



Superintendent's Schools Task Force Notes - April 26, 2023

1. Call to Order - The meeting of the Superintendent's Schools Task Force began promptly at 6:00 p.m. Dr. Conroy began the meeting by thanking the parents and community members for attending and being part of the important task force. At a future meeting, if you are unable to attend, you don't need to send a replacement. If you miss a meeting, please watch the YouTube video to see what you missed. Housekeeping information was discussed.

Dr. Conroy began the Pledge of Allegiance.

Dr. Conroy introduced Board of Trustees President Patricia Singer and Clerk Jack Souders.

2. Welcome by Board President Patricia Singer - President Singer welcomed and thanked the task force for their participation. The Board wants to listen as elected officials, wants the committee to share perspectives - valuable perspectives. She clarified that this is not a Trustee/Board task force, but it is the Superintendent's task force. This was intentional to be mindful of opinions, not to be involved, not have a set agenda, and no predetermined opinions. The District is starting from scratch. Beginning at zero lets the Board hear what the concerns are, what the community is thinking about, etc. The Board will be getting consistent updates as we gather information from the community perspective. She and Clerk Souders will not be staying for the meeting. Confident that there are well-qualified candidates on the task force which allows the Board to stay neutral and wants the task force to drive the conversations. Excited for good feedback and thanked the members again for their participation on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

Board Clerk Jack Souders - not much more to add - really excited to see what options the task force comes up with and there are a lot out there - a lot of different things we can do. After receiving all the information, the Board will decide what is best, but will listen with an open mind. Appreciates and commends the task force being part of the governance, and taking time away from your families for the betterment of the community. Wished for an amazing first meeting and looks forward to getting the updates.

Dr. Conroy shared that each task force member has a binder that staff will add to each meeting. The binder should be taken home and then brought back to each meeting. He went over the information contained in the first meeting packet.

Shared that Cindy Pulfer will be taking notes for the Task Force.

Executive Cabinet, Administrators, and other District support staff are in attendance and their role is to support the task force. Whatever questions come up - staff will be able to go back and research and provide the answers for what is needed. Staff will not be participating - they are here to listen and support. Sign-in sheets are being sent around.

Finally, Dr. Conroy introduced the Facilitator of the task force - Dr. Joe Farley, who is very familiar with Ocean View.

Dr. Farley introduced himself and shared that he has been a California educator for 42 years. He's 72 years old. He was a Superintendent for 21-22 years, an Assistant Superintendent, and a Principal at all three levels. He has done this type of work in many other districts, although this is the largest group (40) that he has facilitated.

3. Introductions - Task Force members shared their name and the connection that they have to the task force. All but three were in attendance.
4. Agenda Review - Dr. Farley reviewed the agenda with the task force. He covered the roles of the task force, the need to clarify any rumors, talked about protocols and structure of the task force, length of the task force, consideration of more or different people joining, sharing the conversations that the community is having, talking about the "elephant" in the room (the buzz), future meeting agendas, providing feedback at the end of each meeting, and trying to keep on task and at an hour and a half.
5. Role of the Task Force
 - Specifically asked to develop options and input for the Board of Trustees to consider relative to declining enrollment and low school enrollment
 - Empowered to represent and communicate with District constituent groups
What happened?
 - To share your perspectives and best thinking with the task force
Provide your best thinking - your best input - for the task force to be productive
6. Meeting protocols, structure, duration, and dates
 - Facilitator Rules - only 1 person speaks at a time; no side conversations or he will intervene if this is happening; and that he will be an active facilitator
 - Composition of the task force group
 - Meeting dates and duration
 - May 10, May 24, June 7, and June 21
 - Meetings will be one and a half hours - is this enough time?
 - Meetings have been calendared through June. Is this enough meetings?
Should the task force meet during summer?

7. Sharing collective knowledge base: How much do we already know? Joe asked for the task force to begin sharing what they know and what they'd like to know. What information is needed?

- Declining enrollment - numbers person - SOM in district for 26 years at middle school and enrollment numbers go up and down. What are the numbers? What is the capacity of each of the schools?
- Heard that there was talk of school consolidation because of numbers dropping; overheard that board meeting got overheated and there were many upset parents.
- A need for 800 students to be viable for a middle school and for 600 for elementary and very few schools are making that threshold - need more info at next meeting
- Big thing is that it was presented that we were consolidating and dropping schools and thought that speaking up vocally - what are we doing - what direction are we headed

Did conversations surprise you? It would be surprising to see the schools chosen without a lot of warning. It would have felt pretty shocking to see your school on the slides.

