districts.” He commented that perhaps they could generate a set of questions to hold other Districts accountable. Trustee Rubio agreed with Trustee Padilla-Salsberg, who demanded clear deadlines that would gauge the District’s progress in addressing the SPED Program’s many shortcomings. He also requested we check in every 6 months or so to monitor our progress. Or sooner?

It Ain’t Cheap

In reference to cultural sensitivity being raised by the Board, SVFT President Steve McDougall, stated it was “It’s about cultural relatability to our students. Although we can teach it, it comes with experience. If we hire Johnny Hayseed from Omaha, Nebraska to come here and Johnny Hayseed may not relate right away. I used to be Johnny Hayseed.” McDougall noted that when he started working in the Salinas Valley, he wondered why parents wouldn’t answer the phone at 3 p.m. “Hold on there Hoss, mom or dad are still working. You can’t teach it, it just comes with experience...We had an audit done of our District and back then (eight years ago), the good folks at Sacramento said, ‘Wait a minute Salinas, you have way too many students that are in a restricted environment...that are sheltered in Special Day Classes and that’s NOT ok. You should be mainstreaming more and more than you are Salinas...so get it together.’” Where’s he’s going with this? Chill, read on. He credited former SHS Principal Sascha Heckman for mainstreaming SPED students. “It was done with structure, care, and Staffing, emphasis on Staffing and it worked relatively well. Everett Alvarez mainstreamed virtually over the Summer, but



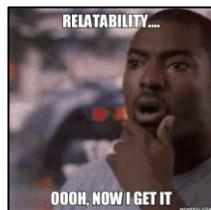
without Staffing....They improved on CST's and they were exposed to more standards by teachers. They were doing better. SVFT said 'We need to do this right, "a la Salinas High" and the issue was brought to the negotiation table.'" Despite that fact, McDougall indicated the language in the contract "isn't always adhered to. We almost went to impasse, not over salary and benefits,but over Staffing



and supporting members who are teaching students with disabilities." He added the contract would 'sunset' at the end of this year. "We can't just throw them

(students with disabilities) out there and say 'make it work' SVFT and CSEA members. It's not working." With upcoming negotiations he said he would refrain that evening from tearing apart the presentation given earlier on the 'progress' (see previous article). "I agree with Dr. Baltazar-Sabbah. It takes a team effort...and you CAN'T do it without SVFT....We have done the lion's share of the work. He insisted that many of those "things in that report (the District update) weren't done through collaboration, they were done through negotiations that we fought for temporarily. These weren't ideas by a Director at this address...We are the experts, we have

relatability. When you staff Para's and they leave early (due to their Part-Time status), when you play a game and say 'what's in a word' and have world standard lessons in Common Core Math,but because they have a reading disability...well that's just ignorant. I question anyone who wants to play that game.....We are willing to work on this. It's not going to be free. You have to prioritize your budget if we're going to do it well and if you want students with disabilities to succeed."



Just To Be Clear

During the Individual portion of the evening, Kati Bassler spoke on, you guessed it, SPED. She thanked Dr. Baltazar-Sabbah for reviewing the Special Ed Leadership group that originally took on the task to address SPED needs. "She (Baltazar-Sabbah) started it and had a good plan....." And while she appreciated PPS Director Irelia Dominguez recognizing the collaboration between SVFT and the District, she highlighted the fact that SVFT had kept the same team to address SPED needs, while the District had handed it off twice. Once to future Rancho San Juan HS Principal Anthony Hinton and next to former SPED Director Nancy Powers. "We got the work



done for our area...WE did it by committing to the tasks.... There are stakeholders....who want to improve how the District supports Students with Disabilities." She asked that the District be transparent because the information given in the presentation prior to her comments, was 'news' to her. "Please be inclusive and transparent. What you saw tonight, I had not seen until it was presented tonight, and that's a shame. Previous leaders demonstrated that our work was valuable...they brought us up here with them as a team. The leadership doesn't understand that and we want to help them."

