



BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
2309 TULARE STREET
BOARD ROOM, 2nd FLOOR
FRESNO, CA 93721
board.fresnounified.org

MINUTES – BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP

Fresno, California

March 28, 2023

Fresno Unified School District, 2309 Tulare Street, Fresno, CA 93722.

At a Workshop of the Board of Education of Fresno Unified School District, held on March 28, 2023, there were present Board Members Cazares, Jonasson Rosas, Levine, Wittrup, Student Member Aquino, and Board President Islas. Superintendent Dr. Nelson was also present. Board Members Davis and Thomas were absent.

Board President Islas CONVENED the Board Workshop at 5:04 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Armand Chavez led the Flag Salute.

BOARD WORKSHOP AGENDA ITEM

PRESENT and DISCUSS Overview of Districtwide Safety

Staff presented an overview of districtwide safety including the safety plan, information related to multi-tiered safety supports, and current Safety Office deployment, roles, and responsibilities. Additionally, staff provided information related to Campus Safety Assistant training, stakeholder input and emergency response data and highlighted the proposed redesign.

Superintendent Dr. Nelson expressed appreciation for everyone attending. Commented it has been a while since there has been a board workshop on the topic of safety. Commented, all seven of our Trustees have safety at the forefront of their concerns. Everyone of our kids and every one of our faculty members, everybody affiliated with a school, our families that come have a right to a safe learning environment.

Very thankful for the people present and viewing via live stream. We have teachers present who work with kids with a high degree of need, we have leaders present, thankful to have parents in the room who are very concerned about how we can do this and do it better. As these issues continue to occur, across our nation and across the world, us being as forth right as we can. It is hard because to some degree you are competing against the free agency of people who are designed to

do things that are not good for kids, but we remain vigilant. Thank you to my principals that are online watching, same thing to our teachers and leaders. Paraprofessionals play a major role, our parents, families and kids, there is nobody that safety is not a priority, and it takes people in every walk of life and every jurisdiction to make it better.

There are not universal beliefs about safety. We acknowledge we are going to tread in some sacred areas around safety, some folks are supportive of policing in schools and other folks feel differently, some folks feel very strongly about suspension, expulsion, and referral to law enforcement and others feel differently, the bottom line is we want to make sure to provide an environment where kids are safe to the greatest degree we can.

For the record, Deputy Superintendent Her thanked people for attending, completed introductions of those presenting, and provided condensed outcomes for the presentation as follows:

- Provide information around multi-tiered layers of safety support
 - Social emotional learning, school climate and culture, and physical safety
- Communicate roles and responsibilities
- Share stakeholder input and emergency response data
- Share 2023/24 priorities

After the presentation, Board members had an opportunity to provide comments or ask questions. A summary is as follows:

Member Jonasson Rosas: Requested clarity as to who updates key words for the Gaggles program to monitor. Suggested it would be good to be proactive and if there are avenues provided to inform the process, the district might consider using principals and teachers as a source to update key words.

Requested clarity as to active assailant training and if school sites receive training. Shared parents have asked, in an age-appropriate way, if the training could be part of lockdown procedures.

Requested clarity as to whether all traffic accidents are reported. Commented the Fresno Police Department and City use their data sites to determine deployment of resources. Member Jonasson Rosas encouraged people to call the police when there are traffic accidents around schools.

Requested clarity as to if crisis calls were duplicative. Requested clarity as to missing and runaway students, are numbers listed in crisis calls from the district only or are parent calls included.

Requested clarity as to whether all principals responded to the survey pertaining to the top three safety concerns. Commented this is important subject matter and it is concerning if not all principals responded.

Commented on proposed safety investments and asked if the district has considered implementing safety buttons, like what is used at Fresno State and Fresno City College.

Commented cameras are after the fact, campus safety assistants (CSAs), having extra bodies, I am sure we will talk about roles and duties and I do not want to make it sound as if all campus safety assistants are doing this, but I often have people telling me CSAs are just in the golf cart on their phone and I know that is not an accurate picture of all CSAs but the impression is out there, and as long as there are key expectations and those expectations are met I think they can provide additional things, but the same with vaping sensors, again, it is after the fact, and we are looking from a punishment perspective. Innovative and active solutions are worth exploring.

