Meeting Date: September 2, 2020
Meeting Location: Held Remotely
Board Members Present: Susan Alvaro, Hector Camacho, Jr., Jim Cannon, Beverly Gerard, Rod Hsiao, Ted Lempert, Joe Ross
Staff Officials Present: Nancy Magee, Secretary
Jennifer Perna, Executive Assistant
Other Staff Present: Claire Cunningham, Jennifer Frentress, Jeneé Littrell, Patricia Love, Lori Musso, Denise Porterfield

1. OPENING ITEMS

A. Call to Order

Board President Hector Camacho, Jr. called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. He announced the County Board was conducting the meeting as a webinar in light of the current health emergency and the Governor’s March 17, 2020, Executive Order N-29-20 suspending certain provisions of the Brown Act to allow governing boards to conduct meetings through remote access. Board President Camacho also noted in the effort to increase accessibility and opportunity for community engagement, simultaneous interpretation of the meeting was being implemented in Spanish using Zoom technology through the end of Public Comment, and would continue further into the meeting if people were utilizing the channel.

B. Approval of Agenda

After a motion by Mr. Cannon and a second by Mr. Lempert, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Camacho, Cannon, Gerard, Hsiao, Lempert, and Ross), by roll call vote, approved the September 2, 2020, agenda as presented.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no other persons wishing to address the Board.
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. **August 19, 2020, Regular Board Meeting**

After a motion by Ms. Gerard, and a second by Ms. Alvaro, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Camacho, Cannon, Gerard, Hsiao, Lempert, and Ross), by roll call vote, approved the Minutes of the August 19, 2020, Regular Board Meeting as presented.

B. **August 19, 2020, Special Board Meeting**

After a motion by Mr. Lempert, and a second by Ms. Gerard, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Camacho, Cannon, Gerard, Hsiao, Lempert, and Ross), by roll call vote, approved the Minutes of the August 19, 2020, Special Board Meeting as presented.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

B. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-44 Honoring Cheryl J. Williams on Her Retirement**
C. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-45 Honoring Catherine Stoddard on Her Retirement**
D. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-46 Honoring Ana Maria Peraza on Her Retirement**
E. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-47 Honoring Rogelio Benuto on His Retirement**
F. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-48 Honoring Mercidita Laudenorio on Her Retirement**
G. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-49 Honoring Patricia McDonough on Her Retirement**
H. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-50 Honoring Patricia Dipratna on Her Retirement**
I. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-51 Honoring Marsha Shea on Her Retirement**
J. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-52 Honoring Ermione Najjar on Her Retirement**
K. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-53 Honoring Karen Skogstrom on Her Retirement**
L. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-54 Honoring Kathleen Catalano on Her Retirement**
M. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-55 Honoring Kerry Hansell on Her Retirement**
N. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-56 Honoring Nicole Tonelli on Her Retirement**
O. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 20-57 Recognizing September 15, 2020, - October 15, 2020, as National Hispanic Heritage Month and Latinx Heritage Month in the State of California**

After a motion by Ms. Gerard and a second by Mr. Lempert, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Camacho, Cannon, Gerard, Hsiao, Lempert, and Ross), by roll call vote, approved the Consent Agenda.

Board President Camacho noted the retirees honored with resolutions on the Consent Agenda provided 317 years of service to SMCOE, and he thanked all the retirees for their tremendous service.
Jeneé Littrell, Deputy Superintendent, Educational Services Division, introduced Karen Gnusti, Executive Director, College, Career, and Secondary Education to provide information on the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan for SMCOE’s Court and Community Schools.

Executive Director Gnusti began by discussing the purpose of the Plan, which includes the following components:

- Addresses how student learning continuity will be addressed during the COVID-19 crisis in the 2020-2021 school year
- Balances needs of all stakeholders including educators, parents, students, and community
- Replaces the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) for the 2020-2021 year while plans for 2020-2021 instruction remain fluid
- Provides for serving students with unique needs, access to devices and connectivity, resources for mental health and social emotional well-being, and meals

Executive Director Gnusti next addressed outcomes for students and how students will experience learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. She said the plan describes strategies that mitigate learning loss, support social emotional needs, provide for parent education, and prioritize a positive school culture.

