MINUTES OF THE SAN MATEO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Meeting Date: April 7, 2021
Meeting Location: Held Remotely
Board Members Present: Susan Alvaro, Chelsea Bonini, Hector Camacho, Jr., Jim Cannon, Beverly Gerard, Ted Lempert, Joe Ross
Staff Officials Present: Nancy Magee, Secretary
Jennifer Perna, Executive Assistant
Other Staff Present: Niambi Clay, Claire Cunningham, Jennifer Frentress, Jencé Littrell, Patricia Love, Lori Musso, Anjanette Pelletier, Denise Porterfield, Alyson Suzuki

1. OPENING ITEMS

A. Call to Order

Board President Hector Camacho, Jr. called the meeting to order at 6:01 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 provided 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 Ms. Gerard and a second by Ms. Alvaro, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Bonini, Camacho, Cannon, Gerard, Lempert, and Ross), by roll call vote, approved the April 7, 2021, agenda as presented.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following individuals submitted public comment by email to express support for physical distancing requirements for COVID-29 safety protocols being reduced from six feet to three feet.

- Trae Vassallo, parent of three children in Portola Valley
- Heather Green, parent of children in elementary school in San Mateo County
- Shripriya Mahesh
- Ann Green, parent of children attending school in San Mateo County
- Sara Smirin, parent of children attending school in San Mateo County
- Vara Ramakrishnan
- Yiyi Zeng
- Maribeth Portz, parent of children in school in Hillsborough
- Erica Plambeck, parent of two daughters in middle school in San Mateo County
- John Randolph
- Manisha Agrawal, Atherton resident
- Jessica Hope, parent of two teenagers in Half Moon Bay
- Cara Dakin, parent of children attending school in the San Mateo Union High School District

An additional comment was submitted by Dana Chung and Heather Hopkins from the Community Equity Collaborative, expressing gratitude to the Board for recognizing the Week of the Young Child and for their ongoing leadership and support in lifting up young children.

The following speakers provided live public comment:

- Janice Pellizzari, SMCOE teacher and San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) President, spoke on behalf of SMCEA members who have done a great job to support students all year
- Trae Vassallo, Portola Valley resident and parent of three children at the Nueva School, highlighted restrictive cohort guidelines which particularly affect high schools

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. **March 17, 2021, Regular Board Meeting**

After a motion by Mr. Lempert and a second by Ms. Gerard, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Bonini, Camacho, Cannon, Gerard, Lempert, and Ross), by roll call vote, approved the Minutes of the March 17, 2021, Regular Board Meeting as presented.
4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

   B. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-16 Recognizing April 10-16, 2021, as the Week of the Young Child**

   C. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-17 Recognizing April 21, 2021, as Administrative Professionals Day**

   D. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-18 Recognizing April 22, 2021, as Earth Day**

   E. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-19 Recognizing April 2021 as Workforce Wellness Month**

   F. **Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-20 Recognizing April 10, 2021, as Dolores Huerta Day**

   G. **Receive Updated Certification List of Trained District Supervisors of Attendance, Education Code 48240-48245**

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

5. **BUSINESS SERVICES DIVISION**

   A. **Receive 2019-2020 Fiscal Audit Report**

   Deputy Superintendent Porterfield stated that the 2019-2020 Fiscal Audit Report is being presented for the Board’s information. She thanked the entire Internal Business Services Team, led by Margie Gustafson, Executive Director, Internal Business Services, for their tireless work maintaining the county office books and records, and ensuring the accuracy of the report. Deputy Superintendent Porterfield then welcomed Jeff Ira, Certified Public Accountant and Partner with the firm of Chavan & Associates, LLP, to provide details on the report with no findings.

   Mr. Ira described his confidence in the exemplary SMCOE staff who consistently provide accurate and quality information. He discussed how the last year has been strange and difficult and the nation finally realized how complex schools are and how they provide many integral services in the life and development of children. Students not only get educated, but get fed, taken care of, and nurtured in their school districts. He stated what SMCOE does is impressive, and he has a great deal of respect for the Board, Superintendent, and staff.

   Mr. Ira confirmed there are no findings in either state or federal compliance and trending continues to be positive and show healthy reserves.