CSAs receive training on NARCAN, but do they have it with them? Are CSAs trained in lifesaving measures? If a campus safety assistance saw someone in an emergency situation, could the CSA decline to provide lifesaving aid? Requested to see that incorporated into their job duties. I know there are classifications such as with police officers, firefighters, and certain medical providers where that is required and would hate to have a situation where because it was not required, lifesaving measures were not provided. It needs to be someone's responsibility because when it is everyone's it is no one's. I am open to suggestions; suggest CSAs because they are trained, just want to make sure we are never in a situation where aid is not administered in a timely manner. Asked if training could happen jointly to improve communication. I think there is value in joint training to build relationships.

Member Levine: Requested clarity as to what encompassed 170 calls to the Fresno Police Department (Fresno PD) and asked if the 170 calls are not listed in other categories. Asked for an example of a call to Fresno PD that would not fall under another category on the list of crisis calls. Commented it would be helpful if additional categories were added such as custody or parent disputes.

Requested clarity as to what fell under the topic of traffic brought forward by the student taskforce, was it accidents or amount of traffic? Requested name of the proposed fifteen sites chosen for Safe Routes to school and rationale for choice. Asked why the district is not doing all schools, asked if it was due to budget constraints. Shared the United States Department of Justice may have funding to help.

Commented on concerns shared regarding consistency of CSAs and asked if CSAs at the site are supervised by a vice principal. Asked if other structures have

been considered pertaining to oversight of CSAs. Asked what the total cost to the district would be if CSAs were added to all sites. Expressed appreciation that the proposal recommends adding CSAs to elementary schools.

Clerk Wittrup: Thanked Board members Jonasson Rosas and Levine for their comments. Expressed agreement with everything they said. Thanked Deputy Superintendent Her, Amy Idsvoog, and Armand Chavez for presenting. Commented it is a lot of impressive data. Commented the crisis call numbers may be double, as staff may not always turn in crisis forms.

Asked if the NARCAN is easily accessible at every school. Commented has heard it is locked up and requested staff look into accessibility, wants to make sure the district is doing its very best to make NARCAN accessible.

Impressed with information at the district level about safety but feels there is a disconnect between what is intended with investments in safety and what happens at school sites in real time. How does the district assess and evaluate every school site's safety practices? Does the district monitor safety practices, give feedback, look at incidents handled poorly, conduct an autopsy of the incident to look at why it happened and how practices can be changed to have a better response the next time an incident happens? How do we assess what we intend with investment, what we buy, and how it plays out at the schools? Does not believe a debrief always takes place. Where are the weaknesses we know of and how do we improve in those areas; there is truly a disconnect between what the district intends and what plays out at schools. How does the district address things happening at schools that should not be happening? Commented it is easy to not do a crisis debrief, to get through the crisis and be done, but when there is no debrief there are missed opportunities for learning and improvement.

Shared concern regarding variations from one school site to the next around safety. Commented usually the site leadership sets the tone, it is felt when you go on campus, a sense of leadership, of running a tight ship, people paying attention, urgency around safety; and then you go to other campuses and do not feel that way at all. Requested to see more consistency and urgency through the system when addressing concerns site leaders, teachers and parents bring to attention. Asked staff what they would say are the district's weaknesses. Commented the district needs to work on behavior interventions.

Member Cazares: Requested clarity on required training or certifications for the campus safety assistant position. Is there a two-year experience requirement? Should consider training current parents or past parents that know the campus layout, grow your own, a current parent might be biased but maybe someone who has a graduate from the school or the principal knows well, as we know it is difficult to ramp up quickly, especially with the elementary schools on our radar soon.

Vice principals that oversee campus safety assistants want to do a good job, they

want to be good mentors, they want to be good supervisors, but they probably have the same number of responsibilities as any other vice principal. We need to look at, especially this year and the coming year, where are the needs for additional campus safety assistants and additional interventions and what additional needs our children may have; so vice principals overseeing campus safety assistants can provide the support needed and focus more time with the campus safety assistants.

