



Mountain View Whisman School District Board of Trustees - Special Meeting Minutes

1400 Montecito Avenue
January 28, 2021
6:00 PM

Remote
Meeting
Notice

Dial in Phone Number: (669) 900 6833 (San Jose)
Meeting ID: 929 1782 4619
Passcode: 433351
There is no participant ID

Members of the public who call in to the meeting will be placed in a waiting room until the appropriate time to address the Board. During that time in the waiting room, the caller will not be able to hear the meeting. Callers can view and hear the meeting here: youtube.com/mvwsd

Members of the public who wish to address the Board during the Board of Trustees meeting may email comments to publiccomments@mvwsd.org. In order to expedite the meeting, please send your comments by the Wednesday before the meeting. Staff will make all attempts to share and record any submissions received, however, depending on timing, late submissions will be provided to the Board after the conclusion of the meeting.

(Live streaming available at www.mvwsd.org)

As a courtesy to others, please turn off your cell phone upon entering.

Under Approval of Agenda, item order may be changed. All times are approximate.

I. CALL TO ORDER (6:00 p.m.)

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

A. Pledge

Trustees President Devon Conley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Roll Call

Present: Berman, Blakely, Chiang, Conley, Wheeler

Absent: None

C. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Ellen Wheeler and seconded by Laura Berman to approve the

agenda, as presented.

Ayes: Berman, Blakely, Chiang, Conley, Wheeler

II. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

A. Superintendent and Board Governance Team Retreat (3 hours)

The Board of Trustees reviewed Trustee roles and responsibilities and discussed the operations and communication process.

III. BOARD REPORT OUT (25 minutes)

CSBA AEC 2020 WORKSHOPS ATTENDED BY ELLEN WHEELER

TH 12/3/2020:

9:30 – 10:45 AM “Welcoming with Open Arms: Building a Strong Governance Team”

Impression: This was an OK workshop led by past CSBA president Luann Rivera who now works as a CSBA Masters in Governance, etc., presenter. Her teammate was a school district superintendent. This workshop was like a mini-New Board Members training, utilizing traditional CSBA vocabulary and recommendations. It was very scripted. The feel of this workshop was very different since it was all on Zoom.

***2:45 – 4 PM “Innovation and the Arts: The Vital Role of Visual and Performing Arts Post Covid”

Impression: I was BLOWN AWAY by this workshop presented by San Gabriel Unified School District. I feel like I’ve attended zillions of arts-related meetings and workshops, so almost didn’t attend this one. I mainly signed up to attend this one just to honor my past work and my passion for the arts. Now I’m spotlighting this work by SGUSD in hopes that we can emulate them. They created a VAPA Program Administrator and have another person helping her, not to mention their enthusiastic superintendent and board of trustees. Their district works on a VAPA strategic plan, resulting in passing a resolution by their board supporting VAPA. (VAPA is a commonly used acronym in school arts circles, and it stands for Visual and Performing Arts.) To learn more, go to sgusdvapa.org or sgusd.k12.ca.us. I also have the names and contact information of the two primary leads on this work of SGUSD. During Covid and virtual schooling SGUSD VAPA teachers and staff put their heads together to craft VAPA lessons in music, dance, and art that were all online. I was particularly taken with the delivery to students’ homes of modeling clay and the step-by-step video that their class utilized which included everything from how to take care of your clay so it doesn’t dry out, to cutting a slice of clay using a plastic knife, and using that slice of clay to make a clay masterpiece. (And make sure to put the rest of your clay back in its plastic bag!) I was very involved in choral and drama classes as a child and continued as an adult, so I was thrilled to see their creative arts teachers keeping up lessons with their students, and also to see the enthusiasm of the students. Art did not die in San Gabriel School District due to Covid (or even Proposition 13).

Dilemma: We are often asked – what should we give up in order to take on

something that an enthusiastic board member brings to our district? Who could/should do that work? When board members volunteer to lead a project we are told that that is staff's role. But, we also must be sensitive to the very full plates of our administrators. What to do? At the very least, I propose that our board (and staff?) craft a resolution similar to the one in SGUSD supporting VAPA (if other school board members are interested). (See the underlined portion of the above paragraph.) I also think such an action would show, in a tangible way, how much we value and support our own VAPA teachers and how they are innovating in teaching the arts during Covid in MVWSD.

*** refers to the workshop I'll spotlight during our board agenda item asking for our report-outs on AEC.

FRI. 12/4/2020

9:30 – 10:45 AM: "Pure Politics"

This is always my favorite workshop of the AECs. Often it includes veteran education reporter Dan Walters and others in addition to leads from Capitol Advisors Group. This year the presenters were mainly from CAG and included their stars Jack O'Connell (former State Superintendent of Schools) and Barrett Snider. They did an excellent job of describing the legislative landscape of 2020 and looked into 2021. I always appreciate their "insider" perspective on what just happened and what to expect going forward.