   Ms. Alvaro shared it was nice to see Mr. Ira, and Mr. Ira related this is his favorite Board meeting to attend. Ms. Alvaro referred to page 91 and the finding about the School Safety Plan, where meetings were not held in a timely manner. She asked if the same situation occurred last year. Mr. Ira replied they are required to report on the prior year’s findings and confirmed this issue has been addressed and corrected. Mr. Alvaro asked if this is a problem in any way and Mr. Ira confirmed it was not. She also thanked Executive Director Gustafson and the staff who do the heavy lifting in the Business Services Division, as well as Deputy Superintendent Porterfield for her leadership.
6. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A. Receive Update on the SMCOE/Alder Teacher Residency Program

Lori Musso, Associate Superintendent, Human Resources/Teacher and Administrator Development, provided an update on the successful launch of the SMCOE/Alder Teacher Residency Program. She addressed the following topics in detail:

- What is a Teacher Residency?
- Teacher Residency Goals
- SMCOE's Role: Responsible for the oversight and execution of the program
- District Partners 2021-2022
- Timeline
- Next Steps

Mr. Ross shared his excitement about the program and congratulated Associate Superintendent Musso. He recalled his excitement when the program was first presented the previous year and said he has been rooting for Heather Kirkpatrick, President and Chief Executive Officer of Alder Graduate School of Education, since 2013 when she first mentioned the idea of creating a graduate school. Mr. Ross asked if SMCOE is Alder's only county office partner. Associate Superintendent Musso answered that we are. Mr. Ross discussed how this is a trailblazing program of which he is exceptionally proud. He added there is a lot of research proving job-embedded pathways for teachers leads to producing exceptional teachers. Mr. Ross emphatically suggested that Associate Superintendent Musso, Ms. Kirkpatrick, and perhaps some resident students present at the California County Boards of Education (CCBE) conference in September to share with other county offices of education.

Mr. Ross asked how many students are in the first cohort, and how expensive and difficult it is to recruit students. Associate Superintendent Musso responded the cohort size is 13, and they currently have 12 residents. The program is still recruiting for the SMCOE teacher resident. She explained that Alder and Ms. Kirkpatrick normally prefer a cohort of 20 residents, but are fully supporting moving forward with 13 students, because they know recruitment the following year will be easier.

Associate Superintendent Musso shared that Alder does a great job helping with media and provides templates and information for interested participants, all linked to the SMCOE website. Associate Superintendent Musso gave shout-outs to Patricia Love, Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, and Patrick Broderick, Multimedia Designer, who helped to brand the SMCOE/Alder materials.

Associate Superintendent Musso discussed the cost of recruitment, explaining one of the benefits of partnering with Alder is they provide staff support. Alder's staff is committed to equity and diversity in the workforce and does outreach in atypical locations. Additionally, Associate Superintendent Musso explained recruitment is a crucial part of Director Veal's job. The consortium determines where a resident best belongs to make the deepest impact and ensure greatest success. If the potential resident comes from a particular district, then they have first rights to that district. Once a district makes a commitment to a resident, the districts invest some funding,
and SMCOE pays a stipend. Associate Superintendent Musso said mentor teachers also receive a stipend. There are costs to the districts, even though the cost-benefit is strong.

Mr. Lempert shared Mr. Ross’ enthusiasm and congratulated Associate Superintendent Musso on the program. He commented how some issues in education don’t change and recalled being in the Assembly many years ago carrying a bill focused on the difficulty recruiting special education, bilingual, math, and science teachers. His bill allowed for differential pay and passed the Assembly Education Committee unanimously, but for political reasons, the leadership killed it. Mr. Lempert cited this as an example of how things are slow to change, even if they need to change.

Mr. Lempert then asked about the differential between these categories of teachers and other categories, and the difficulty in finding recruits in general. Associate Superintendent Musso replied she meets regularly with interested districts. The message from all districts was loud and clear that education specialists reflected the highest area of need, with retention of teachers working in special education being an issue. Associate Superintendent Musso explained that mentor teachers, who serve as host teachers the entire year, go through heavy screening, and the team is excited for these top caliber mentor teachers to shepherd the residents through this process.

Ms. Bonini asked what types of professions the residents come from, and whether they are currently working in districts or have certain degrees. Associate Superintendent Musso explained there is a heavy emphasis on local recruitment because of the connection to community and growing from within one’s district. Each resident receives a small stipend and tuition is paid. Additionally, Alder has a financial advisory group which helps with grants and to secure funds. As part of the recruitment process, Alder emphasizes if someone wants to be a teacher, Alder does not want other factors to get in the way. So, there are paraeducators, as well as students coming from traditional backgrounds with Bachelor’s Degrees, who know that coming into a residency program will set them up for long term success.

