MINUTES OF THE SAN MATEO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Meeting Date: April 21, 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, Jeneé Littrell, Patricia Love, Denise Porterfield, Alyson Suzuki
Youth Commissioner Liaison Present: Allyson Chan

1. OPENING ITEMS

   A. Call to Order

   Board President Hector Camacho, Jr. called the meeting to order at 6:02 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 Mr. Lempert, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Bonini, Camacho, Cannon, Gerard, Lempert, and Ross), by roll call vote, approved the April 21, 2021, agenda as presented.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Superintendent Magee shared a public comment was submitted related to Agenda Item 7.A. Conduct Second of Two Public Hearings on the Composition of Potential Trustee Voting Areas. Board President Camacho noted the comment would be addressed during that agenda item.

The following speakers provided live public comment:

Janice Pellizzari, SMCOE teacher and San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) President, reported in six weeks staff will have successfully completed an intense and fast paced learning experience for students and teachers. She congratulated Eric Rado for being honored by the San Francisco 49ers for being an outstanding coach.

Board President Camacho requested that Ms. Pellizzari continue to update the Board when educators are recognized for their accomplishments.

3. **EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH**

   A. April 2021 Employee of the Month, Janice Pellizzari, Teacher, Adult Transition SMART Academy, Educational Services Division

Board President Camacho recognized the April 2021 Employee of the Month, Janice Pellizzari, Teacher, Adult Transition SMART Academy, Educational Services Division. Board President Camacho congratulated Ms. Pellizzari on behalf of the Board and explained she would receive the award check and commemorative token soon.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

   A. April 7, 2021, Regular Board Meeting

After a motion by Mr. Cannon 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 April 7, 2021, Regular Board Meeting as presented.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

   B. Receive Staffing Reports
   
   C. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-21 Recognizing May 2021 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
   
   D. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-22 Recognizing May 3-7, 2021, as National Teacher Appreciation Week
   
   E. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-23 Honoring San Mateo County Office of Education Certificated and Classified Employees
   
   F. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-24 Recognizing May 2021 as Mental Health Awareness Month
CONSENT AGENDA (continued)

G. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-25 Honoring Eric Soohoo on His Retirement
H. Receive Quarterly Report on Complaints, as Required by the Williams Settlement

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

6. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A. Receive Update on SMCOE's Environmental Literacy and Sustainability Initiative

Patricia Love, Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, introduced Andra Yeghoian, Coordinator, Environmental Literacy and Sustainability, to provide an update on SMCOE’s Environmental Literacy and Sustainability Initiative. Coordinator Yeghoian addressed the following topics in detail:

- What is this Initiative?
- Key Strategic Goals
- Why is this work needed in schools?
- How do we support our schools as we work to achieve our goals?
- Momentum growing for district engagement
- Momentum growing across California

Board President Camacho noted how Coordinator Yeghoian emphasized the hope that students will learn and play, because while there is often focus on learning, the “play” part is forgotten.

Ms. Bonini asked if the goal of environmental literacy for all students throughout the county is based upon exposure to these concepts or if there are concrete assessments or measurements to assure students are environmentally literate. Coordinator Yeghoian explained the definition of environmental literacy includes students being able to put their literacy into action. The formal assessment was embedded in the science exam over the past two years and will be embedded into other exams, as well. Environmental principles and concepts, which is a curricular mandate, will be further embedded into English Language Arts (ELA) and math in the next two frameworks. Coordinator Yeghoian noted how the prior year’s science assessment included questions about the environment. She assured Ms. Bonini these concepts would be more evident in assessments and would be a part of that dashboard.

Ms. Bonini referred to the slide about momentum growing for district engagement, where high school areas were marked, and asked for clarification about the color coding for districts. Coordinator Yeghoian indicated the small green suns indicate districts moving forward. For example, the San Mateo Union High School District just completed a comprehensive baseline assessment process with SMCOE, Cabrillo Unified School District just started, and Ravenswood City School District and San Carlos School District already completed the process. More districts are chipping away in their own ways.
Ms. Alvaro asked if the team is integrating with other service providers who do environmental work countywide. Ms. Alvaro described how the Cabrillo Unified School District partners with the Health Environment Agriculture Learning (HEAL) Project, Elkus Ranch, and other organizations, and asked if this is happening in other districts. She said the HEAL Project serves students countywide. Coordinator Yeghoian added the team is running a network for different providers who offer field trips or guest speaking experiences in the county. There are roughly 30 different partners in the network, and the network’s goal is to have a highly effective experience with a community-based partner for every student at every grade level. The team developed a scope and sequence the previous year for how this would look based on a number of place-based themes agreed upon by each community partner. There were six different environmental themes such as energy, water, and waste, and the team developed a scope and sequence. Now the network is obtaining contracts with districts to ensure this is not only for students who have a teacher who cares about this issue, but rather is based on qualified teachers at every grade level and at every single school.

Coordinator Yeghoian noted after doing a landscape analyses, the team has the data to go to districts and let them know which grade levels or classrooms are engaged. Ms. Alvaro shared that the idea of pulling together community partners and treating them as a network of providers, as opposed to functioning independently, is exciting.

Board President Camacho discussed how this work is a top priority for SMCOE and the county and expressed his excitement to see this work happening in county schools.

