



BOARD OF EDUCATION
Minutes of Special Board Meeting
May 25, 2022

CALL TO ORDER/MEETING PLACE

Vice President Menges called the Special Board meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. at the Las Virgenes Unified School District, 4111 Las Virgenes Road, Calabasas, CA.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Angela Cutbill
Dallas Lawrence
Linda Menges
Lesli Stein
Dr. Kate Vadehra, M.D. - participated remotely from 18 Corral Road, Bell Canyon, CA 91307

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

None

STAFF PRESENT

Dr. Daniel Stepenosky, Superintendent
Karen Kimmel, Assistant Superintendent of Business
Dr. Steve Scifres, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
Dr. Clara Finneran, Assistant Superintendent of Education
Dr. Ryan Gleason, Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services (participated remotely)
Laura Kintz, Director of Elementary Education
Hallie Chambers, Director of Human Resources (participated remotely)
Angie Falk, Director of Pupil Services
Jim Klein, Chief Technology Officer

STAFF ABSENT

None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice President Menges.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

There were no comments from the audience on items not on the agenda.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion of Ms. Cutbill, seconded by Ms. Stein, the Board of Education approved the agenda of May 25, 2022.

Board Motion Carried 5:0 as follows:

AYES: Board members Cutbill, Lawrence, Menges, Stein, and Vadehra

NAYES: None

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Study Session: Review of Polling Data was presented. Dr. Stepenosky shared that we have our polling experts and campaign advisors here to share information about their polling study. This is about exploring a possible bond campaign for the November 2022 ballot. The state does not provide funding for capital projects. Of the funds we receive from the state, 85% go to staff salaries. Large capital projects use bond measure funds. In 2019, Dr. Stepenosky and Ms. Kimmel completed a Facilities Needs Assessment. This assessment identified just under \$700m of project repairs/replacements. Many of the air conditioning/heating units are very old and need to be replaced. We ran a bond in March 2020 that lost by 103 votes. During the last 24 months, we have spent \$1.5m in facility upgrades. Our facility needs are quite large. The air conditioning unit at CHS would cost \$7m. We have a unique opportunity to address this bond measure now as Measure R will drop off in 2026. With Measure R dropping off, this will not increase the tax rates.

The Board authorized the District to bring in a consultant and a polling expert to review the feasibility of this bond measure. We have data from 2020 to use as comparison points which is quite helpful. Dr. Stepenosky stated that it is important to note that if we succeed with passing a facilities bond, the funds would stay local. The Board of Education would control the funds under an advisory committee.

Ms. Stein stated that a facilities bond measure can not be spent on salaries. It can only be spent on brick and mortar. Mr. Lawrence stated that it is important for the community to understand how we receive funds. Unfortunately, the state gives us \$3k+ less per student than neighboring districts which amounts to about \$30m less. If we received the amount that our neighboring districts receive, we probably would have already replaced the HVAC unit at CHS which is one of our most needed replacements. Mr. Lawrence stated that a lot of people are under the impression that the property taxes go to the schools. This hasn't occurred since the early 1980's. The property taxes go to the state where they are reapportioned to other urban districts. The responsibility of the upkeep of school facilities is on the community. Ms. Cutbill stated that the last time she looked at the state funding, she found that our neighboring districts receive more than \$3k+/student. It was close to double that amount. Also, the lottery money was supposed to go to education. Ms. Cutbill stated that the lottery money actually also goes to the state and they decide where to send those funds. The lottery money comprises only 1% of our budget.

Tim McLarney, from True North Research, stated the purpose of the study was to determine if a bond measure was feasible, identify how to create a measure consistent with community priorities, and to gather information needed for communication and outreach. The study was completed between April 27, 2022 and May 7, 2022. The random sample that was chosen was 439 District voters who would vote in the November election. The overall margin of error was 4.7%, which means that the results of the survey are 95% accurate. The survey showed that improving the quality of education was at the top of the list for these voters. The initial survey showed that 59% of the voters would vote yes for the bond measure. Typically, you need a 55% positivity rate to follow through with a bond measure. During the initial 75 word ballot statement, it was stated that this measure would not raise taxes, however, it was embedded within the statement. Towards the end of the questionnaire, the voters were asked point blank if they would vote yes knowing that there would be no increase in their taxes. The positivity rate went up to 69%. Mr. McLarney showed a comparison of where the voters were in 2019 versus today. The positivity rate in 2019 was 54%, and now, the positivity rate is 63%. The point that needs to be made clear to the voters is that there would be no tax increase if the bond passes. This study concluded that this bond measure does seem feasible for the November 2022 ballot.

Charles Heath, from TBWBH Props & Measures Strategy and Communications, stated that he is our strategies and communication consultant. At this point, we see that the bond is feasible for the November ballot. It is imperative to communicate the facility needs of the District to the whole community. This includes both parents, teachers and staff who are directly connected to the schools as well as the 70% of older community voters. The older voters will not necessarily be aware of the District needs. Since they will most likely be voting in the November election, they need to be aware of the needs so they can vote yes for the bond measure. Mr. Carty would help the District with their communication to the community. Board members can freely promote the bond measure. The District, being a public agency, is restricted on their communication to the community. Mr. Heath shared that we are able to bold type the title of the 75 word ballot statement, which would have to make clear that there would be no tax rate increase if the bond passes. This is vital to the success of the bond measure passing. Since the District cannot advocate for the bond measure, we need community advocates to step in and lead the communication. Mr. Heath stated the deadline to qualify for the bond is August 12, 2022. He plans to bring a draft resolution to the Board for the June 28, 2022 meeting. The Board would need to approve the final resolution at the August 9, 2022 meeting.

Tim Carty, who is the District financial advisor, stated that currently, there are two bond measures on the L.A. County tax bill, Measure R and Measure G. Both measures appear on one line of the tax bill. The last year of Measure R is 2025-26. If this bond measure passes, the tax would be deferred until Measure R is off the books. The tax for the bond would start in 2026-27. Currently, the Measure R tax rate is \$36.77. With this amount, we can ask for a bond measure of \$340m. Mr. Carty stated that since 2011, the Board of Education has saved the tax payers \$11,164,623 due to the refinancing of Measure R and Measure G. Ms. Stein reiterated that statement and wanted the community to understand that the Board of Education takes advantage of all saving measures when possible. The Board of Education unanimously gave direction to Dr. Stepenosky to move forward with next steps on a Bond measure.

Adam Weinstein, a CHS teacher, spoke about his interest in helping to get the word out about the the needs of passing the bond measure in the November 2022 election.

Amanda Poulos and Tara Maynard stated that they hear from teachers and parents how the schools are aging. They requested that the Board of Education move forward with this bond measure for the November 2022 ballot.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10.22 a.m.

Date Approved

President, Board of Education