Ms. Bonini spoke of being a formerly trained teacher with an elementary education degree from a small school in upstate New York, and being in classrooms when earning her Bachelor’s Degree, called practicums. When she thinks about the trainings new teachers are receiving, she feels there is not enough time in classrooms. Ms. Bonini discussed how this program is great, because new teachers learn by being in the classroom. Of course, they can learn by taking courses, but they also need the practical experience.

Associate Superintendent Musso explained that it is a requirement that districts cannot have resident teachers serve as substitutes in any classroom. She also explained there is investment in the residency program to really equip teachers to be strongly trained. However, if the host teacher is absent, for example attending a three-day professional development, the resident teaches that class, and a substitute would not be used. This helps districts, and the residents get a lot of experience as solo teachers, beyond what they would receive in a traditional program.

Ms. Bonini discussed how the current residents are all educational specialists/special education teachers and asked if they are being placed in Special Day Class (SDC) classrooms. Associate Superintendent Musso replied they are being primarily placed in Resource classes and are receiving
Mild/Moderate credentials. Ms. Bonini asked how this coordinates with the complicated California Commission on Teachers Credentialing (CTC) levels of credentialing for special education, which is not a typical credential, and whether the residents accomplish all they need to do. Associate Superintendent Musso assured SMCOE would not have partnered with Alder if they were not fully vetted by CTC and able to issue these credentials. She reiterated that residents are earning Mild/Moderate credentials, which has been a challenge for SMCOE in placing a resident, because Moderate/Severe credentials are needed. Alder will provide this opportunity and do a supplement to the base credential.

Ms. Alvaro referred to the budget and recent budget report indicating that past teacher training programs are being funded by contributions and asked if the same kinds of contributions are being used for this program. Associate Superintendent Musso explained that for the teacher and administrator development programs and teacher residency programs, funds are generated in the form of tuition or grants, and since Alder is giving SMCOE $100,000 towards this program, it qualifies as generating funds. Generated funds are not part of the general fund, so if a program is 100% supported by the general fund, one would not see contributions reported. But because this program generates funds, the SMCOE contribution will show in budget documents. In these programs, the revenue from tuition or grants does not cover the total cost. Associate Superintendent Musso emphasized that SMCOE has supported these programs based on Goal Two of the Strategic Plan, but if one just looks at the budget, it looks like the program costs a lot of money, however this is just the way it is reported.

Deputy Superintendent Porterfield added the program was moved over and accounted for in this way to demonstrate SMCOE's commitment to educating new teachers. The contribution demonstrates a commitment to this strategic goal. Before moving over into the Superintendent's Office, the program was accounted for in the former Instructional Services Division (ISD), where it was documented under operational dollars.

Ms. Alvaro discussed the charging of tuition, receiving of grants, and paying by districts for their part of the program for teachers coming into their districts. She asked if what is seen as contributions is the offset or if what is brought in is included in the contributions and it is all wrapped together. Associate Superintendent Musso confirmed it is the offset. The goal is to bridge the funding gap so that SMCOE's contribution is reduced, but it is an artform to find the most effective price point to keep the program viable for participants. She noted tuition has been raised across all programs in alternating years.

Ms. Alvaro stated these explanations help provide clarity. Ms. Alvaro shared she is trying to understand everything and commented that what Associate Superintendent Musso is doing is invaluable. She is proud that SMCOE, the County Board, and the Superintendent are able to support the work and make it possible. Ms. Alvaro described receiving 100% positive, enthusiastic, and grateful responses across the board from participants and participating districts in these programs. She thanked Associate Superintendent Musso and her team for all they do.

Mr. Cannon expressed great respect for Associate Superintendent Musso's work. Mr. Cannon asked if this program is specific to a special education emphasis. Associate Superintendent Musso replied
that yes, the recruitment specifically targeted the districts’ top need for education specialists, therefore that was the goal. She also clarified that if they had applicants wanting a math or science credential, they would be able to accommodate that request.

Mr. Cannon asked why there are so few people seeking special education positions and what can we do to encourage more people to get into special education. Associate Superintendent Musso responded that the recruitment did take a different approach and focused on educating people about the impact of being a special educator and the benefits of partnering with Alder. She discussed how looking at potential candidates in the districts helped discover people who might have been thinking about being a teacher, but didn’t quite know how to make that happen. Associate Superintendent Musso indicated that in these ways, the program is able to support this important workforce.

