

**SANTEE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

February 3, 2004  
**MINUTES**

Douglas E. Giles  
Educational Resource Center  
9619 Cuyamaca Street  
Santee, California

**A. OPENING PROCEDURES**

1. Call to Order and Welcome

President El-Hajj called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Members present:

Dianne El-Hajj, President  
Cathy Abel, Vice President  
Dustin Burns, Clerk  
Julie McIntosh, Member  
Barbara Ryan, Member

Staff present:

Dr. Lisbeth Johnson, Superintendent and Secretary to the Board  
Carolyn Harness, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services  
Dr. Patrick Shaw, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services  
John Tofflemire, Director, Human Resources  
Arletta Schaffer, Recording Secretary

2. President El-Hajj invited three Sycamore Canyon students, Hope Fletcher, Hannah Fletcher and Isabella Lenhoff, to lead the members, staff and audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of Agenda

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda.

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>Abel</b>	
<b>Second:</b>		<b>McIntosh</b>
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>5 – 0</b>	

**B. REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS**

1. Superintendent's Report

- 1.1. Requests for Use of Facilities
- 1.2. Enrollment Report
- 1.3. Developer Fees Collection Report
- 1.4. Schedule of Upcoming Events

2. Presentation of California School Employees Association (CSEA), Chapter 557 Initial Proposal to Modify Articles of the Current Collective Bargaining Agreement Between Santee School District and CSEA

**C. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION**

President El-Hajj invited members of the audience to address the Board about any item not on the agenda. Ellen Holloway, representing Santee Citizens for Safe Power, claimed that power transmission lines in the Hill Creek and Cajon Park areas are a threat to the safety of students. She requested full disclosure of the threat to parents at those schools. She asked the school district to participate in this disclosure and indicated that she was disappointed that so far from her view she had not received information from the District. She invited citizens to report health concerns related to transmission lines.

**D. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

1. Presentation of California School Employees Association (CSEA), Chapter 557 Initial Proposal to Modify Articles of the Current Collective Bargaining Agreement Between Santee School District and CSEA

President El-Hajj opened the public hearing and invited members of the audience to speak on the proposal before the Board. There were no public comments.

#### **E. CONSENT ITEMS**

Items listed under Consent are considered to be routine and are all acted on by the Board with one single motion. It was moved and seconded to approve Consent Items with Member Burns requesting separate action on Item E.2.6.

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>Abel</b>	
<b>Second:</b>		<b>Burns</b>
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>5 – 0</b>	

#### **Superintendent**

- 1.1. Approval of Minutes

#### **Business Services**

- 2.1. Approval of Travel Requests
- 2.2. Approval/Ratification of Revolving Cash Reports
- 2.3. Acceptance of Donations
- 2.4. Acceptance of 2002-03 Annual Audit
- 2.5. Approval of Contract for Nonpublic, Nonsectarian School/Agency Services
- 2.6. Held for separate action by Member Burns

#### **Educational Services**

- 3.1. Approval of 2003-2004 State Preschool Instructional Materials and Supplies Contract and Resolution
- 3.2. Approval of Extended Field Trip for Fifth and Sixth Grade Students from Sycamore Canyon School to the Star of India

#### **Human Resources**

- 4.1. Personnel, Regular, with a copy to be made a part of the minutes. Consultants approved: Virginia Ferrer, Parent Institute, Sue Sarmiento

#### For separate consideration:

- E.2.6. Approval of Agreement with Confident Care Health Services, Inc.

Member Burns asked if it was necessary to hire two substitute District Nurses. Dr. Shaw responded that one position would fill a vacancy and the other position was approved by the Board from a combination of general fund, MAA and MediCal-LEA funds for the remainder of the year. It was moved and seconded to approve the agreement with Confident Care Health Services, Inc. for specialized health care services.

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>Abel</b>	
<b>Second:</b>		<b>McIntosh</b>
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>5 – 0</b>	

#### **F. DISCUSSION AND/OR ACTION ITEMS**

#### **Superintendent**

1.1. Sycamore Canyon Enrollment Advisory Committee Report

Dr. Lis Johnson, teacher Chris Stanley, parent Kevin Moore, and school secretary Louise Jones presented a report to the board on the pros and cons of closing Sycamore Canyon School based on the analysis of the data studied by the Sycamore Canyon Enrollment Advisory Committee. The Sycamore Canyon Enrollment Advisory Committee met on eight occasions since October 2003, when the Board charged the committee with studying the impact of declining enrollment on school viability with emphasis on Sycamore Canyon School. The committee's work was scheduled to be completed by the end of January and this report was on schedule as per direction of the Board to staff.

