

RAVENSWOOD CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

2120 Euclid Avenue
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
This Meeting was held via Zoom Webinar.

Board Members:

Mele K. Latu, President
Tamara Sobomehin, Vice President
Bronwyn Alexander, Clerk
Ana Maria Pulido, Member
Jenny Varghese Bloom, Member

Minutes

March 11, 2021

1. **CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL.**

President Latu called the meeting to order at 7:17 p.m. All Board Members were present.

2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.**

MSC (Sobomehin/Alexander) to approve the agenda as presented. Roll Call Vote: Trustees Mele Latu, Tamara Sobomehin, Bronwyn Alexander, Ana Maria Pulido and Jenny Varghese Bloom, Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

3. **FROM THE FLOOR.**

No one addressed the Board From the Floor.

4. **CONSENT AGENDA**

MSC (Sobomehin/Bloom) to approve the Consent Agenda. Roll Call Vote: Trustees Latu, Sobomehin, Alexander, Pulido and Bloom, Yes. Motion carried unanimously

A. Consideration to approve the Minutes for the February 25, 2021 Regular Board Meeting.

B. Memorandum of Understanding Between Summit Preparatory Charter High School and Ravenswood City School District for the Hiring of Teacher Candidates from the Marshall Teacher Residency Program.

C. Memorandum of Understanding Between the San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools and Ravenswood City School District for the SMCOE/Alder GSE Teacher Residency Program.

D. Extension of the contract for two years FY2020-2021 and FY2021-2022 with District Auditors, Chavan and Associates.

5. **SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE**

A. COVID-19 Safety/ Back to Campus Updates Update.

Superintendent Gina Sudaria provided a PowerPoint presentation and answered questions regarding the update on our return to campus. She acknowledged the Team who has helped to put this plan together: Cabinet Members, our consultant for pandemic response effort, Anne Waterman Roy, and our principals with the specific sites. She indicated that they will also have a conversation about reopening in general. The PowerPoint included:

(1) COVID Safety Updates: Current conditions, vaccines, antigen testing updates, and COVID safety checklist. She informed the Board that the positive rates are declining in the San Mateo County along with East Palo Alto. She noted that East Palo Alto is currently in light purple tier as the estimated number of cases per 100,000 has gone down significantly to 18, whereas the county is at 3, and the positivity rate as well is very promising in regards to East Palo Alto being at 2.3 percent and the San Mateo County is at 1.2 percent. She informed the Board that other districts with similar demographic (Oakland USD, San Francisco USD, San Jose USD, Los

Angeles USD) announced reopening in April. Superintendent Sudaria was happy to announce that all Ravenswood staff have been vaccinated or invited to get vaccinated: 178 Ravenswood employees and 29 from partner organizations have been vaccinated (63.4% of them are certificated RTA staff.) She informed the Board that when we did a survey, we did have seven employees who needed further assistance to get the vaccine. We let them know that they can get a vaccine at Kaiser if they are Kaiser patients, and also the EPA City is able to offer vaccines in East Palo Alto and Belle Haven.

Superintendent Sudaria informed the Board that we are scaling up the use of the implementation of the COVID antigen testing. The learning hubs staff is currently using the rapid testing and we are currently gathering consent forms from families to be able to start testing more students. She pointed out that we have created a bilingual site for our families to be able to review the waiver online. There is also a site for staff about administering the tests. We are also working on training more staff to administer the tests. Superintendent Sudaria informed the Board that we were able to showcase the work that we are piloting in Ravenswood along with Redwood City and La Honda Pescadero. She and Anne Waterman Roy were featured along with our superstar student who demonstrated how easy it was to be able to take the antigen test. She indicated that we will post this so that the community can take a look at it.

She noted that this presentation addressed all three items under Superintendent: COVID Safety Updates, Current status on In-Person Instruction on Campus, and a couple of proposals they would like to share with the Board and then a conversation they would like to have with the Board about reopening.