Ms. Gerard thanked Associate Superintendent Musso for the report and shared her excitement about the program. Ms. Gerard asked how mentor teachers are selected and whether they are selected through a process or volunteer. Associate Superintendent Musso responded that having strong mentor teachers is one of the cornerstones of the program. Districts encourage individuals to apply as mentors and then go through a rigorous process to be selected as mentor teachers. Mentor teachers should be people always looking to learn and improve and are attracted to the professional development component. Associate Superintendent Musso explained that once a month, mentor teachers attend full day of professional development for training, coaching, and support.

Board President Camacho indicated that California County Boards of Education (CCBE) may receive a conference proposal soon about the teacher residency. He is excited about the potential of this incredible program being shared with other Board members and Superintendents throughout the state.

B. Receive Update on SMCOE’s 2016-2021 Strategic Plan

Superintendent Magee provided an update on SMCOE’s 2016-2021 Strategic Plan. She discussed the following topics in detail:

- 2016-2021 Roadmap to Equitable Outcomes
- SMCOE’s Vision and Mission
- 2017-2018: Two-Year Goals
- OneSMCOE Culture
- 2019-2021 Buckets: Goals #1-4
- SMCOE On the Move 2022-2027
- Summer 2021: Strategic Plan Kickoff

Mr. Cannon thanked Superintendent Magee for bringing the Board up to date about the Strategic Plan. He commented it is evident the Strategic Plan is a vital document, instead of a plan which loses momentum as the years go by. Mr. Cannon thanked Superintendent Magee for reminding the Board of key components and sharing where SMCOE hopes to go in the future. Superintendent Magee added that there is an intention to hold a Board retreat in the summer for deeper conversation.
Mr. Ross echoed Mr. Cannon's remarks and shared his appreciation for the thoughtful and impressive plan. He stated the idea of presenting at the CCBE conference is a great idea, and informed SMCOE is allowed to have two presentations.

Mr. Ross invited Superintendent Magee to talk more about the talented data team and the Data Zone project. Mr. Ross discussed genuine interest at the Sequoia Union High School District (SUHSD), Board level and noted how great to create a collaboration between the feeder districts and high school district to track students through their journey. He asked where the team is on that project in terms of timing and how the Board can help.

Superintendent Magee said SMCOE has been involved with the DataZone since its inception going back to when staff met with researchers from University of California (UC) Santa Cruz to envision the work. The Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) was also directly involved in the project at that point. She discussed how SMCOE has done a lot of work on the DataZone, and in the past few years, SCCOE underwent leadership changes. Superintendent Magee indicated SMCOE along with SCCOE have now reconnected, are aligned and back on track. She added that Chief Deputy County Counsel has been updating the MOU to streamline the data sharing agreements. Superintendent Magee also explained that some districts are already part of the DataZone and the team is working to onboard new districts, including SUHSD.

Superintendent Magee emphasized the goal is to have every district in San Mateo County be a part of the DataZone, which is connected to the Silicon Valley Regional Data Trust (SVRDT). The SVRDT provides more streamlined access, with all the right permissions involved, to other youth serving systems, all of which helps support foster youth, students who are homeless, and families seeking greater services and support. Superintendent Magee assured the Board that there are no bigger champions than Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham and herself.

Mr. Ross recalled some members of the Board going to the SCCOE a few years back to hear an ambitious presentation on DataZone. Mr. Ross observed that the legal paperwork and relationships are in place and asked if the only component remaining is to engage districts to participate. Superintendent Magee said yes and added there is a need to engage districts and align their student information systems to the DataZone.

Mr. Ross asked that the team be especially thoughtful to engage the Ravenswood City School District (RCSD), which is not as well-resourced financially or staffed to do data work, as the other feeder districts to SUHSD. He volunteered if there is anything that can be done, he would love to help, but it sounds like the project is in good hands. Superintendent Magee shared that the SMCOE team is top notch and working directly with district partners, Ravenswood City School District included.

C. Receive Initial Proposal from the San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) to the San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools for 2021-2022

The Board received the Initial Proposal from the San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) to the San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools for 2021-2022.
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E. Superintendent’s Comments

Superintendent Magee began by thanking the Internal Business Services (IBS) team and Executive Director Gustafson, under the leadership of Deputy Superintendent Porterfield, for the exceptional work they do every single day. She noted that Mr. Ira made it clear that SMCOE’s audit is of the highest quality and commended the team on their hard work and dedication to the organization’s goals.

Superintendent Magee thanked Associate Superintendent Musso and her team’s amazing work in the Teacher and Administrator Development program, including launching the teacher residency program. Superintendent Magee emphasized there is nothing more important for children and the education system than strong leaders, and commented how the SMCOE team is exceptionally equity-focused and motivating. She described the team as wonderful people and professionals, and Associate Superintendent Musso is an exceptional leader.