B. Public Hearing on the Initial Proposal from the San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) to the San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools for 2021-2022

Board President Camacho opened the public hearing on the initial proposal from the San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) to the San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools for 2021-2022. Receiving no public comment, Board President declared the Public Hearing closed.

C. Public Hearing on the Initial Proposal from the San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools to the San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) for the 2021-2022 Successor Bargaining Agreement

Board President Camacho opened the public hearing on the initial proposal from the San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools to the San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) for the 2021-2022 Successor Bargaining Agreement. Receiving no public comment, Board President declared the Public Hearing closed.

D. Superintendent’s Comments

Superintendent Magee began by referencing the historic verdict in the Derek Chauvin trial the previous day in Minneapolis. She shared that in their Cabinet meeting that morning, the team spent time reflecting on how these events are personally impacting each person. Superintendent Magee recognized that while she is relieved and grateful for the verdict, it presents a sobering reminder of
how much work is ahead. She reiterated she is doubly committed to deconstructing the barriers of systemic racism in order to achieve successful outcomes for students.

Superintendent Magee updated about COVID-19, informing that all 23 public school districts are now offering some in-person learning opportunities. She indicated the team is looking forward to coordinating the facilitation of vaccinations for 16-18 year olds as this will make a huge difference in uninterrupted learning for the fall.

Superintendent Magee referred to the proposed resolution later in the agenda promoting the ideal of full in-person learning and said she is advocating for leaving room for flexibility in the legislation to provide some measure of distance learning. She confirmed that all superintendents are planning for full in-person instruction, but acknowledged that some students may be well-served by having access to distance learning. She also pointed out that COVID-19 is still present in our communities. This means classrooms will be impacted by positive cases and will need to continue following quarantine protocols. If those classes quarantine for the 10-14 days, wouldn’t students be better served if they could continue learning as a group with their own classroom teacher? She emphasized that distance learning provides bridges over gaps that already existed in the system, and she remains a strong advocate for maintaining flexibility for distance learning as one tool in better serving all students.

Superintendent Magee announced that at the next Board meeting on May 5, she will bring the Assembly Bill (AB) 86 Expanded Learning Opportunities Grant Plan to the Board for action. There are two buckets of funding, one for in-person learning and the other is for expanded learning opportunities. She explained for the in-person learning funding, the team has analyzed whether they could allocate those funds to pursue the restructuring plan for the Gateway program with a mental health and restorative model to serve up to 60 students. Superintendent Magee related that increasing the number of students who can access the program will make the program more affordable.

Superintendent Magee explained under the expanded learning opportunities, which includes a larger bucket of money, the team is thinking seriously about how to serve two groups of students in the county, students who are English learners and students with disabilities. The team is exploring how to use some of the expanded learning opportunities funding to restructure the way SM COE provides support for students with disabilities in districts across the county.

Superintendent Magee shared the previous day that she attended the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) quarterly meeting and heard a report from WestED about the needs of special education students across California. This group of students continues to grow annually. Additionally, students who are English learners often have the highest number of referrals into special education. Superintendent Magee indicated the Board would receive the full report at the May 5 Board meeting.

Superintendent Magee related that she participated as a speaker the previous week in a California Department of Education webinar on outdoor classrooms around environmental literacy. SM COE was the only county office represented in this conversation and she acknowledged Coordinator Yeghoian for leading this work around outdoor classrooms. Superintendent Magee also shared
Coordinator Yeghoian will be part of the second webinar next Wednesday, April 28 and will be introduced by Tony Thurmond, State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Superintendent Magee reminded Board members about a few events on the Board’s calendar including the Kent Awards on May 7 and the 17th District Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Honorary Service Awards on May 12, where former Board member Rod Hsiao and she will both be honored. She noted that SMCOE will also be recognized at the May 20 Jobs for Youth event from 11 a.m. to noon.

Superintendent Magee wished an upcoming happy birthday to Jénéé Littrell, Deputy Superintendent, Educational Services Division, on May 5.

Superintendent Magee referred to the agenda item honoring Gene Mullin, and noted it was serendipitous that today happens to be Mr. Mullin’s birthday. She wished Mr. Mullin a happy birthday, expressed that he is missed, and shared that she looks forward to hearing the Board member’s remembrances.

7. **BOARD MEMBERS**

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

   Board President Camacho opened the second 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.

   Superintendent Magee shared a submitted comment from Francesca Segrè, a Board member in the Menlo Park School District, in support of the Board moving to by-trustee area elections.

   Receiving no further public comment, Board President Camacho declared the Public Hearing closed.

   B. **Discuss/Act on Board Resolution No. 21-26 Urging California to Set the Expectation of Fully Opened Schools in Fall 2021**

   Mr. Ross expressed his gratitude to Superintendent Magee, Executive Director Love, and the team for their work revising the resolution from its initial draft to its current form. He discussed how the resolution is not intended to imply the Board has authority to direct districts in the county to take action, but rather is intended to state the expectation that if it’s healthy and feasible, we should plan to be fully back to school in the fall.