(2) Update on In-Person Instruction on Campus. (a) Superintendent Sudaria provided updates on classes that have already returned the campus (Costaño TK and Kinder, LRRM Kinder “Learning Hubs Plus” and 3rd-5th Newcomers class at LRRM). (b) COVID Safety Checklist: Documentation of our COVID safety policies and practices. She noted that the COVID safety checklist is one of 2 documents the state requires for us to reopen. It is basically the Health and Safety Section of our Recovery Plan about health and safety and received updates from the County when we submitted this plan. We received feedback that there is less focus on the disinfection because spread from surfaces or any other contact area is very rare. Therefore, playground usage is allowed. We are also opening our fields and allowing the community to be able to start submitting the facility usage form. She also provided updates about ventilation.

Families Survey Results: Last week, we reached out to all families about their interest in returning to campus. We initiated this in December for several reasons, including lower cases in EPA, the County’s move to Red Tier, and staff getting vaccinated, and we felt it was time to survey our families again to get a sense of their comfort level of returning students to campus for in-person instruction. Superintendent Sudaria stated that as of last Thursday, we have gotten over 500 responses. As she mentioned, back in the winter the positivity rate in East Palo Alto was three times that of the County. She noted that conditions have changed significantly for the better and these are some of the results from our family surveys: More than 60% of the families are open to sending their students back to campus in April. 83% of respondents are in distance learning (currently not in learning hubs); 38% want a distance-only option; 62% said they are open to returning to campus in April. She indicated that regardless of the number of days on campus, we still have more than 50% of our families wanting to be on campus. She noted that Spanish-speaking families are significantly more interested in returning to campus than English-speaking families. Superintendent Sudaria pointed out that elementary school parents were particularly interested in returning to campus.

(3) Discussion and Proposals for Reopening. Superintendent Sudaria presented the following proposals and answered questions from the Board: (a) Costaño Proposal: Phase in 6-14 more classes, building on current TK and Kinder success. About half the students per class would be in person, half on Zoom. The teacher would teach “roomies” and “zoomies” at the same time. Based on preliminary parent interest, we can safely bring back all interested students 5 days/week. Teachers have designed schedules and teaching strategies to make sure “zoomies” get quality instruction and engagement. Superintendent Sudaria indicated that they would like Costaño to be a pilot for how to reopen schools safely as we are expanding more classes to come on campus. She noted that this is a recommendation that the County Office of Education has also shared with us in regards with it being important that when we do any reopening, we do a phase in model. Costaño already meets the State definition to reopen because we offered all TK students a chance to return. We will start with the most eager teachers, similar to what Redwood City has done, and learn from their classroom. We will also learn how to manage schoolwide challenges in reopening. Superintendent Sudaria reported on what it means to reopen Costaño, Reopening

Guidelines and Cohorting Guidelines. She informed the Board that there are only a few steps needed to officially reopen because San Mateo is now in the Red Tier and we have taken some in order for Costaño to be officially in a reopened status. We submitted a safety plan to the SMCOE and posted it on our website. It has the Cal/OSHA that our HR Director, Toni Stone, has updated. We hope to get the final approval from the County soon. Our goal is to start the reopening process or additional classes at Costaño as soon as Monday.

(4) Proposals: Superintendent Sudaria indicated that like in previous meetings, they propose that the Board evaluate the proposal using these criteria: **Safety**: she wants to make sure we follow the State guidelines as well as the County guidelines which are often more restrictive. **Quality**: Does it enhance learning? **Equity**: Will the students still get the same experience as they are getting today? The proposal that they presented for Costaño has been reviewed by SIWG and it has given us approval to move forward as to recommend it to the Board.