Executive Director Gnusti outlined the Plan’s process, highlighting important dates moving forward, based on guidelines from the California Department of Education (CDE):

- 9/3/20 – the County Board of Education hosts public hearing on the Plan
- By 9/30/20 – the County Board of Education to adopt the Plan
- Within 5 days of adoption, SMCOE submits the Plan to the CDE for review
- Once returned, and within 15 days of receipt of recommendations from CDE, the Board shall consider the recommendations
- By 12/15/20 – the County Board of Education to adopt a Budget Overview for Parents

Executive Director Gnusti also provided examples of content still being gathered, which includes:

- 8/28/20 – input gathered from the SMCOE Systems for District Improvement team
- 9/9/20 – staff meeting with superintendent and medical partners
- 9/10/20 – parent and guardian engagement meeting

Board President Camacho thanked Executive Director Gnusti for the presentation.

Ms. Alvaro thanked Executive Director Gnusti for the presentation. She asked of the 42 students in the Court and Community Program, how many are enrolled at Hillcrest and Camp Kemp. Executive Director Gnusti said student enrollment at Gateway is fewer than ten students with seven students at Canyon Oaks. The remainder of students are at Hillcrest or Camp Kemp. Ms. Alvaro
noted how the report stated “SMCOE has been forced to lay off school staff due to declining enrollment and other impacts of distance learning” and asked how many teachers and administrators are on staff. Executive Director Gnusti said there are two administrators—a Principal and Assistant Principal—who share responsibility across four sites. She estimated there are 15-20 teachers on staff, some who teach two subject areas. Ms. Alvaro estimated the ratio may be 2:1. Executive Director Gnusti clarified the ratios do not break down exactly. Ms. Alvaro asked if the Principal was Sibane Parcels and the Assistant Principal was Shelly Johnson. Executive Director Gnusti confirmed this was accurate. Ms. Alvaro asked if they were the site administrators for all four programs. Executive Director Gnusti confirmed this was also accurate. Ms. Alvaro asked if other staff support these programs. Executive Director Gnusti responded that as part of her role at SMCOE, she works with the school team supporting curriculum and instruction and ensuring compliance. She said there are also specifically designated funds to support an English Language Coordinator and an Innovation and Technology Coordinator, both of whom also serve districts in outward-facing support.

Ms. Alvaro recalled how the Court and Community Schools program has always been difficult to fund. She continued that traditionally, the Court Schools have not been quite as bad, as they had more students and there was supplemental funding from the state for students who are incarcerated, but the Community Schools have always required backfilling. Ms. Alvaro noted the decline in student population with 25 or more staff supporting these students, and wondered about budgeting concerns. Executive Director Gnusti replied the team also recognizes this concern and is focused on the issue. She explained having students engaged in distance learning education in school districts allows for districts to make different decisions for their students, so SMCOE is closely monitoring the situation.

Ms. Alvaro discussed the efforts over the past decade toward less incarceration in the juvenile justice system and more alternative approaches, and therefore is not surprised that the number of students in juvenile hall is small. She asked if there is the expectation in other programs that the decrease in student numbers is COVID-19-related, and numbers will bounce back, or is this the direction schools are heading.

Deputy Superintendent Littrell thanked Ms. Alvaro for her questions and reminded the Board that Gateway and Canyon Oaks are fee-for-service programs, in which districts are charged for SMCOE to serve their students. She explained with distance-learning there are fewer students in need of an alternative placement. Deputy Superintendent Littrell said the team feels the current situation is impacted by COVID-19 and as we get to the other side of the pandemic, partnerships with districts will continue in order to meet district needs. She said there are annual and ongoing conversations with districts regarding needs, and SMCOE adjusts and adapts programs accordingly.

Deputy Superintendent Littrell described in addition to 10 credentialed teachers, there is a full-time school psychologist, a full-time school counselor, and SMCOE Coordinators doing outward leaning work but also dedicated to supporting the Court and Community Schools program on a part-time basis.
Ms. Alvaro thanked Deputy Superintendent Littrell and Executive Director Gnusti for the responses to the complicated questions and stated she knows it is a moving target. She expressed her love for the Court and Community Schools program, and her dedication to serving students, but is always aware of budget concerns.

