

Summit Public Schools California Board Meeting September 14, 2020 Open Session Transcript

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Diane: Let's see, 3:02 pm. And let's do the roll. Valeria, do you want to do that? Or you would like me to? Go for it.

Valeria: Can everyone hear me?

Diane: Yes.

Male: Yes we can.

Valeria: Great. Bob Oster?

Bob: Here.

Valeria: Steven Humphreys?

Steve: Here.

Valeria: Diego Arambula?

Diego: Here.

Valeria: Blake Warner?

Blake: Here.

Valeria: And from the Summit staff side, Diane Tavenner?

Diane: Here.

Valeria: Nnanna Ogbu?

Nnanna: Here.

Valeria: Kate Gottfredson?

Kate: Here.

Valeria: That would be it.

Diane: Thanks Valeria. Do I have a motion to approve the agenda?

Male: So moved.

Bob: Second.

Diane: I think that was Bob seconding, yes?

Bob: Yes.

Diane: All right, any discussion? That's okay. Let's do a roll call on that?

Diane: Bob?

Bob: Aye.

Diane: Steve?

Steve: Aye.

Diane: Blake?

Blake: Aye.

Diane: And Diego?

Diego: Aye.

Diane: Great. That carries unanimously. Alright. So our first item up then is the public comment on closed session items. Valeria, do we have any requests to speak from the public?

Valeria: At the moment, we don't have any public comment speaker forms for this section.

Diane: Great. Why don't we take a moment just to make sure everyone from the public knows how they can request to speak if they choose to. I think it's detailed in the agenda. But do you want to just give quick instructions?

Kate: I can go ahead. This is Kate. if you'd like to make a public comment, there's a form that's linked in the chat. It's also on the agenda, but I linked it here in the chat that you can complete. That's our equivalent of a speaker part for this meeting, so go ahead and complete that. I see that there is someone in the chat who would like to make a comment. But I don't have that person's name. So you'll need to complete that card, please.

Diane: Great. We'll just wait one moment for that to come through. As a reminder, right now, we do have two public comment sections. The first is on closed session items, and then the second public comment session will be item number seven. And it's on the remainder of the agenda.

Valeria: We do have one public speaker form that was just submitted. Ona Keller would like to speak on item number four, closed session items.

Diane: Great. Do you want to come off camera and/or voice and we are happy to hear you speak.

Ona: I'm making the statement on behalf of the union representatives from Unites Summit who can't be here today due to the SBS Board's practice of scheduling its meetings during the work day.

The draft learning and continuity attendance plan fails to include the input that our collective bargaining unit has been making for weeks. The current virtual school

model is not sustainable and will not best support students because it will lead to teacher burnout. Some home office have reduced site autonomy and forced adherence to a rigid standardized scheduled for faculty meetings and for students who receive instruction from learning specialists.

During ritual school last spring, our school sites were able to hold Wednesday faculty meetings at the time that worked best for each school site, with approval from site leadership. Site meetings often occurred earlier in the day and used outcome based agendas. This led teachers to efficiently accomplish was most important -- planning quality classes for students and taking care of our own wellness.

This year Summit currently enforces a rigid adherence to one schedule. This change does not add value to the student experience. The only tangible outcome is that teachers and site staff have less flexibility to care for themselves and their families. Co-workers who are parents face especially tough challenges, and this inflexible afternoon meeting schedule unnecessarily adds to those stressors.

One of the focus areas in the draft learning and continuity attendance plan is sustainability. Teachers need a sustainable virtual school model. This model must include sufficient time to prepare for class and contact students and families during our workday, protective time to take care of our basic health and needs of our families, stability in our working conditions and expectations, and flexibility in site autonomy to best meet the needs of our students and individual school communities. There will only be a positive impact on the quality of our teaching on student experience in our classrooms.

Please consider these important comments from the people who are doing the day to day work of engaging with our students during this incredibly difficult and unprecedented time. Thank you.

Diane: Thank you. Valeria do we have any other speakers?

Valeria: We don't have any other speakers at the moment.

Diane: Okay, great. Well, I think that what we will do then is move to close this comment session. Again, we'll have another one. And we'll move to item number four, which is closed session. And so for those who are joining the meeting, you're welcome to stay on. For the board, we'll exit into a different meeting for a closed session and then return back to this meeting when we come back for open session. We're estimating that we'll return a few minutes after 3:30. That is an estimate and we will do our best to meet it.

