



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

Tuesday, October 1, 2013 • 4:00 p.m.
LCPS Administration Building Board Room

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Call to Order

Dr. Connie Phillips called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m.

B. Roll Call

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

- Dr. Connie Phillips, President
- Sra. Maria Flores, Vice President
- Mr. Chuck Davis, Secretary
- Dr. Bonnie Votaw, Member

Those absent:

- Mrs. Barbara Hall, Member

Superintendent Stan Rounds was also in attendance.

C. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Sra. Flores to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

II. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Mesilla Valley Alternative Middle School (MVAMS)

Leandro Martinez, MVAMS Principal, began his presentation with a video illustrating a day in the life of a student at MVAMS. He explained the program was created to target those middle school students who weren't succeeding in the typical school environment. The primary mission is focusing on creating relationships with the students. Smaller class sizes provide teachers an opportunity for a better one-on-one focus. As of today 43 students are enrolled; 32 males and 11 females. Target enrollment is 60 students by year-end. Attendance rates are very good and students are happy and engaged. Of the 43 students enrolled 11 are special education students and 4 ELL students. Mr. Martinez discussed how the program is commonly referred to as LEAP (Leading Edge Acceleration Program).

Update on Jump Program

Arsenio Romero, JUMP Principal reported on the JUMP program. Classroom activities were highlighted in a video. Students are given the opportunity to learn at their own pace developmentally. They are benefiting from using tools that weren't afforded to them before. Instruction is centers based and learning is accentuated with hands-on manipulatives; thus creating a very engaging environment. The multiage aspect of the program provides an opportunity for older students to work with younger students to enhance the learning environment. End-of-year data highlights that 82% of students are now proficient in reading. From last year's enrollment approximately 100 students have graduated and moved on to the third grade. JUMP teachers regularly follow-up with new teachers and track student progress. JUMP

teacher Veronica Varela and LEAP Teacher Sarah Foraker shared success stories with the Board.

2014 Bond Election Process

Supt. Rounds presented to the Board the preliminary list of requested bond projects. The executive committee for the bond advisory group has met since last spring and gathered data. District-wide needs have been identified as indicated. The needs have been grouped into buckets. Thirty-three schools have submitted requests. Parents have reviewed the needs with the school prior to their submission. To date the highest ranked need by the parents on the committee have been safety/security items. The large blue ribbon committee will be created in next few weeks to begin promoting the election. Board members will be asked to participate in speaking engagements. At this point our needs and wants far exceed the \$65 million available. The executive committee will continue sorting requests by priority. Highlights of the discussion were:

- Looking at buying out ECHS 1. We are sitting on an interest rate of 3.8% interest on the lease. The bond interest may be at 4%.
- \$23 million needs to be secured for the completion of LCHS.
- This bond does not precipitate itself on any new schools in this cycle.
- Overcrowding in elementary schools will be addressed with additional classrooms, new wings or some portables.
- We are keeping in consideration the schools that are close to being in the top 100 with PSFA for remodeling projects.
- The CYC campus renovation and construction is part of the bond. Approximately 4 million can be used to build out the new part of the facility. Remodel of the older part of the building can be accomplished though lease purchase costs.
- The APECHS lease purchase cost is 1.4 million a year; ECHS II – 1 million a year.
- Bond elections cycle every four years. The next one will be 2018. \$65 million available as new money every four years.
- Contingency funds are built in to address possible inflation and missed projections.
- A small amount is set aside for architectural design on a new elementary school in to be built in approximately 6-7 years out.
- Can solar/electric power/outdoor lighting be tied together to allow more use for solar. CHS cooling system costs will not decrease with solar energy.

The executive committee will present an updated list of projects to the Board at each meeting until the final is presented for approval.

B. Human Resource Development - Update on New Mexico Teach

Dr. Liz Marrufo, Associate Supt. for Human Resource Development provided an overview on the district's implementation of the New Mexico Teach Effectiveness System. Eric Fraass, Human Resources Director, was commended for his diligence in representing the district on the NM Teach Advisory Board. The system establishes uniform procedures for conducting annual evaluations of licensed school employees, for setting the standards for each effectiveness level and for measuring and implementing student achievement growth. The system is comprised of three

components; these being observations, student achievement and multiple measures. As the evaluation system stands, student achievement will constitute 50% of the teacher effectiveness rating based on results of the NMSBA (35%), Discovery (15%) and End of Course (15%) assessments. Observations and Multiple Measure components will weigh equally at 25%. Dr. Marrufo stated that in May of the Public Education Department (PED) asked each district to submit a list of their multiple measures component of the plan. Members of the NEA were consulted to discuss options for the Multiple Measures component. A survey was developed and distributed to teachers to gather input regarding additional instructional responsibilities that went above their scope of duties. The survey results were used as our multiple measures component.

