

ALBANY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION
Board of Education Meeting Highlights 4/24/2018

These highlights are the personal notes of Board member Charlie Blanchard. They are not official AUSD minutes.

The meeting began with a presentation by Albany Children's Center (ACC) Director Anna Mansker, who highlighted ACC's recent receipt of "No Place for Hate" (NPFH) certification (see: <https://www.adl.org/who-we-are/our-organization/signature-programs/no-place-for-hate>). Director Mankser emphasized the collaboration between ACC and the Albany elementary schools and stated that the three elementary schools and Albany Middle School (AMS) had also received certifications. NPFH provides an organizing framework to support social-emotional learning and social justice competencies.

The superintendent reported that work is in progress to establish a memorandum of understanding with the Peralta Community College District on a teacher preparation program, the AMS Open House takes place on Thursday, and Albany Education Foundation (AEF) hosts "Scoops for Schools" on April 29. Our student Board member reported that AHS teacher Craig Bryant is one of five finalists to receive the NBC Sports Bay Area 2018 All-Star Teacher Award. You may read about Craig and vote for him by June 1st at <http://www.nbcsports.com/bayarea/AST>.

During the time for public comment on matters not on the agenda, several people expressed disappointment or anger over the settlements of some of the lawsuits stemming from the District's disciplining of students involved in an Instagram account that contained inflammatory images of Albany High School (AHS) students and one staff member. Representatives of the Black Parent Engagement Committee (BPEC), the Jewish Parents Engagement Group (JPEG), and Familias Latinas de Albany (FLA) read a prepared statement berating the settlements as a moral failure that revealed a lack of transparency, undermined a sense of community healing, and demonstrated that conflicts with the District could be profitably resolved by filing lawsuits. The statement concluded with six demands of the District: (1) conduct a school climate survey this school year, (2) provide regular updates on progress toward implementing the recommendations of Albany Coming Together (ACT – see AUSD web page at https://www.ausdk12.org/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=897778&type=d&pREC_ID=1244918), (3) mandate ongoing reports from each AUSD school site to the AUSD District Office on incidents of bullying and harassment, to be compiled and publicly reported on a regular basis, (4) hire a full-time District coordinator of equity and an additional 0.2 staff-time counselor at AHS to support social-emotional learning, (5) implement a required ethnic studies class at AHS, and (6) provide \$80,000 to each family of students and staff members whose images appeared in the Instagram account. The Board directed staff to examine the demands and to agendize a discussion of them at a future Board meeting.

Five mothers of children pictured in the Instagram account shared their pain, stated that the settlements were not how they envisioned progressive action, and testified that bullying is widespread.

By law, the Board cannot discuss comments made during the time for matters not on the agenda. The superintendent previously sent the following statement to the community: "Some of the lawsuits filed by students involved in the "Instagram" litigation have been resolved. The settlement amounts will be funded by

the District's joint powers insurance pool and no District funds will be impacted or used for the settlements. We appreciate that you are concerned in this matter, and hope that you will understand that while there is ongoing litigation, there will be no comments by Albany Unified School District or its agents.”

For the record, the District has settled one lawsuit brought by a student who was physically injured during a demonstration related to the Instagram account, and lawsuits with several students where a federal judge ruled that the District had violated the students' First Amendment right to like or follow the account when it disciplined them. The District has not settled with three students for whom the judge ruled that their specific and targeted attacks on fellow students were not protected by the First Amendment.

The Board heard two staff reports. Six members of the District Leadership Team attended a half-day training session to help school personnel prepare for and respond to an emergency with an active shooter on a school campus. On a related matter, staff noted that the new AMS and AHS buildings will have classroom doors that can be locked from inside the classroom. Staff also provided an update on the AUSD Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP), which showed all comments received to date and a list of District progress toward implementing previously approved goals. People can still provide input through the online survey at the District web page (<https://www.ausdk12.org/>).

The Board discussed seven action items. It approved a reduction of 4.7 classified positions that are supported by donated funds (which may be restored if new donated funds are directed toward these positions), a declaration of need for qualified educators (a precautionary measure allowing someone with an emergency credential to be hired if a fully credentialed teacher cannot be hired for an opening), an independent contractor agreement to provide staff training to help teachers implement culturally sensitive teaching practices and strategies based on the Museum of Tolerance educators workshop, a resolution supporting the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act, and amendments to two contracts for the AMS Annex to allow purchase of solar panels and to implement changes required by the Division of the State Architect. The Board tabled a proposed job description for a product development assistant who would focus on expanding the options offered by the food services department pending additional financial information.