



**PTO Special Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, September 16, 2020**  
**6:00 pm via Zoom**

**Board Members in Attendance:**

Anna Stump  
Judy Linares  
Tara King  
Anne-Marie Matthews  
Shannon Schroeder  
Elizabeth Wagner  
Kelly Milazzo  
Michael Paskin  
Matt Genovese  
Lilia Hine  
Cari Menchaca  
Kim Kotnik  
Kristie Chapman  
Shelley Eschelman  
Susan Dunton  
Timothy Lee  
Dustin Todd

**Staff Members in Attendance:**

Denise Granger  
Arielle Curry  
Meredith Llewellyn  
Jackie Blue  
Kaye Cantu  
Heather Volz  
Laura Capps

**Parents in Attendance:**

Bee Saunders  
James Matthews  
Kim Eubank  
Larry Reynolds  
Erika Adler  
Lisa Remorenko  
Shruti Ramaker  
Mark Iversen

Ann Johnson  
Genezaret Lopez-Orozco  
Susan Bertelson-Young  
Megan Raya  
Hollan Thayer  
Megan Bright  
Sam P.  
Carolyn  
Andrew  
Jindra

Ana Chaidez and Jesse Aguilar, Spanish interpreters

Anna Stump, President

Anna called the meeting to order at 6:04pm, welcomed the many new names on the participant list and, looked forward to SBUSD Board of Education President Laura Capps joining the meeting later.

Denise Granger, Principal

Started by considering the current context of 559 students, down from 605 last year. Majority of attrition is in primary grades because distance learning is particularly tough on younger students. School has been through 8 rounds of materials distribution, including hotspots, headphones and learning materials. Slideshow to be shared with parents and teachers.

Busy week: First Monday Morning Meeting yesterday, Back to School night, Car Parade Friday – a needed moment as we finish week 5 we are all feeling the distance. Still need 2 School Site Council reps and more ELAC reps. Commitment for each is approximatel 4 meetings per year.

Library: parents can request physical books here: <https://sbunifiedk6libraries.weebly.com>.

There are many (\$4500 worth) overdue books from last year. Please return!

Superintendent Maldonado’s message: SB Unified will not be applying for waiver. Small cohorts may start soon for highest needs. Not credentialed teachers supervising.

Substitutes and other staff will supervise. Regular COVID-19 testing for all staff in order to



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prepare for students to come back onsite. Students screened daily with temperature checks and a series of questions. We are still in Purple Phase 1 and are hoping to move to Red Phase 2. Questions, contact Mrs. Granger or Ms. Curry. They are here for us. Question re: disaggregated survey results; Denise hasn't received that data yet.

Judy Linares, Vice President

Masks – old Wildcat wear shirts shipped to Wildcat grandparent who will turn them into masks; we will figure out how to market them.

Teacher support – almost all room parents are in place. Appreciation goody bags were distributed to teachers and staff, and chalk art has been created in front of Community sign. Families are encouraged to add art and messages to teachers and staff.

Another surprise coming up next week, let PTO know if you have ideas of how to support teachers / staff.

Tara King, Treasurer

Not too much of an update. We have \$10k in the bank plus reserves. Expecting small SBUSD bill, but not much since we have no Curriculum Specialists. District has been doing a great job supporting teachers, so we've received very few requests from them, so we can be more conservative with our resources. Enrichment? A number of enrichment teachers are providing program outside of school, parents encouraged to find them if desired. We can't do anything on campus and nobody wants more Zoom.

Q: could we get Parks & Rec / RAP to provide something after school? Denise will ask. Enrichment teachers willing to sign on to COVID guidelines.

Dustin Todd, IT Chair

Anna thanks him for responsiveness and flexibility. Not much to update, we are going to start focusing on PRIDE; been in contact with Tara and Kelly. Need to take care of some transitional busywork (domain names, etc.). Request: might be useful to calendar all PTO / special meetings, distribute through Parent Square – instruct parents how to add school calendar to personal calendar. Q: meetings are scheduled, can members be notified in advance? A: predetermined meeting dates at least thru December will be distributed.

