



**Las Cruces Public Schools Board of Education
Work Session**

Monday, May 20, 2013 • 3:30 p.m.
LCPS Administration Building Board Room • Televised by LCPS.TV

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Call to Order

Dr. Connie Phillips called the meeting to order at 3:33 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Roll call was taken by Mr. Chuck Davis. Those present:

- Dr. Connie Phillips, President
- Señora Maria Flores, Vice President
- Mr. Chuck Davis, Secretary
- Mrs. Barbara Hall, Member
- Dr. Bonnie Votaw, Member

Superintendent Stan Rounds was also in attendance.

C. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Dr. Votaw and seconded by Mrs. Hall to approve the agenda. The vote was approved unanimously.

II. OTHER BUSINESS/BUSINESS

A. Field of Dreams Turf

Dr. Phillips opened the discussion by stating that the Superintendent has an option for the turf installation schedule if it's to be ready by the football season. Conversely, if the Board wants to take more time in deciding about whether to have turf at the Field of Dreams, she said the installation would not have to be rushed. Dr. Phillips indicated her preference to be on waiting one more season. She said the Board originally wanted to seek financial assistance and it was desirable to have half of the cost from private sources. The latest estimation for the turf is \$730,000 and half of that amount is not available from private donations. She felt that the original plan should remain in effect as opposed to the Superintendent's suggestion of paying a portion of the turf through gate receipts. Dr. Phillips also said if the administration eventually reports back that they have exhausted all avenues in attempting to raise the monies privately, the Board would then be willing to consider other options at that time.

Superintendent Rounds said if the turf is to be installed for football season, a Board decision would be needed by the first week in June; the June 4 Retreat could be made into a special meeting for the vote. Installation would take five-to-six weeks. If the turf is installed in the winter, he said the Board would need to vote by September.

Dr. Votaw asked for clarification on the amount that Dr. Phillips wanted from private funds. Dr. Phillips said \$500,000, which is closer to half of the original estimated cost. Mr. Rounds said that figure is now much lower. Dr. Phillips said she has yet to see the data as to how the administration has solicited from the community.

The Superintendent said no financial commitments have been made from private sources, with the exception of several golf tournaments. He is currently in discussion with a company for a sizeable donation. Mr. Rounds reiterated that the district has \$351,000 from the Legislature and the balance could come from gate receipts and facility rentals.

Mrs. Hall said that the Board could wait until June 4 and see what the administration could do by then. If the Board is still not ready, then the turf could wait until fall.

Dr. Votaw said she is ready to make a decision and she also wants to see what the community will commit. She also wants to consider graduation ceremonies at the Field of Dreams in May 2014, which will save funds spent on rental of the NMSU Pan American Center. Mr. Rounds said some of the costs would still have to be incurred, including security. He said the funding for outdoor ceremonies could be calculated.

Dr. Phillips said the turf item will be added to the June 4, 2013 agenda.

III. BOARD NEW/OLD BUSINESS

B. 2013/14 Budget Discussion:

In reviewing the proposed 2013/14 budget, Dr. Votaw asked the Superintendent whether technology specialists for the elementary schools were added into the budget. They were not. Sra. Flores asked about the number of FTE (full-time equivalent, i.e., employees) and whether the number will be up or down from the previous year. Terry Dean, associate superintendent for finance, said the total includes an additional 55.4 FTE for 2013/14; the majority are instructional personnel (teachers and educational assistants). Sra. Flores also asked about funds showing in the negative. Mr. Rounds said until the district receives its carryover letters, some funds may show in the negative. And, she asked the Superintendent to check into whether one middle school does not have an instructional specialist.

Dr. Votaw voiced a concern that a tight budget may impact custodial staffing and ability to maintain the schools. Mr. Rounds said the district relies on guidance from Springtime and that newer buildings take less time to maintain.

Dr. Phillips reiterated her comments from a previous meeting that she is uncomfortable with a budget that is still “upside-down” by \$4.3 million after using all cash reserves. She also commented that Mr. Rounds and Mr. Dean are excellent in managing the budget.

The Superintendent said adjustments will be made throughout the year, including not immediately filling non-instructional vacancies as they occur. He also said while other school districts are cutting personnel, LCPS is adding staff, giving an average

of one percent raise, and growing about one percent in enrollment. He pledged to manage the budget wisely. Budget approval will take place at the regular meeting tomorrow - May 21, 2013.

C. *Las Montañas Charter High School (LMCHS)*

LMCHS Principal Richard Robinson was present to address the district's instructional and financial audit of the charter school. A letter he received indicated the school did not meet all six conditions previously set forth by LCPS. However, Mr. Robinson said they have been revisiting the charter's mission and the delivery of instruction. He added that the demographics have changed over the years, including an increase in ELL students, students three-to-four grade levels behind in math, and many high-risk/drop-in students.