Homeless Shelter

Here's the recap: The City of Salinas recently voted for a Homeless shelter to be built over by ROP. They were sneaky and we didn't like it. Superintendent Burns wasn't shy about his unhappiness with the City's attempts to circumvent public comment on the matter. Rare, right? Burns went on to say that if the



District “truly wanted to fight the shelter, we could have organized sit-ins and what not. Our intent was, ‘we can be part of the solution, if you’ll include us.’” Folks, this is probably happening whether we like it or not, but Burns is trying to get the City to understand the potential issues. Do they care? That’s to be seen. “We have some real issues,” said Trustee Ramirez. “I’m in support of the homeless shelter....but I’ve had students from our District saying drugs still get through. People are getting admitted in while they’re high.....” But wait, there’s more! Trustee Ocampo dropped a bombshell when she commented she knew Jesse Armenta, who is slated to be in charge of the new shelter, from years back. According to Ocampo, Armenta was in charge of the now defunct Casa Guanajuato Project once funded by the City of Salinas. . “When I heard the name Jesse Armenta, it reminds me of 2000 when he was a City employee.....He ended up being let go by the City of Salinas because of the fraud that he had



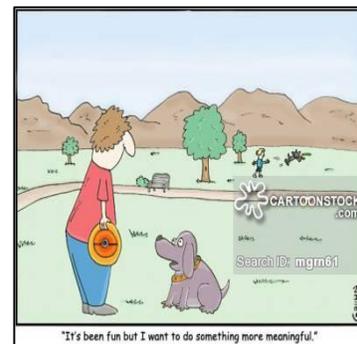
caused....I hope he’s not the one that will be running the center. If I have to go to the City and talk about it, I won’t hold back.” Alarmingly, Trustee Ramirez added that the security Armenta hires for the shelter are, in her view, “children. They’re 20 years old and bossing around parents. We need responsible security out there that will show some respect. There’s no way to complain anonymously. Tabera said, “By being there (the shelter), it’s going to be a heck of a lot easier for a lot of things to happen....We could begin to have a valuable discussion and officially challenge their funding....other people will have issues with this...I hope they will.” Harking back to previous issues with SRO’s and the strained relationship our District has with the City of Salinas, Tabera implied it wouldn’t make it any better. Trustee Padilla-Salsberg



asked that Burns continue to share his concerns with the City to find a healthy medium. Trustee Rubio asked how many homeless people were Veterans, former students, and wanted more dialogue. “We talk about empathy....I think about that, these people are a fact of life. I just don’t know where we’re going to manage. How many are former SPED students from our campuses?” He stated that going against this shelter would conflict with his values on empathy. Burns gave Rubio the numbers. “One third are school age children, 1/3 are women, and 1/3 are seniors. These aren’t usually the single men with dirty clothing, yet, the concern we have is they still hang around the shelters. Students from SHS complain those people that hang around harass our students.” He summarized by proposing that the City not kick people out at 6 am, as to avoid potential conflicts with students on their way to school. Sigh. I know Christmas is coming and all, but, do you see what I see? Eh, it’s October, figures we needed something scary to look forward to.

Connect The Dots.

Director of Resources, Assessment and Accountability, Bobby Cannon gave his yearly report on local indicator data, which covers 8 major priorities. While we won’t go into the details, Cannon emphasized that we are making progress but have some work to do in some key areas. He clarified that data was collected locally, as opposed to the state, making it District specific. “It ensures actions about process provide the community a holistic picture of our progress. The purpose of this data is to provide student outcomes.” In essence, the District gives itself a status ‘grade’ for each priority such as “early implementation” or “full implementation.” It’s a work in progress and Cannon pointed out that when asked if they felt they had “meaningful participation” at



each site, most students felt it was low. That prompted Tabera to ask what exactly that meant. Cannon couldn't seem to put his finger on it either, but he speculated that perhaps they felt more access to clubs might and ability to participate in school activities might have something to do with it. Oddly, more than 90% of students surveyed stated they felt "connected" to their school. Overall, Board members seemed pleased with the results and thanked Cannon for his report.

Wrinkles? Ruffles?