Bob: Diane, I think I may have misplaced the URL for the closed session. So could somebody send it to me, please?

Diane: Sure. We can do that right now. Thanks, Bob. All right. We will sign out and return after closed session.

[pause][07:09 to 39:32]

Diane: Alright. The board is returning from closed session. That was item number four on our agenda. And we are back in open session and I would like to report that no action was taken during closed session. That's item number six.

So let's move to number seven, which is public comment on any non closed

session agenda items. Do we have any requests to speak on this item?

Valeria: At the moment we don't have any speaker forms for people that would like to speak during this time.

Diane: Okay. Thank you Valeria.. Will you please let us know if a speaker card does come in?

Valeria: Yes.

Diane: Thank you so much. All right, let's move to item number eight then. This is a presentation and discussion of some of public schools bargaining proposal.

Let me give you a little bit of background here. As you all know in March, per your instruction the Summit bargaining committee sunshined our initial proposal for contract bargaining, and, that initial proposal, we would like to add a new additional provision to it that was not included in the initial proposal.

Specifically, what we would like to add is a provision around no strikes, no lockouts. A little bit of context here for why we are adding this at this point as the bargaining committee. We entered contract negotiations in good faith and very optimistic and very hopeful. We have a very strong track record of collaboration in the organization and feel very good about our ability to collaborate and come to resolution around things that are in the best interest of our students and our mission.

It never occurred to us that we would need a provision about no strikes and no lockouts. It never occurred to us that we would ever get close to a place like that, or even have to consider such a thing. And that is why we didn't include it in our first sunshining.

We have felt compelled recently to add it, because there's been a pattern and a series of some behaviors that are worrisome to us. And we are having a hard time interpreting from the Unite Summit Bargaining Unit, and that is specifically their drive towards declaring an impasse in bargaining over virtual school, which didn't actually make sense to us. And if you track the process of impasse, really the place that it ends is either in continuing to do what we're doing, or the union calling a strike. And was a little bit concerning to us and signaled that maybe we weren't on the same page around this.

So we felt it important to add this to our negotiations, and specifically as the purpose here says very clearly, we think that we share a commitment to our students and our families and our communities, we know that students are able to develop and learn best when they are in secure relationships and have a consistent learning environment. And it's critically important now more than ever that students and families can rest assured that their lives and their education will not be further disrupted.

So they depend on us to be there for them, and we believe very strongly that anything we need to work out amongst ourselves as adults we can and should work out and we should not impact our students or our families with an action like this.

And so that's why the bargaining committee is sunshining and introducing this additional proposal. Any questions from the board? This is not an action item. Okay. Thank you.

We'll move to Item number nine then. This is a recommendation for action, and specifically, the recommendation is coming from our CFO, Joyce and me.

We are recommending that the action that the board took in the spring in approving the budget for this year of pausing the salary increases for all employees, that you un-pause that freeze at this point.

And we are recommending that for a few reasons. First, the reason that we recommended this pause in the spring was there was a significant amount of information that we did not have available to us and to you as a board when you had to adopt the budgets. At that point in time, based on the legislation that had been improved and passed, we believed that we would be experiencing approximately 11% cut in our funding from the state for our students, and there were significant unknowns around federal aid and a variety of other sources of revenue.

Since then, the state has acted around specific legislation, and so we feel confident at this point that we will not be experiencing those cuts that we were anticipating, and federal funding has actually materialized and come in and been made clear about how it can be used. And so, as a result, and as we had hoped in the spring and talked about in the spring, we feel confident that we can actually un-pause at this point responsibly and be fiscally responsible.

We know that this is meaningful, a meaningful action to all of our employees. And so we want to take this action as quickly as possible. And that's why we're bringing it to you today, versus in the formal budget revise in October. Obviously, this decision will be reflected in that formal budget revise, assuming that you approve it today.

But we want to act at this point because what it will allow is in the September paycheck for every employee to realize their expected school year '21 compensation. And we will also be able to retroactively compensate them for the last one to two months, depending on their circumstances of the expected compensation.

And we'd like to correct that as soon as possible, and doing so today would allow us to do so in the September paycheck. So we've prepared a resolution.

And at this point, I would love to entertain if there is a motion to approve it and then have a discussion on it.

Bob: So moved.

Blake: Second.

Diane: Thanks, Bob for the motion. Thanks, Blake for the second. Any discussion on this item?

