



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

May 30, 2023

Fresno Unified School District, 2309 Tulare Street, Fresno, CA 93721.

At a Workshop of the Board of Education of Fresno Unified School District, held on May 30, 2023, there were present Board Members Cazares, Davis, Jonasson Rosas, Levine, Thomas, Wittrup, and Board President Islas. Superintendent Dr. Nelson was also present.

Board President Islas CONVENED the Board Workshop at 5:09 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Paul Idsvoog led the Flag Salute.

BOARD WORKSHOP AGENDA ITEM

PRESENT and DISCUSS an Overview of Facilities and a Potential Need for a New Bond

Staff presented an overview of the district's facilities which included updated facility assessment and potential future bond election scenarios.

Superintendent Dr. Nelson expressed thankfulness for the opportunity to meet to discuss district facilities. Shared the district is fortunate the Fresno community has supported past bond measures for Fresno Unified and the district is very appreciative of that support. Commented a facilities program is crucial, the Board directed the Superintendent to create an equitable facilities program across the district. Tonight's presentation will provide an update on current facilities projects and to seek the Board's direction on next steps.

Paul Idsvoog welcomed everyone to the Facilities Board Workshop and introduced partners Lance Richards with MGT and Chet Wang with Keygent. Dr. Leigh Sata and Dr. Regina Stanback Stroud with RSSC arrived after introductions.

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

Member Davis: Requested clarity as to how special education and alternative education were rated. Requested clarity as to what the designated category would be for a request for a changing table in a special education classroom. Requested clarity as to designated category for alternative education needs and or requests. Asked what rubric was used to assess alternative education. Requested clarity as to what industry standards were used, asked if there is a gold standard. Asked if there is an opportunity to rethink what the district is accustomed to.

For the record, Trustee Cazares left the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Board President Islas read comments and questions on behalf of Student Member Aquino who was away attending a student event. Below is a summary of Student Member Aquino's comments and questions copied from a document he provided.

Student Member Aquino: Provided comments pertaining to the state of school restrooms, specifically, the unsanitary conditions, equipment is often broken and not properly cleaned. Asked what the plans for school restrooms are and if there are plans for more gender-neutral restrooms. Wrote that it is important that this district provides the needs for all students regardless of their identity and sexuality. Wrote it is very uncomfortable as a gay male to be in restrooms as students tend to make comments about someone from the LGBTQ community in the same environment as them. Asked if there are opportunities for the district to seek grants that would help provide more gender-neutral restrooms.

Asked if there are plans to improve the look of district schools? School sites in Fresno Unified School District have a scary and uninviting look to them. As simple as painting our schools with school colors can really develop a positive mindset for staff and students and develop strong school spirit. Painting can be something students do and that alone can save money. Students will take pride in their work and what they developed for the campuses. Removing the lockers at Hoover as they are being used for students to tag and break them open, they are an eye sore and haven't been used in years. I am sure we can all agree we need our campuses to look beautiful and not sad and depressing.

Asked if there are plans to create better pick up and drop off locations for parents? Hoover is constantly congested with heavy traffic, and it is unsafe for students who are walking as well as drivers on the road. A great amount of the work we would pay contactors or other individuals should be a learning opportunity for our students, as many do not go into college after high school and will be leaning toward the work force this will be a great opportunity to utilize our different pathways and clubs to benefit our sites. As small as planting fun and colorful plants in front of our school will be such a better feeling when entering the campus. I really do believe we need to stop seeking recognition in some of the things we bring to Fresno Unified and it's time for all to work together for our students.

Clerk Wittrup: Asked if the facilities assessment was only an assessment of

facilities without an equity lens. Asked once the facilities assessment is completed how is an equity lens applied. Asked if the Board will receive the findings for consideration. Commented there are facilities across the district that have substandard conditions, a school may look great but have elements within that are substandard. Commented on hope that areas of need are not overlooked. Expressed appreciation for the presentation.

Member Thomas: Commended staff for bringing someone in to help find equitable spaces. Commented has not felt confident on how things were done in the past. Spoke regarding Kirk Elementary School as it has been a red-zone school for a long time; work has been done at the site and now Kirk is much more appealing. The people in the community are happier with what they see except for the gates around the school which makes it feel as if one is in jail, but the gates keep people from going on campus to wash themselves so are needed. Proud of work that has been done.

Commented on a few issues that may arise in the future such as which property should go first. Commented the reds should go first and continue to need upgrades. Historically the work has not moved with haste which then affects product prices and labor costs. Trustee Thomas's expectation is for the work to move quickly to avoid cost factors. This is only approximately 20% of the money the district needs to complete projects as the district has a lot of needs. Commented in awe of the work that has been done and for providing an opportunity to meet for small group discussions. Had a great conversation which provided a sense of confidence in the work.

Member Levine: Expressed thanks for the RCSS team being here as they are a critical addition to the work. Asked in terms of the community engagement timeline is there anything around engagement that is happening before the potential bond or is it more of a post bond passing stage. Commented it is important to gather authentic community input and to build community trust so at the time of vote the community feels they have a stake in the project. Requested clarity on facilities condition scoring, and commented it is helpful to have the overall score and expressed appreciation to having the breakdown of rational per building. Talked about going to have a mixed bag, some sites will be strong in one area but have areas of need in other areas. Important to look at the granular level. Asked if athletic facilities fall under grounds assessment and if it is more than just the state of the athletic fields.

Member Jonasson Rosas: Apologized for not having been available to go in depth. Asked for clarity regarding the equity lens, commented she was under the impression the Board would get a report similar to the facilities score where facilities were scored red, yellow, green and there would be another column for equity. Commented she thought it would be more a mathematical calculation and what is proposed sounds very different. Asked what format will be used to provide feedback to Trustees, and what criteria will be used. Commented sometimes shiny

things capture the attention of our community, but how do we control for the “nuts and bolts” items that may not stand out as much on the surface. Inquired about how we can control those situations. How long does the process take. Asked if these processes could yield different or additional projects or substantially change current project lists.

