

REDWOOD CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
Redwood City, California

UNAPPROVED MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

March 6, 2024
REGULAR BOARD MEETING

1. Call to Order

President Lawson called the Regular Session to order at 7:02 p.m.

1.1 Roll Call

Present at the Regular Board meeting: President Janet Lawson, Vice President Mike Wells; Trustees Alisa MacAvoy, David Weekly, and Cecilia Márquez; and Superintendent Baker

Others present during the Regular Board meeting: CBO Rick Edson, Deputy Superintendent Wendy Kelly, Assistant Superintendent Anna Herrera, Gonzalo Cordova, Itzel Gloria, and many others.

2. Welcome

President Lawson welcomed those present. President Lawson informed the public that Trustee MacAvoy is participating remotely using the teleconference procedures enacted by AB 2449.

3. Changes to the Agenda

President Lawson requested to move Action Item 7.1, Approval of Agreement between the Redwood City School District and TeamCivX and Godbe Research to conduct a Parcel Tax Measure Feasibility Study, after Action Item 7.5.

4. Approval of the Agenda

The School Board approved the agenda as amended (Weekly, Márquez; 5-0).

Trustee Márquez (Ayes)
Trustee Weekly (Ayes)
Trustee MacAvoy (Ayes)
Vice President Wells (Ayes)
President Lawson (Ayes)

5. Oral Communication

President Lawson informed the public that Public Comment will be taken at the time the corresponding agenda item is being discussed.

6. Consent Items

The School Board approved the Consent Items (Wells, Weekly; 5-0), taking the following action:

- 6.1 Recommendation re: Approval of Consent Items
- 6.2 Recommendation re: Approval of the 2023-2024 Certificated Seniority Report
- 6.3 Recommendation re: Approval of the 2023-2024 Classified Seniority Reports
- 6.4 Recommendation re: Ratification of Warrant Registers, February 1, 2024 - February 29, 2024

Trustee Márquez (Ayes)
Trustee Weekly (Ayes)
Trustee MacAvoy (Ayes)
Vice President Wells (Ayes)
President Lawson (Ayes)

7. Action Items

- 7.2 Recommendation re: Adoption of Resolution No. 7, Reduction or Elimination of Certificated Services for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Superintendent Baker presented the School Board with an overview of how the state and federal pandemic recovery grants were utilized to fund the schools. Additionally, he provided information on Prop 28 funding and offered a briefing on the adjustments planned for the 2024-25 School Year. Deputy Superintendent Wendy Kelly provided an overview of the employee transitions.

Public Comments:

Esther Chyan expressed her concern regarding the reduction of positions, particularly in light of the reading levels that students are currently demonstrating. She urged the Board of Trustees to explore creative solutions to support both the schools and the students effectively.

Tom Gierke, a parent of the Redwood City School District, expressed his concern about the funding cuts being made to the music program. He reflected on the positive impact music education had on him. He noted that the proposed cuts demonstrated poor planning of the use of Prop 28 funds.

Hana Ma, a parent of an Orion student, suggested that it would be beneficial for the community to be informed about the alternative options that had been explored. She went on to inquire whether more affordable vendors had been considered. Hana urged the school leaders to consider creative solutions in addressing the matter.

Jill de Bartok submitted a speaker's card but was not in attendance to address the school board.

Lauren Abrahams, the mental health counselor at Taft Community School, addressed the school board to emphasize that while budget cuts were distributed evenly across schools, each school faces distinct needs. She provided the board with an overview of the unique challenges faced by Taft students and their families.

Laura Lind submitted a speaker's card but was not in attendance to address the school board.

Meghan O'Reilly-Green, the parent of two students at Orion Alternative School, conveyed her appreciation for the School Board. Mrs. O'Reilly-Green empathized with the School Board for the tough decision regarding budget cuts. She highlighted the difference in parcel taxes between RCSD's neighboring districts and expressed her support for the parcel tax.

Mary Ann Nakhla, a Mental Health Liaison, underscored the significance of the mental health liaison roles and urged the school board to reconsider the decision to cut these positions.

Lisbeth Estrada expressed gratitude to Dr. Baker for prioritizing equity and addressing the needs of Hoover students. She commended his impartiality towards the Hoover community to ensure fairness, emphasizing the priority given to schools that require the most assistance. Lisbeth thanked Dr. Baker for his leadership, noting the positive impact he has had on the Hoover School community.