11:30 – 12:45: "Supporting Mental Health for Students and Educators"

Since I am extremely interested in this topic, I chose one of the many mental health workshops being offered at AEC this year. This one featured a collection of excellent experts and I'm glad I attended. I didn't learn anything particularly new, but believe it's important to stay current and involved here. As I was listening, I kept thinking how glad I am that in MVWSD we have CHAC, our School and Community Engagement Facilitators (SCEF's), our new mental health director, in addition to a district norm of reaching out to students who might be having a hard time.

CSBA AEC 2020 WORKSHOPS ATTENDED BY LAURA BERMAN

Supere/Board Relationships: The Good, the Great, and the Oh-No

Luan Bruman Rivera, Governance Consultant CSBA, Ramona USD, teaches board presidents workshop

Steven Ladd- Governance Consultant CSBA, Former Supe Elk Grove USD

[Handout](#)

Synopsis: Research shows dramatic student growth coincides with trust between a board and the superintendent. A governing board must work to build and nurture trust, communicate effectively, develop policies that will guide effective practices and problem solving, and know/act within their roles. Effective boards understand the value of an annual superintendent evaluation. Evaluation is an opportunity for growth, encourages leaders to be the best they can be; should align to the goals of the district (LCAP); is a year-long

process agreed upon from the start. The

Governance team sets the tone for the whole district, determines what that culture is going to be, and how the district and community view the district. If the governance team wants the community to have confidence and pride in the district, the team must establish strong norms for behavior and work collaboratively.

Reading: The Governance Core. Vision for a governance team: Supe and Board working together as a cohesive, unified team with a common vision driven by a shared moral imperative.

Relationships

Good beginning for a good relationship: S and B getting to know each other and having patience. If not getting along with a board member, have coffee together and work it out. Great beginning: Devoting time to develop real tips and discussing distinct goals and resources to achieve them.

OhNo: Someone says to new members and says: "this is the way we've always done it, and it works, so don't screw it up."

How to build Relationships

Good: 1:1 communication B and S

Great: Speak in depth, share who you are, get to know and understand each other better

Oh No: Not investing the time in building relationship because of disagreements during elections or in the past

Team Building

Good: Agreeing to do it

Great: Deep Learning- process of working together, exploring values and ideas to better understand where each is coming from to build towards unified delivery

OhNo: "I'm in charge" attitude

Communications

Great: Put those agreements about communication into governance handbook- so if we stray there's a change to come back together

Oh No: Saying to supe "You tell other B members more than you tell me"

Trust

Good: Must have trust. Intellectual understanding of what trust is.

Great: Hold each other and ourselves to behaviors that build trust. You learn to trust people drop by drop. All it takes is one small behavior to break trust.

Think about your own actions and what you can do to build trust. Trust must be earned and worked on. Trust must be demonstrated every single time.

OhNo: "it's just politics"

Research on trust: Dramatic growth in Ss achievement coinciding in trust between boards and superintendent.

Building Trust

Accepting the idea that, among people of good intent, there will be an uncomfortable conversation.

Great: Difficult conversations happen, important to have before they create bigger

problems, be brave enough to speak, be open and listen, assume all have the best intent. Avoid drama, seek solutions.

OhNo: Avoiding difficult conversation (issue won't go away, issue will fester until addressed)

Intra-Board Politics

Good: People come to the table with different perspectives, walks of life, operating from different perspectives

Great: Address the politics by talking to the whole team, what happens if..., decide how to address them and translate the ideas into the governance handbook

OhNo: Conflict between two members and the expectation is that the supe needs to fix it.

Note: A board of five members means many individual relationships to take care of and nurture; important to talk through problems. If any two people are not getting along, it affects the dynamics of the whole team. Go for coffee and work it out. Think about your individual relationships, take time to get to know members.

Yours, Mine, and Ours

Good: Understand roles

Great: Behave within those roles, operate as a team within those roles Oh No: Feeling of "I'm doing it my way."

Personnel

Good: Realize what we have one employee: The Superintendent

Great: Board realizes in charge of one employee and the staff reports to him/her

Note: Exercise with boards: Study the bylaws and policies that define board roles BB9000 The role of the board

BB 9200 The limits on board member authority- stresses board is the unit of authority over the districts, not individuals.

Activity: Share these two bylaws

BP2000 and BP2110 Policies- pairs, ask one person to read the two bylaws above and highlight the important passages, and the other reads the policies.