Mr. Hsiao thanked Executive Director Gnusti for the presentation. He said he attended a Youth Services Network meeting focused on student mental health where agency partners painted a grim picture of an anticipated wave of students with mental health issues in response to COVID-19 challenges. Mr. Hsiao noted he is happy to see that the Plan makes mental health a priority, providing for both individual and group services. He asked for more detail on how these services would be implemented and how they would be proactive and preventative. Executive Director Gnusti explained the SMCOE team is working internally with recent grant funding on creating new goals for mental health services. Executive Director Gnusti said the approach includes three goals – teaching students coping, resilience, and regulation skills; providing for mental health counseling for students; and developing and implementing a universal screener to isolate needs and provide preventative services.

Deputy Superintendent Littrell noted that mental and behavioral health needs are expected to increase exponentially due to the impact of the pandemic. She shared that the school team made the decision to move one of the middle school programs serving students with emotional and behavioral needs to the Gateway School site under the supervision of Principal Parcels and Assistant Principal Johnson. These students’ academic and instructional needs are more aligned with the curriculum offered through the Court and Community Schools program. Deputy Superintendent Littrell described how districts need additional support for students with emotional and behavioral needs, and this might be an expansion opportunity for the Gateway program to lean into.

Board President Camacho referred to the data regarding students earning an average of 7.5 units of credit at Gateway over the summer and asked about the normal credit earning rate. Executive Director Gnusti replied that Gateway had not previously run summer programs and she was unsure about summer credit recovery data at Hillcrest, but she could research that information.

Board President Camacho discussed the effort to release students from incarcerated settings and asked if students remained in SMCOE’s programs once released or if they were reenrolled into the home school they attended. Executive Director Gnusti replied if students were with SMCOE and sent home, she believed they remained with SMCOE to finish up the school year. Board President Camacho shared how the governance team has discussed tracking students once they leave SMCOE programs, even pre-COVID-19, and he hoped to learn more about long term outcomes for students who stayed with SMCOE or returned to their home district. Board President stated this was helpful information, as students sometimes get lost after the transition, and he is interested in outcomes post-graduation.
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION (continued)

B. Conduct Public Hearing on the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan for SMCOE's Court and Community Schools

Board President Camacho opened the public hearing on the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan for SMCOE's Court and Community Schools.

There being no public comment, Board President Camacho declared the Public Hearing closed.

C. Conduct Public Hearing Concerning Sufficiency of Textbooks and/or Instructional Materials

Board President Camacho opened the public hearing concerning sufficiency of textbooks and/or instructional materials.

There being no public comment, Board President Camacho declared the Public Hearing closed.

D. Adopt Board Resolution No. 20-58 Sufficiency of Textbooks and/or Instructional Materials

Jeneé Littrell, Deputy Superintendent, Educational Services Division, assured the Board that all textbooks and instructional materials meet Education Code §60605 and are aligned with standards. She reported that all digital materials being utilized during distance learning are aligned and fall within the guidelines of the public hearing.

After a motion by Ms. Gerard and a second by Mr. Lempert, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Camacho, Cannon, Gerard, Hsiao, Lempert, and Ross), by roll call vote, approved Board Resolution No. 20-58 Sufficiency of Textbooks and/or Instructional Materials.

E. Receive History-Social Science (HSS) Update

Jeneé Littrell, Deputy Superintendent, Educational Services Division, introduced Dr. Gwenn Lei, Coordinator, Reading-Language Arts/History-Social Science, to provide an update on SMCOE's History-Social Science (HSS) program.