Asked if the Gaggle program monitors other languages than English. Asked if the Raptor system has launched at all school sites? Do all school sites have one point of entry? Commented campus safety assistant team is well intentioned and many have good relationships with site and students, but we have talked about safety assistants being on their cell phones for months now, and they are still using their cell phones. Why do they have cell phones at work? If they are on sight walkie talkies should take the place of the cell phone.

Asked if crisis call data was available for the COVID year? Requested to see crisis call data for 2020/21. The main call Member Cazares receives from parents is when their child was attacked verbally or physically and they do not feel the offending student is being held accountable. How do we do a better job of communicating with parents?

Asked for the number of students and campus safety assistants that responded to the safety survey. Requested more detail on data provided on slide twenty-one. Asked staff to look at not only routes outside but also entry points. Asked for clarity as to the responsibilities of the Regional Safety Specialist.

Student Member Aquino: Expressed the importance of the presence of senior staff and trustees at the sites they represent. Encouraged board members to visit sites more often. Requested clarity as to proposed gear for campus safety assistants. Requested clarity as to lockdown notification systems for DHH students and staff.

Board President Islas: Safety is multi-faceted and we have covered how we are helping to address social emotional and behavior issues, and physical health of students and even social health with Gaggle. We need to also consider what have been some of our biggest pain points, racism for an example, and the weaponization of racism is something we need to consider as part of how we address safety. There are elements of important factors we have not drilled down enough, we need to consider how to address and approach and try to prevent stress and issues that perpetuate people's feelings of insecurity. Nurses are definitely part of our safety team, designer facilities, transportation is a huge part of how we promote safety. I heard tonight we are conscious enough that we need NARCAN, but we have not made any investments into the treatment or recovery of students struggling with substance abuse which is a huge area of need. We talked about the Raptor system to help keep people out during the day but we are

not considering the threat when the unhoused are on the campus in the evenings and weekends and the turmoil that is caused by their presence and how we might better respond to those situations. I think we spend a lot of time talking about monitoring our students' behaviors when we talk about safety and I think it is important and I think there are real threats. We witness and discuss suspensions and expulsions before each board meeting and there are issues that do need to be addressed. There are other categories of people causing insecurities on our campuses such as staff and teachers and yet we are not categorizing or monitoring those threats in a way that also gives us data about how we need to intervene to prevent some of that from happening. We have issues of sexual assault of students, we have issues of inappropriate behavior, use of our facilities, and those are things about which I think we need to have honest conversations. How we dissuade and prevent those types of things from happening. Hostile environments, again going back to racism, all of our staff play a very important role in students being welcomed, our parents being welcomed, creating calm and bolstering peace, these are all things in which we need to be proactive. How we work collectively, some of our management have talked about the Disneyland model and all the things Disneyland does to make you happy as you get to the gate and on to the campus. The psychology of some of those interventions we need to better understand and figure out how we can apply.

Most of our students interacting with SROs are students with disabilities and I do not see any training for SROs on how to engage appropriately with students with disabilities or professional learning reflected in the proposal. How are we helping to teach self-regulation, how are we helping to diffuse situations with more professional learning. How many interactions do our general population have with SROs? There seems to be inequity with students of color and I am concerned if you couple students of color and disabilities we continue to see a trend of profiling and expulsion of disadvantaged students. I want to make sure we are interacting in ways we are mitigating, that is not driven by racism, we are trying to make investments that allow all of our students to be successful, that we are not creating these pipelines into prison or disadvantage for our students. Are we ensuring training of campus safety assistants? Are we monitoring to be sure all of our CSAs are going through training? If asked, would leadership be able to produce when CSAs went to training, are we capturing anything about acquisition of skills as result of the training, knowledge increases, if these trainings are in fact having the result we expect in how our CSAs are working. How is lack of performance being documented for intervention, if we are doing the training apparently the training is not being utilized. Or we are doing the training and applying these investments but nobody is monitoring them so there is no incentive to comply.

