

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES
GOVERNING BOARD OF THE LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Including Charter Items

333 South Beaudry Avenue, Board Room

12:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 28, 2021

Board Members may participate by telephone or teleconference
as allowed by California Executive Order N – 25 – 2
which suspends specific provisions of the Open Meeting Laws.

The Los Angeles Board of Education acting as the Governing Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District met in special session on Wednesday, April 28, 2021, at the Administrative Offices, Board Room, 333 South Beaudry Avenue, Los Angeles, California.

Executive Officer of the Board Jefferson Crain called the meeting to order at 12:50 p.m.

The following Board Members were present via teleconference: Ms. Mónica García, Dr. George J. McKenna, III, Mr. Nick Melvoin, Ms. Ortiz Franklin, Mr. Scott Schmerelson, and Ms. Kelly Gonez.

Ms. Jackie Goldberg arrived via teleconference at 12:58 p.m.

Deputy Superintendent Megan Reilly was present via teleconference.

Board President Gonez welcomed everyone in attendance and shared remarks regarding the reopening of schools. Mr. Schmerelson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

NEW BUSINESS FOR ACTION

BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORT NO. 314 – 20/21

UTLA-LAUSD Sideletter on Physical Reopening of Schools for Special Education, Designated Instructional Services, Health and Human Services, and Arts and Physical Education Itinerants

Mr. Schmerelson moved that the report be adopted. Dr. McKenna seconded the motion.

President Gonez passed the gavel to Board Member Melvoin and left the room.

The following speakers addressed the Board:

Alison Bacon
Sara (last name not given)
Louise Salomon
Jenna Schwartz

Mr. Melvoin asked staff to provide an update to the Board regarding the challenges of COVID-19 testing and mask requirements for students with disabilities at a future meeting.

On roll call vote, the report was adopted, 6 ayes. Ms. Gonez was absent.

Later in the meeting, Ms. Gonez recorded an aye vote on the report.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORT NO. 327 – 20/21
Approval of the California Community Partnership Grant Award

Mr. Schmerelson moved that the report be adopted. Mr. Melvoin seconded the motion.

Ms. Goldberg shared remarks regarding the State of California supporting the innovation of community schools.

Ms. Alison Yoshimoto-Towery, Chief Academic Officer, said the District currently has 30 community schools. Staff will provide the list of schools to the Board.

On roll call vote, the report was adopted, 6 ayes. Ms. Gonez was absent.

Later in the meeting, Ms. Gonez recorded an aye vote on the report.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Charter Petitions for Public Hearing (040-20/21)

Beckford Charter for Enriched Studies

Consideration of the level of support for a renewal affiliated conversion charter petition, designated by the state as high performing, requesting to serve up to 600 students in grades K-5 beginning its next term in the 2021-22 school year, with a proposed location of 19130 Tulsa Street, Northridge, CA 91326.

George Ellery Hale Charter Academy

Consideration of the level of support for a renewal affiliated conversion charter petition, designated by the state as high performing, requesting to serve up to 2,167 students in grades 6-8 beginning its next term in the 2021-22 school year, with a proposed location of 23830 Califa Street, Woodland Hills, CA 91367.

Pomelo Community Charter

Consideration of the level of support for a renewal affiliated conversion charter petition, designated by the state as high performing, requesting to serve up to 601 students in grades TK-5 beginning its next term in the 2021-22 school year, with a proposed location of 7633 March Avenue, West Hills, CA 91304.

Calabash Charter Academy

Consideration of the level of support for a renewal affiliated conversion charter petition, designated by the state as middle performing, requesting to serve up to 465 students in grades TK-5 beginning its next term in the 2021-22 school year, with a proposed location of 23055 Eugene Street, Woodland Hills, CA 91364.

Riverside Drive Charter

Consideration of the level of support for a renewal affiliated conversion charter petition, designated by the state as middle performing, requesting to serve up to 510 students in grades TK-5 beginning its next term in the 2021-22 school year, with a proposed location of 13061 Riverside Drive, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423.

Sherman Oaks Elementary

Consideration of the level of support for a renewal affiliated conversion charter petition, designated by the state as middle performing, requesting to serve up to 749 students in grades TK-5 beginning its next term in the 2021-22 school year, with a proposed location of 14755 Greenleaf Street, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403.