- Parent of a child in Special Education (SpEd) - it was very shocking that SpEd was not brought up with no real plan or idea for these students - leaving elementary school to go to middle and then learn the middle is on the list (Spring View). School of Choice - one was pulled. What does that mean and what does it look like? Where's the openness? Answers were : I don't know. SpEd community wasn't thought of at all. Listening to the Board meetings - at the community meeting - it caused stress and a lot of anger - quite frankly the most vulnerable students and rug was being pulled out without knowing specifics. What are transitions going to look like - all still very upsetting - wonderful program at their current elementary and programs at Spring and Vista - both wonderful - don't have a lot of information and now have to decide, and what does the transition look like for a school that may be closed. Need better communication, particularly between District and parents, especially in SpEd.
- To Piggyback - has a child on the spectrum - detrimental to pull a child midway; they need consistency and parents need to depend on that - things change and can be frustrating and need consistency; so dependent on consistency. Detrimental not to take that into consideration - a shocker to a lot of parents who hadn't seen the list of schools.
- Were any schools on the list that have been through modernization? Certainly hopes that is not the case as that was a lot of money that the taxpayers gave us to use.

- None of the schools that have been through modernization were chosen. How were those specific sites chosen to be modernized? Had a school with the highest enrollment, Gate program, sitting next to the smallest enrollment that got modernized. Need details - correct process is, how to compare processes, specialty student programs, how to optimize. Measure R discussion gets lost. Do we have any money left? Where should it be spent? Is it feasible to support one site - two sites - just need a lot of information. Now that parents are actively involved - cloud brewing - hearing low enrollment, low enrollment, the finality did seem really sudden. How do schools get their funding - how to optimize it. Heard 3 schools closed to save \$2.2 million. At a recent Board meeting - If every student who had absences did independent study - the District would gain \$2.5 million dollars.
- Get private school families back to make us competitive - transfer in - certainly want a long term solution and homeowners worried about property values - upheld by strong education. Parents represented by her need information in a timely manner to let them digest it - this is an opportunity for people on YouTube to write in as well. Open communication up as much as possible.
- Joe Farley - Clarify this role by joining this group - part of the decision making and have assumed a role of owning the decision. Can't own that decision until you get all the information. The information will be provided to assume this role and at some point will develop a written report about what recommendations will be - incumbent to all of the staff members - all data and information presented and then fully informed - all questions will be answered.
- Biggest shocks for Circle View community - we met the criteria - shock for the community - why are we on this list - we have GATE, good programs, we have the right class size, was that because of Measure R - we didn't get updated - is that why we're on the list - problem of why, what are those reasons. That's the feeling...

**Clearly need to know what was chosen to be modernized - what, why - will get the data to you for the next meeting.

- Mention that it came out at the board meeting, disappointingly talked about families not being in the district, housing prices too high - looking at private and charter schools, they have a waitlist and are doing well. Almost good news, something that we can address - how do we get families back - pulling kids and going to local other options - we have an important opportunity to get families back - **will get that data for you. Things that we can do to retain families.
- So, couple things: the community feels distrust with the board and administration - the announcement made on Valentine's day. Late-date night cut short. Most parents have more important things to do than to watch a Board meeting - the

way it was brought up - timeline - how soon - it seemed rushed and presented on a day that would have low attendance because of Valentines Day; and representing Circle View, we thought that it would never happen because Circle has highest academics and highest attendance. Never be on that list. Sitting on our laurels a little bit. We're the Gem of the District. Parents were shocked and disappointed and blindsided - we are putting up the numbers - why is Circle being considered - very shocking, disappointing, the timing of the presentation, the time frame. It seemed to us that we were pushed under the rug. The less people know, the less fight the District would get from parents. Suspicious. Canvassed my community and nobody knew what was going on - No, not Circle. It's happening. Large attendance at the town hall, a lot of emotional parents and huge participation - they are active now and have woken up the sleeping giant. Parents are very concerned over this and took it for granted - hey, it will never be us on the chopping block. Dr. Conroy knows members that were there at town hall - passion of the parents that showed up - passion still there - a lot of knowledge. We need the trust - need to see what's going on. Appreciate President Singer coming out to the town halls. Great that the Board was there to hear the community and were able to change their mind and they took it off the agenda. Voices were heard. Last minute changes. Announcing on Valentines Day. Timeframe - getting it done in 4 months.