Anna asked the teachers in attendance– how is it going?

K. Cantu: very lonely and she miss the kids tremendously, its hard through the screen.

District has given good training but teachers are still learning every day. Hearts are in this and teachers are dedicated to making sure to move forward and stay positive. Looking forward to the car parade. Miss students and hope everyone can come back soon.

H. Volz: so impressed by perseverance from especially youngest students. Teachers and parents are a team. Looking forward to car parade also.

M. Llewellyn: concur with others, distance learning is challenging for everyone. Hope to see everyone soon, not on Zoom. Thank you PTO and parents for continued support.

Anna opened the forum for parent questions:



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Q: 3<sup>rd</sup> grader – homework load has been overwhelming, student and parents are working continuously into the evening and weekends to complete. Is this sustainable? Other parents have voiced this as well. Incredibly tough, and not even sure if student is meeting district standards. Some parents are drowning with homework load. Anna requests that parents continue to voice their concerns to the district. Who can negotiate these minutes? Denise: 180/230/240 minutes requirement comes from CA Department of Education. Minutes were waived in the spring but updated for fall. As a school we can determine how to make up minutes. It is a red flag to hear that students are working into the evenings and weekends, and Denise wants to connect with parents on this. Balanced goal of helping students learn necessary content but also making sure they are emotionally healthy. Parents are encouraged to reach out if they are in that situation. Regarding meeting grade level benchmarks, Denise is looking into getting any revised benchmark information that can be shared. Expectations are that students will not be at the same place after spring remote, then summer, now no one-on-one interaction with teachers. Parents are worried that their children will be behind, but we are all in the same boat.

Q: can you comment on consistency of curriculum across the grade level? How closely are teachers across grade levels are working?

A: Grade levels have the same schedule, teaching same things at same time. Work being assigned is shared across grade level. Parent feedback is important.

Concern that when cohorts form, students will not be at the same level.

Comments from some parents that they wish their students had more to do. They are finishing work within Zoom hours and then have nothing to do. Perhaps there is fluctuation between teachers / grade levels? Denise commented that the expectation is for students to be able to finish within the assigned hours.

Q: Will the route for the car parade be the same as in the spring?

A: yes, same route just different timing.

Comment from Ms. Llewellyn: Teachers are trying to find a balance between too much and too little work, and are constantly adjusting. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between students via Zoom. Teachers are trying to fit everyone needs, but it is nearly impossible. Trying to make the schedule work for everyone.

The goal is for grade levels to work together to make the work plan; Denise and Arielle are continuing to work with grade level teams. Parent comment that it would be helpful to have grade level benchmarks this year.

Anna announced that Laura Capps will be ready to join us early.

STAR testing this week – might be good to share with parents that this is coming up in November. Maybe more routine check-ups with parents (regarding how students are keeping up) as November is 2 months down the road.



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Parent Q: We don't have Curriculum Specialists this year. What is the logic on that when we have small groups, and students struggling? High performing students are missing extra groups – why no Curriculum Specialists? Additional comment: parent has never been to PTO meeting or school board meeting, but it is easy to participate over Zoom. How do we increase engagement with parents? Some parents who might miss these meetings ordinarily can probably participate via Zoom.

A: Denise: PTO funds fully supported Curriculum Specialist salaries, and with the lack of fundraising in the spring and uncertainty going forward, we could not guarantee that we could pay for them. District is covering specials teachers. PTO reserves are going to be needed, so not being funneled to that. Parent comment: Heard from another parent that the district was providing Curriculum Specialists to other schools who had previously funded them through outside sources, such as PTO. Can we look into this?

Laura Capps joined the meeting. Anna relayed questions to Ms. Capps. Questions had been collected from parents, and provided to Ms. Capps in advance of the meeting.