Coordinator Lei began by outlining the three key components to be discussed in her presentation:

- Civics Education Initiative
- Ethnic Studies
- Upcoming Events

Coordinator Lei described the Civics Education Initiative as a three-level initiative that answered the call to action set forth in the History-Social Science Framework to support students and teachers in citizenship. The three focal areas are supporting teachers through professional learning in Civics Education, providing opportunities for youth civic engagement, and bridging schools to community through the One Book, One County program.
Coordinator Lei highlighted how 18 teachers, from 7 districts and 12 schools, in grades K-12 have been supported in their work in the following ways:

- Student activism
- Student community projects
- Ongoing coaching
- Increased engagement in community
- Nine full days of professional development

Coordinator Lei explained that the students have been supported in the following areas and activities:

- Student voter registration drive
- Voter education
- Increased student participation in school and community events
- Student-created One Book, One County support
- Student interns at SMCOE
- Student-created advocacy website
- Student activism
- Student participation in a Town Hall with Jackie Speier

Coordinator Lei highlighted the following areas for which community engagement has increased:

- Peninsula Library System collaboration
- 1,000 books distributed to schools
- San Mateo City Libraries collaboration
- Keynote author event
- Internal SMCOE book events
- Families reading together
- Author visit to three school sites
- Increased student participation in school and community reading events
- Student-created One Book, One County website

Coordinator Lei next elaborated on the Ethnic Studies update, discussing the following key points:

- New draft released August 16 for review
- One month public comment period
- Serves as a guide, not a mandate
- Assembly Bill 331 to mandate Ethnic Studies in high school likely to be reintroduced next year
- California State University (CSU) system Trustees voted to make Ethnic Studies a requirement for graduation

Lastly, Coordinator Lei highlighted upcoming events, including the following:

- The Future of History
  - Rescheduled for October 19 in a virtual setting
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION (continued)

- Keynote by the *One Book, One County* 2020 selection author, Alex Gino
- Four days of sessions addressing how to support the social-emotional needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning (LGBTQ+) students and embed this content into curriculum
  - California Department of Education (CDE)-HSS Community of Practice Series and Local Sessions
    - *Unobstructed Hindsight*
    - *Foundations of Antiracist Teaching 2020*
    - *One Book, One County 2020*

Mr. Hsiao thanked Coordinator Lei for the presentation. He referred to the legislation making Ethnic Studies a graduation requirement, and stating he believes in Ethnic Studies, but thinks it should be woven into existing curriculum and not marginalized as a required course. Mr. Hsiao asked how the Los Angeles Unified School District and the CSU system made Ethnic Studies a graduation requirement, and whether the requirement was simply one class. Coordinator Lei replied the new course will be a separate University of California (UC)-approved course that meets A-G requirements. Coordinator Lei explained how she understands Mr. Hsiao’s desire to have the curriculum embedded. Coordinator Lei described growing up in San Mateo County and the first book she read by an Asian author was *The Joy Luck Club* in college at UC Berkeley, which was an eye-opening moment for her, as she experienced racism in schools as a young girl. Coordinator Lei expressed how this is an opportunity to really change education for students and allow students to see themselves in the curriculum.

Mr. Hsiao commented he sees both sides, and remembers when diversity training was required in the corporate world, everyone gritted their teeth about the “touchy-feely” classes. As an Asian-American growing up in Boston, when he and his brother were the only Asians in their elementary school, it was easy to get marginalized. Ideally, he hopes the curriculum will be embedded in all courses, so it cannot be avoided. In this way, students learn there are people from different cultures who contribute to science, politics, and business, an idea that becomes part of the overall context rather than being isolated. He shared how his mother was the first professor on the East Coast to teach Asian-American literature and how one must be a firebrand sometimes.

Board President Camacho shared he was excited for the next book read, and he thanked Coordinator Lei for the update and the work. He stated he was happy that Coordinator Lei was participating in statewide conversations, specifically around anti-racism. Board President Camacho indicated Ethnic Studies would be an ongoing conversation, and the Board would lean on Coordinator Lei moving forward.

6. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A. Superintendent’s Comments

Superintendent Magee began by discussing the impressive list of retirees and retirement resolutions, honoring individuals who have dedicated their entire adult lives to serving children through SMCOE.
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT (continued)

She congratulated the retirees, including the teachers, paraeducators, and office staff. Superintendent Magee noted SMCOE retirees are usually honored in a celebratory manner at the May recognition events, which SMCOE was unable to hold this year. She noted there are plans for an upcoming Zoom retiree event in the fall, with the specific date yet to be determined. She said a date and invitation are forthcoming, and the team will do its best to celebrate all the retirees for their more than 300 years of service.

