



**VENTURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
April 27, 2021
MINUTES**

Call to Order

In accordance with Governor Newsom's executive orders of social distancing due to the COVID-19, the Regular Board of Education meeting was held on Tuesday, April 27, 2021, as a teleconference/video conference meeting where one or more members participated. The public had the opportunity to submit their public comment via the public comments email address or live via the Zoom platform. The public streaming of the special Board meeting was made available through the Ventura Adult and Continuing Education, TDC Studios YouTube Channel. Those in attendance were:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Board President | Ms. Velma Lomax |
| Board Vice President | Mr. Matt Almaraz |
| Board Member | Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez |
| Board Member | Ms. Amy Callahan |
| Board Member | Dr. Jerry Dannenberg |
| Superintendent | Dr. Roger Rice |
| Asst. Supt. /Certificated HR | Dr. Jeff Davis |
| Asst. Supt. /Bus. Services | Ms. Rebecca Chandler |
| Asst. Supt. /Ed. Services | Dr. Antonio Castro |
| General Counsel | Mr. Anthony Ramos |

Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan,
Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

Public Comment on Closed Session Items

None.

Motion to go to Closed Session

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Mr. Matt Almaraz and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to go to closed session at 5:01 p.m.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan,
Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

REGULAR SESSION - Ron Halt Classroom - 7:00 p.m.

At 7:00 p.m., Board President Velma Lomax called the Regular Meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance. A moment of silence was held in memory of Mr. Kevin Roop. Mr. Roop began his career with Ventura Unified School District in 1996 as a 4th/5th grade teacher at Saticoy (now Atlas). In 1997 he moved to Junipero Serra where he remained for 23 years until his retirement in June 2020. Mr. Roop was known for the art of snail painting, square dancing and other shenanigans to remind the students that life was about having fun.

Report of Actions Taken in Closed Session

It was moved by Mr. Matt Almaraz, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the public employee discipline/dismissal/release pursuant to government code section 54957(b), suspension of classified employee #111, for two working days without pay.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan,
Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the appointment of Mr. Brett Taylor as the new Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan,
Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Dr. Roger Rice shared his excitement at the appointment of Mr. Brett Taylor as the new Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources. He is excited to bring someone with his leadership experience and integrity to the team and knows he will do an excellent job.

Dr. Rice gave a shout out to Mr. Michael Tzipori, teacher librarian at Cabrillo Middle School, and Ms. Lindsay Guzik, teacher at Sunset, for organizing Mr. Ivor Davis as a guest speaker for last Friday's Middle School Battle of the Books. Mr. Davis is a current resident of Ventura and was the only daily reporter to follow the Beatles North America Tour in 1964. Mr. Davis shared amazing stories and offered inspiration to all readers as budding authors, as a career journalist and author himself.

Dr. Rice gave a shout out to the Buena High School's Color Guard Team who culminated their virtual season through the Winter Guard Association of Southern California competition, earning a gold medal in their final performance over 12 other Southern California Schools. On behalf of the district, Dr. Rice extended a huge congratulations to the Color Guard Team for also earning first place in all of their virtual competitions this year.

Dr. Rice shared that he thoroughly enjoyed last week's crosstown rivalry football game between Buena and Ventura High Schools. He stated both teams played with the upmost integrity and sportsmanship and he thanked them for making the community proud.

Dr. Rice announced that the California Department of Education dedicated May 7, 2021 as School Lunch Hero Day. He congratulated all of the nutrition service workers for the heroic job they have been doing feeding our students since COVID began.

Dr. Rice shared that he received a letter declaring April 19 through April 23 as the week of Adult Education. He gave a shout out to Ms. Carolyn Vang-Walker and her team for doing an amazing job serving our adult students.

Student Board Member Ms. Violet Delgado representing Buena High School, Ms. Frances Kayser representing Ventura High School, and Ms. Christine Davis representing VACE, shared brief updates on the exciting things happening at their school sites.

Correspondence

None.

