



**Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District
Board of Education Meeting
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

March 30, 2017

A special meeting of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education was held on Thursday, March 30, 2017, in the District Administrative Offices: 1651 16th Street, Santa Monica, CA. The Board of Education called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. in the Board Conference Room at the District Offices. At 4:06 p.m., the Board of Education moved to Closed Session regarding the items listed below. The public meeting will reconvene at 4:31 p.m. in the Board Room.

CLOSED SESSION (4:00-4:15 p.m.)

I. PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR CLOSED SESSION ITEMS ONLY

Persons wishing to address the Board of Education regarding an item scheduled for closed session must submit the "Request to Address" card prior to the start of closed session.

II. CLOSED SESSION (15 minutes)

- Government Code §54956.8 (15)
CONFERENCE WITH REAL PROPERTY NEGOTIATORS
 - Property: 1707 4th Street, Santa Monica, CA
 - Agency Negotiator: Dr. Ben Drati
 - Negotiating Parties: Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD), PCA I, L.P.
 - Under Negotiation: Price and terms of payment

Closed session was added as an addendum to the agenda

III. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call

Board of Education Members

Laurie Lieberman – President	Craig Foster
Richard Tahvildaran-Jesswein – Vice President	– left at 6:52pm
Oscar de la Torre – arrived at 4:20pm	Ralph Mechur
Maria Leon-Vazquez	Jon Kean

B. Pledge of Allegiance

Led by Mr. Mechur

IV. BOARD AND EXECUTIVE CABINET RETREAT

This retreat will be a follow-up to the board leadership practices and effective governance procedures the board and superintendent discussed at the January 2017 retreat. Additionally, board members will have an opportunity to clarify what information and topics they would like to see addressed by staff.

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Dr. Drati's handouts can be found attached to these minutes.

The board and staff discussed the micro and macro planning calendars for the school year as well as how to address and prioritize the list of board member requests to be addressed via board agenda items, Friday Memo entries, or meetings

with specific staff members. The group then identified areas of strength and areas that need improvement in regards to progress made toward meeting the protocols decided upon at the retreat in January. Finally, the board and staff used a chart emphasizing the need for balance between the roles of the board, the superintendent, and staff to analyze a recent scenario that prompted several calls and emails from the community.

At the conclusion of the retreat, Superintendent Drati stressed the need to keep the balance shown in the chart; otherwise, staff will be unable to do the work of the district. In regards to decision-making, he explained that two-way trust involves the understanding that neither the board nor staff are going to take action that put our students in harm's way. Staff considers consequences of moving forward or not moving forward with an action, and, ultimately, decisions are made with students' best interest in mind. He added that the district will be adopting a program called *Let's Talk!*, which allows staff to receive feedback from the community (suggestions, complaints, praises, observation) via a link on the district's website as well as analyze the data of that feedback to identify themes and the magnitude of concerns.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public Comments is the time when members of the audience may address the Board of Education on items not scheduled on the meeting's agenda. All speakers are limited to three (3) minutes. When there is a large number of speakers, the Board may reduce the allotted time to two (2) minutes per speaker. The Brown Act (Government Code) states that Board members may not engage in discussion of issues raised during "VIII. Public Comments" except to ask clarifying questions, make a brief announcement, make a brief report on his or her own activities, or to refer the matter to staff. This Public Comment section is limited to twenty (20) minutes. If the number of persons wishing to address the Board of Education exceeds the time limit, additional time will be provided in **Section XVI. CONTINUATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS.**

- *Jill Hawkins and Ann Thanawalla encouraged the board to postpone termite treatment at Roosevelt Elementary School.*
- *Ericka Leslie addressed the board regarding bullying at the schools.*


VI. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Mechur, seconded by Mr. de la Torre, and voted 5/0 (Mr. Kean and Dr. Tahvildaran-Jesswein were absent) to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m. The next board meeting is a regular meeting scheduled for **Thursday, April 20, 2017, at 5:30 p.m.** in the **District Administrative Offices: 1651 16th Street, Santa Monica, CA.**

Approved: 5-4-17



President



Superintendent



SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Board Retreat Agenda

- a. Review the functionality of how staff and board have interacted from January to current time based on the processes and protocols we have established.
 - i. Review long term and short term calendar
 - ii. Review wish list protocols
 - iii. Review protocols
 - iv. Review staff / board interaction diagram

- b. Identify areas of success
 - i. Use scenarios if possible

- c. Identify areas of growth
 - i. Use scenarios if possible

- d. Adjust processes and protocols to address areas of growth.

