



On The Board

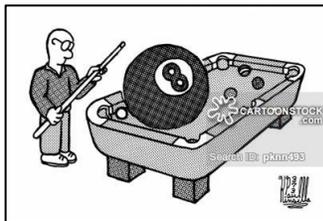
The Salinas Valley Federation of Teachers
931 Blanco Circle Salinas, CA 93901 Telephone: 831.214.6449
E-mail: president@svft.net

Board Highlights from September 2018

Reported By J.J. Campos

Puttin' Fires Out, Board Style

Director of Mission Trails/ROP, Yvonne Glenn gave an update on the upcoming CTE building and all around, there was excitement on the prospect of CTE's expanded offerings. However, Trustee Cann expressed she would like to see a Fire Academy. "We have a need for firefighters, there aren't enough. Have you pursued dual enrollment with MPC? I would like to see you pursue that." Glenn responded the Fire Academy was a "program we truly support. We made a recommendation to hire and receive a new instructor and have students who are waiting and the Fire Department is on board." Putting her 'burning question' to rest (see what I did? 😊), Burns said Hartnell College had to sign a document stating they wouldn't offer a Fire Program but that Concurrent Enrollment was more likely. Trustee Padilla-Salsberg thanked her for the presentation and emphasized that it was a project the Board was excited about. Now, before anyone got too excited, Trustee Eva Marie Martinez said the District was constantly graduating students that were NOT career ready and well, to put it even more bluntly, "we're behind the eight ball with CTE." Ouch. I mean, especially if you're into Pool. She added she



wanted to stop hearing "We're working on it... Keeping us informed is your duty and is helpful and it does take a while..., but for me, it's the timeliness. The LCAP says 'College and Career' ready. We clearly have the college part but where is the Career? What will we do proactively as we move on?... I know it's a lot." Trustee Ramirez chimed and said Food Certification should be an area to focus on given the strong restaurant industry on the Monterey Bay.

Less talking,
More doing.

AVID

Much praise was given for SUHSD's AVID program and AVID Program Director Gladys Edeza, who passed the AVID baton to Enrique Lopez who will be taking the wheel. Edeza reviewed AVID's goals, while Lopez touted that our students "are well above the average in the state." Trustee Phil Tabera sang AVID's praises alluding to its strong support and guidance saying that many learning strategies from the past took on a sink or swim approach... "you figure it out," while AVID did not. "You guys are the best." Trustee Lila Cann was pleased to see the number of females that had benefited from the program. Finally, Trustee Kathryn Ramirez said she supported AVID, but wished more writing programs were available. It was well received and kudos to those who are 'avid'-ly working to make it a success. 😊

Close One!

SVFT President Steve McDougall addressed the Board and ribbed the previous presenter a little regarding his slide-heavy presentation.

“I’ve got 25 slides for you tonight.” He recognized Carolyn Cleaves from AHS, as well as Former SVFT President Kati Bassler, and John Condon from the Transitions Program, who were in attendance. Once the formalities were over, McDougall got right to it. “It is still happening, a significant portion of Article 6, in how we are placing and keeping track how many students who are Mild to Moderate, and we just aren’t getting it done at one high school. Do I need to make sentence frames or what? There’s a grievance process for this, but an agreement was an agreement.” If you seem confused, we’ll cue you in. The Transitions Program that serves Mild to Moderate and students with Severe Disabilities continues to be severely understaffed and you might wonder what’s at risk. A lot, actually. Many of those students require one to one care and are simply not getting it while both they and the Staff are at serious risk of getting hurt. As a side note and through PURE coincidence, I had the misfortune of witnessing first-hand as a student of said program suffering an episode while unaccompanied on his way to class. An assistant who was NOT assigned to his case happened to be nearby and was clearly distraught while a security officer and I had to step in to help her escort said student to class. Her safety, not to mention the student’s, was in question. This seems to be a perfect opportunity to test our good Board’s empathy and solidarity with the Transitions program. Otherwise, as McDougall alluded earlier, it’s a safe bet our District might find itself in a legal mess. And while the status quo by some organizations to take the “it’s- -cheaper-to-get sued-than-to-assume-the financial-responsibility-now” approach, a moral and fundamental question arises: Who deserves our attention? More importantly, will the District adhere to its word? According to our Mission Statement, ALL students deserve our attention. As to the latter question, however, we seem to be falling short. Fix this. NOW. A special shout out to Kati Bassler who has been a fierce advocate for the Transitions

Staff, these students and their families. More on this issue below.