As a result, LMCHS hired a data coach to assist with the process of assessments and to guide the school in putting together a document that will be implemented next school year. Changes will be implemented through a new instructional model, which includes:

- 1) Ensuring student learning and collaborative teaching teams;
- 2) Making a cultural shift from relying on summative assessments to having more frequent, common formative assessments in order to place students more appropriately.
- 3) Providing appropriate interventions for kids experiencing difficulties — differentiated learning.
- 4) Creating sequential tiers based on the level of students' needs.

The school's educational consultant is Rick Rios who is working with the school on performance and strategic planning. In addressing the Board, he said the school's mission needs to change. Based on the LCPS audit and PED requirements, five steps need to be implemented: 1) strategic assessment, 2) evaluate key school process – a school model, 3) strategic plan development/implementation, 4) implement a performance scorecard, and 5) conduct performance analyses. He said they have applied to be a SAM (School-wide Applications Model) school model. He then showed a process flow chart on how LMCHS would deliver results and how it would be aligned with the mission and EPSS. He also presented an overview of a strategic plan with goals and strategies.

Dr. Phillips asked how long he would work with the school. Mr. Rios said he plans to be there next school year and will come back to the LCPS School Board to review new data and address how Las Montañas has improved. With regard to the six conditions set by LCPS, he proposed that the conditions be restated and that LMCHS be issued a performance contract using the new model. If in fact the LCPS School Board opts to vote against renewal of the charter, then the school would appeal through a legal process, which he termed arduous and costly.

Dr. Phillips inquired about the school's financial situation. Mr. Robinson said they made improvements by tightening their spending, increasing cash carryover and hiring a grant writer to seek supplemental income. Dr. Phillips said there are concerns with the cost of the school's rent. Mr. Robinson said it's a high price and if it were not for lease assistance, they would not be able to exist. He proposed that LMCHS and LCPS consider merging the school onto the San Andres High School campus, while maintaining Las Montañas as a charter school. This would allow the

charter to expand extracurricular offerings. He also said LMCHS would provide lease payments to LCPS, therefore, creating a win-win for both sides.

Mr. Davis then asked about the school's governing council. Mr. Robinson said the idea has been presented to his council, which has new members. Merging campuses would take time and a transition should not be rushed, he added.

Mr. Rounds said the subleasing/San Andres proposal has merit. He also reminded the Board that the letter sent to Mr. Robinson was applicable to last school year. Subsequently, the LCPS Board agreed in May 2012 that renewal would be conditional based on student performance, attendance and financial management. At the Board's meeting tomorrow, several options will be available: non-renewal; develop a new partnership arrangement with Las Montañas; grant the charter followed by the school applying for a new charter from the state; grant the charter for up to four years.

He said San Andres is also under-performing and the administration will bring the LCPS Board a new alternative education model to consider. He indicated that his recommendation to not renew the Las Montañas charter will not likely change. Deputy Superintendent Steven Sanchez said without knowing what the Las Montañas model actually looks like, it would be hard to give advice to the LCPS Board.

There was continued discussion about deadlines and timelines for action on the charter and on Las Montañas' budget. Mr. Rios said if the Board denies renewal of the charter tomorrow, the school has 30 days to submit an appeal.

Mrs. Hall said she does not have enough information about the proposed merger in order to make a decision tomorrow. Mr. Rounds felt another year may be needed to get that articulated and that the Board must take some type of action by June 30. Dr. Votaw said she continues to think about how to best serve both schools' populations and that more time is needed for discussions between the school and the district. Sra. Flores said she is against keeping LMCHS in limbo and the school deserves a vote tomorrow.

Mr. Rounds said if the Board votes to renew the charter he would recommend that a special master — an alternative education specialist — be assigned to the school.

Dr. Phillips said the Board will either vote or table the action at tomorrow's Board meeting.

IV. PUBLIC INPUT

Vicky Chavez, the new executive director of the Southwest Educational Cooperative, which is managing the assets of LMCHS, spoke on the school's behalf. She said in a short amount of time, Mr. Robinson has been agreeable to developing internal controls and shutting down petty cash expenses. The audit findings have been addressed and the inventory control systems are in place. She added that Las Montañas is staying within its budget and will have close to \$200,000 in cash balance in 18 months. She appealed to the School Board to allow the charter school to show it can be successful.

Susie Garcia, LMCHS board secretary, said her two children went through the school. She complimented the school's teachers and Mr. Robinson.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Mrs. Hall to adjourn the meeting. The vote was approved unanimously. The meeting ended at 5:59 p.m.

Board President

Board Secretary

Minutes taken by Jo Galván.