On July 1 the PED disallowed the district's selections stating they did not meet with their expectations. At that point the 25% was adjusted to include the attendance factor. The new plan including the attendance factor was submitted July 5. The attendance factor is based on a rubric for absences ranging from exemplary to ineffective. The rubric addresses absences for sick leave only. However; in the district's plan two safeguards were built in to protect teachers and to provide exceptions for extenuating circumstances such as extended illnesses or for primary caregivers for children. Second circumstance is those who may need to participate in Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Additional 4 personal leave days are available to teachers to use that are not taken into account under the attendance rubric. Other leave such as professional leave, bereavement and jury duty are not subject to the evaluation rubric. Attendance will account for 10% of the overall evaluation. LCPS teacher attendance will be uploaded at the designated dates of December 15, 2013 and May 1, 2014. The PED is not mandating attendance as a multiple measure but across the state 56% of districts are implementing it. Other options such as lowest quartile, school grade, and parent and student surveys are available to explore.

Sra. Flores expressed her concern over the attendance measure, stating that as a former educator it is her opinion that teachers need mental health days. She commented that if she were being rated as a teacher today she would be rated "ineffective." It is her opinion that using absenteeism to measure effectiveness is punitive.

Dr. Votaw stressed the importance of requesting legislature delay the implementation of the evaluation system. Districts need more time to make decisions and consult with teachers. It is her fear that the district will end up in a contentious local situation. This Board is on the record in terms of its on resolutions about the evaluation.

Dr. Votaw questioned what are the district's procedures for tracking teacher absenteeism and how does this align with our negotiated agreement? Eric Fraass, HR Director, stated at the moment the attendance piece is not at this time aligned with the negotiated agreement. It does not prohibit the district from using attendance for evaluative measure; however, the terms and conditions need to be negotiated.

Mr. Davis questioned how the district will accommodate employees who are absent due to their active roles in legislature and the bargaining units. Supt. Rounds stated those absences would be protected as an extenuating circumstance and the employee would not be penalized.

Mr. Davis questioned how teachers will be evaluated on the achievement component. Mr. Fraass explained how the testing measure would affect teachers differently based on their grouping. School grades are not considered under the student achievement component. Three groups of teachers that are laid out for student achievement component are:

- Group A – NMBSA tested grades (Mathematics and Language Arts)
- Group B – Grades that are not NMSBA tested (End of Course/Discovery)
- Group C - Grades Kinder – 2nd

In response to the Boards' request, Supt. Rounds will explore amending the multiple measures items and explore implementing the student/teacher evaluation option. A report will be brought back for review.

Mary Parr-Sanchez, NEA-LC, addressed the Board and stated the 10% attendance measure was implemented without any input from NEA-LC. She feels in the manner this was implemented violates the negotiated agreement. It is her request to take this item back to the MOU Committee for further discussion. It is her opinion that implementing this type of evaluation system is not in the best interest of teachers. In addition, she stated that students are being over tested and used as pawns against teachers.

Carmen Gutierrez, E. Picacho Elementary, thanked Supt. Rounds for his foresight and finesse with our budget. She requested he use that same foresight with regard to this evaluation system and exercise the option of utilizing the option of a 2-year waiver to delay implementation of the system.

III. OTHER REPORTS

A. Finance- Review of District Property Disposition

Dr. Votaw was satisfied with the packet materials and stated there was no need for a presentation. It was consensus of the Board to proceed.

B. Instruction – Report on Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey

1. Teen Pregnancy

Dr. Martin Greer, LCPS Lead Psychologist, presented a brief summary of the data published in the 2012 Youth, Risk and Resiliency Survey. Bullying continues to be a concern in our middle schools. Other areas of high concern are the levels of depression, alcohol and substance abuse. The YRRS connects these problems with resiliency factors. High school and middle school students are reporting that they do not feel connected to their friends, community members, teachers or parents. When students are not connected to their teachers they have a significant risk of being bullied, depressed, attempting suicide or binge drinking. It speaks to the need for our staff to engage with students and form personal connections. The survey data indicates in middle school students the parent relationship is more in predicting of resiliency and reducing risk factors. In looking at the relational aspects of teacher/student and parent/student relationships it is imperative to raise awareness in our staff and continue building programs that raise awareness and reduce these risk factors.