- To Piggyback - classroom sizes and that they weren't going to get an aide - already our teachers are extremely thin so I think that a lot have gone to private school. Take that into consideration - More staff and smaller classrooms.
- OVTA - thankful that we're given the time to talk calmly and rationally about this. We've been talking about school consolidation and declining enrollment for several years and as soon as you put a school name on it - now they are listening and paying attention. Parents asking questions - now paying attention even though we've been talking about it for quite a few years. Question? Information - why chosen was presented at that meeting. Because we get into this emotional "not my school," we're not ready to hear the reasoning and the rationale. Just finish talking and now I'm going to get up there. Glad to be here and level-headed and a chance to discuss.

Part of the deal with the dates, teachers who are being let go, were discussing laying off a bunch of teachers, not temporary, but permanent teachers who have been working for this District for 15-16-17 years, their life's work. That has been pushed aside for this year and I do not know what will happen next year. Specific dates that have to be met and that is part of why that happened to fall and why it fell on February date. Assume positive intentions, want to be open to hear other ideas to come up with a good plan, that no one has alternative motives or trying to sneak one over - about the kids, the parents, the families, the neighborhoods, the communities.

- Who chose us? Who reviewed the applications?

- How do we operate as a group? Majority vote? How do we decide how it will be presented?

JF: To answer the 2nd part of your question - The hope is that you get so much data and so much information and so much clarity about all the things that we will get to a point that we have a pretty strong sense about what you can and cannot support. It's inevitable that some of you may not ever agree with what others in the room agree to. We want them to have a voice as well. Majority consensus on certain direction forward. Give voice to minority opinion about what should happen going forward, so that both parties get heard. I've been successful in the past presenting complex information to groups like you, and a very intelligent group of people here, and have gotten to a consensus that we can all live with. If it isn't possible, we will still give a voice to all.

- So, simple majority?

JF: I hope we don't have to go to a vote...hope that a consensus develops. We have a lot more to learn and direction forward is somewhat obvious. Much prefer to get to a compromise that the majority can support.

Dr. Conroy answered the first part of the question and explained how the task force was selected:

Breaking it down...go to the page in the binder that has the membership listing - School site parent representatives were selected from the applications that were returned. Community reps were sought out by Dr. Conroy to get a broad representation of the community. For example, Mr. Ewing - long time community member representing the Personnel Commission - we have a representative from Measure R, the DELAC committee, and representatives from the SpEd field.

Dr. Conroy spoke to the Union presidents and asked for recommendations from those organizations and also asked Principals willing to sit on the task force. There are two middle school Principals (out of 4) and six elementary Principals (out of 10) serving on the task force. Variety of people - District office staff not to be part of the conversation, but will bring the data and collect and analyze information to present to the task force. The Board had nothing to do with the selection. The Superintendent shared with the Board in his weekly updates the numbers in the groups - the Board did not want to know who they were in advance. He shared with the Board how many in each group, and then sent an email on Monday to the whole District community about all of you being on the committee.

JF: Transition to something else -

- Surprised to see that there are not more people with real skin in the game - very few people representing the three to four schools being consolidated - not sure why a rep from every other school is on the task force and what is the thinking behind that. If the purpose for the task force is to try to come up with a solution

and not to consolidate, then only people that are passionate about not having their schools closed... Understand peers and staff to offer input, professional, but little taken aback that the rep from Westmont said she heard some buzz; so she seems out of the loop about the situation; so is she interested in really helping find all the solutions for us.

JF: Do you think we should add additional parent representatives to the group?

- Purpose is to take a step back - love school and district - looking at it as those three schools are no longer at the top necessarily - point is to come up with other solutions - talk through are those the right schools - alternative there is that we've misrepresented other schools that now may be considered and those reps may not have a voice. We all love our schools, so it should be fair to all - intent was to come up with more creative solutions - what is that criteria?

JF: Should we add more parents?