Q: Zoom minutes concerns raised by many parents. What power does the district have to change the zoom minutes / change expectations in order to make distance learning more sustainable? We need more time for successful phased opening. We will be here for a while so how can we make it more sustainable.

A: *That's up to teachers / principal at each school. Doesn't have to be all Zoom, there is some flexibility. Message from superintendent: if families need flexibility talk to teacher / principal.*

Q: Why doesn't SB Unified want to apply for the waiver? Is it financial, not enough funds? Is it the teacher's union? Not wanting to go back?

A: *Ms. Capps knows there is a lot of frustration. The highest priority to get students back in class, and the district is working on doing it safely. Because of sheer logistics of data, and the county not where we should be in terms of numbers, but we are hoping to get to Red tier very soon. Our decisions are driven by science. County still has widespread Covid cases and it is not safe to open physically to 7000 students and 1000 staff at this time. Parents are nearly evenly split, but teachers are 2/1 against applying for waiver. District size – didn't feel confident that we merited that exception when there is still widespread virus danger. District staff explored, and did not recommend to the board that we apply, thinking we would not be granted. Some sports are starting next week; it is a massive undertaking, of planning and preparation. Cohorts of highest need students will be coming back to campus. We are focused on opening because we've achieved safe levels, rather than relying on exception.*

Q: It seems like a big part of the reason why SB Unified isn't applying for the waiver is because of the Teacher's Union not wanting to go back in person. Is it possible for teachers that are uncomfortable teaching in the classroom to zoom with their student's remote? All



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students would be in the classroom and the teacher would be on a screen. A teacher's aid (one not worried about being in person) could assist the kids when the teacher had logged off in the classroom. It seems like an easy, low-cost way to get kids back at school and allow for teachers that are uncomfortable to be safe at home.

*A: Understandable that the focus is on the union, but the union wants what's best for its members; remember unions were originally formed to protect health of workers. Each teacher needs to be asked exactly what they need in order to feel comfortable coming back. Many teachers want to be back in the classroom. Teachers' union is not to be faulted as a foe.*

Q: What is the number one reason why SB Unified is not ready to go back to school full time?

*A: There is not a single reason: combination of financial resources, logistics, and fear of virus (uptick in July/August). Honoring that as educator's primary responsibility is to keep students safe. Other districts who have greater financial resources can do it sooner, and we can learn from them. Anna commented that transportation is also a hurdle - making sure all students who want to go back have viable transportation. We can have no more than 40% capacity on any buses, etc. We can use outdoor spaces for education! District has spent money on tents, etc. in order to prepare. The role of the board has been to ensure equity and moving as fast as possible to get in-person learning back.*

Q: Why can the YMCA, Junior Lifeguards, Pony Baseball, Lacrosse, and other day-care programs go back to having kids full time in-person yet our kids can not go back to school?

*A: The simple answer is size. Stat requires that credentialed teachers need to teach children, we only have so many and so much space. 2/8 or 9 is not viable for teachers / students*

Q: Why can other Counties with high COVID numbers open up schools full time like San Diego County for instance?

*A: In the example of San Diego, their numbers have been better than ours since April...2/100k residents.*

Q: How much of a priority is it for you to get our elementary students, especially the younger ones, back into schools?

*A: It is the # 1 Priority. TK / K would be tiered to come first in person.*

Q: When moving to in-person instruction, someday, will there be a remote option that will remain for medically vulnerable or concerned teachers and families?

*A: Yes, we will just have to work out the teacher /student breakdown.*

Q: How confident are you in the protocols, criteria, and policies laid out by the State physicians, epidemiologists, and public health experts to allow for school reopening? Or do you feel it is the School Board's role to make its own determination as to when community levels are appropriate for reopening?



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*A: We are data / science driven. The school board cannot make decisions based on members' opinions; data and science need to drive decision-making.*

**Q:** What preparations are being made so that SB Unified Elementary schools can expeditiously pivot to provide in-person instruction once we meet the State criteria for school opening?

