

**VENTURA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF
May 10, 2019**

A. CALL TO ORDER

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, and Moment of Reflection
The Regular Meeting of the Ventura County Board of Education, Agenda 19-06, was called to order by Dr. Ramon Flores, Board Vice-President at 8:03 a.m., on Friday, May 10, 2019, in the Board Room of the VCOE Conference & Educational Services Center, 5100 Adolfo Road, Camarillo. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Dr. Flores, followed by a moment of reflection.

2. Roll Call
Trustees Present:
Rachel Ulrich, Area 1
Michael Teasdale, Area 2
Dr. Mark Lisagor, Area 3 – *Absent*
Rob Collins, Area 4
Dr. Ramon Flores, Area 5

VCOE Personnel Present:
Stanley C. Mantooth, Ventura County Superintendent of Schools and Ex-Officio Secretary and Executive Officer of the Board
Misty Key, Associate Superintendent, Fiscal and Administrative Services
Dr. Antonio Castro, Associate Superintendent, Educational Services
Mary Samples, Interim Associate Superintendent, Student Services
Emily Mostovoy-Luna, Assistant Superintendent, SELPA
Regina Reed, Executive Director, Special Education
Mabel Munoz, Director, Early Childhood Programs
Brett Taylor, Director, Alternative Education
Lisa Cline, Executive Director, Internal Business
Stephanie Bellisario, Accountant/Internal Auditor
Alex Valles, Accountant
Nancy Akkerman, Senior Executive Assistant
Brian Meza, Facilities
Manny Ruiz, Facilities

3. Approval of Agenda.
Ms. Ulrich moved the agenda be approved. Mr. Teasdale seconded the motion, and the motion carried upon a unanimous vote of those in attendance (4:0).
Dr. Lisagor was absent.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

C. HEARINGS

None.

D. CLOSED SESSION

None.

E. PRELIMINARY

1. Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of April 12, 2019.
2. Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting of April 22, 2019.

Ms. Ulrich moved the Minutes of the Regular Meetings of April 12, 2019 and April 22, 2019 be approved. Mr. Teasdale seconded the motion, and the motion carried upon a unanimous vote of those in attendance (4:0).

F. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

G. PRESIDENT'S AND BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS

1. Dr. Flores noted Upcoming events. He indicated that he would attend as many as possible.
2. Mr. Collins reported that he attended the April 29th VCSBA Dinner Meeting which focused on Socio-Emotional learning. A lot of this effort falls on school counselors, nurses and psychologists. The rate of students to counselors in California averages 681:1. 96% of students attend schools that exceed the suggested ratio of counselors to students. He suggested that the VCSBA consider holding a second meeting on this important subject.
3. Dr. Flores reported that he too attended the VCSBA Dinner Meeting and the VC Innovates Awards Luncheon where Dr. Morse was recognized. Incredible strides were made in Career Education under her leadership.
4. Mr. Teasdale reported that he also attended the VCSBA Dinner Meeting and the VC Innovates Awards Luncheon. He too is concerned about the tremendous pressure on schools and teachers to address the socio-emotional needs of students. This is an important effort that needs to continue. He also visited Vista Real, Bridges and Ventura Charter Schools.
5. Ms. Ulrich agreed that socio-emotional learning is an important topic as is the amount of substance abuse occurring during school hours. The CCBE Board of Directors Retreat will be held in July. Please contact Ms. Ulrich if there are any suggested topics.
6. Dr. Flores reported that he is part of the CCBE Nominating Committee for next year's CCBE officers. If Board members have any questions or suggestions, please contact him.

H. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

None.

I. LEGISLATIVE REPORT

1. Mr. Teasdale and Dr. Lisagor will attend the Tri-County Education Coalition Legislative Action Day on May 20, 2019.
2. Mr. Mantooth noted that the Governor's May Revise was released yesterday.

J. CONSENT/ACTION

1. Approval of Bid 2019-31 for Carl Dwire School Modernization Phase III

Mr. Teasdale moved that Consent Item #1 be approved. Ms. Ulrich seconded the motion, and the motion carried upon a unanimous vote of those in attendance (4:0).