Superintendent Sudaria introduced Ms. Robin Pang-Maganaris, Costaño School Principal, who presented a few slides of the proposal and answered questions from the Board. She reported that they already have four classes in-person at Costaño and they hope that on March 15th, they will be able to add an additional 3rd grade class and then on April 12th, five additional classes, one in 2nd grade, two in 3rd grade and two in 4th grade. They also hope to pilot an additional eight classes between the end of April and the beginning of May. If this pilot goes well, they hope to be able to have 18 out of 23 classrooms open on campus. She stated that when they realized that teachers were able and willing to come back to campus because they were vaccinated, they did a preliminary survey to find out if there was an interest of parents to send their children back to campus. As of March 10, they found that in the six classrooms that they hope to open by April 12th, 33% of the children in second grade wanted to come back to campus, 66% in one 3rd grade class, and 59% and 63% in the other two 3rd grade classes, and 42% and 20% in the two 4th grade classes. Based on initial outreach, there are a large number of parents who would like their children to come back to campus to learn in-person. Ms. Pang-Maganaris indicated that in order for them to do this, they need to make sure that they are following all the safety guidelines as required under our COVID checklist, so they are spending a tremendous amount of time in the past week working through all of these requirements (maintaining stable groups, physical distancing, face masks required for all, health screening, cleaning/hygiene, COVID testing, contact tracing and communication if cases occur.) Ms. Pang-Maganaris indicated that in addition to the previous criteria, they are also attending to the critical details to ensure safety, like how to maintain stable groups: Where will each class wait before school starts? Where will each class play during lunch/recess? In addition to play schedules, they are planning staff schedules to enable contact tracing and minimize mixing. Special Education or intervention teachers will pull students out when needed to avoid exposing them to the rest of the class.

Ms. Pang-Maganaris informed the Board that in making this decision to want to pilot, she is having roomies on-campus and she wants to make sure that their zoomies continue to have an engaging and quality experience. Therefore, the teachers have worked on creating a schedule that will ensure that their zoomies learning time and opportunities to engage with them will not be reduced and they will get small breakout time as they currently do, and that there is equitable time between the two groups. She pointed out that roomies' educational experience will significantly improve by being on campus, but the change will not hurt classmates who are still learning from home. Pang-Maganaris provided sample schedules of the 3rd grade class where you can see that at 9:00 AM, the zoomies and the roomies will be having a learning experience together. Pang-Maganaris indicated that some other things they are considering are: Meals, technology, transportation, afterschool, Special Education and Intervention services.

Ms. Cindy Chin, Director of Student Services, provided information on the impact of BGCP learning hubs and having students on-campus. She informed the Board that there are 5 learning hubs at Costaño and recently, the BGCP applied for a grant to expand them. We need to work with them to identify the students who want to come back to the in-person learning so that we can determine how those numbers impact the current learning hubs numbers because if we are saying that there is no aftercare for students who are in the in-person with their classroom teacher, we want to see how that impacts the learning hub population so we would like to see if it makes more sense to add students from other grades or to best utilize the resources while we partner with the Boys and Girls Club in determining that.

Trustee Pulido thanked Costaño and its leadership for leading the way, and for piloting this and taking the initiative of saying how we can make this work for our students because we know our families really need this, and also for working on paving the pathway for the rest of us.

At the request of Superintendent Sudaria, President Latu indicated that they will continue with Los Robles-Ronald McNair proposal.

Superintendent Sudaria indicated that our SIWG has already given a recommendation to be able to present to the Board last time for Ms. Cuellar to come into the learning hub and make them most robust with the in-person instruction, but we have learned that because we offered all of our Kindergarten students at Los Robles to come back, they too could have a reopened school status which would allow them more flexibility to have Ms. Cuellar to teach more than one cohort and do one in the morning and one in the afternoon. She asked Mr. Alex Quezada, LRRM Principal to clarify what that model would look like. Mr. Quezada indicated that as Ms. Sudaria stated, this proposal is to give them flexibility to give Ms. Cuellar, Kindergarten Teacher, who is already teaching in-person, more opportunities. Under their current model, Ms. Cuellar will see one pod a week and she rotates through the learning pods that way. For example, a pod might have to wait two weeks before they can have her in-person again so what they trying to do is to use some of the flexibility that the reopening status gives them to have Ms. Cuellar to see more children during the week still respecting and following all the safety protocols, one pod in the morning and one pod in the afternoon.

