

ADOPTED MINUTES

SPECIAL MEETING - The special meeting of the Board of Education was held on the date and place mentioned above.

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE- The meeting was called to order by President McMahon at 6:33 PM, who led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: Jensen, McMahon, Mooney, Spencer, Tam

ABSENT: None

PUBLIC SESSION ITEM

Master Plan Topics: *First Public Education Volunteers report; Secondary restructure; Grade configurations; Inter-district transfers; Follow-up fiscal analysis of Chipman Middle School*

Public Education Volunteers Report

Christine Strena:

- Support for magnet programs – language immersion, International Baccalaureate, music and arts programs at all levels
- Grade configuration changes from traditional patterns – either supported in whole or rejected completely
- Still perception of inter-district transfer students – “those” kids are taking the seats of “our” kids
- Perception of teacher/staffing unions – not positive
- A lot of parents support charters – believe it will eliminate union problems
- Unions protecting staff positions rather than doing what’s best for education; unions are preventing volunteers from working in the classroom; unions need to outreach to parents
- Sidetrack – what would make you leave AUSD? Not physically safe, if no additional parcel tax was passed, class size reduction being removed, middle school isn’t safe, California budget situation
- Rumors that schools will close
- Rather write a check to a private school then deal with these issues

Karen Kenney:

- Overall question re MP strategies: 2 primary things heard, redraw boundaries to push students to under-enrolled schools and pursue really big parcel tax so we don’t keep coming back
- Cuts to programs – understand current budget situation, but protect core academic programs that are critical
- Secondary schools – no strong feeling either way
- One high school – didn’t have enough information to even provide feedback
- Charter schools – current viewpoints, some participants felt weak administrative practices and overall model is too loose
- Any charter would result in district losing money
- Magnet programs – really favored language immersion but fear they can become elitist

- Concern about not getting into neighborhood school
- Parcel tax – strongly you need to go for it and go for a big on. Need to do better job educating community about need and benefits of parcel tax
- No square footage formula for business –more equitable methodology
- Appreciate fact this is very comprehensive, but feel district is pursuing too much. Prioritize and pursue top 3-4 things

Georzann Chaco:

- People felt not enough information to complete survey
- Last time parcel tax approved, people were saying “this is the last time”
- Go to the root cause and fix the inequity in our funding
- Reducing days in calendar year – not favorable
- Increasing class size – not favorable
- For high school, programs are really good – time the community step up and start funding
- Need to do a better job marketing
- Some perception of “squandering” the last parcel tax

Questions/Answers

Q: How do parents volunteer in the classrooms?

A: HR staff can follow-up with you on specifics.

Q: Scenarios – 1 high school and 1 middle school – what are the numbers?

A: At a 10-12 high school, we’re talking about 200 kids. 7-9 middle schools would have about 1,000 students each.

Q: One high school – still have inter-district permits?

A: We probably wouldn’t be able to continue offering inter-district permits.

Q: Gap in performance based on ethnicity – what kinds of efforts will be made to help address that gap?

A: We are doing all kinds of professional development with teachers site-by-site in order to address this. We have a partnership with BAYCES to think about how to resolve the issue, and secondly, we have a huge math initiative in progress. Besides all that, we are invested in a grant writing system. This is a moment for us to say what programs are at what schools and what do we need to support greater.

Q: Scenario 1, choice and creating something at EHS. Go a little deeper?

A: The current Board policy does not allow for high school open enrollment in order to go into any program you would like. The notion of choice is not just for Encinal. One way of doing this is putting out an RFP to ask what are those programs that parents are interested in at various levels. In doing this work well, we would need to meet with families and teachers and determine what it would look like.

Q: Scenario 1 – inter-district transfers included?

A: Yes.

Q: If we’re talking about doing a “real” parcel tax, have we talked about a dollar figure? What does it look like? \$1800 like in Piedmont?

A: PTAG is starting 10/29 and will do an analysis to look at what a parcel tax could look like in

Alameda and what is the “tipping point” for every stakeholder group.

Q: Charter school – if they’re a losing proposition, why do we keep doing it?

A: There are 3, currently. Under the charter school law, there are certain criteria a district has to look at. If the charter meets that criteria then you must approve it.

Q: Do charters get more money?

A: Historically, they have. But now they are getting cut the same rate we are.

Q: What about ASTI?

A: It’s a district school, not a charter.

Q: ASTI has a lot of inter-district transfers?

A: ASTI is a wonderful little school, with 78% of students graduating high school with an associate degree. I was surprised there weren’t more Alameda students taking advantage of this unique program. ASTI recruits from all middle schools, but if families are not choosing the school, then they fill seats with inter-district students.

Q: If Chipman doesn’t convert, what does that look like?

A: The state no longer comes into schools. The expectation is on Superintendent to get schools out of program improvement. In Year 4, you have to make a plan and in Year 5, implement the plan.