K. PRESENTATIONS

None.

L. DISCUSSION/INFORMATION/ACTION

1. Budget Study Session
The following VCOE staff members presented information on the various services provided and the successes and challenges within their respective programs.

COURT & COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Brett Taylor, Director, Alternative Education

Gateway Community School has served 175 students this year with 9 teachers and 12 support staff. Providence has served 331 incarcerated youth with 9 teachers and 10 support staff. Currently operating with approximately 71 students at Providence and Gateway is just over 100 students. Successes include the recent WASC visitation that was very positive. A six year WASC accreditation is expected for both Providence and Gateway which makes the VCOE diploma more relevant and acceptable to outside agencies such as colleges and military.

Facilities at Gateway continue to be updated. An Incentive Room containing computers, 3D printers, video editing, etc, was recently renovated. Students who meet academic attendance and behavioral goals earn the right to go into the Incentive Room on Fridays. This provides an additional motivation for students and builds their connection to the school. A Fitness and Wellness Center with treadmills, weight machines, elliptical, and free weights will open at Gateway this summer. Gateway, Phoenix and Career Education Center students will have access to the Fitness Center and the room will be monitored. This will allow students to work on life-long fitness.

Dude. BeNice, a Non Profit company, recently completed a video highlighting the work of the Gateway School staff. They also provided incentives for behavior and attendance. This is the first time this agency has highlighted a school staff – usually just individuals. The final video will be posted on their website and we will receive a copy. The video will also be posted on the Gateway website. It is an excellent representation of Ventura County programs. Mr. Teasdale requested a copy of the video.

Ms. Ulrich asked if the enrollment at Gateway has increased. Mr. Taylor stated that enrollment has increased at the Junior High level; but the year over year enrollment is declining slightly. Ms. Ulrich asked if there is still a sports team offered at Gateway. There is – Basketball – and they have excellent coaching.

Mr. Collins stated that during his tenure on the Simi Valley Unified School District Board, he found that students returning to the district from Gateway were always appreciative of the services they received and many indicated that attending Gateway turned their life around. Are the students who return to their districts tracked to see if they graduate? No, but it could be done.

Mr. Teasdale noted that the staff at Gateway and Providence obviously care about their students. With enrollment decreasing at Gateway and Providence, are there financial challenges in providing services for students; or if there were more funds, what could be done differently? Mr. Taylor responded that the services provided to students are still exceptional. Even though the numbers and funds are declining; the office does not allow these students to do without. Gateway students receive the same services as students at any high school.

Mr. Teasdale asked how likely these students are to attend CEC classes. Many already attend, and efforts are being made to increase class options that will allow students to both find a career that interests them and to provide students with some type of certification.

Ms. Ulrich suggested that students be allowed to volunteer at the Animal Shelter. Possibly walking the dogs or volunteering their services?

Dr. Flores mentioned that the strong connection between Providence staff and students is now being displayed by the Probation staff.

Ms. Samples commended Mr. Taylor and staff for their work during the WASC visitation. This seasoned group of WASC visitors commented on the excellence of the program offered.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Regina Reed, Executive Director, Special Education

Special Education services are provided for 20 school districts in 86 classes on 22 sites throughout Ventura County. 680 students from Preschool to age 22 are served. The program operates on a fee for service basis. VCOE provides Specialized programs for students with socio-emotional needs (Phoenix); Autism (Triton); and severely handicapped. Speech Therapists, Occupational Therapists and Physical Therapist services are provided. Transportation is provided for all special education students. 994 students use transportation, 130 of those are in wheelchairs. Transportation is also provided to Gateway, CEC and ACE Charter. ACE pays for the transportation for their students. First Student has the contract for transportation services.

Enrollment is based on referrals from the districts. 198 referrals this year (an increase of 86). Class size is 8-10 students per class. Students participate in CEC. Boswell and Access students can take classes at local community colleges. Phoenix and Triton are WASC accredited. They will receive a WASC visitation next year.