Individuals Address The Board

John Condon of the SUHSD’s Transitions program addressed the Board to shed more on its apparent lack of support. “Movement of Staff was not handled properly per CSEA contract and it has caused unnecessary stress. It has had an impact on parents and students.Why isn’t the District hiring behavioral specialists? Students are suffering and Paraeducators are doing what normally a Behavior Specialist does. Isn’t that out of compliance and how do you get away with it? Various 1-1 students have been dumped into a class where one person was taken away by the police and another was restrained. If I was a parent, I would be unhappy. The feeling is everything is coming down from above and no one is listening at the bottom. We just need

I have a fear that the only language that will work with you is using lawyer language that if you don’t address this, ‘we’re going to sue you’re a**.’

-John Condon

to know. There’s some nasty stuff and if you don’t deal with it, it will blow up in your face.” Enter Kati Bassler, clearly disappointed by the District’s inaction. You might remember her efforts which brought in an outside agency that took an impartial look into the Transitions program. The report from that ‘look’ clearly pointed to the obvious: Transitions needs attention. She brought a copy of the recommendations from said report that cost the District \$35,000. “It makes me sad after I worked so hard after 3 years, the continued lack of support for Transitions.” She mentioned that a student with disabilities received a schedule change from Administration six weeks into the school year. As she explained, this may not seem like much, but for a student with disabilities, a



schedule change is huge. Trust us. She continued, “And we wonder why our students with disabilities are not succeeding? We need to strengthen the culture of responsiveness as was indicated in the report....What is the structuring and why are we not following the recommendations?”

Board Comments

Superintendent Dan Burns responded to McDougall’s frustration with “slide-heavy” presentations as he quipped that an upcoming LCAP presentation would include well over



35 slides. Touché. ☺ According to Burns, the presentation would include “reorganizing the agenda, pulling apart

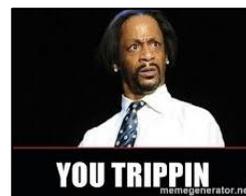
LCAP objectives and embedding them in the agenda, more accurately and more timely.” Burns recognized Special Projects Staff and Tony Saucedo for his leadership at Special Projects. Also, in what can only be described as long-overdue, a new workforce housing task force is being formed to address the pervasive teacher shortage. As Burns put it, we will “have a discussion about long term plans for providing workforce housing.” We wish him well in this new endeavor as surely, a great number of our younger teachers are anxiously awaiting some relief in this area. Kudos.

A Flippin’ Problem.

If your kids like flip-flops, we got a problem. Ok, well, not yet, but according to a proposed Board Policy update given by Associate Superintendent Dr. Blanca Baltazar-Sabbah, the days of exposed toenails and dirty feet may be over. That’s a bad thing? Trustee Kathryn Ramirez adamantly rejected the idea pointing out that a great number of athletes and students in general wear them for convenience. “Will we make an exception?” Baltazar-Sabbah said it was the Board’s



opportunity to opine, and that the update was suggested because according to Case Law, it’s easier to fall or trip with sandals. As opposed to tripping with your shoelaces? Sigh, Leave it to a lawyer. Ramirez added that it would be incredibly difficult to manage. Trustee Eva Marie Martinez agreed, “We’re going to create a mess, perhaps if we get parents to sign off, we can enforce it.” Superintendent Dan Burns said that adding language could help assuage the issue and he acknowledged it....flip flops are everywhere.”



Giving Second Chance...A Second Run?