Mr. Jefferson Crain, Executive Officer of the Board, made the following statement:

This constitutes a public hearing for

- Beckford Charter for Enriched Studies
- George Ellery Hale Charter Academy
- Pomelo Community Charter
- Calabash Charter Academy
- Riverside Drive Charter
- Sherman Oaks Elementary

A maximum of 12 individuals who wish to address the Board on this item will be heard. Speakers signed up in advance on the website to speak.

The Board will be taking action on the charter petitions at a subsequent meeting. Petitions denied may be submitted directly to the Los Angeles County Office of Education or directly to the State for action.

President Gonez returned to the meeting and assumed the Chair.

The following speaker addressed the Board:

David Tokofsky

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORTS

PATH TO RECOVERY

Ms. Megan Reilly, Deputy Superintendent, introduced the topic.

Ms. Pia Escudero, Executive Director, Student Health & Human Services, provided an update on the Path to Recovery Plan that will support the mental health and wellbeing of students. She said the District has the largest cadre of trauma informed student health and human services personnel. The District’s plan is to provide 4-5 support personnel at each school site by ensuring the overarching equity investments such as the American Rescue Plan, Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER), Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services Plan, and the Black Student Achievement Plan are all aligned and ready to serve the individual students and the school sites. District staff will implement an integrated and comprehensive approach at each school site and focus on the following five areas of service: mental health, child welfare and attendance, community partnerships and resources, referral, linkage and case management, and school climate.

Ms. Escudero discussed some of the equity investments the District is making at the school site level and the communities of schools level to meet the needs of students. She discussed a trauma resilient informed Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Framework to support student mental health at all levels, looking at what all students need, what targeted students need, and what intensive students need. This may involve counseling or an array of specific services, school-wide support, and community of school support. There will be an additional 1,439 personnel to support the school sites and community of schools.

Ms. Escudero spoke about the Critical Wellness Index. Staff is using external and internal data to help determine where schools need to focus and understand what type of services schools need. Applying this tool will help to prioritize staffing at each school site and community school, and provide student and family wellness centers based on need.

Ms. Alison Yoshimoto-Towery, Chief Academic Officer, spoke about the Primary Promise, the District’s commitment to make sure every learner leaves third grade with the reading skills, math, and critical thinking skills that serve as a foundation for the rest of each student’s educational success. She spoke about how the Primary Promise is a multi-tiered system of support for literacy. The program goals for year one focus on the acceleration of reading progress for all students.

Ms. Carlen Powell, Administrator, Elementary Instruction, said there are 226 Primary Promise schools that span all Local Districts and Board Districts. Staff looked at the early literacy Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) data and identified schools that had a large percentage of students scoring in the well below benchmark and below benchmark. In addition, staff prioritized for disparities of achievement of African American students and English Learners. All Primary Promise schools are high need and highest needs Student Equity Needs Index (SENI) schools and have at least 40% or greater of their students demonstrating the need of extra support in early literacy.

Ms. Powell spoke about the personnel for the Primary Promise schools. Each school received a Primary Promise Intervention Teacher and an Instructional Aide for literacy. She highlighted their duties and expectations. The District hired 199 of 226 Primary Promise Intervention Teachers for \$18.4 million and 201 of 226 Primary Promise Instructional Aides for \$7.9 million.

Ms. Yoshimoto-Towery said the District is working with District Management Group to support a subset of Primary Promise schools with a focused approach on first grade literacy. The cost for Break Through Teams was \$1.5 million. She provided data regarding student growth.

Ms. Powell briefly highlighted other investments: \$2.6 million for part time intervention teachers, \$539,000 for the school leadership team Action Seminar, \$500,000 for research evaluation, \$3.8 million for the Orton Gillingham Approach Professional Learning Series, \$8.3 million for English Language Arts and Math materials, and \$240,000 for the Early Literacy Micro-Credential Program. She shared a brief video of Ms. Martha Munoz, Teacher, Valerio Street Elementary, who spoke about her experience with the reading Micro-Credential Program. Ms. Yoshimoto-Towery shared remarks from teachers who participated in the reading Micro-Credential Program. She briefly spoke about the proposed actions and investments for year two: \$100 million for literacy investments and \$100 million for focus on mathematics.