Commented, each time the district goes for a bond the district identifies billions of dollars of needs and that the community loves the district and wants to invest, but I don't know if the district asks for enough money. Commented on the need to be careful with the public's trust but worries the score saying we have terrible facilities is approximately the same as last time and at some point, the public will ask why the score is the same when several bonds have been passed. Commented the district has not kept pace with facility needs versus what it asks for in bond measures. Commented the \$2.5 billion list of project needs is only based on the facilities score and may not be based on future plans of the Board. Commented the district definitely needs the equity lens and needs community buy-in, but the \$2.5 billion may only be approximately 80% of identified facility needs, so maybe the number is really \$3.5 billion. Commented when the district goes to the community and asks for \$500 million the number is significantly short and worries on losing the community's trust. Asked for clarity if six is the max for one election. Commented the district has had similar presentations in the past and is concerned the district is falling farther behind in meeting facility needs and the voters will say what is going on, we have passed several bonds.

Board President Islas: Commented, a huge point for the district has been to have equity of access to air conditioning for all sites and that is still not achieved. Commented, when we think about cool it is not only air conditioning but also trees, and access to water. Commented the district has other environmental issues to be aware of such as air quality and the need for good filtration for students on campuses during the fire season. Commented, some campuses buttress up against freeways and ponding basins and need equity from a different lens and while the district can create barriers as fencing, this does not really address mitigation of the potential threats. Commented, a number of schools have reported problems with pests and the corrosion to cabinetry from the pests, the district cannot just look at the infrastructure as there are also “sub-things”. Commented it is important to look at the district's geography and the district's proximity to vulnerabilities experienced from environmental issues in the valley. Commented, often those vulnerabilities are not thought of holistically in assessments. Expressed love for the idea of looking from different lenses and would like to be sure to capture the specificity of our region and our needs. Addressed the point of the district continuing to cycle through these conversations each time they come around and commented it may be helpful to create some touchstone that reminds the Board of the priorities in relation to equity.

Commented there are a number of municipalities that have adopted equity tools in which future projects are evaluated to ensure priorities are maintained.

Commented on having seen a reshuffle of project priorities based on urgent and emergent needs and because of new opportunities and referenced the MASH center at Duncan as an example of maximizing resources available at the state level. Commented it was great and the right thing to do but when the Board continues to reshuffle projects it is why there are sites like Yosemite that do not have working air conditioners in the gym, coaching officing, locker room, and weightroom. Commented on the need to be conscious of how often projects are pushed back for some schools in the process of bringing new and innovative projects for other schools.

Commented on not limiting assessment of facilities to the curb, as campuses have spheres of attendance that are beyond the curb of the school and some of those spheres are areas not easily traversed, they do not have sidewalks, they do not have bike lanes, there are canals, there are freeway systems that intersect schools, and there are schools near liquor stores that have had shoot outs and bullets have been found on school grounds. Commented on there is enough evidence in terms of the shots fired in shot spotter where we know there are schools in closer proximity to gun violence and we have to be conscious of what materials are used and how schools are faced.

Commented that the areas in which the district needs to invest are evolving and the types of things the Board has to consider are things they are struggling with and in which new answers need to be found. Expressed appreciation for the work that has gone into these assessments, and commented there is more for the Board to consider as the district grows and more to consider in terms of the utilization of bond dollars once the district is able to successfully raise them.

Member Thomas: Commented she would be remiss to not acknowledge Cal Johnson who is here tonight and expressed appreciation for him as her predecessor as well as his service on the Bond Oversight Committee. Asked if it is possible to do another bond in 2026.

Member Davis: Asked if voters are asked if they are homeowners or renters. Asked if those numbers are as equally high as previous bonds.

Member Jonasson Rosas: Asked if the district could go for \$500 million in 2026.

Clerk Wittrup: Asked what will be done about deferred maintenance and if it is part of the bond or money the district sets aside. Commented as facilities age more a rainy-day fund is needed, and the district has not set aside money. Reinforced that drop off and pick up areas are at crisis points at some schools.

Paul Idsvoog, Alex Belanger, Lance Richards with MGT, Chet Wang with Keygent, Dr. Regina Stanback Stroud and Dr. Leigh Sata with RSSC were available to provide clarity.

OPPORTUNITY for Public Comment on Agenda Item

For the record, the Board received two (2) requests to address the Board on the agenda item. The individual's name along with a summary of topic is as follows:

1. Debbie Darden: Thanked Superintendent Nelson for the invitation to attend. Advocated for rebuilding Kirk Elementary School which was built in 1908. Provided reasons to rebuild such as tree roots breaking the blacktop, no beautification for the site, small administration building. Commented the school needs to be torn down and rebuilt not renovated or painted.
2. Bob Mitchell: Expressed appreciation for Dr. Stanback Stroud being on board with the district. Commented Kirk Elementary School is very old and faces safety issues during drop-off and pickup. Commented the school is far beyond its useful state, when you go into classrooms there are partitions to try to make more space, it is not a positive environment. Commented is asking for a rebuild of Kirk due to the need, the safety factor and the students cannot be properly educated in current conditions. Asked why we are so far behind, why is it taking so long to get a new school in an area growing rapidly.

OPPORTUNITY FOR UNSCHEDULED ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

For the record, the Board received zero requests to address the Board during Unscheduled Oral Communications.

D. ADJOURNMENT

Board President Islas ADJOURNED the workshop at 6:53 p.m.