Professional Development is provided during 12 minimum days in the school year. A Professional Development Committee meets to determine training needs. There is a lot of collaboration with Curriculum and Instruction in support of quality programs. This year teachers received training on history and math standards. Grade alike collaborations were provided. Preschool training focused on the Desired Results Project and work is being done on Preschool curriculum. Everyone received NCPI training. Other training opportunities included Socio-emotional learning, CHAMPS, and suicide prevention. Bus Drivers receive NCPI and positive behavior intervention training.

Penfield and various Airport facilities have been modernized. Dwire School will be undergoing modernization this year. Summer School will be moved to McCulliffe School (right next door). Triton is in their new temporary facility while work on the new Triton School is ongoing. We hope that Triton will open the new facility at the start of the 2020-21 school year.

Special Education operates on an excess cost model – districts are charged the cost to educate their students. Next year three classes will be collapsed –one at Moorpark High School and two at Flory. All staff have been placed in other assignments. One principal will be leaving at the end of this year and this position will not be filled. The assignments will be shifted to existing principals.

Ms. Ulrich asked if Oxnard Elementary and Oxnard Union High School Districts use our services. Oxnard Union and Simi Valley Unified School Districts took back their moderate-severe programs but use VCOE Special Education for other students.

Mr. Teasdale noted that professional development is very valuable. Do we provide training for teachers who are employed by other districts? Yes, through the SELPA. This summer, SELPA will be providing training for Ventura Unified School District staff.

Mr. Teasdale asked about the rate of students being identified for special education services. Ms. Samples noted that our districts do a good job of identifying students. Curriculum and Instruction works with NPSS to ensure students receive intervention services prior to special education identification. Dr. Castro noted that there is increasing integration between departments to determine how best to serve students in the least restrictive environment. This is a major effort and a challenge. These conversations are ongoing within our own departments and the districts. 600 newly identified students this year. The total enrollment in the County is declining but special education enrollment is increasing each year and a higher percentage of those identified are high cost students.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mabel Munoz, Director, Early Childhood Programs

Current brain development research indicates that the early years of life have a profound impact on how the brain is organized. Everything the Early Childhood Education department does is to enhance early learning opportunities, ensuring there are quality teachers, quality interactions and age appropriate environments for learning. Training focuses on the Early Learning Foundations and supports the alignment of California State Standards. Funding includes a \$3.5 million grant from CDE, and funding from First 5, federal programs and local funding.

QRIS – a program which assesses the quality of local preschools – is the largest program. A Star rating system is utilized. Our department provides training, resources, and assessment for QRIS. 80% of the early childhood programs received a rating of 4 or 5. Additional education for childcare providers is funded. Transitional kindergarten teachers also receive professional development. 168 preschool spaces are provided through a federal grant. A CDE grant provides services for preschool students with disabilities. Local Planning Council is sponsored through this department.

There are currently 147 school and home based programs serving over 5,000 preschool students. Training for over 1500 early education providers is offered. Coordination of early childhood program to public education. Support various components of early childhood.

Mr. Collins expressed the importance of preschool education for special education and socio-economically disadvantaged students. Are there additional funds for these services? The Governor has proposed funding for the expansion of TK spaces as well as additional funding for professional development.

Mr. Teasdale asked about the 80% of schools that are in tiers 4-5. What are the needs of the lower tiered schools? The biggest barrier is longevity of the teachers. As they receive more professional development, they can then earn more in different assignments. How do we support increased salaries for preschool staff?

Ms. Key provided an overview of this portion of the proposed 2019-20 VCOE budget. The assumptions for these budgets include: 3.2% COLA only on Special Education programs, a reduction to the increase in employer contributions for STRS/PERS (the employer rate only increased 1% instead of 2%); a 2% increase to all salary schedules for staff; and step and column increases.

The Governor's Budget Proposal included an additional reduction in the STRS rate bringing the rate to 16.7%, a decrease of almost half a percent. No reduction in the PERS rate was proposed although it is still being discussed. STRS relief is a bigger portion of school districts budgets than PERS.