Superintendent Magee reminded the Board that the previous year was the first year the Board hosted a Youth Commission liaison. She said the staff is working with the Youth Commission on selecting this year’s representative and expects to have them onboard by the first meeting in October.

Superintendent Magee shared about an event held virtually and sponsored by Behavioral Health and Recovery Services and the Community Alliance to Revitalize Our Neighborhoods (CARON), a Spanish-speaking mental health organization. She stated these organizations also partnered with the county’s Office of Diversity and Equity, as well as SMCOE, to put on an event for Spanish-speaking parents to give them a space to ask questions specifically about how to address the mental health issues of their children due to shelter-in-place and not physically attending school. Superintendent Magee shared SMCOE staff were invited to participate to answer parent questions, specifically about the school setting, distance learning, and the Pandemic Recovery Framework. Assisting with planning was Vanessa Castro, Project Specialist, Safe Routes to School, and participating on the panel was Gracie Hough, Coordinator, English Learner Support Services, and Sonia Sanchez, new Bilingual Family Counselor. Superintendent Magee shared the video is accessible on Facebook.

Superintendent Magee updated the Board on the elementary waiver process that Executive Director Love has led so effectively. She explained that Executive Director Love consults and supports educators across the county on a daily basis to get their waivers appropriately configured, submitted, and approved. Superintendent Magee reported that 24 applications have been received, all from private schools with the exception of one charter school. Fourteen waivers have already been approved by the California Department of Public Health. She believes the process from submission to state-level approval is taking approximately 7-8 days. She noted there are some public school districts consulting with their communities and preparing waivers.

Superintendent Magee shared that the previous week the California Department of Public Health released new guidance meant to clarify in-person support on campus for small cohorts and subsets of students. The guidance limits the cohorts to 14 or fewer students with 2 adults. Unfortunately, the ratio of 14 students to two adults does not match the way many special education classes are staffed. She expects the guidance will be adjusted soon. In the meantime, districts are preparing to bring small groups of students with urgent learning needs to campus for in-person support.

Superintendent Magee looks forward to seeing Board members at the upcoming Board subcommittee meetings.
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT (continued)

Superintendent Magee expressed she is also looking forward to the California County Boards of Education (CCBE) Zoom conference the following weekend, and she is interested to hear the speakers.

Lastly, she wished happy birthday to Mr. Ross whose birthday was the previous day, as well as happy upcoming birthdays to Ms. Alvaro and Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham on September 14.

7. BOARD MEMBERS

A. Second Reading and Potential Action on New Board Policy 0470 COVID-19 Mitigation Plan

Ms. Alvaro thanked Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham for the redline version of the document, which made the changes clear.

Mr. Hsiao commented he has concerns that sometimes guidelines are overly prescriptive which has implications for implementation. Mr. Hsiao discussed his main concern that there was language that might be interpreted as valuing time-in-seat over student engagement. He referred back to his conversations at the last Board meeting and how he sees teachers monitoring students to ensure they are looking at their devices and getting work done for the 240-minute requirement, instead of trying to maximize engagement and learning. Mr. Hsiao expressed feeling that this is driving students away from wanting to learn in this mode. He shared concerns that the policy does not mention student engagement as an important element.

Mr. Hsiao further indicated the policy states, “to reduce possibilities for infection, students should remain in the same space and in cohorts as small and consistent as practicable, including for recess and lunch.” While he agrees with keeping the cohorts small and separated, he has concerns the language leaves room for interpretation to keep students confined in the same room for all four hours. He wishes the policy could be adjusted in this area.

Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham responded the language comes directly from the California Department of Public Health Guidance for schools, which is why it was folded into the policy. She indicated CDPH emphasizes the need to minimize students moving from classroom to classroom to control potential disease transmission. She noted schools are also talking about the extent to which outdoor spaces can be used to deliver instruction. Mr. Hsiao wished the policy could mention Environmental Education Leadership and the National COVID-19 Outdoor Learning Initiative, which is exciting work, and he hopes those ideas can be implemented.

