

**VENTURA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF  
July 21, 2020**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

1. Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, and Moment of Reflection  
The Special Meeting of the Ventura County Board of Education, Agenda 20-09, was called to order by Dr. Ramon Flores, Board President, at 1:04 p.m. on Tuesday, July 21, 2020, in the Simi Room of the VCOE Administrative Services Center, 5189 Verdugo Way, Camarillo. Mr. Collins participated in the meeting via ZOOM. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Dr. Flores and followed by a moment of reflection.

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

VCOE Personnel Present:  
Stanley C. Mantooth, Ventura County Superintendent of Schools and Ex-Officio Secretary and Executive Officer of the Board  
Dr. Cesar Morales, Deputy Superintendent, Student Services  
Dr. Antonio Castro, Associate Superintendent, Educational Services  
Dr. Julie Judd, Chief Technology Officer  
Teri Gern, Chief Human Resources Officer  
Nancy Akkerman, Senior Executive Assistant

Approval of Agenda  
Ms. Ulrich moved that agenda be approved. Mr. Teasdale seconded the motion, and the motion carried upon a unanimous roll call vote (5:0).

**B. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**C. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

*Mr. Mantooth presented on the Activities of the Office:*

1. Mr. Mantooth distributed copies of emails from the President and Vice President of the California Association of Student Councils (CASC) requesting an advisor for the coming year. Any interested Board member should contact the office. Dr. Lisagor and Dr. Flores expressed interest.

## **D. DISCUSSION/INFORMATION/ACTION**

1. STUDY SESSION: COVID-19 / Re-Opening of Schools Framework –  
Mr. Mantooth noted that events related to COVID-19 and RE-Opening of Schools are unfolding very rapidly. Informational materials distributed in the packet included notes from the VCOE Extended School Year (ESY) Pilot Program; FAQ prohibiting athletics; Framework for Re-Opening Schools; a letter to Dr. Levin requesting approval of Ventura County school districts' intent to go distance learning only and his response, approving the plan; Governor Newsom's press release prohibiting Counties on the watch list from opening schools in person (this applies to both public schools, charters, and private schools), a resulting VCOE Press Release; and a list of media outreach that has taken place.

### Extended School Year (ESY) Pilot Program

Dr. Morales provided an overview of the ESY Pilot program that was operated by VCOE. VCOE was in constant communication with staff during the pilot program and a nurse was available at all sites. The program had an expectation that masks would be worn and social distance would be maintained. As expected, the preschool aged students had a problem in practice. Teachers wore face shields and disposable masks. The lightweight nature was appreciated. Shields were provided. Some staff wore gowns. VCOE has access to all this equipment.

Teachers and paras had great attitudes and worked to problem solve each day. It was important to have a nurse on site as they were excellent at responding to questions immediately and de-escalating the anxiety levels. Concerns included having students have their own supplies and the frequency of cleaning that has to be done. Experimented with various disinfecting solutions. Ones that can be sprayed and then evaporate worked the best.

This pilot program was achievable because of the very small size of our enrollment. If schools were operating, the frequency of cleaning playground equipment would be problematic. What do you do if a student sneezes, or has a temperature? Temporal thermometers are being distributed by the State to districts, but are not as accurate as we would like.

The pilot was very informative and will be very useful for re-entry planning. The distance learning will allow extra time for planning.

Mr. Teasdale asked about increased cost of opening. Staffing was 100% during the pilot which won't occur during the school year. The cost of cleaning equipment was double and the time needed for cleaning was double. There will be an expense for ongoing communication with a nurse. Little things surface throughout the day and they need time for a response. What will we do if we have all 10 calls in operation? Simple questions, even from staff members, needed responses.

Ms. Ulrich asked if there were any COVID-19 cases? Dr. Morales noted that a non-classroom staff member who came in for 4 hours and worked in proximity with the office manager and the principal was tested. No students were affected. The administrator was given a precautionary test. The results came in 5 and 8 days later which was tough because they could not return to work. This is a definite concern. A quicker turn-around time for test results is needed. Another employee was tested and did not return until a negative result was received.

