

**West Contra Costa Unified School District  
Governance Committee**

Zoom Video Conference

**September 17, 2020**

**Minutes**

**I. Opening Procedures**

**A. Roll Call and Introductions**

Chairperson Stephanie Hernández-Jarvis called the meeting to order at 5:39 PM.

**Committee Members Present:** Stephanie Hernández-Jarvis, Tom Panas

**Staff Attendees:** Matthew Duffy, Superintendent; Debbie Haynie, Executive Secretary; Robert Jordan, Communications Manager, Roxanna Molina, Translator, Reyna Ortiz DeTouriel, Translator

**B. Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Panas moved approval of the agenda and Chairperson Hernández-Jarvis accepted the agenda. Motion carried.

**C. Approval of Minutes: July 7, 2020; August 11, 2020**

Mr. Panas offered a correction to the July 7, 2020 Minutes and motioned approval. Chairperson Hernández-Jarvis seconded. The motion carried to adopt the July 7, 2020 Minutes as amended.

Mr. Panas moved approval of the August 11, 2020 Minutes. Chairperson Hernández-Jarvis seconded. Motion carried.

**D. Public Comment**

Demetrio Gonzalez

**II. Discussion Items**

**A. BB 9150 Student Board Members**

Superintendent Duffy said that no policy change had been made and that currently two student representatives were active participants. He asked for direction about this policy.

**Discussion:**

Mr. Panas shared his primary concerns regarding the number of student trustees and increasing the number from two to four, and also overlapping terms for the four students with year-long terms. He provided the example of two students beginning their term in October and the other two students beginning terms in May, thereby affording opportunity for mentoring guidance from the student perspective. He also mentioned the suggestion made during public comment regarding student representatives from each trustee area but thought the key would be to lengthen the terms and overlap in order to provide at least two student who had continued experience on the board.

Chairperson Hernández-Jarvis agreed that there was benefit to enable the students with more time to become engaged, comfortable and more involved in partnership with other students as peers. She also agreed that staggering of terms would help with onboarding and the leadership role.

**Public Comment:**

Student Representative Garcia-Avila remarked about her experience as a new student trustee and learning to be more comfortable. She thought extending the term beyond a semester would be beneficial.

Chairperson Hernández-Jarvis acknowledged the benefit of the student perspective to the full board and said she supported longer terms and more students serving.

Mr. Panas spoke about the public comment regarding student representatives from the trustee areas. He said while not opposed, he had not previously thought about that perspective. He added that moving from two to four representatives was a large change but made a certain amount of sense.

Chairperson Hernández-Jarvis thought that exploring four student trustees with staggered terms as representative of the district would be the entry point for an equitable, centered student voice.

Superintendent Duffy suggested bring the proposed policy revision to the Board for consideration including a full year term for student representatives and introduce the idea of by trustee area to get a sense of the Board's position.

Chairperson Hernández-Jarvis asked about looking at a draft prior to taking to the Board. Mr. Panas recommended presenting a bylaw revision to the Board for discussion and input. Chairperson Hernández-Jarvis recommended a robust revision to the policy to give a good likelihood of its approval. Discussion continued.

Mr. Duffy will provide a revised policy to the Board for review and approval.

**Public Comment:**

Jemil Sahle

Additional discussion took place.

Superintendent Duffy shared that the policy change would include the one line in the bylaw to amend the six-month term to one-year term and potentially add staggered starts to the terms. The proposed revision will be forwarded to the Board for consideration.

**B. Policy on Renaming School Mascots**

Mr. Duffy recalled previous discussion to review board policy around naming of facilities to determine a way to incorporate the naming of mascots. He said in reviewing the current policy he did not see it as a policy that could be easily amended by insertion of language regarding mascots. He asked the committee about whether to pursue or leave to school site decisions.

Mr. Panas brought up the subject of related costs to athletic programs and acknowledged the circumstances that changing of a school mascot would be considered. He noted that even though a student body might be in support of a change there may also be alumni who look on it less favorably. He asked about a threshold for consideration of changing a mascot and putting guidelines in place while providing respect for stakeholders. He supported it being a site-based decision guided by board policy for all schools.

Superintendent Duffy said that he had reviewed some policy language, the athletic perspective and any inappropriateness of current mascots. He thought it might provide

opportunity for schools to assess mascots for appropriateness, cultural relevance, etc. He also acknowledged the alumni aspect of connection.

