



**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Minutes of Regular Board Meeting**  
**January 17, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER/MEETING PLACE**

President Stein called the Board meeting to order at 4:00 p.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

**BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

**STAFF PRESENT**

Dr. Daniel Stepenosky, Superintendent  
Dr. Ryan Gleason, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services  
Dr. Steve Scifres, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources  
Kim Patterson, Director of Secondary Education  
Jana Davenport, Director of Elementary Education  
Hallie Chambers, Director of Human Resources  
Angie Falk, Director of Pupil Services  
Jim Klein, Chief Technology Officer  
Agoura High School Student Representative, Emma Richardson (observed in the audience)  
Calabasas High School Student Representative, Justin Pistotnik (participated on the dais)

**STAFF ABSENT**

None

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Calabasas High School Student Representative, Justin Pistotnik.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

On motion of Mr. Lawrence, seconded by Ms Menges, the Board of Education approved the agenda of January 17, 2023.

Board Motion Carried 4:0 as follows:

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

NAYES: None

Student Preferential Vote Carried 1:0

**ACTION ITEMS - BOARD VACANCY**

1. Interview and Selection of Candidate for Provisional Appointment to Fill Board Vacancy was presented. Dr. Stepenosky stated that on November 26, 2022, Board member Dr. Kate Vadehra passed away after her 18 month battle with ALS. Cabinet and the Board of Education were heartbroken over her passing. The district plans to honor Dr. Vadehra's legacy with a Kindness for Kate Campaign next week. The State of California had two options to fill the Board vacancy. The first option was to hold a special election which would take place in November 2023. LVUSD would be the only agency on the ballot so the cost would be \$1.5m. During the last election, the cost was split among several agencies that were on the ballot. The other option was to appoint a provisional candidate to fulfill the term of the vacancy. The Board of Education voted at the December 13, 2022 meeting 4:0 to appoint a provisional candidate to fulfill the seat vacancy. This vacancy will last until the next Board of Education election which will be November 2024. Ms. Stein stated that we have five candidates. Each candidate will have two minutes for an opening statement. Then the Board of Education will ask four questions which the candidates will have two minutes each to answer. After the

questions, the candidates will have two minutes for a closing statement. The candidates will be interviewed one at a time. The order of the interviews has been determined by alphabetical order of the first names of the candidates. Ms. Stein asked all candidates to vacate the Boardroom. Each candidate will be called in one at a time to make this a fair process.

The following candidates were interviewed: Mr. Alan Lazar, Ms. Jill Gaines, Ms. Kiyomi Kowalski, Mr. Ronald Kaiser, and Mr. Russell Todd Zink.

After the candidates were interviewed, the Board of Education discussed their views. Ms. Stein thanked all the candidates for their passion and their commitment to excellence in education. Ms. Cutbill thanked all five candidates. She stated that the four candidates that were not chosen should not be discouraged. The next election is around the corner. She asked for their continued support. Ms. Cutbill stated that voters choose Board members. She also stated that she was lending support to Ms. Jill Gaines for several reasons. The reasons were as follows: Ms. Gaines has been a Board member before; Ms. Gaines has been voted in for two terms by the voters; and Ms. Gaines has experience with District bonds and parcel taxes. Ms. Menges also thanked the five candidates. She stated that she felt the love for the district in each candidate. She also stated that voters should choose Board members, but we are in a special predicament at this time. Mr. Lawrence also thanked the five candidates. He stated that he was uncomfortable choosing a Board member because the voters should choose. He stated that he was impressed by all candidates, but he was lending support to Ms. Jill Gaines as she has been a member before and has been chosen twice by the voters to serve. Mr. Lawrence was also pleased that Ms. Gaines had planned on only serving this term, leaving the seat open for the next election.

On motion of Ms. Cutbill, seconded by Ms. Menges, the Board of Education approved Ms. Jill Gaines as the Candidate for Provisional Appointment to Fill Board Vacancy.

Board Motion Carried 4:0 as follows:

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

NAYES: None

2. Swearing-In and Administration of Oath of Office to Newly Appointed Board Member. Dr. Stepenosky led Ms. Jill Gaines in taking the Oath of Office. After taking the Oath of Office, Ms. Gaines joined the Board of Education on the dais.

#### **COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE REGARDING ITEMS ON CLOSED AGENDA**

There were two speakers. The first speaker was an LVUSD employee, Mr. Francisco Ruelas. Dr. Scifres stated the charges against him. Ms. Janet Dungca interpreted for Mr. Ruelas. Mr. Ruelas defended himself against the charges brought against him. Ms. Stein stated that the issue would be discussed in closed session and the outcome would be announced at the beginning of the open session. The second speaker was Mr. Kevin Hull who shared comments about District accountability and credibility.