Public Comments

The following individuals gave a public comment via e-mail or live via Zoom*:

1. Lisa Carrera urging the Board to not return to the block schedule and to remove the mask mandate for students in the 2021-22 school year.
2. Lauren Cohen urging the Board to remove the mask mandate for students.
3. Su-lin Rubalcava requesting an analysis/report of special education services across VUSD schools and to evaluate the equity and access of the special education program.
4. Deanna Gray requesting the Board reconsider and allow outdoor promotions for 5th and 8th grade students.

5. Dan Nelson gave an update on where we are as a community with COVID and gave an update on how it's been going on campuses regarding COVID protocols. He thanked VUSD staff and parents for all of their hard work.

CONFERENCE - SUPERINTENDENT

14.a Board Policies Global Adoption (Action Requested)

It was moved by Mr. Matt Almaraz, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the global adoption of the revised board policies.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan,
Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

CONFERENCE - EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

15.a District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) Advisory Report

Dr. Soledad Molinar, Director of Multilingual and Multicultural Education, presented the District English Language Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC) Advisory Report along with several members of the DELAC Committee including Mr. Carlos Mora, Ms. Maria Honorato and Ms. Stephany Alfaro Ayala. The DELAC Advisory Report shows the progress towards DELAC goals and DELAC recommendations for English Learner programs in VUSD. This information is then used by the Multilingual and Multicultural department and school sites for district planning for the upcoming 2021-22 school year.

15.b Student Learning Loss / Acceleration and Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) Data

Ms. Gina Wolowicz, Director of Elementary Curriculum and Instruction, gave an update on Student Learning Loss/Acceleration, focusing on VUSD's LCAP Goal #1, *Increase Student Achievement*. Ms. Wolowicz presented Elementary Assessment Data for Trimester 2 for Language Arts and Mathematics, including strengths and areas of growth for each grade level Kindergarten through grade five.

Dr. Greg Bayless, Director of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction, gave an update on secondary students D/F rates. The data revealed that there was an overall increase of all secondary students receiving one or more D/F as well as with secondary students receiving two or more D/F's in the 2020-21 school year versus the 2019-20 school year, with the biggest increase among middle school students. The data clearly showed an overrepresentation in the D/F rates of Hispanic/Latino students, socioeconomic disadvantaged students, and English Language Learner students.

CONFERENCE - BUSINESS SERVICES

16.a Consideration for Approval of Resolution #21 -08, Requesting Board of Supervisors of Ventura County to Include the Voter-Approved Parcel Tax on the 2021-22 Tax Roll (Action Requested)

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve Resolution #21- 08, requesting Board of Supervisors of Ventura County to include the voter-approved parcel tax on the 2021-22 tax roll.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan,
Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

CONFERENCE - HUMAN RESOURCES - Certificated

17.a Presentation & Approval of Resolution # 21-10 Credentialed School Nurse Day (Action Requested)

It was moved by Mr. Matt Almaraz, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve Resolution #21-10 claiming May 12, 2021 as "Credentialed School Nurse Day."

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

CONFERENCE - HUMAN RESOURCES - Classified

18.a Reduction in Classified Positions/Layoff of Classified Employees, 2021-2022 Fiscal Year (Action Requested)

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the reductions of the identified positions and authorize the issuance of layoff notices for the Classified incumbents.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

ACTION ITEMS

19.a Consideration for Approval of a Supplementary Book *Deep Kindness*

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Mr. Matt Almaraz and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the supplementary book *Deep Kindness*.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

CONSENT CALENDAR

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Mr. Matt Almaraz and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve consent items #'s 20-23 as presented.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Certificated

- 20.a Approval of Variable Term Waiver for Speech - Language Credential
- 20.b Ratification of Administration's Approval of Resignations, Retirements and Release for Certificated Personnel for the 2020-21 School Year
- 20.c Ratification of Administration's Approval for Leave of Absence for Certificated Personnel for the 2020-21 School Year
- 20.d Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment and Reemployment of Substitute Teachers for the 2020-21 School Year
- 20.e Ratification of Administration's Approval of Miscellaneous & Part-Time Certificated Assignments for the 2020-21 School Year
- 20.f Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment and Reemployment of Certificated Personnel for the 2020-21 School Year
- 20.g Ventura County Office of Education Williams Activity Report for Quarter 3 Fiscal Year 2020-21

**CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES -
Classified**

- 21.a Classified Personnel Changes
- 21.b Classified Position Changes

CONSENT - BUSINESS SERVICES

- 22.a Southern California Edison Grant of Easement and Right of Way Agreement
- 22.b Gifts to School District
- 22.c Ratification of Purchase Orders (March 31, 2021 to April 13, 2021)

CONSENT - SUPERINTENDENT

- 23.a Consideration of Board Meeting Minutes

BOARD REPORTS

Trustee Dannenberg thanked everyone involved in broadcasting the Buena/Ventura football game. Dr. Dannenberg attended the game, but enjoyed being able to watch it again online. He shared that it was so good to see students out on the field giving it their all. Dr. Dannenberg noted that he also attended the AVID mentoring meeting last Friday and always enjoys interacting with the students.

Trustee Callahan acknowledged how proud she is of Ventura Unified for having our secondary students back to full-time in-person learning and thanked all VUSD Leadership that made this happen.

Trustee Rodriguez attended the Ventura County School Board Association (VCSBA) training on Governance for Developing Learning Loss Recovery related to COVID on April 19 and is proud of how much district representation was there. Ms. Rodriguez also attended the California School Board Association (CSBA) webinar regarding the necessity for broadband for all students in California, which advocated for broadband as a basic right for California citizens. Lastly she shared that as part of her General Plan Advisory Committee, there is an upcoming community input forum this Thursday if anyone would like to participate or share their vision of the city.

Trustee Almaraz attended the 27th annual Latina Action Day Conference where the focus was on California Education; there were several guest speakers including the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mr. Tony Thurman. He also attended a meeting with Superintendent Dr. Roger Rice earlier today. Mr. Almaraz has been attending a series of Webinars from the Department of Education for Social Emotional Learning, the most recent was on suicide prevention. He noted that he attended the VCSBA meeting with over 20 districts represented and shared that he was voted in as the second vice-president. Mr. Almaraz also watched the Buena/Ventura football game and shared his excitement for getting our players, musicians, cheerleaders, and dancers back out on the field.

Trustee Lomax was thankful she was able to watch the Buena/Ventura football game online since she was unable to attend in person. Ms. Lomax also conducted a Webinar, where she worked with the Navy and the Department of Defense (DOD) getting funding for our district; she thanked Dr. Rene Rickard for being there as our district representative.

COMING EVENTS

- Ethnic & Social Justice Studies Committee Meeting: April 28th at 4:00 p.m.
- Teacher of the Month Celebration at Montalvo: April 29th at 3:00 p.m.
- Special Education Department Advisory Committee (SEDAC) Meeting: April 30th at 9:00 a.m.
- Special Board Meeting Tour of Washington School: May 3rd
- Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting: May 4th at 9:30 a.m.
- School Lunch Hero Day: May 7th
- LCAP Advisory Committee Meeting: May 12th at 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
- Special Study Session on Learning Loss: May 13th at 9:00 a.m.

FUTURE BOARD ITEMS

- Human Resources Update - May
- Fall Reopening Update - TBD
- Facilities Update - July
- Graduation Updates - May
- Summer School/End of Year Updates- May
- Reviewing Board Policy-Naming of Facilities – July

Trustee Callahan would like to have a graduation/end of the year update. Ms. Callahan also shared that many parents have reached out regarding having in-person promotion ceremonies for eighth grade students. There was Board consensus to bring this back as an agenda item at our next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Trustee Rodriguez would like to provide the community with an update on summer school. There was Board consensus to bring this back as an agenda item at our next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS - (No official action will be taken)

Dr. Rice acknowledged that we have not had a perfect reentry to school. Teachers have shared that students are having difficulty remaining socially distant. Dr. Rice asked parents to encourage their children to please wear their masks and to stay socially distant throughout these last few weeks of school.