   At the same time, the resolution embraces the idea that innovation and opportunities for alternative learning should also be made available. It is important to note that student learning hours are not minimized and synchronous learning time is important. Mr. Ross expressed the hope that the Board would agree that the resolution states the position that the community should be planning to go back
to school. Nobody believes that superintendents, school leader, teachers, or staff do not want to go back to school. He believes the Board has an opportunity to stand up and express what parents and community members are waiting for elected officials to do, to state the obvious – if we can safely get back to school, we should expect to safely get back to school. He noted the direction of the resolution is focused at a state-wide audience and at Sacramento, and is not seeking to direct any individual district about what should be done.

Superintendent Magee thanked Mr. Ross for the overview and added this can be considered a first read if Board members want to add or propose edits or revisions to be brought back to the next Board meeting.

Ms. Alvaro referred to the last sentence at the end of the resolution stating that we don’t want Section 43500 of the California Education Code reauthorized, which allows for reduced instructional minutes in the school year. Ms. Alvaro discussed how in concept, she understands exactly what Mr. Ross is saying in terms of wanting students back in school for the full school experience and not pared down. But in practicality, if we go into another tailspin or version of COVID, something will need to be done if a classroom, for instance, has to quarantine and all students must go home and have instructional time at home for two weeks before they are allowed to return to school. The schools need flexibility rather than having to engage full time if a situation comes up.

Ms. Alvaro asked if we are saying that we don’t want this section reauthorized, but there has to be some flexibility built in if things go sideways, or if we are simply saying we do want it authorized again. Mr. Ross replied this resolution does not lock the path if there are changed conditions such as other disasters causing the need for other measures. He described as things stand now, planning for a full return to school with full instructional minutes is the right move for students and if things change, adjustments will be made. Mr. Ross clarified that subject to the guidance of health authorities, schools should plan to be reopened.

Ms. Alvaro indicated she did not want to wordsmith but wants to be careful to say that the health guidance comes first. The resolution states that we expect everything to go back to normal with full instructional minutes, and there is the clause about actions being subject health guidance, but she wonders if that language could be strengthened so people don’t interpret this as the County Board of Education suggesting that classes start without listening to health authorities. She described how it has been a tough time for school personnel who have been pressured to get students back in school, and she wants to be careful to not say that getting students back in school surpasses anything else. Rather the message should be that getting students back to school is the most important action provided it is done under the guidance of health authorities and safely.

Ms. Bonini stated from a parent-centered and student-centered perspective over the past year, there has been frustration with the inconsistency across districts. Parents have their perspectives on what should be done and districts leaders are responding to the needs of students. She asked if we could take this position and still retain the flexibility driven from the student perspective of not returning to normal. Ms. Bonini referred to an article discussing how the pandemic should challenge the way we think about student engagement. Maybe instructional minutes and absenteeism should not be as
much as a focus and perhaps certain students are better served by distance learning, which might be something to integrate. This would call into question that section of the Education Code and the Board may want to consider building in the flexibility. She shared she was unsure how that would be advocated for in terms of maintaining flexibility, but she agrees. Ms. Bonini discussed that if certain students or families feel they need to be back in school, that should be offered, but we need to keep flexibility. She asked if we could add language to account for this, because she feels the resolution does not yet account for the flexibility.

Ms. Bonini also discussed the tasks being asked of students under distance learning and under synchronous in-school/distance learning. She indicated that for her middle school son who has returned to school, minutes are reduced and perhaps students could do more if they had all of the minutes, but when things are done at home, time can be spent more efficiently.

Mr. Lempert deferred to Mr. Ross and shared his personal appreciation for Mr. Ross’ leadership in bringing the resolution to the Board. He discussed how for some students, before, during, and after the pandemic, it may make more sense to not be at school every day and the flexibility for distance learning should be supported. He expressed concern that the justifiable argument has been twisted in a political sense, which is why according to studies, California is number 50 in the country in terms of school reopening. He wonders if language could be added indicating that after schools are fully reopened, any parent or student who wants full in-person instruction full time is allowed to do so. He described not buying into how some have twisted the argument to argue against as opposed to considering that the previous ways of doing education may not work and distance learning might make sense for some students.

Mr. Lempert expressed appreciation for the comments about innovation and related that even though the last year has been horrifying, we have learned a lot. He shared being struck by Oxford Day Academy’s report a few weeks back. His own view of charter schools is that traditional schools are overregulated, and this conversation highlights that concept. Mr. Lempert discussed whether there should be an instructional limit requirement, whether there should be passing time requirements, and whether every school in the state should be micromanaged to the degree there is little innovation. We are learning from Oxford Day Academy, and they are doing remote learning well.

Ms. Alvaro thanked Mr. Lempert and agreed with his comments. She shared in the last three “Whereas” clauses, several issues have definitely been addressed. These include the issues of a student-centered approach, distance learning being allowed as an essential tool in certain cases such as the horrible smoke conditions the previous September and floods in Pescadero a few years back, and ensuring student learning needs are met for each and every student. Ms. Alvaro indicated these issues are addressed to her satisfaction without adding more language. She does want to be careful that writing language about flexibility is done through an equity lens. If there is a parent who stays home and can help educate their children, time out of class may be well spent. Families who work multiple jobs aren’t doing that and students who are not going into school the right number of minutes are falling further and further behind. She discussed how many families in her community, and elsewhere in the state, especially many Hispanic families, are afraid and don’t want their children to attend school. Ms. Alvaro shared about middle school students spending their days...
babysitting younger siblings when all should be doing distance learning, which is happening in lower income housing and not upper income housing.