Superintendent Magee reported that SMCOE was hoping to be awarded one of the state’s community schools grants and described the team’s hard work with partners to prepare a progressive proposal for how to grow and extend community school services. The team learned this week that they did not receive the grant and as a result, the Gateway program may be dismantled. She assured the Board would be kept updated on this issue moving forward.

Superintendent Magee shared about the health and safety guidance released this week from San Mateo County Health. San Mateo County Health updated the physical distancing guidance to a 3-feet minimum between students in schools, with masking, and physical distancing between adults remaining at 6 feet. This change may allow some school districts to expand services this school year, but most school districts will not have the capacity to further expand until summer or fall. Superintendent Magee discussed the Governor’s announcement about schools being fully operational in the fall, and noted it is still unclear whether any distance learning program will be allowed to occur. She shared hopes that flexibility is maintained to ensure all students are well-served.

Superintendent Magee thanked Executive Director Love for her exceptional leadership in producing the updated Pandemic Recovery Framework and providing technical assistance to school districts and leaders, including public, private, and charter schools. Superintendent Magee described Executive Director Love as a phenomenal resource for districts.

Superintendent Magee reported that Mary McGrath, Executive Director, Safe and Supportive Schools, shared that in working on programs serving students who are experiencing homelessness, one of SMCOE’s community partners, LifeMoves, was granted $10,000 from McKinney-Vento
monies to help build a learning center for children at the safe parking lot site in Redwood City, a location where families experiencing homelessness can safely park their cars. There are many students from both the Redwood City School District and the Sequoia Union High School District whose families park their cars in this secure lot, and SMCOE is grateful that this money can contribute to better conditions for the students.

Lastly, Superintendent Magee announced that the San Mateo County School Board Association (SMCSBA) is honoring SMCOE at the 2021 Kent Awards with a Leadership and Action for Equity. She shared the team is so honored to receive the award. The event is being held on May 7, and she hopes the Board can attend to celebrate the staff’s hard work. Additionally, the Association of California School Administrators (ACSA) organization announced the Region V 2021 Leader Awards and Superintendent Magee proudly shared that Anjanette Pelletier, Associate Superintendent, Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) would receive the Region V George Hurley Outstanding Service Award, a perpetual trophy award. Superintendent Magee described Associate Superintendent Pelletier as a phenomenal individual, whip smart with untold energy, who makes a difference in so many spaces, and congratulated her on her well-deserved recognition.

Ms. Alvaro thanked Superintendent Magee for the report and discussed the afterschool and summer learning programs for students on the Coast who don’t have a place to go. She shared that the Boys and Girls Club is a phenomenal partner and suggested that a call to them to connect them with the group building the learning center for the homeless youth could yield interesting results. Superintendent Magee thanked Ms. Alvaro for the suggestion and assured she would follow up.

7. BOARD MEMBERS

A. Conduct First of Two Public Hearings on the Composition of Potential Trustee Voting Areas

Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham introduced the first of four public hearings on the Board’s process of transitioning from an at-large election to a by-trustee election system. She outlined the process in detail and highlighted the following topics:

- Purpose of Tonight’s Public Hearing
- California Voting Rights Act (CVRA)
- Two Safe Harbors
- How Districts are Drawn
- Community of Interest
- Highly Compact Areas
- Areas Driven by Policy Concerns
- Tonight’s Discussion

Board President Camacho thanked Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham for the refresher.

Mr. Ross thanked Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham for the overview. He asked to what degree this process answers to the federal and state law. Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham replied that
the California law is more stringent, so by complying with the California Voting Rights Act, SMCOE will be in compliance with the Federal Voting Rights Act.

Mr. Lempert asked if the weight of SMCOE being a county Board, broken down by school districts, outweighs other concerns; in other words, would the communities of interest being defined as school districts outweigh the other examples in the law. Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham responded that this is within the purview of the County Board of Education in selecting its final map. The point of the hearings is to hear from the public about what are their interests, which can be taken into consideration when the Board acts. The purpose of having these public hearings as part of the process, which is required in the Elections Code, is to make sure there are multiple, regular opportunities for public input throughout the process. Typically, public feedback would be requested at the end of the process. However, in this case, the law requires public input, from the perspective of whoever decides to participate in the hearings.

