

BALLARD SCHOOL DISTRICT

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, March 22, 2023
3:30PM

1. CALL TO ORDER

Board President, Tracey Cassidy called the meeting to order at 3:31 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

All board members were present. There were approximately 30 people in attendance.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Art Kaslow led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Tracey Cassidy reminded the public that the purpose of the Special Board Meeting was related to the Amendment to the Parental Rights Policy only. She said the board appreciated everyone being there and welcomed all comments in consideration of a change to the existing policy. She reminded the public of the three-minute timeline and the orderly procedures that follow Robert's rule of order.

In way of background, Pamela Rennick reminded the public that Ballard School currently has a Parent Right policy that follows the state, CSBA guidelines which follow the laws of the State of California, and all the valley schools mirror the language written through CSBA. There are four "opt out" rules: sex education, HIV prevention, surveys that relates to family life and, finally, state testing.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

- a. Discussion and decision to make any modifications to the Parent's Rights and Responsibilities Board Policy and Administrative Regulations BP 5020 AR 5020
Background: The board currently has a board policy and administrative regulations for Parent Rights and Responsibilities. Several members of the community have requested modifications to the policy. The board requested copies of the other valley school policies for comparison. The most current California School Board Association (CSBA) policy is also attached for comparison.
- b. Discussion and decision regarding Board Policy Updates with Gamut through the California School Board Association (CSBA)
Background: The board previously gave directions to get a quote to update the Board Policies through a workshop with a subsequent global adoption, and the ability to host the policies through Gamut on the school website.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- 1- Wants to see full transparency and believes notification to parents protects teachers and parents. Urges the inclusion of all people and ideas, asking to restore parent trust and strongly advocates establishing a committee to review the current Parent Rights policy with an Open-Forum format.
- 2- Considers it a privilege to be able to discuss issues such as these, reminds the board that we are all part of the same family at Ballard school and that growth comes from conversations that reflect the changing times. Wants clarity in the existing language (10-year-old document), seeks the right solution with mutual respect and compassion for staff, parents and community.
- 3- Parental experience with a student that has an IEP at Ballard school and the struggle to change pro-nouns, urges "opt out" for parents and cautions an abuse of power in education with a parent on the school and PTA boards, would like to see an examination of the current Parent Right policy.
- 4- Expressed desire that trust has been shaken with parents at Ballard school, advocates for expanded "Opt-Out" language in the current policy. The ability of parents to discuss emotional topics in the classroom is disrespectful to parents and now I wonder what other topics are being discussed.
- 5- Ballard school has an established and practiced protocol which was intentionally breached and has broken the trust of some parents, urges the board to consider establishing a committee made up of staff, parents and Superintendent to change the antiquated Parent Right policy. Considers the change in policy to be a preface to avoid teacher exposure and sets a legal precedence for future generations; the policy must be improved with school safety in mind.
- 6- Thanked board for opportunity to provide input, the school board should reflect the community, in support of social issues but expressed the need for parent agency, considers the classroom discussion to be a miss-use of power, seeks the establishment of a committee to review the current Parent Right policy, with a legal review before adoption.
- 7- Considers it an honor to be in the Ballard community, reminded the board that we are all humans trying to do our best and the recent event is a learning opportunity. Urges a pause or "breathe" moment and not allow emotions to take over but continue to seek viable solutions that emphasize safe and trusting environments for all students, staff and parent community.
- 8- As a parent and teacher, I find it difficult to believe that the teacher was never part of the discussion to allow the parents into the classroom and trusts the leadership of the school to follow standard practices. Finds the conversation not reflective of all parents and cautions against over correction based on one incident; wholeheartedly trusts the staff.

BOARD COMMENTS

Tracey Cassidy apologized for not being at the last board meeting due to flight delay and expressed her diligence in reviewing the emails, meetings and recent video posted on u-tube of the meeting and had the following comments:

- Can assure everyone that teachers work in a safe workspace with open communication; they are represented by a union (with a spokesperson), so it is not necessary for parents to speak on their behalf. Teachers are varied and diverse and have a voice in administration and in their workspace. They are able to speak up with fellow co-workers and, in fact, are encouraged to do so. Historically, teachers at Ballard School have an established and positive track record of conducting their classroom effectively with an exemplary reputation.
- Not sure parents understand how comprehensive the parent right policy already is. The rights are in place (via CSBA language) that support the laws. There is clear "opt-out" rules and furthering parent right language may diminish the ability for teachers to do their job. She believes re-writing the policy would be an over-correction.
- The policy was not written in a vacuum and is consistent with other neighboring valley schools. The citing of the Orange County school has jurisdiction over a small charter school. Adding proposed language handcuffs, the teachers rather than supporting them in providing adequate learning experiences such as field trips, assemblies and class projects. Cautions against fear-based leadership and advocates for a strong and trusting community.

Art Kaslow thanked the public for giving opinions and feedback. He read back the sentiment of public comments and potentially supports an "ad hoc" committee to review the current Parent Right policy. He acknowledged the need to openly discuss them. He supports looking at all angles, including the school's legal counsel and seeks viable solutions that support staff and community.

Sean Conroy appreciated the public's willingness to speak up. He is in favor of discussing the option of forming a committee and expressed his desire to collaborate with all stakeholders. He agreed to have the opinion of legal counsel as another part of the conversation and acknowledges that everyone wants to move forward in a constructive and positive way.

The board of Tracey Cassidy, Art Kaslow and Sean Conroy openly discussed with Superintendent/Principal, Pamela Rennick the following timeline:

- A Committee to review the five binders of board policy is a lot of work and is very time sensitive
- Identified the steps necessary through Gamut which is a company that comes into districts, through CSBA updated language and cross-references with the state's governing body, legislature and the current policy with school's legal counsel for accuracy and continual changes at the state level. It helps to update our website and reviews 4x a year for quarterly changes. They begin with the most generic templates, red lines with attorney and help to present for first and second readings. The initial cost is \$8200 (see board packet), \$1200 for review of current policy and \$2080 per year to keep policy current
- Discussed the cumbersome process regardless of Gamut help and the necessity to provide compensation or stipend for additional staffing

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

- a. A motion to deny modifications to the Parent's Rights and Responsibilities Board Policy and Administrative Regulations was made by Tracey Cassidy, seconded by Sean Conroy and opposed by Art Kaslow passed by majority vote.
- b. A motion to approve a contract with Gamut to bring the board policies current with the premise of a ceiling cost of \$12,030 with a \$3,000 annual cost was approved by Tracey Cassidy, seconded by Art Kaslow and passed unanimously.

The board clarified that the discussion of assembling an "ad hoc" committee will be an action item at the next scheduled board meeting.

6. NEXT REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Unless otherwise announced, the next regular Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at 3:30 PM.
7. ADJOURNMENT Time: 5:21 pm



Art Kaslow, Clerk of the Board



Date