Ms. Bonini shared she is hung up about this language being in the “Whereas” clauses and prefers some of it be in the resolution itself. She expressed she would be more comfortable if more of it appeared in the resolution. Ms. Alvaro clarified when resolutions are put together, all the “Whereas” clauses speak to where we stand, what we know, and what we think should happen, and therefore we resolve about what should happen. Mr. Ross indicated this is not a resolution for a corporate entity but is rather a statement of intent and these clauses can be and are read together. He expressed appreciation for the legal perspective and shared if this was a binding resolution for governance purposes, what matters is what is resolved. He reiterated he is not opposed to editing the resolution and is happy to consider changes that provide comfort to his colleagues. Mr. Ross shared it is also important to step back and consider Mr. Lempert’s comments that California is doing very poorly compared to the rest of the country in terms of measures of student achievement. There is a lot of dissatisfaction with the silence of people in authority.

Mr. Ross noted there are 23 school districts in the county, a Board of Education with seven county-wide elected officials, a County Superintendent of Schools, a State Board of Education, a State Secretary of Education whose seat is empty, and a State Superintendent of Education. There is little singular authority for people to look to and right now with the biggest crisis in education in our lifetimes, the Board members are the county-wide elected officials that address this topic.

Ms. Gerard expressed her strong support for the resolution. She said she has read it three or four times and referred to the language stating there have been “few to no incidences of on-campus COVID-19 transmission.” Ms. Gerard suggested removing the reference to “or no” incidences because there have been a few.

Mr. Cannon expressed agreement that the resolution is terrific, but there are concerns about some wording. He suggested that Ms. Alvaro, Mr. Ross, and Ms. Bonini chat to work out the language and bring the resolution back to the Board at the next meeting. Board President Camacho stated that he liked that idea. Ms. Alvaro reported she was happy with the answers to the questions she asked and was okay with the language the way it is, but agreed with Ms. Gerard’s suggestion to remove the words “or no.”

Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan shared the resolution language is strong, and she agreed with the suggested changes. From her student perspective, the amount of time in the classroom has been important and was a main consideration for students such as herself when deciding to go back to school. If she were to go back, she would only have had the chance to go back two days each week. If it were a more consistent schedule and fully in-person learning, she would be compelled to go back. With an online hybrid mixture, there is less motivation to go back, and many of her peers share a similar perspective. Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan reported at her school, few juniors returned to school. However, she agreed for some students, having the online model available is also important. She took some classes through the independent study asynchronous model given through Edgenuity, which allowed more flexibility in her own schedule.
Board President Camacho agreed with Ms. Gerard’s suggested edit and shared he is comfortable until the “Resolved” section. He discussed getting stuck on the instructional minutes portion for two reasons. First, after speaking to individuals he knows in alternative education, flexibility has led to increased outcomes in a lot of ways in alternative education. With SMCOE being an institution of alternative education, we recognize that flexibility is key. Board President Camacho expressed concern that lessons learned may get lost because a student must be in the room. In talking to his colleagues in alternative education about this issue, they don’t love those rules for the same reasons discussed by Mr. Lempert, because policy gets in the way of the actual education of children. The other piece which stood out to him was the difference between having schools open and available and mandating that schools be open and available with all students in attendance. We are in the middle of conversations about whether being in school might be damaging for some students in many ways, even outside of a pandemic.

Board President Camacho stated he is concerned about students walking into classrooms with a mindset focused on all that has been lost. He shared that he likes the idea of a few Board members talking virtually or over email to come up with language to capture some of the ideas from this discussion. Board President Camacho stated that Ms. Alvaro’s ideas were captured and Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan’s perspective was helpful, and perhaps Ms. Bonini, Mr. Ross, and himself could work together on the resolution’s language.

Mr. Lempert asked if the Brown Act applied to the Youth Commissioner Liaison and whether Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan could meet with a subgroup of the Board comprised of four people in total. Board President Camacho deferred to Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham who assured she would look up the rule. She related that the subgroup could not make up a majority of the Board.

Ms. Bonini agreed with Board President Camacho’s statements about the ongoing feelings of certain students in regards to discomfort being on campus. Ms. Bonini stated there have been positive outcomes because some of the biases which exist within the classroom environment aren’t possible in a distance environment.

Board President Camacho indicated there is a direction to do a second reading and action at the next Board meeting. Pending Chief Deputy Counsel Cunningham’s feedback, Mr. Ross, Ms. Bonini, and either Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan or himself would meet to work on the resolution language. He thanked Mr. Ross and the Superintendent’s office for the work done on the resolution. Mr. Ross also thanked the Superintendent’s office, including Superintendent Magee and Executive Director Love, for helping.

C. Receive Update from Budget Advisory Subcommittee

Mr. Cannon reported he feels positive about this process. He shared that he and Ms. Gerard met with Core Cabinet on April 12 in the second of three meetings scheduled with Superintendent Magee and her top Cabinet members about the 2021-2022 budget. During the meeting, Superintendent Magee and her colleagues provided a thorough presentation of SMCOE’s financial position, his main concern on the committee, as well as the program challenges which lie ahead.
Mr. Cannon discussed how Ms. Gerard and Superintendent Magee provided copies of the agenda and minutes to the entire Board, which should also be a big help.