Collective Bargaining

Good: Be aware of the board's functions and responsibilities

Great: Understand the rationale of the governance team behind desired goals; take the time to have those conversations; stay within the roles we each have and maintain confidentiality.

Team needs to stay together, confidential conversations that take place in closed sessions.

Determine the parameters, stick with the parameters, pressure to give in, but weaken the whole team and risk not achieving goals. Stick together and have a united team through the process. Crucial.

Oh, No: I told the collective bargaining head about what we're thinking about, told them I didn't agree. (Erodes trust, confidentiality. Collective bargaining is building capacity, want what's best for the district)

Note: Confusion on the part of new board members- tug/pull between transparency and confidentiality- don't understand there's a lot to be transparent about and much to keep confidential.

Supe Evaluations

Good: Publicly stating the value of doing an annual evaluation, board is committed to evaluating the supe on an annual basis, have an agenda item, talk about it.

Great: Have a clear process for a fair, constructive, collaborative evaluation Oh No: Miss the timeline for the evaluation

Notes: CSBA has key points for superintendent evaluation. ([see handout](#)) It's a crucial process, main responsibilities are that the work we're trying to do is done, goal is to focus and align all the work of the district. Clear process for a fair, collaborative evaluation, one that is based on the goals of the district (LCAP). Important for the whole team to sit together in a collaborative

way, develop goals and success indicators, and do that from the very beginning. See evaluation as building capacity and not a "gotcha"- good intent, be best they can be. This is a year long process.

New board members or new learning and want to change things mid-year? Recommendation is to share the ideas but finish the year as is since it's been agreed on from the start. Finish that process the way it was set up in the beginning. Goals can be adjusted mid-term, but continue with the process for the school year. New board members are jumping on a moving carousel, it doesn't stop. Must jump in.

A great evaluation aligns to the work of the district. The superintendent meets with his/her cabinet members, explains the vision/goals, incorporates the same elements into cabinet evaluations; starts to align the work of the district. All work is focused of achieving the best outcomes for the whole district. All rolling in the same direction.

Governance

"Governance is not just passing policies; it is what boards and superintendent do together and how they do it."

Good: Practicing some of the time

Great: Board and superintendent function as a governance team, adhere to governance handbook.

Note: The Governance team sets the tone for the whole district. Up to us what that culture is

going to be and how the district and community view the district. If you want them to have confidence and pride in the district, then we need to establish good norms for behavior and work together collaboratively as a governance team.

Oh no: "Cause I said so" "you can't make me"- Break down of trust and communication

Supe Leaves

Great way to part: Wish them well, describe attributes that created a strong trusting, productive team. Create a positive foundation for the new superintendent. Creating an environment where people want to come and work. Show, display and model behaviors that build a strong and productive team.

OhNo: No negative talk- it can impact recruiting, culture of the district.

IV. FUTURE TOPICS (5 minutes)

- policy district

V. ADJOURNMENT (10:00 p.m.)

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 pm.

NOTICES FOR AUDIENCE MEMBERS

1. **RECORDING OF MEETINGS:**

The open session will be video recorded and live streamed on the District's website (www.mwbsd.org).

2. **CELL PHONES:**

As a courtesy to others, please turn off your cell phone upon entering.

3. **FRAGRANCE SENSITIVITY:**

Persons attending Board meetings are requested to refrain from using perfumes, colognes or any other products that might produce a scent or chemical emission.

4. **SPECIAL ASSISTANCE FOR ENGLISH TRANSLATION/INTERPRETATION:**

The Mountain View Whisman School District is dedicated to providing access and communication for all those who desire to attend Board meetings. Anyone planning to attend a Board meeting who requires special assistance or English translation or interpretation is asked to call the Superintendent's Office at (650) 526-3552 at least 48 hours in advance of the time and date of the meeting.

El Distrito Escolar de Mountain View Whisman esta dedicado a proveer acceso y comunicacion a todas las personas que deseen asistir a las reuniones de la Junta. Se pide que aquellas personas que planean asistir a esta reunion y requieren de asistencia especial llamen a la Oficina del Superintendente al (650) 526-3552 con por lo menos 48 horas de anticipacion del horario y fecha de esta reunion, para asi poder coordinar los arreglos especiales.

5. **DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:**

Documents provided to a majority of the Governing Board regarding an open session item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection in the District Office, located at 1400 Montecito Avenue during normal business hours.

Los documentos que se les proveen a la mayoria de los miembros de la Mesa Directiva sobre los temas en la sesion abierta de este orden del dia estaran disponibles para la inspeccion publica en la Oficina del Distrito, localizada en el 1400 Montecito Avenue durante las horas de oficinas regulares.