Superintendent Magee indicated that both of Mr. Hsiao’s comments could likely be amended in the policy. Speaking to his first concern, she described that a clause could be added to highlight the importance of student engagement as a critical factor in learning, as this is an instructional best practice. Speaking to his second concern, she discussed the idea of maximizing physical distancing but being creative about using other spaces in the school for learning, such as the outdoors. Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham confirmed there was already language in the policy about
considering the use of non-classroom space for instruction, including the regular use of outdoor space, weather permitting. Superintendent Magee indicated this covers the point about the learning setting. Mr. Hsiao expressed hopes the language concerning his first concern could be adjusted.

Board President Camacho asked if the Board was holding on the item for a third reading.

Mr. Cannon asked if the policy was only for SMCOE students and administrators. Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham confirmed yes. Mr. Cannon asked if there was flexibility with common sense in interpretation, going up to the Superintendent if necessary. Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham again confirmed this to be true.

Ms. Alvaro confirmed this was not guidance for local school districts, but was only guidance for SMCOE staff and students. She stated she heard Mr. Hsiao’s concerns about keeping students in classrooms all day long, but reiterated there is language about getting them into outdoor spaces as much as possible and utilizing care in passing in the hallways. Ms. Alvaro commented as this is not guidance for local districts, she was unsure how much additional language needed to be added, and asked if that changed Mr. Hsiao’s comfort level.

Mr. Hsiao stated he was bearing the brunt of policies being interpreted in prescribed ways and it is worrisome that he needs to have a teacher conference the following day because teachers are interpreting policies in the wrong ways, instead of exercising common sense. Ms. Alvaro shared understanding for his concerns, adding the district at which Mr. Hsiao’s children attend school is not governed by this policy. Mr. Hsiao agreed this was true, but he feels their Board also has a policy they feel can be interpreted with common sense and reason. He asked if there was a hurry to have the policy implemented as soon as possible.

Board President Camacho asked if the preference was for this policy to be adopted that evening, or would a postponement to the next meeting be acceptable. Chief Deputy County Counsel stated from her perspective, a postponement would not create a hardship, and deferred to Superintendent Magee, who agreed a delay would not create a hardship.

Board President Camacho asked if it was okay to be presented with both options at the next meeting, the original and a version with updated language, and they could choose which version to adopt. Superintendent Magee confirmed this was okay. Board President Camacho thanked all for their input on the policy and indicated it would be brought back for a third reading at the next Board meeting.

Mr. Hsiao expressed appreciation for everyone’s flexibility.

**B. First Reading of Updated Board Policy 5030 on Student Wellness**

Jeneé Littrell, Deputy Superintendent, Educational Services Division, shared that Board Policy 5030 on Student Wellness requires updating every three years. She said the redline changes include guidance from the California Department of Education (CDE) to ensure the policy stays current with the work. Deputy Superintendent Littrell added the policy is also informed by school nutrition programs through federal guidance, and the language suggested by those entities is indicated.
Ms. Alvaro referred to the language regarding instruction being delivered in the classroom, such as tobacco education. Since instruction will not be delivered in the classroom for a while, she asked if language should be left alone to be in compliance with the requests of the state and federal programs and whether SMCOE is able to deliver any of this instruction in distance learning. Deputy Superintendent Littrell responded that the language to which Ms. Alvaro referenced likely speaks to the Tobacco-Use and Prevention Education (TUPE) grant, and part of that grant does require curriculum be provided in the classroom. When instruction is provided in the distance learning model in the context of an educational setting with a teacher, it is considered “in the classroom” and SMCOE is compliant according to the grant. Ms. Alvaro asked for confirmation that we are in compliance with the language when teaching the curriculum remotely, which Deputy Superintendent Littrell confirmed was accurate.

Board President Camacho indicated the policy would return for a second reading at the next Board meeting.

C. Discuss/Act on Designation of the San Mateo County Board of Education's Voting Representative at the California County Boards of Education (CCBE) Remote Meeting as part of the CSBA Conference December 4, 2020

After a motion by Mr. Ross and a second by Mr. Lempert, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Camacho, Cannon, Gerard, Hsiao, Lempert, and Ross), by roll call vote, approved Beverly Gerard as the San Mateo County Board of Education's Voting Representative at the California County Boards of Education (CCBE) Remote Meeting as part of the California School Boards Association (CSBA) Conference December 4, 2020.