SANTA MONICA-MALIBU UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

1651 Sixteenth Street • Santa Monica • California 90404-3891 • (310) 450-8338 • www.smmusd.org

Board of Education: Oscar de la Torre • Craig Foster • Jon Kean • Maria Leon-Vazquez

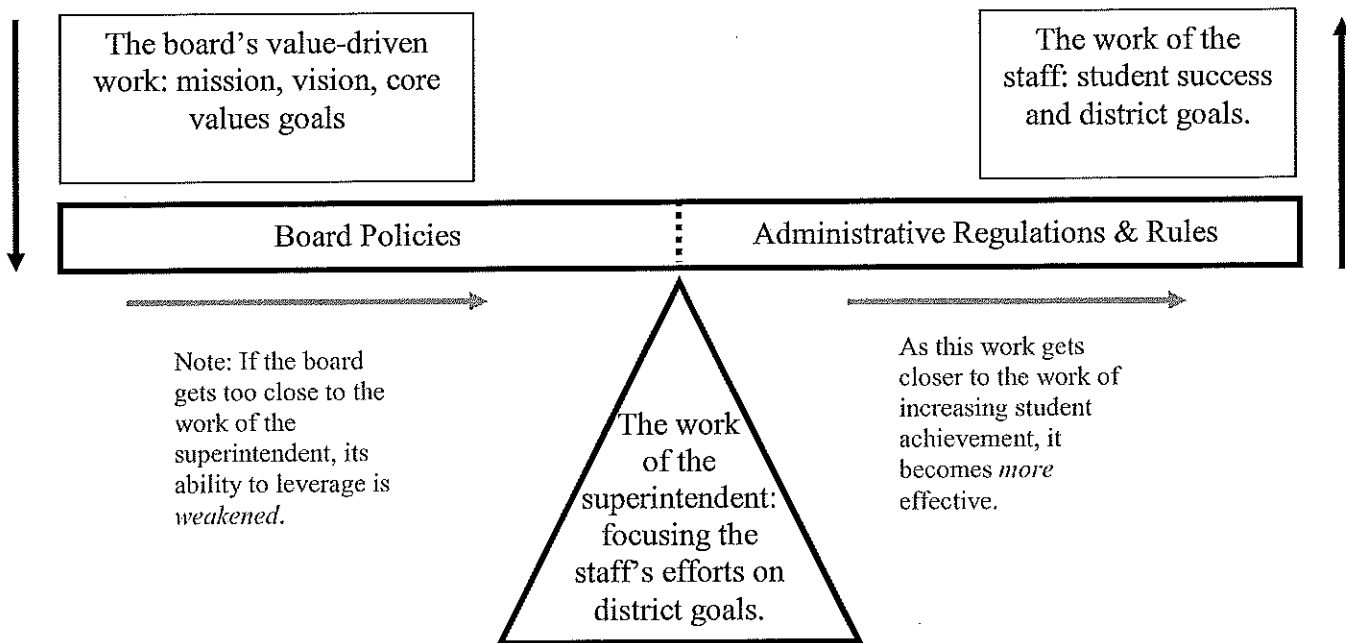
Laurie Lieberman • Ralph Mechur • Dr. Richard Tahviidaran-Jesswein

Superintendent: Dr. Ben Drati

Key Thoughts on Staff / School Board Interactions

The Role of the Board and the Superintendent

- The board leverages the work of the staff through the superintendent.
- The board applies pressure by clarifying and communicating the district's mission, vision, priorities, goals, and policies; this is their value-driven work.
- The superintendent translates all goals and policies into action.
- The lever's strength is **increased** when:
 - the fulcrum, the work of the superintendent, is close to the work of district improvement and increasing student success, AND
 - the board is focused on the work of its value-driven work, and more distant from the skill-driven work of the superintendent
- The strength of the lever is **decreased** when:
 - the fulcrum is too distant from the work of district improvement, OR
 - the trustees become less focused on their value-driven work, and more focused on the skill driven work of the superintendent and staff.



How the fulcrum moves

To have confidence in their ability to direct the superintendent, trustees need and have a right to receive sufficient communication, clear processes, and the basis for decisions or recommendations. At the same time, the frequency of communication with trustees and the degree of detail in their inquiries move the fulcrum to the left – *pulling the superintendent away* from the work of the district. Striking this balance of sufficient communication to meet the needs of trustees with maximizing the superintendent's attention on district goals is essential to increasing the effectiveness of the governance team.

SMMUSD Board Retreat
January 13, 2017

I want to thank you for your engagement, willingness to be vulnerable, and being self reflective at the board workshop. I left the meeting more encouraged and confident as I have a better understanding of some of the sources of conflict. Therefore, I feel more confident in offering possible solutions we can employ. I've summarized what was discussed and organized it in the following way: the board and superintendent's reflection on Legacy, analysis of the issues, possible solutions to resolve the issues, board meeting protocols, next steps.