Ms. Ortiz Franklin asked what other budgetary topics staff would address at future meetings such as for arts education and outdoor education. She asked what mental health positions were already in place and what positions will the District be hiring. Ms. Reilly presented a slide shared from a previous meeting showing what staff has been working on for the path to recovery with a breakdown of the expenditures. She said at each Board meeting staff would delve into different topics to discuss what staff is proposing. Ms. Escudero said staff is looking into what positions were purchased by school sites. Staff wants to honor the positions already purchased and provide additional staff as needed.

Mr. Joel Cisneros, Director of School Mental Health, spoke about the university partners and employment recruitment efforts. He said staff is also working with KLCS to put together various public service announcements and working with Human Resources to publicize messaging on social media, and various platforms for recruitment.

Mr. William Celestine, Director of Wellness Programs, spoke about the university partners and about the bachelor level students who have an interest of working with students. Staff is working to create engaging content to encourage undergraduate students to be a part of LAUSD.

Ms. Ortiz Franklin asked how many positions the District is hiring before the Board has approved a budget. Ms. Goldberg said waiting for budget authority hinders the hiring of individuals who are interested in working for the District. Ms. Reilly said the District's capacity limitations would be based on the number of people we have to work the programs and decisions will be based on an equity lens.

Mr. Melvoin asked out of the 1439 FTEs, how many are already employed by the District. Ms. Reilly said staff would research and provide the information.

In response to a question, Ms. Escudero and Mr. Celestine responded to how the Critical Wellness Index aligns with SENI. Mr. Melvoin requested staff provide a list of schools and community schools indexed based on the tool. Mr. Melvoin said there are other elements of mental health support such as art, music, play based approaches, and outdoor learning. He would like to discuss these topics at a future meeting.

Board members discussed the District's approach on providing mental health professionals at every school, how the needs of some schools are different from the needs of other schools, prioritizing District staff at the highest needs schools, and the need for flexible approaches.

Ms. Gonez requested more clarity on the equitable nature of distribution as well as the hiring details of mental health professionals. In addition, she requested staff provide in writing more specificity regarding the Critical Wellness Index, in terms of how those measures are going to be weighted, what the schools look like, and how it aligns with SENI.

Mr. Melvoin said he would like to learn more about the tools we are providing teachers.

Ms. Ortiz Franklin asked staff to submit in writing the formula for the Critical Wellness Index and to provide a comprehensive look at the indices the District uses, what the formulas are, what schools are ranked, how schools are benefiting, and if there is an evaluation process in place. In addition, she requested staff provide an update on the total dollars spent through the Critical Wellness Index. She asked what the District should be learning from all of these indices about our students' needs and how we can streamline the efforts. Ms. Reilly said staff would provide the information.

In response to a question, Ms. Yoshimoto-Towery clarified that Primary Promise teachers and instructional aides focus on direct student support. The Break Through Team investment is to support the system.

Ms. Powell responded to questions regarding the data and teacher positions that were disrupted because of the hiring of the Primary Promise teachers. Ms. Ortiz Franklin requested staff provide the number of classroom teachers that left in the middle of the year.

Ms. Gonez shared remarks about the advocacy for mental health and advocating for state legislation. She would like to see the year two Primary Promise plans and would like to know how staff plans to sustain the gains past the primary grades. She said she would like to discuss how the Primary Promise work connects to upper elementary grades, middle school, and early education at future meetings.

Mr. Melvoin asked for a list of the Primary Promise schools and the specific supports each school is receiving to share with the public.

Ms. Yoshimoto Towery and Ms. Reilly responded to a question regarding the investments for the Primary Promise Program.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Ortiz Franklin moved that the meeting be adjourned in memory of Jose Sierra, Student, Gardena High School.

Mr. Melvoin seconded the motion and asked that the meeting also be adjourned in memory of Ms. Marilyn "Toddy" Richman, and Rabbi Morley Feinstein, Palisades High School parent.

By general consent, the meeting adjourned at 3:25 p.m.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD: **JUNE 8, 2021**



KELLY GONEZ
PRESIDENT



JEFFERSON CRAIN
EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE BOARD

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