The Governor's proposal also included \$690 million in additional special education funding; an increase from the January proposal of \$500 million. The requirement to create a new program was removed which is a positive change. Another positive is that no new onetime funds were proposed which is easier for the local school districts to account for.

Ms. Key then reviewed the individual budget presented;

Special Education Instruction. Special Education is the largest department accounting for \$40 million of the total County Office budget of \$115 million. We are experiencing a decline in enrollment – a silent takeback from districts. Classrooms are consolidated as necessary. The students we educate seem to have more challenging issues. A 2% cost of living increase is included in this budget. Reductions to the budget include the consolidation of 3 classrooms and one principal. Step and Column increases and the STRS reduction are also reflected. The budget for this program remains steady.

Revenue includes State funding, local funds, transfers (revenue received from school districts from excess costs billing) and other financing (school districts LCFF is received based on these students and those dollars are transferred to VCOE). LCFF funding is \$3.7 million but the cost to serve the students is \$40 million.

Special Education Transportation. First Student is our new provider of services. Durham paid to be exit their contract early. The cost has increased \$765,000.

SELPA. Budget includes a slight increase based on COLA, but the total budget is reduced due to declining enrollment. Losing about 2,000 ADA per year across the County. Dr. Flores noted that the funding is based on total number of students in the County which is declining while special education enrollment is increasing.

5,980 students out of 131,000 (4.5%) attend 11 Charter Schools in Ventura County. Not all are a part of our SELPA. Ms. Mostovoy Luna noted that the total Countywide SELPA budget is \$167 million. VCOE's portion, \$18.9 million, is presented. Ventura County SELPA is a very low funded SELPA. AB428 which proposes equalization of this funding could provide additional funding to the countywide SELPA. This would free up unrestricted dollars for all students.

Restricted Maintenance. This program is required because VCOE receives State bond funds. 3% of unrestricted expenditures (\$3 million) must be spent annually on maintenance of facilities. This does not account for facilities that VCOE rents from local districts which we maintain as well.

Categorical Programs. The decrease in revenue and expenditures is due to a grant ending. Many grant award letters have not yet been received or will not be received until after the start of the year. This budget will change in the first interim report. Ending budgets are also estimated.

Dr. Flores noted that we received a 3 year federal grant to start a drone program. The grant pays for a teacher and equipment.

Ms. Ulrich moved to extend the Board meeting to 10:30 a.m. Mr. Teasdale seconded the motion, and the motion carried upon a unanimous vote (4:0).

Technology Services. The work of this program is expanding. Technology is charged with not only keeping our internet secure but also providing additional access for students. A huge task.

Providence School. This budget reflects the increase in expenditures and the decline in enrollment. This program cannot be reduced further without affecting the quality of the program. The threshold is approximately 110 students. Current project a possible \$300,000 deficit in the Providence and Gateway programs. Much of the staff serve both programs.

Mr. Teasdale asked if we are maintaining staff and cutting services. Ms. Key noted that the Providence budget has additional funds. Expenses are moved from between the two programs (Providence to Gateway). The combined budgets are not experiencing much reduction. One teaching position was reduced at Gateway and the rest are adjustments between the two budgets with no services being reduced. One budgetary disadvantage that these programs experience is there is no one year protection for declining enrollment like school districts have.

Career Education. This budget has experienced a lot of changes. Grants are still coming in. Preliminary notices of new grants include: CTIG of \$2.2 million; Strong Workforce Program of \$4 million; and LCFF of \$2.5 million. The presented budget shows the winding down of previous grants.

Mr. Teasdale asked if AB1303 passed would it increase funding for this program. Ms. Key noted that it would, but that additional funding is not included in the budget presentation..

Teen Parenting (previously CalSAFE). This program is paid for by Oxnard Union High School District which contracts with VCOE to provide these services.