Mr. Cannon said it is clear to him from the first two subcommittee meetings and from regular reports from Deputy Superintendent Porterfield, including the recent audit from Jeff Ira, and also reflecting on the quality of the Business Services Division, and the checks and balances in place, that SMCOE is in a sound, even robust, fiscal position, now and for next year. He described how this process began back in roughly 2006 when the committee was established due to Board concerns that up-to-date financial reports were not being provided. They didn’t have the information they needed in a timely fashion to be able to approve the Superintendent’s budget. At that time, there were a number of school districts around the state going into bankruptcy and they observed the devastation. The effect on everyone involved, students especially, but also on staff and parents, was huge. Mr. Cannon emphasized he has no concerns about SMCOE going bankrupt. However, he still looks forward to more details on program at the third subcommittee meeting on May 5. He, along with Ms. Bonini and Ms. Gerard, will learn more about what is going on for the future. Mr. Cannon referred to the issue of being flat-funded and the need to reduce services and make difficult choices in the coming years. But those difficult choices are much different than the original purpose of the committee, which was to make sure SMCOE was fiscally sound. Mr. Cannon asked Ms. Bonini and Ms. Gerard to chime in with their concerns and observations.

Ms. Gerard asked if anyone had questions on the notes, which she felt were helpful. She indicated that the more information out there, the better, because everyone is curious and nervous after what has occurred over the past year.

Ms. Alvaro thanked Mr. Cannon and Ms. Gerard for the report. She explained she didn’t have any questions on the notes because they were received just prior to the Board meeting and she hasn’t yet had time to review them. She agreed with Mr. Cannon about why the subcommittee was formed but added another reason was it gave a subcommittee of the Board the opportunity to meet with Cabinet, ask questions, and bring information back to the Board so they could better understand the process. Long before the issues discussed, there were many times when the budget came before the Board, and it looked good, and the Board was supposed to approve it, but they didn’t really understand every detail. They asked questions in the Board meeting, but having the subcommittee meet with Cabinet to ask questions, and report back to the Board, was a huge help. Mr. Cannon agreed with Ms. Alvaro.

Board President Camacho asked if Ms. Bonini had any feedback from the subcommittee perspective. She apologized that she was unable to attend the last meeting due to travel for work, but she reviewed the notes and did not have any questions.

Board President Camacho indicated he is concerned with increased public engagement and the story being told with budgets. Aside from that, he wants to feel comfortable that the public has a clear understanding of where dollars go and why choices are being made. Board President Camacho described the budget subcommittee document as helpful. As he read it, he wondered if the information would be helpful for the public. He thanked those attending the Board meeting and discussed how there is lower attendance at SMCOE Board meetings, but he would love to have this
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material as part of Board packets, in the event that a member of the public wants to have this information. School boards have opened up more in terms of visibility, and he would love to lead with information and allow the public to see how things are covered.

Ms. Bonini mentioned she is used to agenda items showing the fiscal impact, because that is what district Board agendas show. She wasn’t sure if the Board’s agenda items have elements showing which part of the budget is implicated or the impact of a new or existing program. Ms. Bonini asked if that has ever been part of County Board agendas. Superintendent Magee responded that she is not the longest-standing member of the group, but in her 10 years she has not seen that. Part of that is the difference in the role of the County Superintendent and Board as elected officials, which is a much different role to play than a district Board who is primarily responsible for all of those decisions.

Board President Camacho emphasized it is never the intention of the Board to budget or disagree with spending. The goal is just to increase efforts to provide more information for public consumption. There are cycles when the public becomes more engaged and there are members of the public who will dig into SMCOE’s financial situation, which is wonderful because SMCOE is a public agency. He suggested perhaps this could be discussed further and noted he did not want it to ever appear that Board members are attempting to budget, which is not his intent in any way.

Ms. Alvaro asked if the Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) process with stakeholder meetings, including the public and parents, includes budget discussions in that process, directing her question specifically to Ms. Gerard. She clarified she is not referring to the public approving the budget any more than the Board micromanaging the budget, but asked if the budget is discussed so members of the public can understand program costs. Ms. Alvaro noted the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and LCAP are tied together.

Superintendent Magee shared that LCAP discussions do focus on how dollars are allocated. She provided the example of adding a certificated counselor to the high school program, and noted how the team made this decision with stakeholders providing feedback. Superintendent Magee related that the LCAP money is restricted and can’t necessarily be used for anything. Often, the decisions made in the LCAP end up being associated with staffing, and in that way, they are tied to the budget. But the program is so small and the LCAP budget is a minute portion of the entire SMCOE budget. Ms. Alvaro stated she can see this and was curious about the process. Superintendent Magee indicated the report coming to the Board at the next meeting about expanded learning opportunities would share how the public was involved in stakeholder engagement through that process.

