



**Las Cruces Public Schools Board of Education
Special Meeting (Board Retreat)
Tuesday, October 6, 2015 • 9:00 a.m.
Professional Development Center, Doña Ana Room**

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Call to Order

Sra. Flores called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

B. Roll Call

Roll call was taken by Mrs. Barbara Hall. Those present:

- Sra. Maria A. Flores, President
- Mr. Chuck Davis, Vice President
- Mrs. Barbara Hall, Secretary
- Mr. Ed Frank, Member

Mr. Maury Castro, board member, was absent. Superintendent Stan Rounds was also in attendance.

Andre Gonzales, student advisor, joined the meeting at 11:22 a.m. and left at 12:00 p.m.

C. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Chuck Davis and seconded by Mr. Ed Frank to move item V.A.1. Gun Safety Discussion to be presented after item IV.B.1. Decrease in Graduation Credits Requirement. The motion passed. A motion was made by Mr. Ed Frank and seconded by Mr. Chuck Davis to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed.

II. CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. New Business

1. Limited Personnel Matters Related to the Evaluation of the Superintendent, as permitted under Section 10-15-1(H)(2) of the New Mexico Open Meetings Act

A motion was made by Mrs. Barbara Hall and seconded by Mr. Ed Frank to move into closed executive session for the purpose of discussing the Superintendent's evaluation. A roll call vote was taken. Mr. Frank-aye; Mr. Davis-aye; Mrs. Hall-aye; and Sra. Flores-aye. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Report on Closed Executive Session

The Board met in Closed Executive Session from 9:01 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and reconvened in open session at 11:05 a.m. Sra. Flores reported that board members met in closed executive session to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation. No other matters were discussed and no action was taken.

III. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Preliminary Discussion for SY 2016-17 Staffing

Superintendent Rounds provided information regarding staffing for SY 2016-17. Board members and the Superintendent share a joint interest in class size by

enrollments and sustaining staffing levels where enrollments may be low. Superintendent Rounds asked board members to be mindful of staffing loads and operating conditions to set a baseline for the SY 2016-17 budget expectations. He recommended sustaining current level staffing for SY 2016-17. High schools have the most fluctuation in staffing and this year, staffing was reduced at each high school. He stated it is a difficult decision whether to allow more curricular options which cost more in staffing and provides fewer resources for salary improvement. He said staffing is a direct result of scheduling which is a result of class size by enrollments. There are statutory limits with some class sizes that the district is required to meet and a snapshot of class sizes is taken by the state on the 80th day of the school year. Superintendent Rounds recommended to the board that teacher staffing remain the same next year and that education assistants be increased. There was a brief discussion regarding staffing and furlough days. Superintendent Rounds stated that staffing at the 84% or 85% range of the operational budget is a healthy percentage for budgeting purposes, and the district is currently at 90%. President Flores said she was not in favor of the lower the staffing percentage.

B. Secondary Tableau

Dr. Elizabeth Marrufo, Chief of Human Resources Development, made a presentation regarding enrollment in secondary schools highlighting language arts classes at Camino Real Middle School and Oñate High School and math classes Vista Middle School. Sra. Flores asked if the presentation included ELL classes for language arts which Dr. Marrufo responded no, but stated the information is provided in another graph and can be provided. Dr. Marrufo stated the tableau is used to best utilize staff to meet the needs of students. She is currently working on a staffing guidance document.

IV. OTHER REPORTS

A. Finance

1. Budget Preparation and Calendar Discussion

Mr. Terry Dean, Chief Financial Officer/Chief Operations Officer, presented a budget calendar for SY 2016-17. The calendar goes through June 2016. Mr. Dean asked board members to provide ground rules in outlaying the budget for SY 2016-17 and to provide their budget priorities in October or November of 2015. Sra. Flores stated she does not want to cut staff and Superintendent Rounds reiterated his recommendation that staffing remain the same. Mr. Dean stated that significant growth or decline in enrollments is not projected for next school year. Superintendent Rounds clarified for board members the meaning of “level” staffing, stating that staffing remains the same throughout the district, not by school. He said if one school has fewer enrollments than another, staff would be moved from the lesser enrollment school to the higher enrollment school to accommodate the increase in enrollments. There was a discussion regarding the decline in enrollments in language program electives and the concern of elimination of language program electives. Sra. Flores stated she did not want to see language electives eliminated.