The data was divided into seven sections: budget, housing development in the City, enrollment, facilities capacity, program, human element, and other miscellaneous factors. The miscellaneous areas included such factors as corporate sponsors, magnet schools, charter schools, modifications to costs and the impact of joint use when the District's budget for 2004-05 is known. Dr. Johnson requested Board discussion, questions and direction for future study at the end of the report.

President El-Hajj thanked the members of the committee for their report and stated that the Board will take no action at this time. She indicated that a decision would be made by the Board much later when the District's budget for 2004-05 is known. Interested persons will have other opportunities at future Board meetings to speak to this issue. She invited members of the audience to address the Board. Twenty-six speakers spoke to the Board about their position on the report. All speakers opposed the closure of Sycamore Canyon School. Many spoke on the assets of a small, high-performing school community. Others asked the Board to consider all innovative and creative solutions to solve the District's budget dilemma without closing Sycamore Canyon. Several parents spoke about how the special education students and programs would be disrupted at Sycamore Canyon and other receiving schools. Others still threatened to remove their students from the District if Sycamore Canyon was closed.

When all speakers had been heard, President El-Hajj thanked the audience for their patience and courtesy. She explained that the Board is required to conduct all business in public and that Board meetings are intended for Board members to share, discuss and dialogue about issues. All discussion must be in open session. Closed session agenda items are restricted by law. She emphasized that contrary to e-mail messages she has received from members of the public, Board members have made no decision about the closure of Sycamore Canyon School. She invited parents to contact a Board member directly if they wish to seek clarification of a rumor.

Member Ryan stated that she has not made any decision on the Sycamore Canyon closure and needs more information before doing so. Many external decisions still need to be made. The March 2 election is crucial. Voting is an opportunity for the parents to be heard. Proposition J is a way that parents can help. Proposition 55 is the bond measure to help finance the state budget. The Board is looking at all options and has been for five years. She appreciates all suggestions by parents. She went on record in support of charter schools and options for parents. She is personally not opposed to looking at that option. She asked Dr. Johnson to clarify if there is a plan to move special education students. Dr. Johnson responded that there has been no discussion about moving special education students. Dr. Johnson asserted that there is no specific plan to move ten SDC classrooms from two schools, as reported by a speaker. She indicated that this was a recent rumor started because a staff member not involved in the planning process was asked to speculate about a plan for special education if Sycamore Canyon closed. Dr. Johnson said that she found out about this earlier in the evening and that no plan aligned with this speculation to move special education students has been developed.

Member Abel stated that she has made no decision about the closure of Sycamore Canyon School and asked for support on Proposition J.

Member Burns was frustrated and concerned about rumors and those who may be hurt by rumors. The Board has not discussed special education classroom placement. He emphasized that he has listened to all the comments made during the evening.

Member McIntosh sees the decision on Sycamore Canyon not as a stand-alone decision but part of the 2004-05 budget deliberations. All budget decisions have a ripple effect. She expects to have questions on the Sycamore Canyon data when studying the research. She indicated that the data provided during the evening was immense and would take time to go through before a decision could be made.

President El-Hajj wanted to know what kind of program adjustments can be made at Sycamore Canyon to modify costs, particularly in the areas of adjusting staff time, facility usage, and decreasing costs/increasing revenue. She acknowledged that her fellow Board members made a tough decision to vote for the Santee School closure. She believes that there may be equity issues with cuts at Sycamore Canyon and would want to know the feelings of parents on that. She also wanted to know if program adjustments could be made at neighboring schools to bring students back to Sycamore Canyon. How small is too small? What does the research say? What are the program issues for a small school?

She also addressed a few of the points made by parents during the public input portion of the meeting. She wanted the audience to know that PTA paid for the new school marquee at Sycamore. Mrs. El-Hajj explained while it sounds responsible to limit all travel for staff during difficult budget years, eliminating staff training is not always prudent when in order to perform your job you need to travel and learn at a seminar. Staffs have been very responsive with reductions of travel expenses and funds from non-general fund programs are used whenever possible. Charging for busing was also mentioned as a way to increase revenue. Students in Santee are bused only for safety and for mandated special education. The Board is exploring the idea of charging but Mrs. El-Hajj is concerned about the administrative costs of collecting the fees. She stated that the Board and administration have known for several years about the enrollment decline. For over five years the Board has done everything possible to protect the education of children and the salaries of employees, staying as far away from the classroom as possible. She indicated that when you cut employees, these employees have families and it is not as easy to cut their livelihood as one might think. The Board has the charge to educate students and she believes it is responsible to educate all students with the dollars given.

Dr. Johnson responded that staff will investigate the program areas mentioned and bring the research to the second meeting of March as part of the budget discussion. Board members invited all stakeholders to phone or e-mail them with ideas and suggestions. At the end of the report, the committee asked for future direction from the Board and clarification on any of the data presented.