Mr. Ross agreed with everyone who stated the Board should not budget for the Superintendent at this time. He stated at the same time, he is unsure if that is a legally binding decision on the Board, or if it is something which actually reflects Education Code. Mr. Ross reiterated he is unsure if that is anything more than a policy decision in a situation where the Board has a good relationship with the Superintendent and processes are operating on their normal course. He realizes this has been the practice but this is an open question for him. Mr. Ross discussed the unimaginable situation with a rogue Board or Superintendent, and he is unsure if Education Code is clear about what to do.
about the budget. He stated there is contradictory and confusing authority in the Education Code about what it means for a Board to approve a budget and an office to prepare a budget, and there is debate on this topic.

Board President Camacho expressed appreciation for the term “fuzzy” because this issue connects to ongoing conversations about how to take a complex document like the LCAP and present it in a digestible way. He explained the Board knows how to read these documents, but it is a challenge to present them in a way that the public can easily understand. The Board has conversations all the time and when new grants are discussed, they are placed in a context. This issue is connected to the confusion around the LCAP for the public. We should be working towards more easily digestible documents for someone who wants to pop into a County Board meeting or onto the website. Board President Camacho summarized that Superintendent Magee is hearing these concerns but he is unsure what action needs to be taken at this time. Superintendent Magee expressed appreciation for the discussion and indicated there is similar discussion happening across the state. She called on Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham to verify the Education Code between the County Superintendent and County Board in regards to the budget. Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham reported she would be happy to prepare a legal memo analyzing this issue if that would be useful to the Board. She related there are a number of Education Code provisions that discuss the different statutory obligations and requirements for the County Board of Education, as opposed to the County Superintendent of Schools.

D. Board Member Comments in Honor of Former Assemblymember and Educator Gene Mullin

Mr. Cannon described how he and Mr. Mullin worked together on different projects over the years. They went to the same elementary and high schools and grew up in the same neighborhood, although Mr. Mullin was five years older. Their paths never crossed as youths but they certainly did as adults. Mr. Cannon indicated he would defer to his colleagues, such as Board President Camacho, who had a dear, close relationship with Mr. Mullin. He referred to the passing of Tom Mohr, and how Mr. Mohr had the ability to make others feel important and close to him, and feel greatly respected. Mr. Cannon discussed the dramatic and moving accounts in the newspaper about Mr. Mullin, and how Mr. Mullin had the gift to make others want to be a part of his world.

Ms. Alvaro agreed with Mr. Cannon’s comments. She discussed having the privilege of working with Mr. Mullin on a number of issues, including being on the Board, but also because she ran the Coastside Collaborative for Children, Youth, and Families for nine years, as a non-profit which was part of a county-wide effort. One of the partners was South San Francisco and she was able to work closely with Mr. Mullin. Ms. Alvaro expressed how she adored Mr. Mullin because he was a fine human being and legislator with a big heart and a big impact. She shared that Mr. Mullin was once asked to participate in a read-aloud day for first and second graders. She introduced Mr. Mullin to the students in the classroom, and he sat in a tiny chair, with his knees under this chin. He chose the book “Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel” and as he read the book to the students with energy, it took him over half an hour because he made humorous asides. The students were enthralled. Ms. Alvaro described this as one of the most wonderful experiences she has ever had bringing a guest into a classroom of small children and she will always be grateful to Mr. Mullin for his participation.
BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

Every time she saw Mr. Mullin, he took his two large “paws” and took her hands and asked how she was doing. Ms. Alvaro expressed gratitude to Mr. Mullin for directly inspiring young people to take charge of their own communities, which includes Board President Camacho, who was in his classroom. She informed that Mr. Mullin checked in on Board President Camacho from time to time, and Ms. Alvaro would report that he was doing great. Ms. Alvaro emphasized that Mr. Mullin was so proud of Board President Camacho and to see that one of his former students was serving the community and went on to serve at the county level. She indicated that Mr. Mullin could take pride in that because although Board President Camacho has had a lot of influences in his life, a big one was Mr. Mullin. Ms. Alvaro stated she is forever grateful that she had the opportunity and privilege of knowing Mr. Mullin, and she will miss him desperately.

Mr. Lempert shared the first time he met Mr. Mullin was when Mr. Mullin brought students to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors meeting, and Mr. Lempert was on the Board, in the early 1990s. Mr. Lempert said he never saw any other teacher bring students to a San Mateo County Board of Supervisors meetings, and he wasn’t sure if any had before or since. Mr. Mullin’s students were going to learn about county government and the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors. They got to know each in many ways and many titles apply to Mr. Mullin – Assemblymember, Chair of the Education Committee, Mayor, amazing father and grandfather, and friend but mostly, teacher. He inspired thousands of young people but was also a teacher to those not fortunate enough to be his student. Mr. Lempert explained that he has been around politics for a while in many different roles, and he tells others that politics is hard-ball and intense, which is almost always the truth. He emphasized that Mr. Mullin was not that way, and was the kind of person in public service he wishes everyone could be, at every level.

Mr. Mullin was about treating each person with respect and getting things done, and rising above the petty and politics of name-calling and trying to one-up others. Mr. Mullin acted in the way everyone should in public service. Mr. Mullin, the teacher, taught a lot of people in public office how they should behave and that model will continue. Mr. Lempert spoke of Mr. Mullin being an amazing father and described how Assemblymember Kevin Mullin conducts himself with that same integrity as his father. Mr. Lempert summarized that Mr. Mullin will be missed greatly and will be an inspiration for many years to come.