Steve: No, I just want to comment, I think it was the right thing to do at the time to be careful. But I'm glad, and especially glad it's retroactive to the time it would have gone into effect. The teachers are working so hard in so many.... I mean, you can't even say words to reflect what they're managing, what they're delivering to the students. So I think this is terrific to be able to do, so thank you for recommending it.

Diane: Thanks. Any other discussion? Okay, let's take a roll call vote. Blake?

Blake: Aye.

Diane: Diego?

Diego: Aye.

Steve: Aye.

Diane: Bob?

Bob: Aye.

Diane: Great the motion carries unanimously. That takes us to Item number 10 which is a public hearing.

This is a public hearing on the 2021 Learning Continuity and Attendance Plans. This public hearing will be followed by a decision on these plans in a couple of weeks, and so this is the opportunity for you to hear from the public, if the public has comments on these plans on and also to give the staff any feedback that you might have as we continue to draft and finalize these plans. And certainly for us to answer any questions that you might have about the plans.

Some quick context on this, given the disruption to education and learning in the state of California, this state has -- Kate and Nnanna correct me if this language is wrong -- but suspended the normal LCAP process, which is a little bit confusing because it's very similar letters, but it's a different process. That is how state funding is actually facilitated in California now, and temporarily replaced that process with the learning continuity plans, which have some similarities, but also some fundamental differences that recognize we're in a very different time and dealing with very different issues and whatnot. So these plans actually seek to enable our schools to articulate what the current reality is and what that will look like for the year.

That said they do serve a similar purpose, they are the plans that we'll be held accountable to, and that will trigger our state funding and revenue, and some of the federal as well, as I understand it. Kate and Nnanna, please correct me if I'm improperly summarizing.

Kate: No, that's a great summary. I would add that, we will return with the traditional LCAP in December. The legislation that replaced this kind of punted that down the road. So this is taking the place of what we historically would have done in June and you would have come to approve those plans.

I'd also add that, in addition to this period of time for public comment, these plans have been developed over time with a lot of consultation. And as you see in the plans, the feedback we've received through surveys and direct feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders. They'll remain posted on the website and allow for the submission of written public comment as well, until we come back the 29th for the final approval. But also happy to answer any questions.

Diane: Great.

Male: I noticed throughout these forms, the use of the term distance learning and not always virtual school, is distance learning taken on, is that a legal term now or specific language that we're supposed to use in these?

Diane: That's a good question.

Kate: I think where you'll see that distinction is... We still choose to call what we're doing, virtual school. The state often characterizes this as distance learning, and through some of the legislative language, they've used distance learning. We, as you know, intentionally have called what we're doing virtual school to bridge that distance. So there's probably some back and forth there where it's our presentation of what we're doing, discussing virtual school, but tying it to that legislative native language.

Male: Thank you.

Diane: Any other questions or discussion on the plans? Okay, hearing none, I believe that is the final item on our agenda. Anything else that we should be doing team? With that then I...

Male: Sorry Diane, I think Valeria mentioned that a public comment did come in.

Diane: Oh, okay. Well, I think if the board is open to accepting a public comment in a different time frame on the agenda, I think that would be fine.

Male: Sounds good.

Diane: Okay, Great. Valeria, do you want to facilitate the comment?

Valeria: Yeah, absolutely. We received a speaker form from Ona Keller. She would like to speak on agenda item number 10 which is the Learning Continuity and Attendance plan.

Diane: Great.

Ona: Hi. This comment is actually on behalf of Ernesto Umana, who submitted this but wasn't sure if the board actually received it in their emails. In regards to item 10 the 2021 Learning Continuity and Attendance Plans, it should not be stated that stakeholder engagement was promoted. Specifically, it is wrong to say that members of the public are able to participate in all Summit public school meetings and hearings.

I'm a member of the public, a fourth year teacher at Summit, Tam, who wishes he could participate at this meeting. But the decision was made to have this meeting in direct conflict with all schools leadership team meetings, thus making it impossible for me or any other teachers to participate. In the future, I ask the board to meet at a time when teachers -- an important part of the Summit public schools community -- can actually participate. Thank you.

Diane: Thank you. All right. Anything else? Okay with that do I have a motion to adjourn at 3:56 pm?

Bob: So move.

Diane: Thank you, Bob.

Diego: Second.

Diane: Thank you. Diego. Blake?

Blake: Aye.

Diane: Diego?

Diego: Aye.

Diane: Steve?

Steve: Aye.

Diane: And Bob?

Bob: Aye.

Diane: Alright. And with that, we are concluded. Thank you so much.