Superintendent Rounds asked board members if the return of staff furlough days is a consideration for next year’s budget and board members agreed. He stated that furlough days are valued at a daily rate which poses an issue. Jo Galván, Chief Communications Officer, suggested the board convene in closed executive session prior to the October 20, 2015, regular board meeting to discuss the matter

further. Andy Sanchez, Esq., counsel for the Board of Education, reminded board members of the state anti-donation clause which does not allow staff to give three days as a donation. He also stated that a financial obligation cannot be carried over into another fiscal year.

The request for a budget summit was discussed briefly, and Mr. Dean stated a budget summit is incorporated into the budget calendar process. Sra. Flores suggested publicizing the information of the summit through the budget calendar process so the public is aware. Mr. Dean stated that in February, revenue, expenditures and cash balance is reviewed, and in March staffing allocations are finalized and the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG) is examined for projections for SY 2016-17, as well as a review of legislative outcomes.

Mr. Davis asked what guidelines are used by departments in their budget requests. Andy Sanchez suggested using the November and December work sessions for board members to understand school and department budget requests and Sra. Flores also suggested using finance committee meetings to get the information to board members, as well. Superintendent Rounds stated there are a lot of programs throughout the district, and suggested only highlighting new programs and their requests for budgetary amounts. Administrators will advise principals the change in the deadline to submit budget requests to accommodate board members' request of the review of the process. Superintendent Rounds will advise principals that budget requests submitted after December 15, 2015, will not be considered until next budget year. He also shared that department requests are approved by him prior to going before the board for approval.

There was also a discussion regarding the board setting budget priorities at the beginning of the budget process. Sra. Flores would like equity and poverty to be addressed as budget priorities.

B. Instruction

1. Decrease in Graduation Credits Requirement

Dr. Wendi Miller-Tomlinson along with principals Eric Fraass (Mayfield High), Jennifer Amis (Arrowhead Park Early College High School), Michael Montoya (Centennial High) and Jim Schapekahn (Oñate High), shared their recommendations from a committee of principals regarding graduation requirements. The group did not recommend reducing graduation credit requirements. Dr. Miller-Tomlinson stated the consensus of the group was that the current structure provides many opportunities for students which keeps them engaged and in school. Eric Fraass shared that when credits are not met for graduation, it is usually a core class which cannot be cut, so the suggestion to cut the credit requirements is moot for Mayfield High School. Michael Montoya, stated the change in credit requirements would not increase or decrease graduation rates.

Board members were reminded that the increase in credit requirements from 24 to 29 many years ago was due, in part, to the change to block scheduling for high schools. Sra. Flores asked about feedback from parents and students and Mr. Fraass stated that Mayfield compiled a student survey to solicit suggestions for improvement. Principals stated that there are multiple opportunities for high

school students to recapture credits if needed such as night school, which is offered at all the comprehensive high schools.

2. *Gun Safety*

Anna Ranson, of Be SMART, shared information in providing community awareness on the prevention of deaths by guns. She stated that 3.5 million homes across the nation have guns that are unsecured. The Be Smart group would like to share information with PTOs at the schools. Jo Galván will provide information to principals and PTOs for follow up by them should they wish to invite Be SMART to present at the school level. An article entitled, *Pushing the Limits*, was provided to board members by Sra. Flores.