Q: Is there any movement towards student accountability for CST scores? They don’t mean anything to the students because it doesn’t hold them back from anything and it’s not on their transcript. We do heavy marketing for this, but we even have high-level students randomly filling them out.

A: CAHSEE is the only accountability.

Q: Option 3 – sounds scary. Sounds like incredible need for public awareness campaign?

A: We are doing work through school sites as well. We depend on principals, families, teachers, and staff to get the word out. We are also providing other ways to give input - roadshows at each school, newsletters, postcards, monthly letter, etc.

Q: 3 scenarios – is building a new high school completely off the table?

A: We would need \$250M. Number of strategies we’d have to look at, minimum 5-year process. Including finding money, then land, then dealing with excess property. The problem is we wouldn’t get match from the state if we have excess property. We’d have to look at a bond.

Q: Look at year-round school, rotating schedules, etc?

A: year round schools run on a multi-track. There’s always one track that gets short-changed. While there is a cost savings, it’s not good for kids and not equitable.

Q: What is the timeline of implementation?

A: All the analysis is coming coming together. The Board will vote in January on what the plan is, whatever it may be. The reality is there are lots of interdependencies.

Q: You mentioned other types of costs other than fiscal. What is educational cost of increasing kindergarten class size?

A: There’s no research that says 20 is the “magic” number, so it’s hard to say. However, there are kindergarten teachers who can personally attest to how much more difficult it becomes to teach as more students are put into your classroom.

- Q: In all of these scenarios, at least half of the savings is coming from CSR changes. This is something that sounds like its coming no matter what. We need to make sure that the community knows that's what's happening.
- A: I am not making that recommendation nor could I as it is a negotiated item. It is, however, on strategy that district traditionally use.
- Q: If we pass a permanent parcel tax, could we still look at restructuring scenarios but based on program improvement instead of financial necessity?
- A: Yes. We need to do the choice things for kids.

Comments

- Marketing campaign – we need to emphasize what's going on at our schools. Good schools increase property values. What percentage of employees graduated from public schools? Even social marketing – online blogs, etc. can help.
- Is it true only 10% of Alamedans have kids in school? How many families with students don't own homes? How do we reach out to both of these groups?
- We are in desperate need of real leadership to guide us in the right direction.
- I would like more information about a bond vs. a parcel tax. There may be a completely different public reaction to a bond.

Board Discussion

- When I look at this, it's very hard for me to make sense of this; this is the first time I've seen this. For me to make a decision, I don't know how I can tell you what's best because I don't see dollar signs attached to these options. I have to know how much we would save and how much it would cost.
- When I look at this, if going to increase class size to keep flex space, is that what's really important?
- I have a concern – as a middle and high school parent, those schools have really incurred a lot of the cuts during the past 7 years.
- I don't know how we would put more kids at AHS as there are too many kids there, now. We have kids that can't get section they want because class is full.
- We need a vision. We need to improve education. We need to consider how we're going to spend money to improve education. There has to be a cost benefit analysis to everything we talk about. How many parents are going to leave when we increase class size? How many will we lose to private or charter schools?
- Interdistrict transfers – overall, they may represent a small percentage, but there is a 100% increase at the elementary level. This shows there are 30 at one elementary school and zero at another. If inter-district students really are good for district, shouldn't they be proportionately across the district?
- We have data in the district about our educational system – achievement gap, performance, etc. The State of California has seen fit to determine that funding for small class size isn't a priority; we have to respond to that.
- How do we respond to students who are not getting their needs met? We need to look outside the box – class size configuration, etc.
- Dollars aren't completely tied to analysis, but we need to share this information. I am gratified to see so many people here today and hope you are sharing information with friends/colleagues, etc.
- Parcel tax – when people say a big number, what do you think that is? Currently, property owners pay \$309 total for 2 parcel taxes. If we look at what would be needed to cover \$15M that would be \$1,200.
- What if the state cuts us more? A few hundred dollars might seem like a small amount per student, but once you multiply by all 10,000 students, it's a huge impact.

- We can't lose sight of the education plan and what's best for students. Our schools are good; some of us think they're great.
- We need to remember that there's always a tradeoff with different scenarios. What are the tradeoffs as far as facilities and educational impact? We need to keep that in mind.
- Challenge that we have is how do we get the biggest bang for the bucks we have and provide for the best education? What programs give us the biggest bang for our bucks and how do we build capacity to maintain them? Constant conversation I have with Superintendent with regards to equity and core values in serving our children.
- Equalization – if we were to equalize to the state average, it would be an additional \$1M. It will continue to be an inequity until the state figures out a new way to fund public education. The cost of every single program is already available to you – go to the website and look through all the posted documents.

ADJOURNMENT

President McMahon adjourned the meeting at 8:33 PM.