D. Discuss/Act on Nominations for California School Boards Association (CSBA) Directors-at-Large: Director-at-Large, Asian/Pacific Islander; Director-at-Large, Hispanic

The Board took no action on this item.

E. Board Member Comments

Ms. Gerard

Ms. Gerard thanked the Board for entrusting her with their vote for CCBE County Member Board Voting Representative for both the CCBE and CSBA conferences. She then wished happy birthdays to Mr. Ross, Ms. Alvaro, and Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham. Ms. Gerard shared her excitement and pride, congratulating SMCOE on the two grants received, acknowledging the tremendous amount of work and perseverance that went into receiving them.

Ms. Gerard referred to the upcoming CCBE conference the following week, sharing that she and Mr. Ross were excited about the wonderful speakers, including Mr. Ross conducting a fireside chat. She emphasized the huge amount of work that went into conference planning, which was much more than anyone had anticipated. Ms. Gerard said the team has done an excellent job. She shared that she had recently attended a virtual conference, and it was more interesting and entertaining than she thought it would be. Ms. Gerard shared hopes that all would attend.
Lastly, she stated she was impressed with Coordinator Lei’s presentation and is excited that Coordinator Lei is working at the state level on Ethnic Studies, as she truly believes in the curriculum.

Mr. Hsiao

Mr. Hsiao stated he enjoyed the evenings’ presentations. He again referred to his participation in the Youth Services Network meeting, and how he enjoyed the comments from San Mateo County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services and Fred Finch Youth and Family Services. Mr. Hsiao shared how alarming it is for these agencies on the front lines of serving students with emerging mental health issues.

Mr. Hsiao spoke of the progress being made by the Ad-Hoc Task Force he co-leads to support out-of-school time providers. He indicated the task force presented to the county’s Recovery Strategy Committee as well as the Faith Leaders Network, resulting in three offers for free space for providers willing to serve underserved families. He shared they are excited about the traction they are getting.

Mr. Hsiao indicated his concerns about the direction of distance learning indicated in a report the task force is compiling after talking with out-of-school time providers and parents who shared their experiences working with teachers in six to seven different schools. He added it is discouraging to parents that students are tuning out, and to great alarm, he is hearing that in his children’s school district, which has only been open for a little more than two weeks, students are already behind two weeks for different reasons, e.g., they couldn’t log in, they couldn’t find the assignments, or they couldn’t upload their assignments. Mr. Hsiao expressed fears that students are falling behind and once they feel like they are under water, they will check out.

Lastly, Mr. Hsiao stated that he, along with Mr. Ross and Ms. Alvaro, met with Jon Walton, County Chief Information Officer, to learn more about how the county is trying to close the digital divide in underserved communities, both on the coastside and in the Redwood City and Ravenswood School Districts. He added they have received Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) money to do so, but it is a complex issue which needs continued monitoring. Mr. Hsiao indicated Mr. Ross would be introducing another vendor solution through the county to see if they might be more effective in serving students on the coastside. He thanked his colleagues for joining him on that call and for continuing to keep that issue front and center.

Mr. Cannon

Mr. Cannon shared appreciation for the evening’s presentations, expressing that he continues to learn and better understand the work of Superintendent Magee and her staff, as well as their own work as a Board. He shared how the previous week Michelle Obama discussed being in a low-grade depression over the last four years, and he saw nodding heads among his family and acquaintances. He reflected on the struggles of Mr. Hsiao and Board President Camacho, who have young children, while others on the Board have passed that stage, and how it means a lot to hear and understand their point of view. Mr. Cannon referred to Mr. Hsiao’s experiences as an Asian-American child growing up back East, and noted the one positive thing about the past four years for him is hearing people’s stories about being poorly treated and how tragic these experiences have been for hundreds of thousands of people. He thanked Mr. Hsiao for his participation and sharing.
Ms. Alvaro
Ms. Alvaro thanked Mr. Hsiao for putting together the meeting aimed to close the digital divide in underserved communities, sharing how pleased she was that they were listened to about their own personal, on-the-ground experiences, for example with dead zones and canyons on the coast where nobody was getting Wi-Fi. She stated the meeting was encouraging, and she hopes they will continue to work with the Board members and their communities.