Executive Director of the newly resurged Second Chance Program Bryan Contreras addressed our Board to discuss a \$43,000 request to help fund the program. “Last time you saw me, I said I was leaving. I’ve come back to Second Chance after a one year leave.” He shared that it had been his experience that while working for a non-profit on the Monterey Bay, he was startled to see how quickly citizens were moved to allocate funds for animals, yet struggled to find the means for student programs. “I have a dog and a bird....people invest more in animals than they do people and kids. The year I was there we received 6 million dollars in requests for animals.... and yet we struggle when we look for investment in kids.” Here here. He mentioned there were 3 full-time, and 4 part-time employees on his staff and that they were currently looking to reorganize and rebuild the agency. Originally, Second Chance’s mission was to deter youth from participating in gang activity but according to Contreras, that has changed. “Our mission is to work with kids and families, we’ve eliminated the gang element. Now we do a little bit of everything...helping those with challenges in the community. Our goal is to put kids on the right path....” Contreras gave an overview of the various trainings Second Chance Staff participate in through ancillary



programs, such as Joven Noble and the Xinachtli program. Later, Tabera asked about the counseling piece of Second Chance, and if they helped with psychological problems, “Are they lay counselors or are they counselors with degrees?” Contreras answered they were, in fact, lay counselors and added that they go through a number of trainings before they can counsel students. Tabera then alluded to the \$43,200 request, “which isn’t a heck of a lot of money, for what you’re doing....you have 53 kids. How many people (counselors) are we talking about? For the \$43,000? Is it \$10,000 a piece?” Contreras replied that it didn’t necessarily spread out that way, as the funds were meant to go towards the purchase of shirts, meals and miscellaneous expenses related to the intake process. Trustee Tabera finalized that he felt “The Joven Noble and Xinachtli programs are excellent for our people. The cultural aspect has been neglected...I don’t know if on purpose, but it has been neglected.” Trustee Ramirez asked how large the each class size was within Second Chance with Contreras replying that it averaged about 6-7 students per class.

Rhino In The Room

SVFT President Steve McDougall referenced his bimonthly meetings with Superintendent Dan Burns and stated progress was being made. “We had an open conversation.” McDougall added that while there were different perspectives, they would hash out the details on staffing Paraprofessionals and once again underscored the impact CSEA employees have on our District. “We can’t do business without CSEA. We can’t open the doors. We won’t have immaculate facilities. I’m not afraid to use the bathroom at any school in this District.” Finally, he addressed the Rhino in the room (you preferred an elephant? ☺) “We can’t deliver services to moderate to severe students without the Paraprofessionals who deliver services to these Special Needs students.” He reiterated his support for their plight and added a

solution was necessary. “We need to troubleshoot that. I’m looking forward to working together with them (CSEA and SUHSD). We don’t represent them, but we need them.”

Board Comments (9/25)

Trustee Rubio stated he recently attended a Masters In Governance workshop with Superintendent Dan Burns and expressed it was a great experience. Trustee Patty Padilla-Salsberg shared her experience from a recent study session among Board members that concentrated on taking a closer look at student data. She thanked Associate Superintendent Dr. Blanca Baltazar-Sabbah for her guidance. Trustee Martinez agreed with Padilla-Salsberg and stated he would like to see more study sessions and an “exchange of information. Perhaps we can have more of those.” Tabera then reminded those in attendance it was High School Voter Registration Week while encouraging teachers to have their students register to vote. You heard him. Get out the vote. Trustee Ramirez participated in the NSHS Alumni Day and enjoyed the turnout. “It was a very classy event.” She said that it was encouraging to see NSHS Leadership students volunteer a tremendous amount of time to bring activities to their school. Additionally, she mentioned her participation in a CSBA (California School Boards Association) focus group addressing equity. “Equality is about treatment....how we can make decisions that lead or improve to better outcomes to historically underrepresented students.” Superintendent Dan Burns said 2+2 meetings continued with Elementary Schools, Labor Management Institute Initiative and putting some energy in that. He mentioned some initiatives by the city to help curb the homeless issue, (yes, it’s a thing) and there’s just one little problem. According to Burns, one proposed shelter would be located on Laurel at the base of the entrance to ROP. Trustee Tabera interjected and wanted clarification and, uh, clearly, he wasn’t