Ms. Ulrich stated that the ripple-effect on staffing will be problematic. She knows that they are working to have quicker test results. Dr. Morales stated that the issue of substitute teachers also needs to be addressed. Another issue was the hours that Ventura County Public Health is open. We have communicated to VCPH regarding these needs. If districts open, they will need a hotline type number where they can reach someone, and that number needs to be staffed afterhours. VCPH needs to assist schools in determining whether or not a classroom or school should be closed and the appropriate messaging that will need to go out very quickly.

Dr. Lisagor expressed his appreciation for the pilot program. This is such a challenge for staff, especially considering the different programs that we offer. The budgetary impact is going to be around staffing. Ms. Ulrich noted that the office may need extra staff members on hold, so the programs can continue. Mr. Teasdale noted that this cost will be very large.

Dr. Lisagor asked if the current distance learning will be for the full first semester. Mr. Morales noted that right now it is unknown. Presently the county would need to be off the watch list for 14 days and it doesn't look like this will happen soon. Likely distance learning will be in place through the fall. Other considerations, should it be phased in. The additional costs associated with the Special Education students are going to have to be adsorbed by the districts.

Dr. Morales added that the parents were phenomenal. They were extremely appreciative. Opening or closing our schools is especially tough due to the very intense nature of the needs of our students.

Mr. Mantooth noted that whatever happens, it will happen quickly and the districts are planning for all contingencies.

Mr. Teasdale questioned the costs of a safe school opening, even if it is staggered. Are there any models on how much that will cost. Would we need a smaller student/teacher ratio? Dr. Morales notes that our present smaller enrollment allows us to operate within the social distance guidelines. The additional costs are hard to quantify. We will need additional custodial staff; and that additional bus runs will cost \$60,000. This number could double and triple based on cleaning requirements. We don't currently have the monetary resources to do this correctly.

Framework for Reopening Ventura County Schools.

Each district has its governance body and therefore their own plan for reopening; but the districts have agreed to come up with a degree of commonality. The framework was adopted with the input of Ventura County Public Health (VCPH). The framework was adopted and is to be used as a guidance document. Reopening plans are to be submitted to the County Office of Education for review.

Dr. Flores noted the very diverse demographics of the different districts. This is such a problem due to the disparity. This virus is hurting the people who can least afford to deal with it. There are some commonalities.

Dr. Castro noted that Dawn Anderson, VCOE Director of Comprehensive Health, and VCPH staff, assisted the Task Force throughout the development of the plan. The Task Force worked to develop a document that would provide guidance on how schools could be opened. Special Education guidance, health guidelines and a template that can be used to help the LEA determine if it is meeting the requirements, are included in the document. District Re-Opening Plans will be evaluated by the County Office of Education and then passed on to VCPH when completed. The document is practical and defensible.

Dr. Lisagor asked about distance learning – is our role to provide training for teachers on how to provide distance learning? It is clear that access to information gap will grow. Dr. Castro noted that many of the districts have been developing this expertise for a long time, especially the high schools. The challenge is to leverage that learning to all students, including the youngest learners. We know we can provide instruction to high school and middle school students through distance learning, but the true challenge is to teach younger children. This puts more burden on the parents.

Dr. Judd reported that for the past 4 months, VOCE has worked to provide technical training on software applications – Google, Google Classrooms, Zoom, and Canvas which is used widely across the county. VCOE will be providing support on Canvas, through a trainer of trainers model. We are developing real time and any time models for learning and teaching. Real time learning with the student and anytime learning for reinforcement. Media literacy and digital access continues. We have repurposed a full-time employee to join the technology staff to focus only on this project.

Ms. Ulrich suggested reaching out to the Community College District as they are already providing training on Canvas to their teachers. Dr. Judd noted that staff has been in contact with the private universities but will contact VCCCD as well.