Mr. Mantooth expressed his appreciation for the directors and their programs. He also complimented the business office staff. In this organization, people who work in the business office know that the numbers represent students, staff and programs, and they work hard to develop appropriate budgets.

This item was presented for information only.

2. Report from Subcommittee on Ventura County Board of Education Goals and Objectives

Mr. Mantooth stated that at the April 22, 2019 Board meeting, the Board adopted three focus areas for advocacy efforts: Special Education funding, Career Technical Education funding, and Increased LCFF Base Revenue Funding.

Ms. Ulrich suggested adding bullet points under Career Education noting that grants have been drying up and that would impact the program.

Mr. Teasdale thanked staff for their efforts on the talking points. Reduced funding or lack of increased funding both impact programs. He requested additional stories that identify where there are challenges and how additional funding would help staff to do an even better job; i.e., more funding at Triton would allow students to go on field trips to attain skills that would allow them to become more independent.

Ms. Ulrich stated that as a teacher at Oxnard Community College, she can see the effects of high quality early education. There is a skill differences in the college students. A lot of money is being spent on remediation classes instead of on regular education courses and this could be avoided with more quality early education.

Mr. Teasdale and Ms. Ulrich asked the Board what they want to do with these talking points; what are the next steps in advocacy efforts?

Dr. Flores suggested that Board members go to their local school districts and discuss out common goals. Present them with information and/or request their participation in advocacy efforts.

Mr. Collins suggested the Board develop a resolution that incorporates the talking points and ask the local boards to adopt a similar resolution. Mr. Mantooth noted that the district superintendents support these areas of advocacy.

Dr. Flores noted that in previous years, Board members and senior management went to local school district Board meetings to explain the role of the County Board of Education. For advocacy efforts, Board member could go to local meetings and present what the County Board is suggesting for their advocacy efforts. The Board could also meet with their local legislators.

Mr. Teasdale suggested the Board adopt a resolution and ask local districts to adopt it as well. This might give more persuasive impact. Just as CSBA provides a unity of purpose; this would allow us to present a consensus towards concrete action. Develop a resolution and an action plan to enlist local school districts to support this resolution. Rather than supporting actual bills, support the areas of focus.

Mr. Mantooth noted that staff could create a resolution for the Board's review that could set the stage. We support the specific legislation or the topic of need.

Ms. Ulrich proposed a coordinated plan. Ms. Ulrich suggested that Board Trustees reach out to local board members with a draft resolution before it is passed by this Board

It was determined that staff would create a draft resolution that would be provided to the subcommittee for review prior to presentation to the full Board at their May 28th board meeting. Once finalized, Board members to go to selected local Board members to gauge their approval. Ms. Ulrich cautioned Board members to only meet with a minority of school board members to avoid Brown Act violations. Ms. Ulrich further suggested that Board members reach out to local Board members that may come from a different philosophical background.

Mr. Mantooth stated that the budget is likely to be adopted by June 15 so there is limited time.

Mr. Teasdale requested a draft resolution in the next week. Board members could then forward it or discuss it with local school districts. Emphasize that this is a draft resolution.

Ms. Ulrich noted that with upcoming graduation season, it may not be possible for Boards to adopt a resolution.

M. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

1. Board Members thanked staff for the Budget Study Session.

N. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Options for Increasing Funding for Education – *Rob Collins*
2. Budget and LCAP (*Public Hearing, June 17, 2019; Adoption, June 24, 2019*)

O. FUTURE MEETINGS

Date: ***Tuesday, May 28, 2019***

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: 5100 Adolfo Road, Board Room, Camarillo

Purpose: Regular Meeting of the Board

Date: Monday, June 17, 2019 (*Public Hearing on LCAP & Budget*)

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: 5100 Adolfo Road, Board Room, Camarillo

Purpose: Regular Meeting of the Board

Date: Monday, June 24, 2019 (*Adoption of LCAP & Budget*)

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: 5100 Adolfo Road, Board Room, Camarillo

Purpose: Regular Meeting of the Board

P. ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Flores adjourned the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Adopted by Board Action on 05/28/19.

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