Ms. Alvaro discussed the Coastside Big Lift meeting the previous day, referring to the guidance from the state regarding the teacher to student ratio for early childhood educators, especially daycare providers. She emphasized that having two adults in a cohort of children does not work, because they will no longer have anyone to clean. Ms. Alvaro indicated groups of 14-16 children have been working with a teacher and a teacher’s aide, but there was also a third adult whose entire responsibility was cleaning, and the new guidance removes the third adult. She expressed hopes that the CDE may issue different guidelines and clear up that issue, which is a real concern for daycare providers.

Ms. Alvaro mentioned she had not yet seen a CCBE Conference schedule and asked if those attending would receive information regarding events. Ms. Gerard indicated a welcome email had been sent out, which Ms. Alvaro confirmed she had not yet received. Ms. Gerard discussed the ongoing issue of Board members not receiving CSBA emails, and assured she would speak to Charlyn Tuter and Jennifer Ng the following day. Board President Camacho suggested Ms. Perna could follow up on this issue.

Lastly, Ms. Alvaro referred to emails from the public coming to the Board Members’ SMCOE email addresses, and asked to be looped in when someone responds, in order to know who responded and what was said, and avoid duplicate responses, or determine if the Board President or a SMCOE staff member should be responding. She also shared she wanted to ensure emails from the public are not ignored. Board President Camacho agreed these were good points and asked if Superintendent Magee could send him instructions on how to best communicate when all Board member receive a message. He requested that he and Superintendent Magee talk about how to best handle the issue, and she could follow up with a message to the Board. Superintendent Magee replied that the Board had narrowed this issue to two options and agreed the issue needed to be solved. Ms. Alvaro thanked Superintendent Magee for the response.

Mr. Lempert
Mr. Lempert shared appreciation for the evening’s presentations and the comments from his Board colleagues, especially those from Mr. Cannon which resonated with him. Lastly, he wished happy birthday to those celebrating birthdays and thanked Superintendent Magee and her team for their hard work during these unprecedented times.

Mr. Ross
Mr. Ross stated the comments from his colleagues were well put, including those from Mr. Hsiao and Ms. Alvaro, and he especially appreciated Mr. Cannon’s reflections on Mr. Hsiao’s sharing. He added a shout-out to Executive Director Love and her team, who are responsible for the incredible content on the website. Mr. Ross discussed struggling on behalf of a small business in Santa Clara
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County to figure out what that county is advising small businesses to do to be compliant with COVID-19, and his difficulty trying to find resources on their website. He shared feeling our website has much more content, is better designed, and is a great resource for disseminating information, and again, he thanked Executive Director Love and her team. Lastly, he thanked everyone for the evening’s reports.

Board President Camacho
Board President Camacho shared he also enjoyed the evening’s presentations and thanked all presenters. He stated he feels SMCOE educators are doing a tremendous job with students and programs, and are truly committed to the county’s most vulnerable students, and he appreciates their dedication to providing the best level of service for them and their families. Board President Camacho mentioned he is so happy there is a Bilingual Family Counselor to provide support, and again expressed appreciation to all. Lastly, he wished happy birthdays to all celebrating birthdays, indicating one of his children and his sister also share a birthday with Ms. Alvaro and Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham.

Board President Camacho said he was trying to wrap his comments around all that has happened since the last meeting, as well as being thankful that Jones Gulch has not been lost. He indicated there is a long road ahead, and it is an honor to walk that road alongside everyone in the room.

Ms. Gerard added that Shirley Hoch, a member of the South San Francisco Unified School District Board of Education for over 20 years passed away last month. Board President Camacho thanked Ms. Gerard for bringing that to the Board’s attention, adding that Ms. Hoch was quite a figure in the South San Francisco and Daly City greater community.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. Board President Camacho announced the next regular meeting would take place on September 16, 2020, at 6:00 p.m.

Nancy Magee, Secretary
jlp