Board President Camacho shared he had Mr. Mullin as his senior year Government teacher, and he vividly remembers where he sat in the room. Mr. Mullin had the ability to make each student feel like the most important person in the room, even when there were 30 students in the room. Board President Camacho indicated teachers are supposed to make students feel special and like they can do amazing things, and Mr. Mullin did this for him. Mr. Mullin started the Youth in Government program in South San Francisco, which he believes is now happening throughout the county. In this program, students in South San Francisco paired up and shadowed all five city council members and senior staff such as the Parks and Recreation Director and the Public Works Director. It all culminated with an actual student-run city council meeting with actual policy proposals by active student department heads. Board President Camacho related that Mr. Mullin chose him as mayor, at the time that Mr. Mullin was mayor, so he shadowed him in his other professional life of City Council Member and Mayor.
That is when Board President Camacho saw that it was possible to be a politician and leader that does the work only for other people. Board President Camacho stated that is who Mr. Mullin was—everything he did was for somebody else and he just doesn’t ever see that now. He joked that there was no dirt to be found on Mr. Mullin. Board President Camacho shared he and Mark Nogales of the South San Francisco City Council graduated from the same high school in the same year, and both had the fortune of having Mr. Mullin as their teacher. Mr. Mullin encouraged them to aspire to serve, but it was never about them, only what they could do for others. Board President Camacho described how the legacy left by Mr. Mullin is continuing not just with his students, but with Kevin Mullin. He related that Mr. Mullin also leaves a legacy through his mentoring of student teachers, including the individual who took over after him, who went on to inspire countless other South San Francisco students to get involved.

Board President Camacho spoke of Mr. Mullin’s honesty. He shared a story of student teaching and how his own master teacher had been mentored by Mr. Mullin, so Mr. Mullin would come by when he was in the Assembly and speak to the students. When asked about his favorite high school in the county, and after teaching at South San Francisco High School for 42 years, he replied that his favorite high school was Oceana High School. Mr. Mullin took that to the Assembly and represented schools, students, and teachers so well. He truly brought dignity to conversations about education. Board President Camacho expressed his heartfelt appreciation to Mr. Mullin. He thanked the Board members for their comments and stated he wished the honor could have been done in a more public forum so Kevin Mullin and his family could hear the wonderful remarks being shared. He related that it was lovely to spend this time honoring Mr. Mullin and thanked Superintendent Magee for suggesting this be an agenda item. Board President Camacho summarized that Mr. Mullin would be missed but he was an incredible educator in the county and an incredible person.

E. Board Member Comments

Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan
Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan expressed excitement to work with the subcommittee and discuss the resolution further since that is interesting and relevant to her, given her student perspective.

Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan updated about the San Mateo County Youth Commission, sharing that this weekend her subcommittee is excited to be holding an online conference about civic engagement for youth, intended for youth throughout Northern California. The San Mateo County Youth Commission is also working on opening applications for the next school year.

Ms. Alvaro
Ms. Alvaro shared it was wonderful to have Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan at the meeting. The Board values her input, and it is exciting to have her voice at the meetings.

Ms. Alvaro informed she spoke earlier in the day to the Half Moon Bay High School Principal John Nazar, who was ecstatic to have students back on campus. She shared Mr. Nazar has missed having interactions with his students, and it is nice to see students going back to school.
Ms. Alvaro related that she read the valid comment that was submitted online, but it reminded her that people are still confused about the process. She emphasized that Board members are elected by district, meaning they must live in the districts they represent, but they are elected at-large by the entire county at this point. Ms. Alvaro indicated the hope is not to change how districts are represented, but how Board members are elected, given some redistricting and reboundarying. She shared she has seen and heard that it will be nice to have Board members live in the districts they represent, which has always been the case. Ms. Alvaro asked if Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham could help make clear that this is not one of the changes being made.

Ms. Bonini
Ms. Bonini referred to her mentioning of Senate Bill (SB) 692 at the last Board meeting and the possibility of discussing the bill at the legislative subcommittee meeting, and said she is thankful for that. She updated that Senator Becker has agreed to co-author that legislation regarding inclusion and it is just a data point in terms of increasing accessibility. There has been discussion in the advocacy community about this not being a fix for the issue and each step being a step forward. Ms. Bonini shared that increasing accessibility is good and she looks forward to that discussion.

Ms. Bonini noted two additional bills for potential discussion at the legislative subcommittee meeting. The first is Assembly Bill (AB) 339 which proposes to carry forward the ability to have meetings virtually, which impacts different points of accessibility and persons with disabilities. The second is AB 988, relating to the Miles Hall Lifeline Act, a suicide and mental health crisis hotline. She shared how that bill has been discussed in different points of legislation and was raised on some level by Assemblymember Berman at a recent San Mateo County School Boards Association SMCSBA meeting. This bill was authored by Rebecca Bauer-Kahan.

Ms. Bonini referred to the efforts put into the equity framework and rolling out of vaccines for school districts, and asked for feedback at a later time about the opening of vaccine access to high school students ages 16 and older. She discussed how we are on the threshold of vaccines being opened to younger children ages 12 and older, if trials go through. Ms. Bonini asked if any discussion has taken place to try and help coordinate those efforts among districts. She said there are certain points of access, but they are not accessible to everyone. For instance, when rolling out access to 16 and 17 year olds through Stanford University, they must go to San Jose or Pleasanton. Ms. Bonini asked about accessibility points within the county because people are struggling on this point, and discussed the need for equity and accessibility for communities who already struggle with accessibility.