- I think 40 is enough.

JF: Is there some contingency that isn't represented here? Or that should be at the table? It is the task force responsibility to go back and share with the school community.

- Better question is what that person can offer - Village View has an expert on modernizing schools, it's her profession, she's free and brilliant - what skills she can bring to the table.
- For the people who volunteered and signed up and who are not part of impact; does it impact every school? Was it because your school may be thrown in...love to know why you're on the task force.
- If schools are consolidating - it will affect all schools and we'll have a trickle down effect and all of us will be here to have a voice and talk about what that potential may be.

JF: If one school is struggling, then the District is struggling. If you change one school, it will change every school in the district. Reminded of something that Patricia said - she wanted us to develop a range of future options. In reality, none of you are representing an individual school, you're representing all of the schools.

Dr. Conroy - 2 points

Why everybody? - looking to the future of what could be presented to the board:

Part 1 - school closure, if 1 or 2 possible, the subsequent conversation would be school boundaries - and school boundaries will impact everybody. Rationale is that every school is represented and will impact the entire district.

Question of the number of people on the task force? We do have a big group here - we can always put a table in the center to add more. Want to make sure that we have a rich conversation and good dialogue and listen to everyone's point of view; that we can come together and develop solutions that we can recommend to the Board. We're starting at ground zero. There is a lot of baggage and we need to work through all the filters and provide the information to everybody so that those conversations can take place. If you think we should have more, to be consistent and fair...to pull a name out of the hat...for equal opportunity. I wouldn't want to create a condition that we are not being transparent. If you want more, no problem with it. What do you think of numbers here and representation? Pull five names from a hat, may end up being all from the same school. Create an equal balance in the conversations?

- This group is pretty large. If we add more parents, we could bring 10 parents - not productive, voices would be getting drowned out and we've reached the limit. We have a fair balance - everyone brings something and all have a skin in the game and have no desire to expand the group.
- Starting at ground zero - not sure if we are at ground zero. The District has done their best to try to not get to this decision. A lot of different pieces, transportation cuts, and a lot of different opportunities that they have tried to cut programs to get to a point where we didn't have to do this today. Welcome opportunity to see the work that needs to be done and want to see the other work that has been done - helpful to analyze and understand what we ???.
- Marine View - as a community, it is about the district. We're not a private school sector, what affects the district, it affects the entire community. Representation from my school - if it affects my kids it affects your kids.

8. Discussion about the "Elephant in the Room"

JF: Level of distrust about what has happened in the last year or two. Do you feel like you're going to be able to get over that with more information and more discussion and become more trusting?

- What we're doing right now speaks to the fact that it's a great start, to find another way.
- I'm concerned. That the timeframe that we were given - enrollment is going to decline based on assumptions and opinions or the buzz - oh we're stepping back. We don't have time based on numbers in September...in order to get some trust we need some sort of consensus from the Board about time frames, what does it mean to have a successful school, what are they really looking for, just kicking the can down the road, I've got a 4th grader who will promote and then this can be someone else's problem.

- Want something that includes transparency and not necessarily assumptions - that there will be a resolution that does not necessarily include automatic closures.
- People are thinking in their mind that the District has already made up the decision, will do what they're going to do, and we're here to quiet people and this committee is just here to make people happy.
- Representing as a union representative - classified employees - feeling will I be laid off, lose my job - should I start looking for employment elsewhere - goal is highly skilled employees - that's the goal of CSEA - we are the heavy lifters - vital part of the schools - retention of these skilled employees - not the highest paid in OC. Love the students, staff, parents, community... Feeling like no decision has been made - losing our employees right now. Sometime down the line this is going to happen - we will all feel it - seniority will all feel the shift whether or not their school is closing.

JF: This speaks to the complexity of these decisions. Not a quick fix. Hope that we can get to the point where we can trust each other and have honest and frank discussions about what people all know...and get to where you know and understand the data in terms of what that means and can make recommendations to the Board. It would be political suicide to meet with you and ask me to facilitate this if they have already made a decision - they need to hear input and that will influence what the actual decision is. Otherwise this would be just a scam. They are asking Joe Farley to work with the task force to figure out a way forward and why we put this on pause.