Ms. Alvaro referred to federal code prohibiting racial gerrymandering, and asked for help understanding that concept, as the Board weighs communities of interest, which could be school districts, but also wants to ensure equitable representation. Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham explained that the point of the Federal Voting Rights Act and California Voting Rights Act is to prevent racially polarized voting. In minority communities within a jurisdiction, if there are certain gerrymandered or drawn boundaries, these individuals would never be able to be represented on the Board, based on where the lines are drawn. These laws are designed to prevent that from happening.

Ms. Alvaro referred to federal code prohibiting racial gerrymandering, and asked for help understanding that concept, as the Board weighs communities of interest, which could be school districts, but also wants to ensure equitable representation. Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham explained that the point of the Federal Voting Rights Act and California Voting Rights Act is to prevent racially polarized voting. In minority communities within a jurisdiction, if there are certain gerrymandered or drawn boundaries, these individuals would never be able to be represented on the Board, based on where the lines are drawn. These laws are designed to prevent that from happening.

Ms. Bonini asked when looking at communities of interest, whether there is guidance that says generally a given amount of population should have one trustee, or with increased population, there might be a consideration for more trustees. Ms. Bonini shared she knows this often happens in connection because of growing populations and some County Boards may have more or less members, and asked if there is any maximum amount per person, based on Census data. Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham responded that expanding or retracting the membership of the County Board is not part of this process. The assumption is that the Board is looking at creating maps based on the current composition of the Board. She discussed how the idea of communities of interest is used quite a bit with regard to the County Committee on School District Organization (CCSDO). When the CCSDO is looking at territory transfer petitions, this concept has been more robustly fleshed out throughout the process, but it is not specifically defined, at least with regard to the transition to a by-trustee area election system. Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham said the term “communities of interest” does not have a legal definition, but is more of what people think of when they think of their neighborhood.

Ms. Gerard referred to Ms. Alvaro’s question on gerrymandering and recalled in the past, when the Board looked at maps of represented areas, they looked at school districts, which seems different, and asked if she was wrong. Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham replied that school districts could be considered communities of interest, by virtue of the work that the County Board does in hearing appeals of interdistrict transfer requests and expulsion appeals. It could be considered a community of interest to not split up school districts, so the public knows their representative on the County Board of Education. The Board can look at that factor but is not required to make that determinative. Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham believes the bigger challenge will come when the Census data is received to make
the populations equivalent across the districts which may force the Board to split up districts simply based on numbers.

Mr. Ross asked if there is any built-in protection that would have arisen from the applicability of these voting rights laws to the line-drawing work of the CCSDOs, or if it is separate. He shared it strikes him that the rule against gerrymandering based on race doesn't necessarily line up with the way school districts in any given community are drawn, and in fact, quite often school districts historically have been driven around communities of race. Mr. Ross explained he doesn’t know what the demographics and Census will show, and asked in a situation where school districts created de-facto racial gerrymandering on one hand, but on the other hand the historical community of interest is drawn around the school districts, must the Board weigh that and would they get advice on how to weight that? Counsel Cunningham replied school district boundaries were set well before even the Federal Voting Rights Act was enacted, so they were created and lines were drawn where they were drawn. To address his question on the role of the CCSDO, Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham explained that they do play a role when it is a School Board going through this transition, holding public hearings and taking action at the end of the process. But they are not involved with the County Board of Education; it is the Board of Supervisors which takes the action which in other circumstances would be taken by the CCSDO.

Board President Camacho announced the Board would then convene the first of two Public Hearings to receive public testimony concerning the composition of potential trustee voting areas associated with the Board's transition to a by-trustee area election system. Receiving no public comment, Board President Camacho declared the Public Hearing closed.

Board President Camacho asked when the next hearing would take place. Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham reported there would be public hearings at the next three Board meetings.

B. Board Member Comments

Mr. Ross

Mr. Ross shared appreciation for the evening’s presentations and thanked Superintendent Magee for the update on the Strategic Plan. He acknowledged the incredible work of Associate Superintendent Musso across all of her responsibilities and thanked her for all she does.

Mr. Ross noted there was no public comment on the district boundary drawing. He asked how SMCOE could get the word out about these hearings because it would be good to hear from the public. Mr. Ross discussed the interesting reality that school districts are not drawn in ways which are compliant with the intention that they become political districts to comply with the Voting Rights Act. He believes the public should be invited and encouraged to attend and comment. Where he lives in the county, the lines do not represent the increasing numbers of Spanish-speaking residents who live not only in the Ravenswood City School District, but in the Redwood City School District and other districts. Mr. Ross said he is curious to hear from the public on this topic.