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Dr. Castro noted that VCOE has continued to provide professional development during the shutdown. Our employees have had to learn to utilize Zoom, but we have been able to reach out to 100 participants. Dr. Judd noted that VCOE has an unlimited number of basic ZOOM accounts that can be provided.

Dr. Flores asked about service providers – has there been movement in providing connectivity? Dr. Judd noted that she is in constant contact with all of the district Technology Directors. We have distributed 200 Mifi devices; and our vendors – Spectrum and Verizon - are working to provide alternate methods of connectivity for areas like Briggs. Simi Valley has installed a Ham radio network to add WiFi to the neighborhoods. We continue to look at options. Devices have been attached to stadium lights at the high schools. Thousand Oaks Rotary has provided financial resources. The local credit union will be doing so as well. Businesses are providing funding.

Ms. Ulrich expressed her appreciation for all the work being done to provide for students' learning. The connectivity, the devices and the lessons can be provided, but we still do not know how the students will absorb the knowledge. We cannot measure the education loss but we know it will be huge.

Mr. Teasdale asked if we know the percentage of students that do or don't have connectivity at this time. Dr. Judd noted that the guestimate is that 85-90% of students now have connectivity. VCOE continues to research possibilities for problem areas. Spectrum provides cabling to a house. For a minimum of 25 clients the cost is \$50 per month. Briggs has 500 students and 11 households that need access. One suggestion is how might we be able to share resources based on where people live.

Mr. Teasdale asked if we have heard rumors of many teachers retiring because they don't want to change to distance learning? Districts are acknowledging the differences in teachers. District must look at what are all the different scenarios that give the freedom to work with their teachers along with the credentialing accountability and has a system that is flexible for teacher needs.

Mr. Mantooth noted that education is experiencing a huge change but it is incumbent upon us to make those changes so students can continue to learn. Staff are scared and concerned; yet there still need to be rules for those that might take advantage; or for those who may have health concerns or other issues at home. VCOE has a positive relationship with our union and they have been open and willing to work with us. Our teachers are there to help their students, but they have expressed their concerns. Some staff members are unhappy with technology based learning and there may be 1-2 retirements as a result. We have a re-entry committee with classified and certificated personnel who will try to determine the best answers. Another huge question is what do our staff who have children at home do if their children do not return to school.

Dr. Flores asked what flexibility can be provided for teachers. Dr. Morales noted that teachers are essential workers. Our teachers attended 100% of professional development on distance learning. They are all committed to teaching, but we do need to have flexibility. We may have to allow teachers to deliver distance learning in their classrooms and have paras there as well to provide the small school instruction. We are working with the JPA to determine if school aged children of staff could come to the classroom as long as social distancing is provided. We would need to also consider the needs to classified staff. We and the districts will have to bend a little during this time. Communication with our unions is very positive. Communication with the districts is positive.

All the districts had the intention to return to on site teaching. This period of required distance learning will provide for more planning time to re-entry, but there will still be anxiety when we return to in person instruction.

Ms. Gern reported that employees are fearful and that is valid. Each situation has to be addressed. Can the employee work at home? If they have to be home because of their elderly parent; there is FMLA leave. We are trying to be very accommodating. Whatever we are doing, we are doing it with compassion. Retirements are not an easy solution as it is based on a formula of years of service and age. Someone who is already considering retirement may choose to retire early, but it is unlikely someone would retire early as a result of COVID.

Ms. Ulrich noted that at the Community College level there are teachers who are resistant to distance learning. All Community Colleges are using Canvas. Dr. Morales added that the Career Education Center is working to move all their courses onto Canvas so it can be used for both in person and virtual instruction. VCOE has been asked to provide a statewide training. Migrant students are attending summer school is very large numbers. Teachers are contacting students by phone. We continue to operate outside of the box.

Mr. Mantooth noted that the Educator Support and Effectiveness program has been working hard to work to support student teachers in these new areas.

