

## **Special Meeting of Board of Education - Conducted Telephonically 5:30 p.m. (Monday, September 21, 2020)**

### **1. Call To Order :**

The meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m.

### **1.2 Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Dr. Ryan Smith, Assistant Superintendent-Secondary Educational Services

### **1.3 Roll Call**

#### **Members present**

Vivian Hansen, Yesenia Cuarenta, Sonia De Leon, Linda Garcia, Carmen Gomez

### **1.4 Special Meeting Agenda September 21, 2020**

Approve the Special Meeting Agenda September 21, 2020.

Motion by Carmen Gomez, second by Sonia De Leon.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Vivian Hansen, Yesenia Cuarenta, Sonia De Leon, Linda Garcia, Carmen Gomez

### **2. Public Hearing**

Procedural: 2.1 Hearing Guidelines

**Anonymous** - Several districts and schools have given specific anticipated return dates for their schools. For example, "our school will return no sooner than X day, regardless if we are allowed to or not." It would be very helpful if PUSD would also come to a decision on a "no sooner than" date so that we can somewhat feel of a sense of certainty as to how long we will be making adjustments to lesson plans, teaching style, etc in this virtual set up. Will it be December? January? After spring break? Or the full year as so many universities and districts have already committed to?

**Anonymous** - We have meetings, just to have meeting. I am capable of doing my job without having three meeting and training e every week. All this does is stress the teaching staff out. We would all retire if we could. Too much.

**Anonymous** - Why am I having so many informal observations during distance learning? We weren't even a month into school and I had two informal observations.

**Anonymous** - Thanks for the opportunity to share my point of view. I am a teacher at PHS, but I don't want my identity known. A colleague here wrote the board criticizing our district for not doing enough to help students get internet access. This person's criticism was wrong and misinformed. Everyday, I read article after article about how many students across the state and country are lacking internet access. I'm actually going to use these in a Socratic seminar discussion in my English classes this week. I know that internet access is an issue in PUSD like everywhere else, but it is SO MUCH better here than everywhere else, and that's due to our ed tech and IT team. Based on what I read in both the LA Times and NY Times this weekend, there are nationwide shortages of hotspots, connectivity issues with them, and problems with cost. Despite all of that, our district continues to find them, hand them out, and support families. Last week, two of my students received new hotspots and were able to participate in my classes easier and more regularly than before. A few weeks ago, one of my students swapped hers out for one that worked better in her neighborhood (I guess Verizon doesn't work everywhere in Paramount). Teachers should take a minute and inform themselves before criticizing our district publicly. It makes us all look bad when they do that. I've

taught here for 9 years now and virtually everyone I work with at PHS acknowledges that PUSD is a great place and is doing all that it can for its students. The board should realize that the criticism they hear isn't representative of the views of most teachers.

**Anonymous** - I do agree students should return to school in person. We have to learn to live with this virus and it is very challenging to work through a screen. As an aid assistant, I cannot even practice all of what I've been trained for. I can see through a screen every day how parents have no control over the behavior of their children very Opposite of How in class as an aid I can handle it very fast and very well. Kids constantly walk away from the screen, others don't show up to class, others are distracted, the noise around every home infiltrates and causes disruption, others need a hot spot, other students have connection problems. We have more problems on line. If we go back to school, we only have 1 problem, the virus so we need to deal with this one problem than with so many other problems that have arise in front of us and impede a successful academic achievement. I say we go back. If we would have gone back in August, by now, we would have been ahead and surviving in person learning. We've been wasting time experimenting a failing Online learning system. Let's go back in person and move on.