Mr. Ross referred to the idea of working on a Board resolution to address the expectation, intention, and plan to have schools fully back in the fall, health conditions permitting. He shared that he drafted a resolution and has been in contact with Superintendent Magee and Board President Camacho, and
they will continue working on the resolution, with the expectation to have it prepared at the next Board meeting for the Board’s consideration. Mr. Ross explained there are individuals in all communities looking to the Board to do or say something, and notwithstanding the limits of the Board’s responsibilities, they do have the ability as public officials, elected county-wide at the moment, to express sentiment on behalf of represented constituents. He believes there is a way to do this which recognizes the limits on their authority, as well as their obligation to speak out when necessary.

Ms. Bonini
Ms. Bonini recognized and thanked Eric Soohoo, Human Resources Analyst, whose last day prior to retirement will be Friday. She shared she had the pleasure of working with him for almost three years when she served on the Personnel Commission. She said he is amazing, dedicated, hard-working, and an expert in his field. Ms. Bonini referred to the email received to send comments to Mr. Soohoo, and wished him the best.

Mr. Bonini shared that she completed the CCBE County Board Governance Training courses and found them informative. She participated in the new Board member track, and enjoyed being in a session with Board Member Gerard. Ms. Bonini reported she is also participating in the Masters in Governance (MIG) for County Boards courses, which includes brand new curriculum and which has also been amazing. Some information overlaps while some information is unique. She is excited to be participating in these trainings.

Ms. Bonini spoke of SMCOE’s involvement with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission (JJDPC), and shared that in her role with the San Mateo County Commission on Disabilities, she now serves as a liaison to the JJDPC, along with Trustee Ligia Andrade Zuniga, who is new to the San Mateo Union High School District Board. The work of the San Mateo County Commission on Disabilities overlaps with that of JJDPC, as well as SMCOE, and she looks forward to that work.

Ms. Bonini shared she has been in communication with Senator Becker and his staff about Senate Bill 692, and Superintendent Magee wrote a letter in support of that bill, along with five other county offices. The purpose of the bill is to add the least-restrictive environment or the inclusion aspect currently noted in certain reporting to the dashboard, so it would be clear that is a need for improvement across the state. She spoke of the supportive letter from the counties and expressed she is very much in support, as well. Ms. Bonini hopes the Board can discuss and/or consider supporting this bill when it comes up in the future.

Ms. Bonini commented on districts returning to in-person instruction and her experience in listening to parents is that while it has been difficult for many students, it has been especially difficult for students with disabilities. Even though there was priority placement for certain groups, many districts were slow to bring those students back to hubs or other supports. On a personal note, Ms. Bonini described how many components of her son’s Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) have not been completed. She knows it has been difficult for districts, and there is a lot to do, but she asked how the Board can better support districts in this process. Ms. Bonini emphasized that this is an extremely important issue and families, parents, and students, especially students with disabilities, are in crisis. She
explained that not all districts are back and even for those who are back, not all students or grade levels are back. Ms. Bonini said she was putting out this question for further discussion.

Board President Camacho referred to Ms. Bonini’s comments regarding Senate Bill 692 and suggested this could be added to a future agenda item under “Board Members” for discussion and a possible resolution.

Mr. Lempert
Mr. Lempert thanked Associate Superintendent Musso for her great report on such exciting work. He thanked Superintendent Magee for her report on the Strategic Plan. He stated we have a long way to go to get back to normal and noted this work has been a huge strain on the superintendent and the SMCOE team. Mr. Lempert urged Superintendent Magee to hang in there, and he thanked her for her extraordinary leadership.

Mr. Cannon
Mr. Cannon agreed with Mr. Lempert’s comments. He related he was just visiting his daughter in Atascadero, who developed an interested in politics in high school through Mr. Lempert, when she became enthusiastic about his campaign. It was Mr. Lempert who really got her interested in politics.

Mr. Cannon reported he appreciates Ms. Pellizzari being present at meetings and giving the Board a chance to hear from her.

Mr. Cannon was pleased to recognize Executive Director Gustafson and the rest of the Business Services Division for the wonderful audit report. Mr. Cannon shared that in his experience, auditors would always find four or five issues in any audit report. He emphasized it is no small accomplishment to have such a clean audit, and he congratulated the team on their work.

Mr. Cannon shared there would be an opportunity to discuss Gene Mullin, who was close to many Board members, and he would reserve his comments until that time. He stated he looks forward to the opportunity to talk about Mr. Mullin at the appropriate time.