Dr. Rice shared that there have been reports of VUSD not following up on contract tracing and explained that sometimes information is given directly to a teacher or nurse and then we have to do some backtracking to get the information. He gave a shout out to Mr. Eric Reynolds, Director of Risk Management, and Ms. Ann Marie Bidlingmaier, Coordinator of Health Services, for their hard work.

Dr. Rice expressed his appreciation for how our district has handled reductions in the past and is really proud of Ms. Peak's advocacy and Ms. Crouch's tact and diplomacy handling these. He shared that our District goes out of its way to find a landing spot for most if not all of those who were laid off. We have also offered early retirement incentives several times this year and tried to do everything we could to adjust for lowering enrollment numbers, nearly 500 per year.

Dr. Rice acknowledged that we have a lot of work ahead of us in regards to the student achievement gap, however he has great confidence in the amazing work being done by Ms. Gina Wolowicz and Dr. Greg Bayless, along with our new Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Dr. Antonio Castro. Dr. Rice is excited to see the work of the team under the guidance of the Board and along with the stakeholder guidance.

Dr. Rice acknowledged that we are in the process of increasing and improving the services in the area of special education and that it is of the highest importance to him as the Superintendent.

Trustee Amy Callahan thanked Dr. Rice and his team for all they do.

Trustee Rodriguez thanked Ms. Gina Wolowicz and Dr. Greg Bayless, for the work they do and for sharing the difficult data with the Board. Ms. Rodriguez also shared that National Teacher Week is scheduled for May 4th. Dr. Rice shared that we will be adding the day of the teacher to the May 11th board meeting, as California honors teachers on May 12th.

Trustee Almaraz thanked everyone and stated that it was wonderful that all students were back to campus fulltime. He shared that there is concern that if more parents do not fill out the survey for summer school, there will not be enough sections offered. He suggested offering a paper copy of the survey for parents who may be having trouble navigating the on-line form. He also suggested to have Ms. Marieanne Quiroz continue to send out communications regarding summer school to families. Lastly, he mentioned that as of today there are new CDC guidelines in regards to wearing masks outdoors if you are vaccinated and that it would be helpful to have an update guideline at the schools explaining that we follow our local Ventura County Public Health guidelines.

Trustee Lomax shared that we have received several e-mails from the public regarding the So Cal Gas issue and wanted to assure the community that we are in the process of finding out all the information we can. Dr. Rice added that he has already met with the gas company, the city manager, and attended the latest city council meeting. VUSD has also sent out a communication to the community letting them know that we are in the process of gathering information and trying to educate ourselves, and hope to come out with more detailed information soon.

CLOSED SESSION

There was no reason to return to closed session.


ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Matt Almaraz, seconded by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to adjourn the meeting at 9:41 p.m. to the next Regular Board Meeting to be held at 7:00 p.m. on May 11, 2021.


Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan,
Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

APPROVED



President



Secretary

[REDACTED]

From: Lisa Carrera <carreralisa23@[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 27, 2021 8:55 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Block Schedule 2021/2022 school year

Hello,

I have a 9th grader at Ventura High School. She is very happy to be back in person. Two topics I would like some feed back on:

One, can we please NOT return to the block schedule for the next 2021-2022 school year. My child is having a hard time with staying focused with that long of a period. Also, lets be honest, this is very difficult as I'm sure many parents have to work, I myself have two different school starting times with two children in two different parts of town. I'm really hoping the district will go back to a normal schedule for the schools that were not previously on the block schedule.

Also, with the tier system going away in June, can we look at also removing masks for the following school year? The science shows that kids do not spread covid and now that more and more people are vaccinated, these children should be allowed to NOT wear masks. Maybe a suggestion, make floor to ceiling plexiglass walls between teachers and kids so the kids can see the teachers faces. Also this will be beneficial for teachers teaching language classes, I watched my daughter try to learn Spanish and saw that it is very difficult to learn properly without being able to see the teachers mouths while learning a language.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lisa Carrera

[REDACTED]

From: Lauren Cohen <lsmith0417@ [REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 27, 2021 10:15 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment

"The time is always right, to do what is right" Martin Luther King Jr.