**Anonymous** - As a mod/severe special education teacher for the past 28 years, I am deeply concerned about a return of our staff and students to the classroom. This population of students is the least likely to follow the CDC guidelines for returning. They exhibit sensory, cognitive, medical, behavioral issues. They will have the most difficulties wearing face masks and with social distancing. They need physical assistance to cover their nose and mouth when they cough and sneeze and then physical assistance with washing hands with many having aversions to hand sanitizer. Also, many of these students require physical assistance in the restroom and some are diapered and are dependent on staff to perform the duty of ensuring that they are clean. The return to school needs to consider the safety of the students along with the educational benefit of the students. It is difficult to comprehend how students can benefit from being in a classroom that would need to spend the majority of their day trying to keep them safe. Staff will need to be constantly enforcing that students keep masks on, social distance, and keep hands and all surfaces clean. They would be unable to use materials and everything would need to be put away. Students would need to be isolated with their devices to complete their lessons online. Their education would be similar to what they are currently receiving except for the threat of contracting the COVID -19 virus and spreading it to their families at home. In addition to the students in the classroom, the safety of the staff needs to be addressed. We need to work closely with students that have behavioral issues. These students may hit, kick, bite, spit, etc. which puts all of us in danger. We all have families depend on us. As much as I look forward to the day I can return to the classroom to be with my students in person, I don't think that this is the population that can do so safely.

**Anonymous** - How can we bring back SH classes with out plexiglass partitions in place in the classrooms? Since kids won't be going to their PE classes... when will we work on all of the overdue IEPs? Will we be paid for keeping kids during our conference time and teaching online (for the kids the parents keep home)?

**Anonymous** - Hello. I'm a special education teacher at a middle school. I'm very concerned about the distance learning plan in place. I am so overwhelmed with planning to teach, the scheduling, IEPs, and how many meetings there are. I've tried to voice my concerns to my administrators but felt like it wasn't heard. So now I wanted to ask the Board Members to reconsider the plan. We need more planning time and better plans in place to address our needs. We're trying our best to get everything completed but thats at the sacrifice of our sleep, health, and well being. We want more help from aides and a better schedule for them. We need a better schedule to plan. We need less meetings at our sites. We need time to write our IEPs. Thank you for listening and I hope you will address our concerns.

**Kari Schavezz Mod/Severe Teacher** - To Our Esteemed Board Members, As a Mod/Severe teacher, I am wholly committed to assuring that my students, their families, and my aides experience the best distance learning experience that I can provide. While it has been challenging to say the least, I do think a return to our classrooms puts our students, their multi-generational families, our aides, and teachers at extreme risk. If you are at all familiar with the mod/severe population, you will know that safety protocols will be impossible to enforce due to our students' needs

**Amie Steward** - Good evening President Hanson, Board members, Dr. Perez, and PUSD leaders. Tonight, I would simply like to quote a paragraph from a 2018 NEA article, in hopes that we will commit to collaborate. Quote "A good relationship takes time to build, and along the way, trust is formed, collaboration grows, and the collective does better. The same holds true when district leaders, unions/associations, and school boards work together. Decades of research support this claim, and the results show gains in student achievement, improved school climate, increases in teacher retention, and both principals and association representatives being seen as stronger resources by educators at their school. To get these positive outcomes, one thing must happen first: you must start somewhere." End quote Tonight is the night to start somewhere. If our district, school board, union, and stakeholders can not figure out a professional and respectful way to work together, we will never reach our full potential. We are working together for one thing: children. Let's please remember this going forward.

**Anonymous** - It is very difficult to put into words, how I feel right now. The best word I can use is disappointed. I have never felt such a lack of support from my district in all the years I have worked here. I am exhausted every day. This job has affected my mental health and home life. I have to spend so much time adapting our curriculums for online teaching it leaves little to no time for anything else. This is a horrible feeling. I feel like I can no longer be innovative with my lessons, it takes too long to just create basic online materials. I am Google I and II certified, and very technology proficient. If this is how I feel, I can imagine how my coworkers that are less technology savvy are feeling at this time. Our district curriculum department has left us to drown. They have provided us with no useful material, their trainings, as Kelly Morales put it, "taught us how to fish"... This is outrageous. Our Paramount teachers were very clear. They wanted online made materials to help them get started with planning, instead we got the EXACT SAME curriculum guides. There was no meaningful change. It has all been left on the shoulders of our teachers. Yet, all expectations remain the same. We get no support but are expected to do it all as if we were in school. Create, take attendance multiple times, check in at home, take care of SEL, grade, troubleshoot technology... teachers are overwhelmed, discouraged, and exhausted, and PUSD is too blame.