## **Business Services**

### **2.1. Approval of 2003-04 Budget Revisions for December**

This monthly item reflects adjustments to the general fund budget. The unrestricted ending balance is estimated at \$86,000. It was moved and seconded to approve the December budget revisions.

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>Burns</b>	
<b>Second:</b>		<b>Ryan</b>
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>5 – 0</b>	

### **2.2. Approval of Youth Sports Programs on District Property**

President El-Hajj asked that this item be placed on the agenda. Carolyn Harness reviewed the item. Administration is seeking Board direction on a request by Youth Tennis San Diego for a new sports program at Rio Seco School. In addition, Board direction is needed on requests by the Santee Sports Council to use additional grass fields at Pepper Drive and Sycamore Canyon

schools during the little league season. Carolyn Harness explained that the closure of the Renzulli property and relocation of the Bobby Sox league to Carlton Hills School have complicated field usage this year.

While Member Burns supports all youth sports in the community, he can only support the tennis program if the City of Santee is willing to write a waiver on the mitigation ordinance. Regarding the fields at Pepper Drive, he believes that the Board and the Santee Sports Council should have a discussion about the ownership of the District fields. He supports District staff scheduling the use of our fields on an annual basis.

Member McIntosh would also support a meeting with the Santee Sports Council. However, based on the ongoing conflict with the City Council on field mitigation, she would not support adding sports fields to those currently in use. She questioned if the Board would inadvertently create a problem for the future by adding another program.

Member Ryan supported the tennis program and does not want to see kids suffer because of conflict with the City. The Santee Sports Council needs to hear from the Board that the fields are owned by the District. She would also agree to take back the scheduling of fields. Member Abel concurred. She speculated that the City's mitigation ordinance does not take effect unless District property was to be sold.

President El-Hajj supported the tennis program, but wants to discuss the use of the Rio Seco fields at the next Board/City Joint Committee meeting.

Board members agreed to set a meeting with the Santee Sports Council on Saturday, February 7 at 3 pm to discuss field usage.

### **Educational Services**

#### **3.1. Report on 2003 Summer School Program and Recommendation for Summer School 2004**

Dr. Shaw provided the Board with a summary of the 2003 summer school programs. The programs offered were Extended Year for Special Education Students, a Skills/ Intervention Academy for grades 3-7, and a Bilingual Academy for grades K-3. The cost to the general fund for the Academy programs was \$4,006. Class size averaged at 28:1 in the intervention program. While the cost to the general fund was smaller than previous years, students did not show significant academic growth as in prior years because class size was increased. The cost to the general fund for the mandated program for special education students was \$125,000, reduced from \$160,000 from the prior year.

Due to the need to reduce the budget for 2004-05, it was moved and seconded to offer only the mandated Extended Year for Special Education Students program during the summer of 2004. Board member McIntosh expressed her sadness about this action.

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>Ryan</b>	
<b>Second:</b>		<b>Burns</b>
<b>Vote:</b>	<b>5 – 0</b>	

#### **G. BOARD POLICIES AND BYLAWS (none)**

#### **H. BOARD COMMUNICATION**

Member Ryan serves on CSBA's Conditions of Children Council. It was discussed at a recent council meeting that CSBA was awarded a planning grant to explore the attitudes and practices of school board members and top District staff relating to universal preschool. Since the grant's criteria matches the location, size and diversity of the District, CSBA has asked for our participation in collecting data. Board members and staff agreed to participate and the Superintendent will contact the CSBA representative.

Member Burns suggested that the Board extend an invitation to Secretary of Education Richard Riordan to visit Santee in an effort to share the perspective of a smaller district. Member Ryan suggested contacting Senator Hollingsworth or Assemblyman LaSuer to facilitate the visit.

**I. CLOSED SESSION**

President El-Hajj announced that the Board would meet in closed session for:

1. Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release
2. Conference with Labor Negotiator  
*Agency Negotiator: John Tofflemire, Director, Human Resources*  
*Employee Organizations: Santee Teachers Association (STA)*  
*California School Employees Association (CSEA)*
3. Conference with Real Property Negotiators  
*Location: Renzulli Site*  
*Agency Negotiator: Carolyn Harness, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services*

The Board entered closed session at 10:25 p.m.

**J. RECONVENE TO PUBLIC SESSION/ ADJOURNMENT**

The Board reconvened to public session at 11:35p.m. No action was reported. The February 3, 2004, regular meeting adjourned at 11:35p.m.

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Dustin Burns, Clerk

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Lisbeth A. Johnson, Ed.D, Secretary