*A: We are working on contracting with a testing lab; thermometers will be available for every family. Plexiglass barriers for office staff. Hiring sanitation staff and purchasing sanitizers. Food Services – everything pre-packaged. Ideas and connections from the parent community are welcome. We are in All-Hands-On-Deck mode!*

**Q:** What were the final results of the parent survey for elementary waiver application? Was a similar survey conducted of the teachers, and if so, what was that result?

*A: Charts are publicly available. District has webpage for Covid info.*

**Q:** Since the SBUSD Board meetings have been held remotely on Zoom, I have attended every single one, often staying up listening till midnight! My question is, how many people used to attend in-person meetings? How many are now attending Zoom meetings? Will meetings continue to be available remotely even when, in whatever distant future, they can resume in person? It seems like anything to increase engagement should be encouraged, and the meetings could be made even easier for people to log in to and listen (just finding the access details can be a lengthy and frustrating process!). This is especially true for those who may feel marginalised and, like me, would be unlikely to attend in person. On a related note, I wonder how they can be made more succinct?! Or whether they can start earlier in order to avoid such late finishes and people being forced to leave before all important business is discussed. \*I commend you, and the Board, for all your hard work, often in the face of verbal backlash, and wish all the best for the future!\*

*A: Last School Board meeting was a marathon, with 3.5 hours of public comment. Board subsequently had annual governance meeting, and they are outlining a process to streamline the meetings. Every meeting will have 7pm COVID, time-certain for foreseeable future. Also limiting public comment to 30 minutes, by prearranged sign-up.*

**Q:** Regarding parent choice: Full distance learning? Hybrid, Full in-person? Can we match up teachers with students based on who wants to return and who does not?

*A: This is part of the logistics challenge – how many kids want to distance, how many teachers? Matching up teachers / students is not off the table, Denise concurred. Not a choice right now because we ALL have to be distanced, but could be doable down the road.*

**Parent Question:** can we apply for the waiver, and if we get it, then figure out who wants to come back? That's what Peabody is doing. *A: Don't see that as logistically possible for 14000 students.* **Parent Comment:** Del Mar Union asked parents what they wanted for their kids, and what teachers wanted specifically. If SBUSD knew that NOW, we could be planning for something specific and ready to go much faster whether that is applying for waiver or going back because numbers allow. *A: half of SBUSD parents wanted the waiver,*



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*less than half of teachers did. This only works if majority wants it. Survey has shown that LatinX families are more reluctant to return in person. Waiver talk has become a distraction, we just need to get numbers down.*

*We are prioritizing a return to in person. If we can get to the Red tier, cohorts can return to campus, in classrooms and tents...slightly different fore each campus.*

Q: What is negative effect of getting a waiver and not using it?

A: *It takes time and resources to apply, makes it challenging for administration. The process needs to be thoughtful. Staff does not feel comfortable applying for waiver. Required testing is a part of it, and the county is not taking care of that so SBUSD has to contract labs and administer tests in accordance with HIPAA. Heavy workload on the front end, financial burden on the back end. We have a better plan moving forward, to open gradually rather than applying for exception. If you apply for waiver and open, then have an outbreak, you close down again. If we move from Purple tier to Red, then there is an outbreak, we move back to Red. There is more leeway in working with the color tier scheme.*

Q: There is a lot of weight placed on results of survey. Maybe send out new survey specifically to K-6 families and find out - would the results be different after a month of distance learning.

A: *Will make pitch for another survey soon. This is ever-changing and more surveying of community is needed.*

Q: Why are staff at other districts more comfortable coming back than at SBUSD?

A: *Again, it comes down to numbers...a school of 160 students vs.560.*

*Part of the requirement for a waiver application is consulting with all of SBUSD's constituency. We need our teachers in order to open. We are in this together.*

Anna thanked everyone and mentioned our great collaboration with district, which we hope continues on beyond Covid times!

Meeting concludes 8:02pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 6-8pm via Zoom