**Heather Van Eede** -Good evening President Hansen, board members , Dr. Perez and executive cabinet, I hope you enjoyed your weekend and are staying safe. I love working in Paramount, our students are amazing and full of potential. Over the last several weeks of distance learning I have realized that our professionalism is being called into question. As teachers we know what our students needs are and what is best for them. It seems like lately there have been a lot of people who are not in the classroom making suggestions and causing many teachers to feel as if they are not doing enough, when we already feel that way. We are doing more work then ever and working twice as hard to build connections with our students. I understand that observations, suggestions and coaching is part of the process but it is overwhelming the teachers and making them feel unappreciated. Thank you so much for your time.

**April O'Connor** - Good evening school board president VIVIAN Hanson, school board members, Superintendent Dr Perez, executive cabinet and guests. Tonight when reviewing the plan I would like to share that over the fast four years the amount of spending for consultants has nearly tripled. Continuing this trend during a pandemic with spending away from the classroom is a source of concern for educators. There are needs educators, para professionals, parents and staff see and their

voices are not heard. Site LCAP funds for purchasing consulting services need to go through site school site council committees which consist of community members, educators and administrators. There were no school site council meetings since last year and we continue to approve consultants and it is disproportionate from site to site. We desire to work collaboratively with parents and stakeholders, determining the best use of our resources to support the academic success and safety of our students and staff . Currently Csea does not have an agreement for safety protocols. We have one on one testing to begin on sites with staff members and safety cleaning protocols have not been published. As we move forward with serving our most vulnerable population, educators and parents need to be part of the planning to ensure safety. Valuable input from all stakeholders in a transparent process is the way we will make sure our students and staff are safe. This plan should reflect that process and currently does not. We need better communication, collaboration and partnership that is focused on our students. Thank you for listening. April O'Connor TAP president

**Daniel Hasheminejad** - Good evening Paramount friends. I'm speaking as a teacher in the district who has served this community since 2003. It's been frustrating to see the increasing amount of top-down decision making by a few PUSD district-level employees, resulting in decreased outcomes for students. The lack of true collaboration is most to blame. District officials with no student contact are making sweeping changes with no sound rationale, no meaningful data. It's clear that the board is aware of these practices, yet district leadership continues to operate unilaterally. I am motivated by our board's commitment to true collaboration. Newer teachers expect their feedback and responses to survey questions to be taken into consideration; however, any teacher who has been in PUSD for more than a year or two knows better. When the district asks for our input, a decision has already been made. The most disappointing aspect is the failure to monitor and adjust when things aren't working. There is no debate and discussion with district leadership to see what worked and what failed. Criticism is viewed as negativity; appeasement is chosen over improving student outcomes. Education is most successful when the best ideas are brought to the forefront, not when people in power operate with impunity. I am confident that our board will address this.

**Judy Johnson** - My oldest is a senior at paramount high. He is using Khan Academy in his math class and I am very happy that this is available to him now. He always had trouble with math so this helps a lot. He also met a new counselor from USC who is helping him with getting ready for college apps. Mrs Garcia is very helpful and he likes her a lot. A teacher I talk to at the school mentioned that some of you voted against these things and others that help kids. I couldn't believe that when I heard that and she encouraged me to speak out today. Why would any of you vote against these good things? Thanks to those of you who did vote for them. I have two other kids in Paramount schools so they will be helped too. I am an involved parent and will be watching you closely in the future.

**Christina Alarcon** - hello, if you guys would be willing to help us work in the class yourselves and be helping us toilet the kids and cleaning up after them and make sure that they keep their masks on and then will be more than happy to return to work. If you guys are present, in the class hands on, then I will be more than happy to return. I don't think it would be very smart for the first returning group of students to return would be moderate to severe students. I think that The General Ed group would have a lot more success.

### **3. Action Items**

Action: 3.1 Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan for the 2020-21 school year  
Approve the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan for the 2020-21 school year.

Motion by Carmen Gomez, second by Linda Garcia.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Vivian Hansen, Yesenia Cuarenta, Sonia De Leon, Linda Garcia, Carmen Gomez

#### **4. Adjournment**

The Board adjourned the Special meeting September 21, 2020 at 5:58 p.m.

Motion by Carmen Gomez, second by Vivian Hansen.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yea: Vivian Hansen, Yesenia Cuarenta, Sonia De Leon, Linda Garcia, Carmen Gomez