President Hernández-Jarvis acknowledged the student-centered request around a place of pride at their school. While wanting to honor the alumni pride, she would also like to honor the student initiative. She supported having a policy in place with specifics that allowed for guidance of a process, considering both elementary and secondary schools, and inclusion of a process for periodic review.

**Public Comment:**

Student Representative Garcia Avila shared her experience at Richmond High when students inquired about evaluation of the Richmond Oiler mascot and ideas for inclusion of alumni, students, teachers and community in seeking a new mascot for the school.

**Discussion:**

Superintendent Duffy shared a sample school district policy found online regarding [Procedure for Naming Facilities and Mascots](#). He reviewed the points of the policy and suggested using this policy as a guide, talking with student trustees and others for input to develop a sample.

Discussion continued regarding finding ways to consider racial and gender equity while being sensitive to making schools spaces that are racially sensitive and anti-racist, enabling students to identify with their school.

Next steps included bringing a draft policy to the next committee meeting for follow up. From there it would proceed to the Board for consideration.

**C. BP 7310 Naming of Facilities**

Mr. Panas spoke about requests regarding changing the names of schools. He noted the current policy had a procedure outlined. He said that many schools were named after men and remarked about the current culture. He thought the topic bore discussion about giving schools latitude in changing the name. He advocated for a way to get students involved.

**Public Comment:**

Demetrio Gonzalez, Jemil Sahle

**Discussion:**

Chairperson Hernández-Jarvis said she supported providing the ability to create a pathway for schools to have more autonomy in this decision.

Superintendent Duffy said that recent instances of renaming had involved new school campuses. Discussion continued regarding modifying the policy to allow for school name change under circumstances other than extraordinary.

Superintendent Duffy suggested edits to the policy and returning it to the committee for opportunity to receive public input.

**D. DEI Policy and the Proposed Racial Equity Oversight Committee**

Mr. Duffy provided background related to the closely related subjects of the DEI policy and racial equity oversight and previous discussion around more community advocacy with the possibility of the Positive School Climate Committee taking up some of the work. He said he would like to get thoughts from this committee regarding the subjects.

**Public Comment:**

Jemil Sahle

**Discussion:**

Superintendent Duffy explained that there was no DEI policy drafted at this point and that any work regarding a racial oversight committee had not begun.

Mr. Panas recalled the previous meeting's proposal to include this with the work being done by the Positive School Climate Committee. Discussion included timeframe, a possible subcommittee of the group as well as the charge of the proposed Racial Equity Oversight committee, and whether it fit under the work of the Positive School Climate Committee.

President Hernández-Jarvis acknowledged the Healthy Richmond recommendations as the work of many organizations and a broad base of community stakeholders. She said she thought development of a policy and process for implementation would be at the core of the work to be ongoing. She would like to explore the timeline, potential partners and how to leverage staff and community members.

Discussion turned to investing in a partner to lead the work, use of someone outside the district to take this on, creation of a committee with a clear charge for the work and determining whether the Board would give input and direction.

Superintendent Duffy recommended asking the Board as part of the Local Continuity Plan at the September 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting whether it advised taking up the work of a Racial Oversight Committee and if so, the committee would begin to craft a policy and develop a set of actions. Chairperson Hernández-Jarvis said she looked forward to moving the item forward with next steps.

**E. Anti-Racist/Anti-Bias Framework of Education**

Superintendent Duffy recalled the conversation about including the work in the next edition of the Roadmap. He said this item was another piece of the previous discussion about committee, policy and framework.

**Public Comment:**

Jemil Sahle, Demetrio Gonzalez

**Discussion:**

Chairperson Hernández-Jarvis shared that the District currently does not have a drafted policy and this discussion was to formulate next steps.

Mr. Panas began by asking how much of the anti-bias / anti-racism work involved students as well as staff. He asked how it fit into the curriculum, impacted teachers and staff and others on campus. He asked about the vision for whom a policy was intended.

Superintendent Duffy said that he saw building a framework different than developing a policy. He said that he thought a framework would help to drive a set of actions or behaviors as well as policies. He spoke of the 3,000 employees and a framework that could be embodied by all. He continued to speak about the organization's mission, vision and core values guiding the organization while involving students in the process.

Discussion continued.

Next steps were determined to include this with the Board's discussion about an oversight committee and whether a committee would take up this work.

**IV. Governance Committee Next Meeting**

The next meeting date was set for Thursday, October 15, 2020, 5:30 PM.

**V. Adjournment**

Chairperson Hernández-Jarvis adjourned the meeting at 7:20 PM.