- Some of you don't know who I am - SOM - put that aside - 5 children that went through the OV school district - lives in the Village View tract and it is a bit contentious out in the community now. I want my grandchildren to go to our schools. Excited to be asked because I have a love for this district. Strong and impressive district. Yes, it says committee, but I'm a mother and lucky to let them go through there - my heart is OV. Looking forward to hearing ideas and that I can be part of that. My children didn't all go to Village - I'm impressed with District overall. My part on the task force is Ocean View!
- Last year we lost 2 teachers that had been there for 15 + years - it's not just the kids - the domino effect, the complexity, the teachers, the CSEA employees. Keep all of this in mind. A lot of things to consider and how that will affect the District as far as skin in the game. This is our community so it affects everyone.
- How much do we already know? - parents were rather surprised about how land rich the District is. Would like more information about which properties there are that are bringing money in and how we may modify them - need more information about that.

- Task force - it came up that it was going to go through June? You're going to make this recommendation in June? Beneficial to hear something from the Board - we may not reach a consensus - complex issues - numbers, staff, found interesting - very limited talk about what we're doing to pull students in. Transfers in - Dual Immersion Program...WHY? Gave an example of a friend who applied for the DLI program and hasn't heard anything from Ocean View - lives across from Harbour. Garden Grove offered her a spot in their DLI program. Part of the communication from the District - Board commitment - what are we doing to bring students in??? Transfers in - Would be nice to receive something from the Board - that the pressure is off-no solid answer by June - there are a lot of things going on.

JF: From what you have described so far - we'll need to continue to have meetings into the new school year. Pretty complex things to discuss - my hunch is we will continue on in the new school year - won't be able to gather the information and discuss, or come to a consensus by June. Will work with the Superintendent to get something in writing about a more specific mission they will have for you - have some sense that they are clearing the slate and are going to take your input and benefit from your collective knowledge.

9. Plans for the next meeting of the task force

Are we going to get more material? More material - more data to everybody

Next meeting is May 10th - this is what is being requested by task force members:

- More hard data - figures
- Legal parameters
- Facility information
- Staffing information
- Budget information
- Trend data
- County wide and regional data on consolidations
- Plus all other that are made in the notes (above)

JF: Any other?

- Private school, charter school, home school trends
- Address some of these challenges historically - previous school closures and how it was approached
- General budget of the district and how much we're trying to cut
- Real cost of the smaller/larger schools
- Consolidation of teachers - shifted with other schools within or where will they go?
- How are we exposing our fabulous programs - STEAM, VAPA, different than other schools
- How are we marketing that? Shaping children from small adolescents by the time they get to high school - we need to expose what we're doing

- Budget - worse case scenario - what happens - do we reach bankruptcy - how fast does that happen - when is it rock bottom for the district
- Data on how the special programs, VAPA, DLI, how subscribed they are, so it would be good to have that data
- What kind of marketing and does it work
- Boundaries - where we could make those cuts and if we did consolidate and how does that affect the neighborhood real estate
- What will you do with all that land? Timeline for when you will sit on it? Can't continue to have closed sites with the potential to add charter schools. No community member would want a school closure within their housing tract where we sit on it as long as we did Park View and deal with homeless issues.
- If closed, and property is closed, how long will they protect it?
- What are the sites zoned for - potentials for each site
- How many of these charter schools have OVSD students - coming in from other cities but not our kids.
- When does the Board want an answer?

10. What will you say about this session tomorrow to your community?

How did it go, what was that impression, cross section, sense as you leave tonight

- Good introduction meeting
- Good ideas gained
- What we want to get out of this meeting
- Good faith effort by the Board and Dr. Conroy
- We need to reestablish that trust - good step
- Not much accomplished, but trust foundation started
- A lot of passion, creativity, desire, and a lot of data coming our way
- So much data - want to see it all
- Can you email some of that information? We will meet soon to see if you have some homework to do?
- Cautiously optimistic that conversation was started and that we will be able to get to a solution
- Here because they chose to be here with the same goal in mind.

11. Closure

Joe Farley observation - intelligent and intuitive group - a lot of potential to help with this task at hand. Even more aware of the complexity just by all of the things that you shared.

Complex challenge and trying to make sense of them - increase and vested interest and help you get to the point at our last session that you will be proud of what we've done by listening and working together and then feel a little more trust than when we walked into the room.