Superintendent Sudaria indicated that they wanted the Board to give staff direction on a districtwide reopening plan. They are bringing this to the Board because our positive EPA number are down, the County is in Red Tier, we have vaccines and we are collecting feedback from the constituents that we serve. There are some things that they would like the Board takes into consideration when looking into this direction for us regarding staffing. (a) We can only require our teachers to return when all schools are considered reopen. We do have teachers feeling comfortable coming back, but they are some teachers who do not feel comfortable and ready to come back. (b) Also the focus amongst the staff is that we would have the time that it will take to plan the reopening. We would be working on that versus planning for in-person instruction for summer school, where we really want to try to recruit close to a thousand students and then in-person instruction with the hybrid model that we have and is posted on our website ready to execute for the fall. (c) Construction around IT infrastructure: BH, LRRM and CCRMS have construction plans. (d) Impact on learning hubs. Bringing back more classes may reduce space for current learning hubs.

Ms. Ronda White, RTA President, thanked the Board for having this open and honest dialogue about reopening schools, what it looks like, and what it means. She indicated that she is thankful that she is a teacher in Ravenswood, where teachers have not been forced to come back. They are thinking about this decision methodically and with the intent of if it is safe for the students, it is equitable, and what is in the best interest of our current situation. There are no other districts like us that have been in purple tier since July and had such high positive numbers. She is also thankful that we have teachers who have had foresight to say, “whether I get a vaccination or not, I am coming back”, other ones to say “I am little leery” or “If I get that first one, then I will do the next one” because what it has allowed is that we come up with some hybrid model over the summer and now we are able to experience some very different models that are working. LRRM has three hubs with a teacher live and a teacher at home splitting subjects. Costaño has in-person with TK and K and now Costaño has a plan for Mr. Dellamano to start on Monday and for the other five to come back a week after spring break. This pandemic has given us the opportunity to look at things closely to figure out how we change education to the best of our availability so that our students can thrive during these difficult times. She is excited that teachers are getting the vaccines if they choose to. She congratulated the learning hubs, the Boys and Girls Club and all the partners who jumped in and have been there making sure that our students get what they need. She noted that with the various ideas and thoughts of what is being tried at the different schools, we can say, equity does not mean equitable. We do not have to have the same program at every school in order for kids to have access to the best programs.

Mr. Drake Deidrick, Parent of two students at Costaño, stated that if both of his children do not come back on the same day, it is going to be logistically hard for them. He asked if his children can start late if one of these classes opens a week before, or if they can send them both to the one that is already open so that they send both kids on the same day. He has spoken to a few other parents and they have a similar issue.

Superintendent Sudaria indicated that what we will probably need to do is to identify the requests of families in regards to that. We will try to serve as many families as possible to meet those requests but she is not sure if we are going to be able to cater to the needs of all of our families, especially if we start with a phase-in model.

After a discussion on these proposals to return to in-campus learning, Trustee Pulido made the motion, seconded by Trustee Bloom to approve Costaño and Los Robles-Ronald McNair Plans. Roll Call Vote: Trustees Latu, Sobomehin, Pulido and Bloom, Yes. Trustee Alexander, Abstain. Motion carried 4-Yes, 1-Abstain.

The Board gave directions to staff to exploring how we reopen for our entire District.

Superintendent Sudaria thanked Principals Robin Pang-Maganaris and Alex Quezada, and Cabinet Members.