Saoirse Rafferty, a student at Orion, conveyed her affection for her school and appreciation for her teachers. She expressed gratitude to Dr. Baker and the school board for their dedicated efforts in supporting both the school and the district.

Sue Jorgensen, the Taft Librarian, spoke before the school board to convey her dissatisfaction with the inadequate communication. She discovered, through the agenda, that three of her librarian colleagues were to be laid off, receiving an official notice only 36 hours prior. Expressing her lack of trust in the school district, she also voiced opposition to the parcel tax.

Salvador Gomez Nava submitted a speaker's card but was not in attendance to address the school board.

Ann Berljafa conveyed her understanding of the challenging nature of the budget cuts situation. She advocated for a change in the collective bargaining unit to establish a 25-to-1 student-to-teacher class size ratio. Ms. Berljafa highlighted the pitfalls of having larger class sizes. Expressing concern over the large class sizes, she emphasized the importance of prioritizing what is best for the students.

Shari Tsuchiyama, a first-grade teacher at Roosevelt Elementary, advocated for the inclusion of a clause in the contract that guarantees a maximum of 25 students per teacher for TK-2nd grade. She emphasized the positive outcomes and advantages associated with smaller class sizes.

Jessica McLain, an Education Specialist, voiced her concern regarding the increasing class size for Moderate to Severe classrooms. Ms. McLain emphasized the challenges of having larger caseloads and underscored safety concerns for the students.

Alison Sudol, a teacher at Roosevelt Elementary, expressed her concern about the growing class sizes. She observed that with the rise in class size, there has been a corresponding increase in dysregulation and unsafe behaviors among students. Ms. Sudol suggested the addition of an extensive support needs classroom and a specialized learning center to ensure the safety and well-being of the students.

Erinn Washburn, a Music Teacher within the Redwood City School District, addressed the School Board to highlight the advantages of maintaining a well-funded and proper music education program for the students.

Dianne Gutierrez, a Mental Health Counselor, recounted an interaction she had with a student recently, emphasizing the significance of the work that Mental Health counselors undertake.

Lilli Milton, a parent of Orion and Kennedy Schools and a board member of the Redwood City Education Foundation (RCEF), requested that the School Board reject the proposed resolution and explore alternative approaches to finding solutions. She emphasized that if cuts need to be made, they should be implemented in schools that require the least support to ensure an equitable approach.

Dave Fribush acknowledged the difficult decision that the School Board faces and echoed the previous comments in support of an alternative solution, advocating for the rejection of cutting positions.

James Kang withdrew his speaker's card.

End of Public Comments.

Vice President Wells expressed gratitude to the parents, staff, and everyone present at the School Board meeting, appreciating their commitment to the district. Furthermore, Trustee Wells acknowledged the comments from the public and sought clarification on the criteria used for selecting priorities in the proposed cuts. Superintendent Baker addressed his question.

Trustee Weekly requested an explanation of what the March 15 deadline entails to which Deputy Superintendent Wendy Kelly responded.

Vice President Wells inquired about how the budget cuts would affect the stabilization plan and CBO Rick Edson answered.

President Lawson noted that she received a letter from the county stating that the district's first interim budget report was a qualified certification.

Trustee Weekly requested an explanation of what the consequence would be if plans were not submitted by the March 20 deadline, and CBO Edson responded.

Vice President Wells extended gratitude to all the speakers.

Trustee Márquez echoed Trustee Wells's sentiments, expressing how much she cares for the district. She also apologized for the communication method through which the staff received information about the budget cuts.

Trustee MacAvoy expressed gratitude towards all the speakers and their comments. She recounted her tenure as a school board member and emphasized that the district has never been fully funded. However, she emphasized that despite this, it can still provide a high-quality education. She empathized with the affected individuals but hoped that funding would improve in August.

Trustee Weekly agreed with the comments that were heard and thanked the teachers, staff, and parents.

President Lawson acknowledged that dealing with budget cuts is one of the most challenging aspects of serving as a School Board member. She further clarified that the decision was reached with input from the principals. President Lawson expressed optimism regarding the potential for reinstating the affected positions in the future.

Superintendent Baker extended gratitude to all attendees of the board meeting. He recognized that the resolution under discussion represents a difficult decision to make. Dr. Baker further acknowledged the need for being well-funded.

The School Board adopted Resolution No. 7, Reduction or Elimination of Certificated Services for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (Márquez, Wells; 5-0).