Dr. Phillips thanks Sra. Flores for bringing this survey to the Boards' attention because it contains important information. Dr. Votaw agreed with the importance

of building relationships with students. The district should be celebrating those teachers who build and salvage relationships with students.

Dr. Earl Nissen, NM Department of Health, shared statistics on teen pregnancy in Dona Ana County. In 2006 Dona Ana County was identified as #1 in teen birth rates in the state of New Mexico. In 2007 the district implemented the family planning aspect of our School Based Health Centers (SBHC). Since the implementation of family planning in our schools we have witnessed a downward trend in teenage births. The greatest drop in teen births was witnessed in 2011-2012. He reported Dona Ana County is currently ranked #17 in teen birth rates. The SBHCs are also assisting in identifying and treating mental health disorders.

2. Substance Abuse

Ellen Williams, LCPS Health Services Director, gave a brief description on the emerging problem of synthetic drugs in our community. Synthetic cannabinoids are a family of compounds that are functionally or biologically similar to the active ingredient in marijuana. Synthetic cannabinoids are not organic as in marijuana but are chemicals created in a laboratory. These cannabinoids are categorized as designer drugs that do not disclose all of their ingredients. Spice is one of these synthetic products that produce experiences that are similar to marijuana and are marketed as “safe” legal alternatives to drugs. These items are labeled not for human consumption and contain dry shredded legal plant materials plus the chemically altered material that produces psychoactive or mind altering affects. For several years Spice products have been easy to purchase through smoke shops, hooka shops and gas stations and via the internet. Manufacturers of Spice products attempt to evade legal restrictions by substituting these chemicals periodically; which is why there is no blood test to determine when someone has taken Spice. Medical professionals have reported that people who use these types of products experience dangerous side effects including convulsions, anxiety attacks, dangerously elevated heart rates, increased blood pressure, disorientation, vomiting, paranoid behavior, elevated temperatures, and non-responsiveness. Students have been seen in our nurse’s offices with all these systems. These things are very dangerous. In 2012, LCPS nurses conducted 438 drug screens on students. Of the 438 only 123 students were referred for drug use. In 2013, the screenings decreased to 413 but over 200 students were referred.

It was agreed to bring this item back to a regular board meeting so the information can be shared with a larger public audience.

Dr. Sanchez reported that Ms. Williams will be a key player in the redesign of the district’s health education curriculum to address this important issue. We will also begin evaluating what we need to incorporate into our school based health centers to deal with the student use of synthetic drugs. Mr. Davis requested the district share this information with other agencies such as the New Mexico School Boards Association.

IV. Board Items

A. *New Business – Discussion of student roundtables/student presentations*

Sra. Flores and Dr. Votaw developed a proposal of working with student roundtable discussions. Sra. Flores announced her participation in the Great Conversations that are currently happening at the middle schools. The conversations are facilitated by Randy

Harris. There are no questions, it's only a conversation. Mr. Harris would be the only facilitator everyone else would simply participate in the conversation. She recommended this same format be implemented for the student conversations proposed for the high school level. She introduced another option available through the ENLACE program. The conversations should be limited to the high school level and 2 board members would attend at a time. Dr. Phillips suggested Sra. Flores organize the effort and return with a proposal at the November meeting. Sra. Flores agreed to facilitate a conversation with administrative staff on how to conduct these conversations. It was decided to have the ENLACE program give a presentation at the November meeting.

Sra. Flores requested an item be placed on the November meeting to vote on which party should be responsible for the salary of the Las Montañas Charter High School Special Master.

IV. PUBLIC INPUT

Margaret Sanchez-Maes, parent, addressed her concerns about the testing in schools. As a parent she feels students are over tested. Her children are advanced by several grades. She is concerned that students are outsmarting the testing routines and are underperforming in the beginning so their later scores mark significant improvement. Teachers are putting too much pressure on the students to perform well on tests and this is making school a not so fun place.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Davis and seconded by Dr. Votaw to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting ended at 6:35 p.m.

Board President

Board Secretary

Minutes taken by Brigitte Zigelhofer.