CSEA Representative Maria Villalpando commented on the new Synergy data system. She alluded to a few worrisome wrinkles (catchy right?) ☺ that still needed to be addressed. Primarily, Villalpando focused on the huge number of discrepancies or omissions being found in transcripts since the transition. "We crosscheck every single transcript and the priority has always been Seniors. We found discrepancies, duplicate courses, course names changed such as Ag Bio as Bio....For us as registrars, what is in the history should be the same, maybe we need a letter from our Superintendent so students aren't jeopardizing their chances for scholarships.....We want to be compensated for these corrections. It affects our students and our integrity." She wrapped up by thanking the District for the recent Professional Development opportunities they were given.

Procrastination

SVFT President Steve McDougall and the District recently met and, according to McDougall, there are signs of hope in terms of addressing the much needed attention the SPED program needs. "After 120 minutes of listening to one another, the Federation felt listened to. We see the dire need for Tier 3 students. We definitely feel it's not going to be cheap to take care of Tier 3 students and it will cost an inordinate amount of dollars." In reference to a presentation given earlier

related to District upgrades, enrollment and expansion, he reminded the Board the numbers (related to cost) they heard were conservative in nature. "It is in today's dollars, the longer you wait, the more it'll cost. Thank you for listening and I don't know if Tier 3 can wait 2 or 3 years."

Board Comments

Trustee Padilla-Salsberg shared she had a "great experience for the groundbreaking at Mt. Toro." She also reminded everyone to vote in our upcoming elections. Trustee Martinez dittoed Padilla-Salsberg's comments regarding the groundbreaking at Toro while Superintendent Burns updated Board members on the 2 + 2 meetings among local school districts. "There are common things between Districts....we're gonna' need more schools, and contrary to what the Mayor said, none of us can tighten out belt to build them. Just like they can't come up with \$22 million with their deficit."



Leadership Elections

While there was a quorum to take a vote on the on the hotly debated proposal to change how the way Board members are appointed to various chairs (i.e. President, VP, Secretary etc.), it didn't happen. Trustee Rubio and Ramirez were absent and the motion failed, thus extending this conversation even longer. Prior to the vote, Trustee Tabera said, "It affects all of us that we should all vote on it....not everyone is present and I'd like to see everyone vote on it." Trustee Cann and Ocampo were against the proposal while Tabera, and Martinez voted in favor.

Money Matters...Or Does It?

Superintendent Burns said recently he was asked by several Board members to review the Board Policy on compensation. He didn't say who, exactly, but what we do know is that it felt like a waste of time, cuz' from the looks of it, nobody cared. Either that, or it's just



smokescreen. Allow me to explain. Burns shared current language and gave some Board compensation comparisons for a District similar to ours. At issue is whether or not Board members should be compensated, even when they miss a meeting, and if they do, what would constitute just compensation. I mean, Board members get sick too, right? Board members would have to fill out a form indicating their hardship. Additionally, Burns floated the idea of a raise not to exceed 5% in the coming year. Trustee Padilla-Salsberg quickly chimed in and had this to say: “I feel my commitment is because I want to be here and I have no interest in more compensation. If we add the word hardship, it will be difficult to define. I either attend an entire meeting or I don’t get paid. I’m not here to make money. I’m here to provide a service.” Tabera dittoed the sentiment while Ocampo saw things differently. “I don’t see it as taking away funds from kids.....Life is costing money and we are elected to serve the public, but the public also asks for increases...That’s how I think.” Can’t argue there. Cann agreed with the idea of being compensated only if you’re present. “If you don’t attend a meeting, or come for part of a meeting, you shouldn’t be compensated.” Regardless, Padilla-Salsberg insisted Board members’ healthcare package and stipend were already attractive, making the increase unnecessary.

How’d They Vote??

Shall the Board adopt a New Board Appointment System? (President, VP, Clerk, Secretary)

	YAY	NAH
TABERA		
MARTINEZ		
CANN		
PADILLA-SALSBERG		
RUBIO		
RAMIREZ		
OCAMPO		

**“GOOD WORK
AIN’T CHEAP,
CHEAP WORK
AIN’T GOOD.”**
- NORMAN “SAILOR JERRY” COLLINS