Board Member & Supt. Legacy

1. To be part of a dynamic board that truly speaks to what we have done collectively and to have people feel positively about our efforts and the district's direction and mission (John)
2. A good listener who helped move the district to be an even more compassionate place, and that we have opened the door for student opportunities (Maria)
3. That people truly understand what equity is really about and there is diversity among all students, staff and administrators (Ralph)
4. We achieve the goals of raising achievement for all and we are a model for others (Craig)
5. This organization is here to support students and that we fit the district to meet needs of our students (Ben)
6. Reflect that I was on a team that was able to put the puzzle pieces together so that we experience a renaissance of a joyful education and team (Richard)
7. I came back to district to serve and champion for social justice (Oscar)
8. Part of a team to build a collaborative and inclusive culture that moves us to excellence for all (Laurie)

Analysis of the issue

1. Board meetings are "to make decisions"
2. Board members' 5-minute limitation protocol is effective.
3. Important decisions should be made at the beginning of the Board meeting.
4. Board members need to be more self-disciplined.
5. A year-long board calendar of study sessions and action items is crucial.
6. Board meetings are to do "mission critical" work.
7. Staff must frame out what staff needs from the Board in each board item.
8. The way board meetings play out set the tone for the district and trickles down to the staff. A poor board meeting can cause confusion and uncertainty.
9. Consider review of Board policy updates on a quarterly basis is important.
10. Being respectful of each other and staff is essential.
11. We should sharpen our procedures for placing an item on the agenda.
12. It is important for Ben to continue one-on-one interaction with board members to ensure on-going communications.
13. Our meetings must be more efficient and effective, not necessarily shorter.

14. The board interacts with Ben, and Ben interacts with staff.
15. The board needs to recognize the difference between governance and management.
16. All parties need to respect each other (the board, community, and staff) by the way we communicate. This means everyone has ample time and information to respond to handle board items.
17. Board members need to have confidence that the district knows what it's doing to meet the needs of students so that they are able to defend the work in public.
18. A democratic approach in leading the district and the board is good.

Solutions to the Issues

1. **Establish and institute a year-long governance calendar that everyone (staff & school board) subscribes to.** The governance calendar should serve as a guide to: explain the year-long work of the board and staff, demonstrate and illustrate the work to the community, serve as an accountability indicator to the community, instill confidence that the work is being done.
2. **Treat all Friday memos as a tool to enhance understanding of the governance calendar, inform board members about activities in the district, and address pressing issues that may not require a board meeting.** Friday memos should be organized and narrated with supporting documents so that it is easy to follow. I recommend that we go electronic as soon as mid February and utilize google docs to share and organize our work. The district is currently training all staff on how to use google doc and will send an invitation for the board to be trained soon. Google doc is an efficient and effective way of sharing documents and it will make our lives easier to manage.
3. **Institute and Utilize an electronic board meeting agenda service.** Doing this will save time and money. Many California districts and county offices of education subscribe to such a service. A web-based application allows you to electronically develop and access board meeting information including agendas, background information, rationale, supporting documents and minutes. This process, in combination with a year-long calendar, will allow ample time for staff to prepare board agenda items and supporting documents in a timely fashion so that all documents used in any presentation is available for the public and board to see before any board meeting. This will allow us to better "respect each other" and give ample time for all constituent groups (school board, staff, and community). Staff will be instructed to follow specific protocols in submitting agendas prior to a board meeting. Please read the protocols in the link provided [here](#). My goal is to start these protocols by mid February.

Please note that the process to switching over to an electronic agenda using a consultant service will take some time. IT is working on acquiring sample devices for testing and pricing out. My office is contacting the various companies that offer electronic agenda services to obtain quotes and set up demonstrations

for staff and a board subcommittee. Once a company is awarded the contract, training can begin for staff (information input) and board members (target audience). Our goal is to have a complete system in place for the beginning of the 2017-18 school year. Meanwhile, staff will start to include any slides or background information that would have normally appeared in the Friday memo in the actual PDF of the agenda directly behind the cover page for the corresponding item. This will achieve the goal of mutual respect by providing the board with all relevant information prior to a board meeting, but not necessarily in an elegant format, as will be the case when using an electronic agenda service.

4. **Institute one-on-one standing meetings with board members.** These meetings will allow for board members to bring up issues and allow me to provide guidance on how to best deal with it. You'll be bestowing a lot of trust in me to handle the issues in a democratic way and I will not take the task lightly.
5. Board members will **read the board items and supporting document prior to board meetings.** Staff will operate at board meetings as though this was done. If a question is brought up that has already been addressed in the narrative and supporting documents, I'll lightly reference that and possibly ask the board member to redirect the question. However, I think it's fair for board members to ask for clarity.

Board of education meeting norms

1. Contact superintendent with agenda questions by Wednesday of the week of a board meeting.
2. Make concise comments.
3. Avoid repetitive comments.
4. Refrain from interacting with public speakers, except for clarifying questions.
5. Be attentive and avoid texting.
6. Speak no more than twice to a single agenda item.
7. Meetings will conclude at 10:00pm, unless board approves a 30-minute extension.

Next Steps

1. Board receives this memo as a recap the retreat experience.
2. Ben sets up one-on-one meetings with board members to discuss the memo.
3. Ben schedules a board discussion about the recommendations.
4. Possibly adopt the protocols as an action item.