6. BUSINESS DEPARTMENT

A. Consideration to approve the 2020-2021 Second Interim Report.

Mr. William Eger, CBO, informed the Board that Education Code Section 42130 requires Local Educational Agencies (LEA) to submit two (2) interim financial reports to the District Governing Board during each fiscal year. The First Interim Report which is based on activity through October 31 and the Second Interim Report which is based on activity through January 31. After receiving the information, the Board is required to certify that the District "will" (positive certification), "will not" (negative certification), or "might" (qualified certification) meet its financial obligations for the current fiscal year and the two succeeding fiscal years. He provided information and answered questions on the Second Interim Report. He noted that due to increased stimulus spending, we are in a better overall position than we did during the first interim budget update. Based on the current assumptions, it is expected that the District will be able to meet the financial obligations for the current and succeeding fiscal years. Therefore, he recommended that the Board of Trustees approve the Second Interim Financial Report as submitted with a positive certification.

MSC (Sobomehin/Pulido) to approve the 2020-2021 Second Interim Report with a positive certification. Roll Call Vote: Trustees Latu, Sobomehin, Alexander, Pulido and Bloom, Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Consideration to approve Resolution 2020/2021 -19 Authorizing The Issuance And Sale Of General Obligation Bonds Of The Ravenswood City School District In An Amount Not To Exceed \$25,000,000 By Negotiated Sale.

Mr. William Eger, CBO, provided information and answered questions on the resolution. He stated that the District is seeking to issue the General Obligation (GO) Bonds approved in the Election of 2018. The issuance provides \$25 million for facilities improvement projects anticipated to commence during the summer of 2021. Mr. Eger noted that they are providing a number of additional documents besides the formal resolution for reference. Many of these documents include blanks or bracketed information. This is because the resolution approves the form and structure of these documents giving district staff and Eastshore the flexibility to provide the specific numbers closure to the specific moment that the bond will be issued. Mr. Eger pointed out that there is no general fund cost associated with the issuance. The costs associated are paid from proceeds of the bonds. It is estimated that the cost of issuance will cost \$170,000 which will be paid through the issuance of the bond.

Mr. Eger introduced Mr. Shin Green from District's Financial Advisors, Eastshore Consulting LLC, who provided a report detailing the results of the issuance process. After his presentation, Mr. Green asked the Board if they have questions about the bond or bonds in general. He noted that we have District Bond Counsel Eugene Clark-Herrera from Orrick on board along with his associate Lauren Herrera and David Stimple from Siebert Williams and Shank who are ready and willing to step in if there are any legal or markets technical questions. Mr. Green also provided a description and answered questions on the documents attached to the Resolution.

MSC (Pulido /Sobomehin) to approve Resolution 2020/2021 -19 Authorizing The Issuance And Sale Of General Obligation Bonds of The Ravenswood City School District in an Amount not to Exceed \$25,000,000 by Negotiated Sale, Prescribing the Terms of Said Bonds; Approving the Form of and Authorizing The Execution And Delivery of a Bond Purchase Agreement, a Paying Agent Agreement, a Continuing Disclosure Certificate and an Official Statement Relating to Said Bonds; and Authorizing the Execution of Necessary Certificates And Documents Relating to Said Bonds. Roll Call Vote: Trustees Latu, Sobomehin, Alexander, Pulido and Bloom, Yes. Motion carried unanimously.

B. Green Ribbon Schools Award Program Presentation.

Mr. William Eger, CBO, provided information and answered questions on the Green Ribbon Schools Award Program. He informed the Board that the Green Ribbon is a national and statewide award designed to celebrate schools practicing sustainability. Districts and schools are evaluated on three pillars: Pillar 1: Reduce Environmental Impact and Costs: RCSD applied to (a) Develop a 'baseline' understanding of where we are as district through a third party audit, at no cost to the district; (b) Create a central venue to bring together the various stakeholders working on green initiatives across schools and centrally; (c) Help us identify where to go next in addressing the issues. He introduced Ms. Delma Camacho, Director of Operation, who shared information on the work she has done on Pillar 1. (a) She noted that Internal benchmarking showed a 34% reduction in Green House Gas (GHG) from 2015-2019; (b) Upcoming Solar installations; (c) Over 1,000 trees across all campuses in partnership with Canopy; (d) Compost. Green Team grants and students interest in food waste diversion. (e) Safe Routes to School Program with 20% of students walking. District fleet switched to natural gas resulting in GHG emission reduction. She noted that the new buses have not been used due to the pandemic.