pleased. Yet, as Trustee Padilla-Salsberg pointed out, it was simply an information item that could come up for discussion later. Cuz' you know that's exactly what we need, a homeless shelter RIGHT by our school! Just sayin'. ☺ In reference to the implied danger that could pose, Trustee Lila Cann also asked how many 'fires' had been put out that had put students in danger." Next, Burns informed the Board that on September 19th, he sent a



letter to the contractor of Rancho San Juan High School some quality control issues that have reared their ugly head. Somethin' about windows, who knows. The point is, Burns let

the Board know that the SUHSD might be forced to withhold payment to the contractor in the future if certain quality issues were not resolved.

Workin' Out The Kinks

You'll recall that Superintendent Burns proposed a new way to elect officers on the Board. It's pretty simple. At its core, positions would be rotated yearly thus avoiding the gut wrenching, nail biting, Boardroom musical chair excitement, we've experienced in the past. It was laid out pretty clearly and it seems to be an equitable step in the right direction, but change is never without controversy. Trustee Rubio said it was a "good thing." Trustee Ramirez asked if the practice of Board members whose kids are graduating automatically becoming Board President that year would be eliminated. She shared her concern with the proposal, specifically when a new Board member "could potentially wait seven years to be taking on the Board President position," and asked that new members not be moved to the



'back of the line per se.' According to the proposal, to assume the Board President position, a member would have to attend a Masters In Governance workshop, but Ramirez pointed out that "Somebody might be ready....It's just a thought." Trustee Cann agreed. "I don't think it's right to make someone wait seven years if they have more leadership skills. It's not necessarily if someone's child or grandchild is graduating to become Board President. It should be decided by the whole Board who is going to be in leadership roles." Tabera stated it had been eight years since he'd last been President for "strange reasons," and added the proposal



was equitable, while the election process had not been in the past. As to being Board President for the sake of having the honor of handing a child or family member a Diploma, he felt it was unnecessary with the Board having discretion to decide if they wanted to allow another member said honor. "I'm the same as everybody else. I've never asked for that. I think the policy change is fair and we should move it to action." Trustee Martinez agreed "with the way it was set up," but had concern with some people being ready as soon as they were elected to office. "They would be dropped all the way to the bottom, perhaps we can find a happy medium." Burns listened to their concerns and while he was supportive, he pointed out there were 7 Board members on the SUHSD Board as opposed to 5 members on other Board, making a little trickier to find said 'happy medium.' Trustee Ramirez added that if the Board moved forward with this, it should support it "and stick with it" and to support the rotations even if other Board members didn't support a member taking on a new role. Trustee Lila Cann was not convinced this was a good move and asked how this proposal had "come before us without taking a vote



whether it should come before us?” She said she had asked for the past five years on a policy change regarding meeting attendance and getting a per diem. “It has never come before us, but this came before us because a few people wanted it.” Burns chimed in to say that four Board members had, in fact, requested it. Trustee Tabera commented he never saw Cann’s proposal and Ramirez added she had supported Cann in the past. It started to get a little tense and Burns tried to



quell the waters, “I don’t want someone to go away angry....” and assured Cann there would be a chance to discuss her

proposal soon. Again, Cann, “When? Before I fly? Everything else has been put off.”

Agreeing with Cann, Ramirez commented, “This has come up really, really fast.” A frustrated Burns responded, “No, this has been talked about for months.” Trustee Padilla-Salsberg thanked Cann for her comment but said that her concern was unrelated to the matter at hand and not on the agenda. With the exception of giving new Board members the ability to be President a little sooner, (if they’re ready), the Board was pretty much....um, on board. For the sake of equitability, fairness....and everyone’s sanity, (sigh), kudos to Burns for taking the Board in this new direction.