Ms. Alvaro
Ms. Alvaro thanked Ms. Bonini for her comments about Mr. Soohoo, congratulating him on his retirement and thanking him for his many years of work and assistance.

Ms. Alvaro shared exciting news that the Cabrillo Unified School District began opening this week and many principals shared that students are ecstatic to be returning to their schools, classrooms, and friends. There is only a month and a half left in the school year, but many plans are being made for students who need credit recovery in the summer.

Ms. Alvaro thanked Molly Henricks, Coordinator, School Safety and Risk Prevention, for a great presentation to the SMCSBA. She described the presentation as “phenomenally good,” and even though she had heard much of the information before, it was worth hearing again. Ms. Alvaro reported that she mentioned Coordinator Henricks’ name at a Coastside Chamber Education meeting
and Sean McPhetridge, Superintendent, Cabrillo Unified School District, could not say enough complimentary things, and the districts really appreciate her work, as does the Board.

Ms. Alvaro mentioned in the American Automobile Association (AAA) magazine that came out a few weeks back, there was an article commending Deborah Carlino of Martin Elementary in the South San Francisco Unified School District for their student training on the school safety patrol. Their school safety patrol saved a woman’s life with their training after she fell down and was injured in front of some cars. The children were able to tell the adults not to move the woman until help arrived and were awarded a AAA Lifesaving Medal. Ms. Alvaro said that Ms. Carlino is now the national spokesperson for the school safety patrol program, which is celebrating its 100th year. She was excited to hear this news and knew Board President Camacho would be proud because it is his district. Ms. Alvaro reminded the Board that Ms. Carlino is the teacher who brought her students to the Board to recognize Ruby Bridges Day on two occasions.

Ms. Alvaro asked if there would be an opportunity to discuss Mr. Mullin or if that would be put off until another night. Board President Camacho suggested the discussion be agendized for the next meeting because Mr. Mullin had connections with many people in the room and it would give them the time to make comments. Ms. Alvaro stated she would save her comments for that time, other than reporting that she spoke to Mario Rendon, who works with Assemblymember Kevin Mullin, and he requested that any family condolence cards be sent to Kevin Mullin’s office in San Mateo.

Ms. Gerard
Ms. Gerard thanked Coordinator Henricks for her presentation on the SMCSBA call on Monday, which was phenomenal. She said she was so proud she thought her heart was going to burst. Ms. Gerard shared her pride for all Coordinator Henricks and SMCOE are doing for mental health and safety, which is so vital. Ms. Gerard discussed the importance of getting this information out so the public knows what SMCOE does.

Ms. Gerard shared that along with Ms. Bonini, she also completed the CCBE training, Level 2, and noted they were together in their last session. Ms. Gerard congratulated Board President Camacho and Juliana Feriani, Board Member, Tuolumne County Office of Education, on their excellent job of presenting. She noted they took an entirely different pathway to get the same message across as any class she has ever attended on Boardsmanship.

Board President Camacho
Board President Camacho thanked Ms. Gerard for her comments and shared it was a great team for him to work with. He called attention to the SMCSBA Legislator Forum, attended by State Senator Becker, State Senator Wiener, Assemblymember Berman, and Assemblymember Mullin, at the end of March. Board President Camacho thanked everyone who was able to attend. He described the event as a great opportunity for SMCSBA to meet and have some focused attention with the legislators before opening it up for the general discussion about where they are on the education conversation overall. This has become an annual event and SMCSBA is excited to continue the tradition, particularly with the new leadership from State Senator Becker. Board President Camacho hopes the event started some important conversations, and he felt there was a desire for
follow up and additional conversation about what providing equitable access looks like from the legislators.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m., in honor of Gene Mullin, one of San Mateo County’s finest educators, public servants, and leaders. His legacy of service and accomplishments includes being recognized as an outstanding educator with several public education awards, including San Mateo County Teacher of the Year and the California Teachers Association’s State Teacher of the Year in Politics. Mr. Mullin’s political career includes serving his hometown of South San Francisco as a member of the city’s planning commission, then as a city councilmember and mayor, and being elected to the California State Assembly, representing the 19th District. The community is united in its gratitude for such an exemplar educator whose impact on thousands of students will be felt for years to come and is sad to say a final farewell to such a pillar of the community.

Board President Camacho announced the next regular meeting would take place on Wednesday, April 21, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

\[Nancy~Magee\]
Nancy Magee, Secretary
jlp