

FOLSOM CORDOVA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
125 East Bidwell Street
Folsom, California 95630

January 7, 2010

MINUTES

Board of Education

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

Folsom High School

Library

1655 Iron Point Road, Folsom CA 95630

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Teresa A. Stanley, President

Richard Shaw, Vice President

JoAnne Reinking, Clerk

Ed Short, Member

Roger Benton, Member

January 7, 2010

Board members present: Teresa Stanley, Richard Shaw, JoAnne Reinking, Roger Benton, and Ed Short

5:00 p.m. – Open Session

CALL TO ORDER (Held in Library)

President Stanley announced items to be discussed in closed session.

5:05 p.m. – Closed Session

(Held in Library)

6:00 p.m. – Open Meeting

(Held in Library)

Meeting convened at 6:01 p.m. President Stanley called the meeting to order. Teacher Michael Itkoff led the flag salute.

REPORTING OUT CLOSED SESSION ACTIONS

President Stanley reported that no action was taken during Closed Session.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

SHORT/BENTON MOVED TO ADOPT the agenda.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENT (0910-144)

President Stanley announced that this was a Special Meeting of the Board. The first part of the agenda allows for public comment.

No one came forward.

DISCUSSION/ACTION

0910-145 – Consideration of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Race to the Top Funds

Superintendent Godwin explained what is known so far about the Race to the Top (RTTT), including required elements and voluntary elements. He clarified that any money received from RTTT would not help the District with the present budget crisis, nor would it make up for California's underfunding of education.

Mr. Godwin also voiced some concerns he has:

- What constitutes "highly effective" teachers/principals?

- The turnaround strategies, including firing of the principal and dumping 50% of the staff.
- LEAs must implement all elements of the state plan even though no one has seen the state plan.
- What can the District expect to receive?
- How binding is the MOU?

He found some answers in Frequently Asked Questions on the CDE's website and in a teleconference in which he participated today.

- Regarding funding:
 - The best "guess" is that the District would receive funding equal to what we currently receive as Title I allocation, which could amount to \$2 million over four years.
- Regarding the MOU:
 - The process is started by submitting the signed MOU by January 8, 2010.
 - By April, funding will be known.
 - If we feel funding is inadequate, we can withdraw without penalty.
 - Once we know the amount of funding, we have 90 days to develop our plan.
 - If we decide at that point it will be too costly or, for whatever reason, we do not want to go forward, we can withdraw without penalty.
 - If we proceed with the plan, begin to implement it and find a benchmark we can't get past or find the funding isn't enough, we can withdraw without penalty.

He had a productive meeting today with FCEA leadership and said it is clear that the MOU would not supersede the collective bargaining agreement, but agrees that there are problematic areas such as tying teacher evaluations to student performance on assessments, and differentiated compensation.

The superintendent's recommendation was that the Board submit the MOU, agreeing with the required and voluntary elements, to find out what the funding would be and continue the dialogue. It does not mean he agrees with all aspects of the plan, but it is important to keep the door open to qualify for the funding. He does understand the concerns of FCEA, but hopes they will be willing to sign the MOU. In April, a decision could be made together to see if it makes sense to proceed with developing a plan.

Ms. Stanley

- Questioned whether the plan would have to be implemented in all schools, and, if, with regard to "highly effective" teachers, it resembles No Child Left Behind and includes all students.
- Is concerned that the MOU clearly does not have exit strategies. She is surprised to hear of the opt out scenarios the superintendent mentioned.
- Asked if it would be a reason for withdrawal if FCEA does not agree.
- Asked if it would be a reason for withdrawal if, at any time, the grant is less than the implementation costs.

Mr. Godwin responded to Ms. Stanley's questions.

Public Comment

Mark Schultz, President FCEA

- When the FCEA executive council looked at the MOU as written, they had the same concerns as Ms. Stanley. Doesn't want to be locked into something that creates a whole new structure for the District within 90 days. Feels the MOU does affect the bargaining agreements.
- Doesn't want to sign without consulting his executive council.
- Doesn't want to be locked into doing something that modifies what we do in our district for what could be a relatively small amount of money.

Bob Winford, District teacher

- Concerned about teacher evaluations contained in the MOU. It would be easy to be a “highly effective” teacher in some of our schools and not as easy in others because of the obstacles some students have to overcome.
- The year and a half growth model called for in the MOU is called “teaching to the test.” Sees major gaps and problems in how this program would be administered at site levels.

Michael Itkoff, District teacher

- “Bad things happen when policy is driven by money.” Is glad to hear clarification of the exit strategies. Signing would not be prudent unless there is overwhelming evidence to show that the state will allow us to exit.

Tyler Johnstone, District teacher

- A lot has changed in the last week, but there are still many unknowns. Would hate to see us say “no” and find out it is a good thing. Should move forward cautiously and see what lies ahead.

Gina Bamberger, District teacher

- Asked if it was written somewhere other than the FAQs that districts could withdraw after the 90-day period.

Mr. Godwin again explained the withdrawal strategies noted in the FAQs and communicated to superintendents in a phone conversation with CDE officials.

Board Comment

Mr. Shaw

- Isn't sure we would even qualify for funding since we don't have Title I high schools.
- Would like to have buy-in from our teachers' organization.
- Concerned that we may spend more money implementing the program than what is received.
- Came here tonight ready to vote “no,” but Mr. Godwin did his work today, and he believes what Mr. Godwin said about the exit strategies is true.
- He will reluctantly vote “yes” to buy more time.

Mr. Godwin clarified that you don't have to have Title I schools to qualify. He explained what he was told this morning's teleconference:

- Of the money that comes from the federal government, 50% will go to the LEAs, and 50% will stay with the state. The 50% to the LEAs will be distributed based on a formula based on Title I students. Districts that don't have Title I schools will be funded out of the 50% that stays with the state.

Ms. Reinking

- It is troubling to her that the rules and information keep changing. She also came here tonight thinking she would vote “no,” but if there is a way out without causing a tremendous amount of work, she is curious to see what we might receive.

Mr. Short

- From what he heard from Mr. Godwin tonight, it looks like, with the exit possibilities, there is low risk. In today's economy, he would not want to pass up an opportunity for funding.

SHORT/BENTON MOVED TO DIRECT the Board President to sign the MOU with the State of California committing to four strands of improvement and six “strongly encouraged” voluntary initiatives.

Mr. Benton

- It would be difficult to say “no thank you” to \$2 million. He believes with everything he’s heard tonight, we should do this.

Ms. Stanley

- She feels that for FCUSD this is less than a Race to the Top and more like playing king of the hill.
- We might not be happy when the funding is known and the plan is prepared. She’s not sure we can afford this in a number of ways, not only financially, but how it will affect our staff and students. We can have further discussion when the grant is known.
- In this process, we need to assure staff that we won’t go “willy-nilly” into implementing something just because we might get a few dollars.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Record of **special meeting** schedule January 7, 2010:

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|----------------------------|-----------|
| Open Session | 5:00 p.m. |
| Recessed to Closed Session | 5:05 p.m. |
| Reconvened to Open Session | 6:01 p.m. |
| Meeting adjourned at | 7:02 p.m. |

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Godwin, Executive Secretary to the Board

JoAnne Reinking, Clerk of the Board