Mr. Teasdale asked if there is any training for parents on how to be better coaches for their students. Mr. Mantooth noted that there are a number of resources for parents on our website. This item was presented for information only.

2. Approval of Submission of Request for Allowance of Attendance Due to Emergency Conditions (Form J-13A) for VCOE Operated Programs

Mr. Mantooth explained that during the Easy Fire, VCOE operated programs experienced a loss of revenue due to the need for school closures and a material decrease in attendance when schools resumed. Education Code includes provisions for substitution of estimated days of attendance for actual days of attendance and that LCFF apportionments be maintained and instructional time credited when losses are experienced due to the nature of the emergency.

Ms. Ulrich moved the Board approve the claim of a Request for Allowance of Attendance Due to Emergency Conditions (Form J-13A) for VCOE Operated programs to be submitted to the California Department of Education.

Mr. Teasdale seconded the motion, and the motion carried upon a unanimous roll call vote (5:0).

3. Cancellation of Regular Board Meeting of July 27, 2020 and Change in Start Time for the August 24, 2020 Board meeting

Mr. Mantooth suggested that the Regular Board Meeting of July 27, 2020 be cancelled. Mr. Mantooth also noted that the Mary E. Samples Center will be completed by the August 24<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. He suggested that a small scale Grand Opening Celebration be held to ensure that this Board, which approved the various components of the project, and Mary Samples, be recognized and a tour of the building be held. To accomplish this, he suggested that the August 24<sup>th</sup> meeting begin a 5:00 p.m. Mr. Teasdale

Mr. Teasdale moved the Regular Board Meeting of July 27, 2020 be cancelled. Dr. Lisagor seconded the motion, and the motion carried upon a unanimous roll call vote (5:0)

Ms. Ulrich moved the start time of the August 24, 2020 meeting be changed to 5:00 p.m. Mr. Teasdale seconded the motion, and the motion carried upon a unanimous roll call vote (5:0).

## **E. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

1. Dr. Lisagor noted he has been working with a group of students on a program, "Justice in the Classroom" which addresses Racial Inequities.

Dr. Lisagor also had a meeting with Senator Stern regarding school re-opening and it exposed how concerned and anxious everyone is about the pandemic and the budgetary concerns. The liability issues are also a huge concern.

2. Mr. Teasdale thanked everyone for the work they are doing.
3. Ms. Ulrich reported that she will be attending a CCBE Retreat via Zoom on July 31<sup>st</sup> and August 1<sup>st</sup>. The CCBE Fall Conference will likely be held online. Registration information has not yet been distributed. Please let Ms. Ulrich know if you have any items to bring up with CCBE. Mr. Teasdale will be presented for CCBE Vice President. CSBA is still planning for an in-person Annual Conference in Anaheim.

## **F. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Annual Parent Notification – *August, 2020*
2. Review and Adoption of 2020-21 Courses of Study – *August/September, 2020.*

**G. FUTURE MEETINGS**

Date: Monday, July 27, 2020  
Time: 6:00 p.m.  
Location: 5100 Adolfo Road, Board Room, Camarillo  
Purpose: Regular Meeting of the Board

Date: Monday, August 24, 2020  
Time: 5:00 p.m.  
Location: 5100 Adolfo Road, Board Room, Camarillo  
Purpose: Regular Meeting of the Board

**H. ADJOURNMENT**

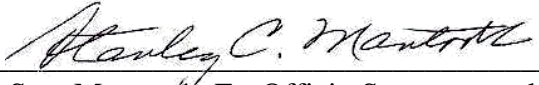
Dr. Flores adjourned the meeting at 2:52 p.m. in memory of Mr. Marty Bates, former Board member, who passed away on July 9, 2020.

**Minutes Approved by Board Action on 08/24/20**

August 24, 2020  
Date

  
Dr. Ramon Flores, Board President

August 24, 2020  
Date

  
Stan Mantooth, Ex-Officio Secretary and  
Executive Officer of the Board

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