

**Local District 1**

**Parent Community Advisory Council**

Conference Room K

December 10, 2009

**Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 9:08 a.m. by Randi Theodosopoulos, Chairperson.

<b>Parent Members Present:</b>
Alma Padilla
Angel Zobel-Rodriguez
Connie Lujan
Dina Javadi
Irma Sanchez
Jane McPherson
Jill Klessig
Lillian Yee
Lisa Haberman
Randi Theodosopoulos
Robert Cohn
Seta Margossian
Suzie Kane
Val Roth

<b>Community Members Present:</b>
Aaron Yusem
Kenn Phillips
Sheri Osborne (Excused)
Obie Slamon (Excused)
<b>Ex-Officio Members Present:</b>
Kelly Rogers

1. The meeting was called to order by Randi Theodosopoulos at 9:10 a.m.
2. Jean Brown gave her Superintendent's Update:
  - a. Jean discussed the status of the Public School Choice system. As she had previously discussed, there are twelve "focus" schools in LAUSD, which will become part of the choice program because of their performance. None of them are in local district 1 (LD 1). However, there are 24 new schools opening, two of which are in LD 1. Therefore, any group can apply to run these schools, including groups of parents or teachers/unions. The two schools that will be opened are #6 (Panorama City) and #10, on the Sutter Middle School campus. The Sutter site may not open on time. There are 7 applicants for each of the schools. One of those applicants is LD 1. Jean believes that LD 1 can operate the schools well. To that effect, two retirees have been brought in as interim principals. (Normally when a new school is opening, the new principal is hired in January. However, in this case the group that is chosen to operate the school may want to hire their own principal.) The two interim principals were introduced: Berta Cochario and Cheryl Mueller. The two are busy crafting the plan, and, together with Jean, spoke about it. The plan has 13 very specific areas. The planning team is drawing information from successful schools and embedding it in the plan. An example was given of Plummer Elementary that has a data

analysis system that allows the principal and teachers to meet and discuss the data. The school has had a large (150 point) increase in their API. The planners are also seeking parent and community involvement. Students have been involved in the focus groups. As an overall goal, Jean would like to make a new model for schools in LD 1.

- b. A question was asked about the funding for the new schools. Jean stated that if the school becomes a charter, then the money will go directly to the school. Otherwise, the funding will depend on the model. No additional money is being provided to these schools, but some of the groups may have applied for grant money.
- c. Jean wanted to make it very clear that regardless of which group is ultimately chosen to run these schools, the schools will serve the children that they were built for. The schools were built to address the overcrowding in surrounding schools, and the designated pupils must be offered a space at the new school regardless of the model it operates under.
- d. Jean then discussed the budget. She provided several handouts. LAUSD continues to face severe budget shortfalls, and needs to cut at least \$460 million (more) for next year. One cut is that there will only be 4 local districts, which will be called something else. Negotiations are ongoing with the teacher's union, but Mr. Duffy (of the union) would not negotiate as long as there were 8 local districts. It is hoped that the unions will accept some sort of furlough/pay cut system. If not, then further cuts will be made, which are in the large handout. One thing that would happen is that the K-3 class size would be increased from 24 to 29. Mr. Cortines feels that the upper grades can not tolerate further class size increases.
- e. Ways to increase revenue into the schools were discussed. One important issue was attendance. Each 1% increase in attendance that we can create results in an increase of \$30 million. The goal for attendance is 96%. LD 1 has an average of 95%, although some schools are at 90%. Another possibility is that schools with enrollment of less than 400 students would be "consolidated" in some form. This does not necessarily mean closure. It was also mentioned that the district needs to do a better job of planning for decreased enrollment, and also that we have lost money because of charter schools.
- f. There were questions about how the funding is actually sent out to the schools, especially in terms of purchasing positions. Jean mentioned that schools are charged based on the average cost of a position, not the actual cost. Therefore, if a school hires a less experienced employee, they are still charged the same amount as a school that hires a very experienced employee. The goal of this system was to make sure that the schools with more money did not get all of the experienced teachers. The district has talked about different funding models, including a "zero based budget". In this you hire all of your staff. Unfortunately, schools with enrollment of less than 500 could not afford even the basic staff (Principal, AP, plant manager, etc.)
- g. Erika Torres was introduced. She is the Coordinator of Dropout Prevention and Attendance. The board wants a 96% attendance rate. 39 schools used some of their money to purchase a PSA or diploma counselor. Erika noted that one of the duties of her office is to participate in "attendance hearings". These are run by the LA City Attorney's office. It is the parents' legal responsibility to make sure their child is in school. LD 1's dropout rate is 14%, LAUSD average is 24%. It was noted that middle school is where we lose a lot of kids. Middle school has social promotion. This seems to be where kids get disengaged from learning. Further problems come in high school, especially 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Students are then promoted

(or not) based on achievement. The many reasons for kids disengaging/dropping out were discussed:

- i. Violence/fear for personal safety
  - ii. Gangs
  - iii. Transiency/homelessness
  - iv. No connection, especially in a huge system
  - v. Poor preparation/performance for the academics
  - vi. Decreased number of social workers
3. Parent Collaborative report – Sheri Osborne was not available, so Connie Lujan gave the report. This was her first Parent Collaborative meeting, and she found it interesting, especially some of the dynamics. The one concrete bit of information she presented was that there will be no new travel authorized.
  4. Kenn Phillips gave his report. He handed out books that discussed various careers in the environment. More are available to any school that is in need of them. A private sponsor donated the books. Tomorrow is the official launch of the Canoga Park HS garden. Ultimately there will be 2000 sq. ft. of green house space, and a 4000 gal, cistern system. Boeing has donated to the project. Kenn noted that there is an “Exploring” program that has an integrity of character award. The recipient is Jean Brown.
  5. Randi noted that the “best practices” are being tabulated, and there can be a presentation at an upcoming COC meeting. The next COC is on January 13, 2010 and is titled the “road to college”, although it will include non-university schools as well.
  6. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m. The next meeting is Jan 28 at LD 1.

Minutes submitted by:  
Jill Klessig, PCAC Secretary