Pillar 2: Health & Wellness for Students and staff. Mr. Eger introduced Ms. Niko Janik, STEM Coordinator, who presented a slide of pillar 2 on behalf of Jasmine Sosa, REF Assistant and then Pillar 3. She noted that a few of the programs in the district are aligned with pillar 2, standards include but not limited to: (a) Child Nutrition and Education (CNE) Team has implemented a nutrition focused meal plan, purchasing local and environmentally friendly food, while simultaneously providing weekly meal distributions at each school site; (b) Student Access to School Gardens. Currently we have gardens at three of the four school sites and an extra special garden this year was possible through REF and Community Organization Fresh Approach, the Belle Haven School Garden made in memory of long-time Ravenswood Teacher and Leader Jose Ibarra. Another example is our work with REF to provide our students with access to mental health services all year round regardless of in-person or distance learning. These non-profit partners include CASSY, Child Mind Institute, Children's Health Council and Star Vista. Pillar 3: Effective Sustainability Education. Ms. Janik indicated that under the science umbrella, (a) We have a lot of long time partnerships with community organizations; (b) Grade-level (districtwide) field trips focused on outdoor education for 2nd-5th grade; (c) Overnight outdoor education programs for 4th-7th grade. STEM content: REF funded STEM Coordinator, Makerspaces, STEM Fair, and Green Career programs. In addition, we do the Service Learning projects through campus gardens & landscaping and Alumni participating in environmental justice advocacy.

Moving Forward. Superintendent Sudaria thanked Delma Camacho and Niko Janik and indicated that there is more that we can look at in the report on Agenda Online. She highlighted some things that they want to continue with and explore: (1) Looking at stated funded opportunities to bring solar panels; (2) Continuing to be thoughtful about trying to make new construction green; (3) They will report back the results of the Green Ribbon application. Superintendent Sudaria indicated that the Board has expressed interest in participating on our Green Team and asked if there are any Board members who would like to join the Green Team. President Latu and Trustee Alexander expressed interest in participating on the Green Team. Superintendent Sudaria stated that the goal of the Green Team is to develop a sustainability plan and also a climate emergency resolution.

7. **BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

A. Consideration to approve Resolution No. 2020/2021 -13, Board Members Excused Absences. **All Board Members were present.**

B. Board Reports/Communications.

Trustee Alexander reported on a conversation she had yesterday with some community partners and she wanted to make sure that our community is aware that during the last week or so, East Palo Alto had a vaccine clinic and there is another one happening this weekend on Saturday in front of the Belle Haven School. She noted that there are still 350 open slots for people who are eligible to receive the vaccine from the Belle Haven neighborhood and you can get a wristband on Friday afternoon which is when they do the COVID testing and up until nine o'clock on Saturday morning in front of Belle Haven School.

Trustee Alexander also reported that as she mentioned earlier, there is one more day until the mural that is in the garden in memory of Mr. Jose Ibarra is completed. This coming Sunday includes putting the faces on a lot of people and any touch-up that has to be done and then sealing it all off. She will update the Board on when the ceremony will be for the dedication.

- C. President Latu announced that the next Regular Board Meeting will be held on March 25, 2021, and if the Board holds a Study Session, they will make sure to relay the information to all staff and community.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, President Latu adjourned the Meeting at 10:04 p.m.

March 25, 2021
Date of Approval

Clerk's Signature

/nm