3. *Student Opt-Out of Testing Options*

Mrs. Andrea Fletcher, Chief Academic Officer, provided the district's current policy on district assessments (Policy ILBB) which outlines the opt-out process. She stated the regulation has changed to accommodate families who wish to opt-out of standardized testing. Video assessments are currently offered on the district's website and Mrs. Fletcher also provided the district's Assessment Plan and provided a comparison of the LCPS Assessment Plan in comparison to the Albuquerque Public School's Assessment Plan.

There was discussion regarding the ramifications of opting-out of standardized testing, the direct ramifications to the district, and parents being fully informed with a complete and fair notice. Andy Sanchez stated language regarding the ramifications of students opting-out of mandated testing should be included in the district's regulation, and the district plan should be signed by parents acknowledging their understanding of the ramifications. He also stated that alternatives to mandated testing should not be provided by the district and encouraged changing mandated assessments by lobbying at the legislative session. Mrs. Fletcher stated that the ramifications of opting-out of standardized testing are provided in the district's plan and parents are fully aware and informed and the plan is signed by parents confirming their acknowledgement. Mr. Sanchez also stated pursuant to PED regulation, if a student has opted-out of testing and attends school on testing day, the student will be placed before a monitor to test. Parents who have opted-out their child(ren) from testing should keep them at home. He stated this language needs to be added to the district's regulation. There was further discussion regarding the district providing an alternative location for students who have opted-out of testing and still attend school on testing day. Mr. Sanchez reiterated to board members that if a child who has opted-out of testing and presents himself/herself at school, the outcome is a grade of zero on the test, which will affect the ~~he~~ school grade and the teacher's NM Teach evaluation.

Sra. Flores stated she believes teachers and administrators need to be neutral with regard to mandated testing and Mr. Sanchez stated that the directive needs to be made clear to parents that if they opt their student out of testing, the child needs to stay home on the day of testing, and the ramifications need to be made clear to parents. Andy Sanchez will work with administrators in crafting language for the district's regulation.

Mr. Tim Hand, Chief of Staff, shared with the board that students who opted-out of testing last year, are tagged as “opt-out” for teacher evaluations.

C. *Operations*

1. *Discussion of Bus Overloads and Bus Complex Acquisition*

Mr. David Del Toro, Director of Transportation, provided updated information with regard to bus overloads. He addressed the concern brought by Sra. Flores with regards to Mayfield High School overloads by three students seated to a seat, stating there are currently no issues regarding overloads in the district. He stated that due to the size of children, it is possible to put three students to a seat and still be in compliance if there is no overlapping on the seat. The bus driver has the right to assign students to seats in keeping with safety regulations. Sra. Flores asked if there is a maximum capacity on the buses. Mr. Del Toro stated the manufacture regulation is 71 or 77 persons. There is no maximum capacity on secondary buses and there is not a shortage of buses. He stated bus drivers are in high need; based on low salaries. The PED provides bus management training to drivers. There was a discussion with regard to the protocols when a bus breaks down. A substitute bus is immediately dispatched. Mr. Davis asked what the requirements are in providing transportation for students within the district. Mr. Del Toro stated it is one mile for elementary students, one and half miles for middle school students and two miles for high school students. Mr. Del Toro also stated when he receives a concern from a parent with regards to safety he personally goes to the site to investigate the allegation/concern.

Mr. Terry Dean, Chief Financial Officer, stated the City of Las Cruces has pulled out of negotiations with regard to the purchase of the bus complex. The property owner is now entertaining an offer by STS of New Mexico and is in negotiations. Superintendent Rounds stated he is optimistic there will be an agreement reached between the property owner and STS of New Mexico.

V. **BOARD ITEMS**

A. *New Business*

1. *Gun Safety (moved to Item IV.B.2)*

B. *Old Business*

1. *None*

VI. **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mr. Chuck Davis and seconded by Mrs. Barbara Hall to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 2:29 p.m.

Board President

Board Secretary

Minutes taken by Tina Gonzalez.