Commented on increased number of student incidents with a car. Assessments are important and I see them as a long-term effort, we are gathering information, we are identifying areas of intervention, we are working with our counter parts, but an assessment is not necessarily an intervention. I want to act on the data and not wait on an assessment about the missing assets on or around our campuses

when advocating for infrastructure. I know we at least have one contractor, Safe2School and they are serving elementary campuses, but we have evidence this year our middle and high school students need support. So, in the past we have talked about internship opportunities for older students acting as crossing guards, paid positions. We explored before and maybe we need to revisit that it becomes a noon-time assistant position so we can have all campuses covered with some support. I think that we need to invest more in this area and we can't rely on the long-term outcome of advocating for infrastructure because it will not mitigate the current issues we are experiencing. Asked to see a proposal to support internship opportunities for students.

Referenced slide #15, and asked, of the 24 arrests how many of those were referred to youth court, are they all felonies, misdemeanors, what is happening to our students and how do we make sure they are put back on a right track, they are given opportunities to come back from mistakes they made. Interested in learning if there were more resources for our nursing staff and what it would look like. Lockdowns, asked to see differentiation of lockdowns. Deaths include students and staff, not necessarily on campus. Slide #25, new CSA at elementary and no mention of more CSA resources at middle school. Slide #26, is there a reason we can not get the SROs to help monitor traffic. We need to be driving our contracts for the district. Would like to see it added as a duty into the contract with the Fresno Police Department. Crossing guards need more support and gear, asked to see that included in the proposal. Classroom management and school leadership, restorative justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion would like to see those added as well.

Special education, we need to have a very honest conversation with our parents, regarding SRO interactions. We need partnerships with parents to help us support our students.

OPPORTUNITY for Public Comment on Agenda Item

For the record, the Board received five (5) requests to address the Board on this item. The individual's name along with a summary of topic is as follows:

1. Vicki Allen Westburg: Referred to safety incidents that took place while employed with Fresno Unified. Commended staff on presentation but commented did not hear talk of teachers. Ms. Allen Westburg works at Fresno Pacific University with new teachers and as part of the course new teachers are asked questions pertaining to their knowledge of safety plans at school sites such as: layout of classroom, if they are equipped with appropriate tools for windows and doors, barricading procedures and locations. Requested the district to set up a notification system. Teachers need to know what to expect and what they are expected to implement immediately. Concern is not a matter of if but when we have a shooter in the Valley.
2. Dan Westburg: Asked if the district has the ability to deal with a school

shooting. How will a school lock down? Is there a sweep procedure to check bathrooms, hallways, and other exposed areas? Asked if students knew what people expect of them in a lockdown? Are the expectations the same across the district or are there different protocols for different sites? Substitute teachers that go from site to site, do they know the specific protocols for lockdowns or intruder on campus?

3. Eileen Cheng Buron: Not satisfied with the data provided, it is not really what is going on at the school site. You are not doing our job, hearing the parents, parking, and unloading zone safety issues. We are always asking you to hear our voices. Referred to an incident at Greenburg.
4. Benita Vasquez: Commented security is what is most important to us right now. Asked when the district show families a plan of security because this is worrisome? Agreed with one point of entry and exit at school sites for safety. Commented security people should be well-trained. Requested the district to include parents as they have ideas to share. Thank you for involving us because this is something we all worry about.
5. Delia Delgado: Commented heart is aching for families in Nashville. Asked what protocol is followed when a student is physically abused by a staff member, an incident happened and Ms. Delgado was not happy with how it was addressed. Commented safety throughout the school has been important for years, oldest son does not use the restroom because there is a lot of substance abuse taking place in the restrooms.

Member Cazares: Requested staff comment on school safety plans.

Board President Islas: Requested clarity as to if there is a districtwide safety plan.

Member Levine: Is there a designated place in the office to find the safety plan?

Deputy Superintendent Her, Executive Officer Amy Idsvoog, Manager Vanessa Ramirez, Manager Armand Chavez, and Superintendent Dr. Nelson were available to provide clarity.

OPPORTUNITY FOR UNSCHEDULED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

For the record, the Board received one (1) request to address the Board during Unscheduled Oral Communications. The individual's name along with summary of topic is as follows:

1. Adela Moreno: Commented the Board approved a police car with two officers but has not seen cars or officers at the sites. Children go to Computech Middle School and Ewing Elementary School.

D. ADJOURNMENT

Board President Islas ADJOURNED the workshop at 7:36 p.m.