Trustee Márquez (Ayes)
Trustee Weekly (Ayes)
Trustee MacAvoy (Ayes)
Vice President Wells (Ayes)
President Lawson (Ayes)

7.3 Recommendation re: Adoption of Resolution No. 8, Reduction of Certain Classified Services for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Deputy Superintendent Wendy Kelly explained the reasons behind the reduction of the classified positions listed in resolution 8.

Public Comment:

Salvador Gomez thanked the Taft staff. Mr. Gomez spoke on the importance of having mental health counselors at the school.

Anna Solorio, the President of CSEA Chapter 5, urged the School Board to explore alternative solutions to layoffs and to reject resolution no. 8.

Connie Hamilton, a school librarian, voiced her concern about the impending layoff of three librarians who lack LMTA certification.

Beverly Aguilar, a school librarian, spoke on the elimination of the LMA positions and the lack of communication regarding the cuts. Ms. Aguilar requested that the school board reject the reclassification.

End of public comments.

Trustee Márquez inquired for clarification regarding the 6 vacant librarian positions and Deputy Superintendent Wendy Kelly responded.

Vice President Wells thanked MS. Solorio, Ms. Hamilton, and Ms. Aguilar for speaking to the school board, and thanked Ms. Kelly for clarifying the decision-making process.

President Lawson expressed anticipation regarding the outcomes of the CSEA negotiations and expressed hope that the current LMAs would retain their positions.

The School Board adopted Resolution No. 8, Reduction of Certain Classified Services for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 (Wells, Márquez; 5-0).

Trustee Márquez (Ayes)
Trustee Weekly (Ayes)
Trustee MacAvoy (Ayes)
Vice President Wells (Ayes)
President Lawson (Ayes)

7.4 Recommendation re: Adoption of Resolution No. 9, Release and Reassignment of Certificated Administrators(s)

No questions.

The School Board adopted Resolution No. 9, Release and Reassignment of Certificated Administrators(s) (Weekly, Wells; 5-0).

Trustee Márquez (Ayes)
Trustee Weekly (Ayes)
Trustee MacAvoy (Ayes)
Vice President Wells (Ayes)
President Lawson (Ayes)

7.5 Recommendation re: Approval of Release of Temporary Teachers

The School Board approved the Release of Temporary Teachers (Weekly, Wells; 5-0).

Trustee Márquez (Ayes)
Trustee Weekly (Ayes)
Trustee MacAvoy (Ayes)
Vice President Wells (Ayes)

President Lawson (Ayes)

7.1 Recommendation re: Approval of Agreement between the Redwood City School District and TeamCivX and Godbe Research to conduct a Parcel Tax Measure Feasibility Study

Public Comment:

Chris Robell, a Redwood City resident, addressed the school board to state the community does not have unlimited funds. Mr. Robell inquired whether there would be an additional bond.

Trustees Weekly, Wells, MacAvoy, and Lawson expressed support for the feasibility study.

The School Board approved the agreement between the Redwood City School District and TeamCivX and Godbe Research to conduct a Parcel Tax Measure Feasibility Study (Wells, Weekly; 5-0).

Trustee Márquez (Ayes)
Trustee Weekly (Ayes)
Trustee MacAvoy (Ayes)
Vice President Wells (Ayes)
President Lawson (Ayes)

8. Board and Superintendent Reports

8.1 Report from Board Members and Superintendent

Vice President Wells reported attending the Black History Month Assembly at Kennedy Middle School.

Trustee Weekly reported he has two upcoming meetings. One with a representative of the Dental Alliance and another with Dr. Geiser from the Stanford Gardner Center.

Trustee Márquez reported attending the Spanish Superintendent Advisory Council meeting.

Trustee MacAvoy mentioned attending several CSBA meetings and informed the school board about the upcoming CSBA Legislative Action Week.

President Lawson had nothing to report.

Superintendent Baker reported attending the Superintendent's Advisory Council meeting.

9. Information

9.1 Information on San Mateo County Investment Fund - January 2024

No questions or comments.

10. Correspondence

President Lawson reported receiving the County's review of the district's first interim report.

The Trustees received multiple emails regarding the agenda.

11. Other Business/Suggested Items for Future Agenda

Vice President Wells requested an update on the solar program and the phase 2 plans.

Trustee Weekly requested to have recommendations from the dental group presented for the district.

12. Board Meetings Calendar

12.1 Changes to the Board Meetings Calendar

None.

13. Adjournment

The School Board adjourned the meeting at 9:55 p.m. (Weekly, Márquez; 5-0).

Alisa MacAvoy, Clerk