#### **ADJOURNMENT TO CLOSED SESSION**

The Board Adjourned to Closed Session at 5:30 p.m.

#### **ADJOURNMENT OF CLOSED SESSION**

Closed Session Adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

#### **CALL TO ORDER OPEN SESSION**

President Stein reconvened the Board meeting at 6:22 p.m.

#### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Angela Cutbill  
Jill Gaines  
Linda Menges  
Lesli Stein

#### **BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT**

Dallas Lawrence

#### **STAFF PRESENT**

Dr. Daniel Stepenosky, Superintendent  
Dr. Ryan Gleason, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services  
Dr. Steve Scifres, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources  
Kim Patterson, Director of Secondary Education  
Jana Davenport, Director of Elementary Education

Hallie Chambers, Director of Human Resources  
Angie Falk, Director of Pupil Services  
Jim Klein, Chief Technology Officer  
Agoura High School Student Representative, Emma Richardson (observed in the audience)  
Calabasas High School Student Representative, Justin Pistotnik (participated on the dais)

### **STAFF ABSENT**

None

### **REPORT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION**

President Stein reported that the Board of Education voted to release employee #DQ5463074 in a vote of 4:0.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On motion of Ms. Cutbill, seconded by Ms. Menges, the Board of Education approved the Regular Board Meeting Minutes of December 13, 2022.

Board Motion Carried 3:0:2 as follows:

AYES: Board members Cutbill, Menges, and Stein

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Board member Lawrence

ABSTAIN : Board member Gaines

Student Preferential Vote Carried 1:0

On motion of Ms. Menges, seconded by Ms. Cutbill, the Board of Education approved the Special Board Meeting Minutes of December 21, 2022.

Board Motion Carried 3:0:2 as follows:

AYES: Board members Cutbill, Menges, and Stein

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Board member Lawrence

ABSTAIN: Board member Gaines

### **STAFF/BOARD COMMUNICATION**

Dr. Scifres stated that we have three employees to honor tonight. The Classified Employee of the Month from last month is joining us tonight. Dr. Scifres stated that we honor employees every month who exhibit our core dispositions which cultivate a collaborative community. Mr. Klein introduced last month's Classified Employee of the Month, Ms. Maureen McDonald. He shared some wonderful qualities about Ms. McDonald. Ms. Stein presented Ms. McDonald with an apple trophy and thanked her for her dedication to our students and staff.

Ms. Falk introduced the Classified Employee of the Month, Ms. Denise Edwards. She shared some wonderful qualities about Ms. Edwards. Ms. Stein presented Ms. Edwards with an apple trophy and thanked her for her dedication to our students and staff.

Chaparral Principal Goldstein introduced the Certificated Employee of the Month, Ms. Michelle Constantino. She shared some wonderful qualities about Ms. Constantino. There were two students who presented Ms. Constantino with a book they had prepared for her. Ms. Stein presented Ms. Constantino with an apply trophy and thanked her for her dedication to our students and staff.

Dr. Stepenosky thanked the Measure S Committee for their hard work and dedication. Present tonight were the following members: Ms. Amanda Poulos, Ms. Tara Maynard, Ms. Kristina Goldman, Ms. Susan MacLean, Ms. Nicole Cullen, and Ms. Stacy Radke. He also specifically thanked Ms. Amanda Poulos and Ms. Tara Maynard, who co-chaired the committee. Ms. Stein thanked the committee for their hard work. She presented a Proclamation to each member of the committee and presented a gift to each co-chair on behalf of the Board of Education.

### **ACTION ITEMS - CONTINUED**

1. Acceptance of Audit Report 2021-22 was presented. Dr. Gleason stated that this is an audit of the 2021-22 school year. Andrew Park, from Eide Bailly LLP, was there to present the report. Mr. Park stated that this report is an unmodified version of the report which is the highest level of assurance. Mr. Park stated that the auditors did identify some internal control deficiencies with respect to the financial statements. For federal compliance, the audit consisted of auditing the Special Education Cluster which is a federal subsidized special education fund. They also audited the Education Stabilization Fund. ESSER and GEER are two funds that are closely looked at since the federal government funds these accounts. The firm also audited the district's ELC which is the Covid testing fund. This fund came directly from LACOE. The opinion of these audits were unmodified with the exception of the ELC. That fund was qualified. They noticed some key compliance components that the district did not adhere to. This could possibly be due to the change

in administration during the 2021-22 fiscal year. Mr. Park also stated that the regulations changed almost on a daily basis which made it extremely difficult to adhere to every regulation. The state compliance was unmodified.

On motion of Ms. Cutbill, seconded by Ms. Menges, the Board of Education approved Acceptance of Audit Report 2021-22.