Ms. Bonini informed that she attended the California School Board Association’s (CSBA’s) webinar the previous day on broadband access throughout the state. She has attended many sessions held by the legislature focused on the struggle and push against internet service provider (ISP) control and how to be effective in this work. Ms. Bonini stated it was a useful webinar with many great ideas and community collaboration and discussion about models. She thinks CSBA will be rolling out more information on the issue and knows the county has done a lot of work collaborating with the Board of Supervisors around accessibility. There is a lot of money coming from the federal government, many things for which school districts need to be aware, and ways that infrastructure can
be impacted with careful planning. Ms. Bonini noted that even some of the AB 86 money could be used for this and she would be happy to discuss these issues in greater detail at a later time.

Mr. Cannon
Mr. Cannon stated he had his chances to speak earlier in the evening, which he appreciated. He shared that he enjoyed the evening’s discussions on the issues, which he finds helpful and educational.

Mr. Lempert
Mr. Lempert referred to the budget item, and recalled a conversation between himself and Mr. Cannon when the budget subcommittee was formed and there was real concern about the budget. He discussed the need to understand the high-level oversight and the need for public oversight, and shared appreciation for the Board’s role. Mr. Lempert emphasized that the Board’s roles are so different than the roles of elected school district Boards, and described how dangerous and detrimental it is to micromanage the Superintendent. That is when the Board is elected to oversee the finances and hire the Superintendent, let alone with SMCOE where the Superintendent is elected. Mr. Lempert related that the Superintendent is elected to run the budget, so he hopes whatever public-facing process is created is dictated more by the Superintendent than the Board because she is an elected official. If she wants to use the Board meetings as a way for the public to have more insight, he would support that.

Mr. Ross
Mr. Ross stated he did not have any comments for Mr. Mullin because he did not know him, but he has engaged and interacted with Kevin Mullin, and a lot of his father is seen in him. Kevin Mullin is one of the most warm and engaging individuals in the county in politics. Mr. Ross emphasized that his lack of comments were not out of disrespect, but rather out of ignorance because he did not have the privilege of knowing Mr. Mullin. He related that this thoughts and prayers go to the Mullin family.

Mr. Ross thanked the Board for their thoughtful conversation about the resolution and said their points are well-taken. He shared he could not be more delighted about the next step working with Board President Camacho, Ms. Bonini, and Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan. Mr. Ross conveyed that Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan may be the most effective student member of a Board of Education in the county before the Board is done with her. He suggested, given Ms. Bonini’s comments, that it was time to schedule a legislative subcommittee meeting, and asked Superintendent Magee for help coordinating that meeting. Mr. Ross invited Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan to attend if she is available, now that Chief Deputy County Counsel Cunningham has provided clearance for her to attend. He stated the Board would love for Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan to attend because her perspective is helpful.

Mr. Ross asked about the possibility of having a meeting with everyone in the same place sometime in the next few months.

Mr. Ross thanked Ms. Gerard, and others around the state, who engaged in a long meeting the previous Sunday to discuss planning the keynote speakers for the September California County Boards of Education (CCBE) conference. He suggested that all Board members should attend and
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BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

speak. He again thanked Ms. Gerard for attending the meeting and shared how the group was energetically talking about how to invite attendees to the conference, which was amazing to see.

Ms. Gerard
Ms. Gerard agreed the meeting was an interesting way to spend a Sunday afternoon. In regards to Mr. Mullin, she indicated that she did not know him well, but listening to the Board’s heartfelt comments makes her reflect on leadership and being a leader. She thanked the Board and Mr. Mullin for that. Ms. Gerard shared that she enjoyed the evening’s comments and discussions, which were productive.

Ms. Gerard shared she attended the webinar on outdoor classrooms in which Superintendent Magee participated. As always, she felt proud of SMCOE for their participation and the webinar was reflective and interesting. There are innovative practices happening and the webinar provided a wonderful way to learn and think about how they can be implemented in districts throughout San Mateo County.

Board President Camacho
Board President Camacho highlighted he attended a COVID-19 Town Hall hosted by the San Mateo County Youth Commission, featuring the Chief Equity Officer for San Mateo County. The students put on an incredible program which was well facilitated. He shared it never ceases to amaze him how professional students are when organizing county events and arranging guest speakers. There were excellent conversations, and he asked Youth Commissioner Liaison Chan to pass along his praise.

Board President Camacho updated that he has attended a few community forums on redistricting. Everyone is in that process, and the county is seeking community members to be on the redistricting advisory council. He shared it is a great time to engage the community around redistricting because all lines must be redrawn. Board President Camacho explained he was under the impression that school boards didn’t have to do this every 10 years and it was an optional process, but apparently every school board must do this every 10 years. He expressed hopes that more members of the community will volunteer to engage in the process because it is a once in a decade opportunity.

Board President Camacho wished happy birthday to Superintendent Magee on April 29.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m. Board President Camacho announced the next regular meeting would take place on Wednesday, May 5, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

Nancy Magee, Secretary

Nancy Magee, Secretary

jlp