This is a quote written on my child's school. Now is the time to do what is right. Take the masks off of our children. No one can give a good reason to have masks on our children other than the governor mandates it. We all know that science has shown us that the children are not affected by this virus and they are not spreading it. So please do what is right and stop mandating them in school! We have to start thinking about what is right for them. We have no idea what the long term effects on small children wearing a mask will be. Stand and fight for our kids now!!!! I will no longer sit silently while our children's rights and livelihood are being ignored. Please join me in not sitting passively just waiting for this year to pass by and hope that next year can be normal. Our children have been put last for way too long.

It is time to do what is right.

Thank you

Lauren Cohen
Concerned Parent ready to fight for our kids

From: Sulin Rubalcava <[redacted]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 27, 2021 11:27 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: Fwd: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment Email - Sulin Rubalcava

Dear VUSD Trustees and Dr. Rice,

Thank you for all of your efforts and dedication to opening our schools. It is greatly appreciated.

I wanted to follow up regarding my Public Comment dated March 22nd, 2021 regarding VUSD staff providing a Special Education Analysis/Report of Will Roger's School versus other schools and accessibility to special education services in comparison to other schools - in particular with small group in person access this year. It's come to my attention, we need to evaluate the equity access of all schools with special education. Can we dive further into special education and analyze the department and report the findings in a board meeting?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Su-lin Rubalcava

From: Sulin Rubalcava <[sulinrubalcavasc@](mailto:[redacted])>
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2021 6:29 PM
To: Public Comment <public.comment@venturausd.org>
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment Email - Sulin Rubalcava

Dear VUSD Trustees and Dr. Rice,

Thank you for your time devoted to COVID-19 efforts and dedication to the operations of running all VUSD schools. I understand this entire year has been extremely difficult for all.

As a parent of two students at Will Roger's and a child with additional services, and as the Will Roger's SEDAC parent representative. I'm here today with the hope all VUSD Board members ask Dr. Rice and his leadership staff to provide a report and analysis on the following items I will address today.

Today, I'm asking all board of trustees to ask VUSD staff for a Special Education report, and analysis to look into the special education department and services to compare accessibility for students across all schools especially comparing Will Roger's. Do all schools have equitable special education services regardless of the schools socio economic status?

To summarize, I hope in the upcoming board agenda meetings Special Education is its own item on the agenda.

Once again, thank you Dr. Rice and VUSD board for all your time and energy devoted.

Su-Lin Rubalcava

Marketing Strategist



From: Deanna Gray <deannagray22 [REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, April 27, 2021 1:15 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- In Person Promotion for 5th and 8th Grades

Dr. Rice and Board Members,

I am hopeful that you might reconsider the decision for 5th and 8th Grade Promotions. The District email regarding Promotions stated: "due to current guidelines, our desire to provide consistency among all schools, and the limitations on space, these will continue to look different than they have in years past." Can you please clarify which guidelines you are referring to, or the specific space limitations that are making this important tradition unavailable to our students? It is hard to imagine that there is an elementary campus that wouldn't safely accommodate their 5th grade class (and perhaps 4 attendees like the High schools are allowed). The Middle Schools certainly have ample outdoor space for their 8th grade students and a limited guest list.

I urge you to please reconsider. This year it is more important than ever for these students to gather together to celebrate persevering through the last year. For the 8th graders (and 5th graders too I imagine), many of them will go on to different schools and this culminating tradition is special for them to share collectively. I don't doubt that each site is working tirelessly to plan fun Drive-Thru Events. Please, our students deserve more than that. If VUSD can have football/sporting events and have campuses filled daily with students, surely there can be a ceremony celebrating these students safely outdoors.

Please think about these students who want to be together with their classmates (that they have been apart from for so long), and make the right decision for them to celebrate safely together. No more drive thru promotions! Please reconsider!

Thank you for your consideration,
Deanna Gray