Board Motion Carried 4:0:1 as follows:

AYES: Board members Cutbill, Gaines, Menges, and Stein

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Board member Lawrence

Student Preferential Vote Carried 1:0

2. Adoption of Resolution 21-22 Certifying Measure S Election Results into Board Minutes was presented. Dr. Gleason shared that on November 8, 2022, Measure S passed which awarded the District with bonds in the amount of \$340m. LVUSD has received official certification from the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder that Measure S has officially received more than fifty-five percent of the votes cast in favor of issuing the bonds. The Board's approval of entering the results into the minutes is an important documentation step as we proceed with initiating important deferred maintenance projects in the 2023 calendar year and beyond.

On motion of Ms. Cutbill, seconded by Ms. Menges, the Board of Education approved Adoption of Resolution 21-22 Certifying Measure S Election Results into Board Minutes.

Board Motion Carried 4:0:1 as follows:

AYES: Board members Cutbill, Gaines, Menges, and Stein

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Board member Lawrence

Student Preferential Vote Carried 1:0

#### **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA - A**

On motion of Ms. Cutbill seconded by Ms. Menges, the Board of Education approved Consent Agenda A, Items 1-10.

Board Motion Carried 4:0:1 as follows:

AYES: Board members Cutbill, Gaines, Menges, and Stein

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Board member Lawrence

Student Preferential Vote Carried 1:0

1. Approved Warrants as listed on the attached document.
2. Approved Board Policy 4219.11 & 4319.11 - Sexual Harassment as listed on the attached document.
3. Approved Board Policy 4119.26 - Professional Standards, Grooming Behavior as listed on the attached document.
4. Approved Job Description: EDSMM Instructor for Center EdX as listed on the attached document.
5. Approved Student Teacher Agreement - Western Governors University as listed on the attached document.
6. Approved Overnight Field Trip Request 22-23.19 AHS ASB as listed on the attached document.
7. Approved Overnight Field Trip Request 22-23.20 CHS MUN SB as listed on the attached document.
8. Approved Overnight Field Trip Request 22-23.21 CHS MUN NYC as listed on the attached document.
9. Approved Overnight Field Trip Request 22-23.22 CHS Dance as listed on the attached document.
10. Approved Overnight Field Trip Request 22-23.23 CHS ASB as listed on the attached document.

#### **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA - B**

On motion of Ms. Menges, seconded by Ms. Cutbill, the Board of Education approved Consent Agenda B, Item 1.

Board Motion Carried 4:0:1 as follows:

AYES: Board members Cutbill, Gaines, Menges, and Stein

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Board member Lawrence

#### **STAFF/BOARD COMMUNICATION - CONTINUED**

Dr. Stepenosky shared that Cohort 5 and 9 from Center EdX celebrated their graduation ceremonies here in the Boardroom. Chaparral Elementary was just awarded as a 2023 California Distinguished School. Calabasas High School was given the AP Computer Science Female Diversity award by the College Board. This award goes to schools that fill the gender gap. The female scores must be in the top 4% to receive this award. Agoura High School received this award a few years ago. Dr. Stepenosky stated that he was pleased that both high schools now score in the top 4%. AHS hosted their Showcase last week and the CHS Showcase will be next week. White Oak Elementary received their new mascot, Rory, the Lion. Dr. Stepenosky shared a picture of the high school students being trained to be outdoor ed counselors. This will be an overnight trip which is the first since the pandemic. LVUSD is now enrolling TK through 12th

grade. Dr. Stepenosky stated that the rest of Cabinet will forego their comments due to the long agenda this evening except Ms. Davenport and Ms. Patterson who have some important information to share.

Ms. Patterson stated that in memory of Dr. Vadehra as a leader and Board member in our District, every school will participate in the Kindness for Kate Campaign next week as part of the National Kindness Challenge. Principals and school staff will encourage students and staff to participate in kindness events.

Ms. Davenport stated that there will be events next week such as kindness spirit days. There will be many ways to be kind to one another. Being kind teaches everyone to do for others. There were some flyers presented to the Board this evening that shared the different events that will be offered next week.

Calabasas High School Student Representative, Justin Pistotnik, shared that after returning from winter break, the high schools have been very busy. CHS hosted their Winter Pep Rally. ASB hosted an International Banquet highlighting all of the diverse cultures and food from around the world. CHS is getting ready for their first talent show, CHS Got Talent. The AHS Chargers are ready to complete their final exams to get ready for their new semester. The senior class recently hosted their Battle For The Bands which was very successful. Lastly, last weekend AHS hosted their Spirit competition in the gym.

Ms. Gaines and Ms. Cutbill forewent their comments.

Ms. Menges welcomed everyone back and wished everyone a Happy New Year. Ms. Menges stated that she attended some committee meetings during the first couple weeks of January.

Ms. Stein congratulated Ms. Gaines and thanked her for stepping up to sit on the Board for the next two years. She recognized the impact of her decision to serve on the Board again. The Board, Cabinet, and the District are very appreciative.

### **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

1. Review/Realign Board Committee Appointments was presented. Ms. Stein asked the Board members to please look over the committee dates and times and email her their top three committees. They will vote during the next Board meeting. Ms. Stein also stated that she will closely look at the committees and try to place Board members on committees that they might not have been a part of in the past. Ms. Stein feels very strongly that Board members need to understand all workings of the District.

2. Superintendent Committee Assignments & Areas of Focus was presented. Dr. Stepenosky stated that he would also like the Board members to let him know which areas of interest and committees they would like to be a part of.

3. Willow Elementary Special Education Program was presented. Ms. Stein stated that this item is an informational item about the Special Education Program at Willow Elementary. Ms. Stein stated that there were two speakers in the audience who wished to speak about this item. She will allow the speakers to go first. They will each have three minutes to address the Board. Then Ms. Falk will present the item. After that, the Board can ask questions. Ms. Stein shared that the District has about 1,000 employees. Each employee has a right to privacy. The Board will not discuss individual employees. Also, the Board does not make staffing decisions on individual employees. There are times when circumstances warrant mid-year employee changes. The District has the legal authority to make mid-year changes. These decisions are not taken lightly as changes can be disruptive. Ms. Stein spoke to the two speakers. She stated that she knows they have been here before. She knows they have concerns. The Board takes these concerns very seriously. After the speakers addressed the Board during the last meeting, the Board asked Ms. Davenport, Ms. Falk and Dr. Stepenosky to get involved and dig deeper into the situation at Willow.

Mr. Fadi Amer and Ms. Hana Amer spoke about the decision to change the Special Education teacher at Willow Elementary. They questioned the transition plan and the way the decision was handled and delivered to the parents.

Ms. Falk stated that every elementary school has a Learning Center model of which Willow Elementary was included. The Learning Center model is where most of the special education students receive their special education services. It is a pull out model which means that the students primary placement is in general ed and we pull the students out to receive their special education services. Some students spend the majority of their day in the learning center and some students just spend a portion of their day in the learning center. We have two full-time special education teachers at Willow. Each teacher has 2.5 level 1 paraeducators assigned to them supporting the students. All DIS services such as speech, counseling, occupational therapy, etc are all provided per the IEP. Willow happens to have the District Program which is the enhanced behavior program. Willow is the only enhanced behavior program at the elementary level. The Willow program is a district program, not a site-based program. There are currently eight students in the behavior program at Willow. It is a highly specialized program, which is research based. It is taught by a teacher who has behavior background. Academics are also taught in this program. The focus in this program is on how does behavior

impact a child's education and how can we work collaboratively to help the child progress. Some of these students will transition out of the program. If a student needs this level of support in middle school or high school, we do provide programs at those levels. In this learning center model, there are two full-time teachers and four 2.5 level I paraeducators in the class. The paraeducators are highly trained. They go through a very intensive training program with a BCBA to work with these students.

Dr. Stepenosky asked Ms. Falk to discuss the transition. Ms. Falk shared that we had a teacher resignation the Friday before the Thanksgiving break. We needed to fill that position. During Thanksgiving week, we had to gather all of the information regarding this change. It did not happen as quickly as Ms. Falk would have liked. Once the decision was made, Ms. Reynolds, the Willow Principal, sent an email on Sunday night to inform the parents of the change. The District offered the parents a meet and greet the day that school resumed. Ms. Falk shared that she also offered the parents to meet one to one with Principal Reynolds and Ms. Falk. There were three sets of parents who accepted the one to one meeting. Ms. Falk explained that this was the best decision in the interest of all students moving forward. Ms. Falk stated that there was a transition plan. She stated that all parents were notified that academically, the schedule would not change. The academic groups that were in place would stay that way. Ms. Falk also stated that there has been cross communication between the prior and current behavior teachers.

Ms. Stein asked Ms. Falk to elaborate on the transition. Ms. Falk stated that the email was sent Sunday night to the parents. The two teachers were going to discuss the transition. There was no transition with the academic portion of the class. The paraeducators remained the same. They assist the teachers with the academics. The groups stayed the same. The only difference was the behavior teacher. When the children walked into the classroom on Monday, some knew the new teacher and some did not. For those that did not know the teacher, Ms. Falk understood how some of the students might have responded. The two teachers were and still are in direct communication with transitioning the students. The former teacher did come into the class on that Monday to say goodbye to the students and help explain the situation. The former teacher has continued to attend the IEP's. Ms. Stein asked Ms. Falk and Ms. Reynolds to continue to lean in and help these students and families.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

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Date Approved

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President, Board of Education