

Wasco Union High School District
Wasco Union Elementary School District
Boards of Trustees
Special Board Meeting
Wasco Union High School District
Cafeteria
December 6, 2011
5:00 p.m.
Adopted Minutes

I. Call to Order – 5:00 p.m.

A special meeting of the Wasco Union High School District and Wasco Union Elementary School District Boards of Trustees was called to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Wasco Union High School Cafeteria, by WUHSD President, Mr. Barry Braun and WUESD President, Dr. Jim Forrest.

Wasco Union High School Board Members Present

Mr. Barry Braun, President	Mrs. Patricia Sanchez
Mr., Craig Fulwyler, Clerk	Mr. Wayne Wallace
Mr. Jesse Acebedo	

Wasco Union Elementary School Board Members Present

Dr. Jim Forrest, President	Mr. Cruz Rodriguez
Mr. Marty Jones, Clerk	Mr. Ernie Sanchez
Mr. Richard Reding	

Administrators Present

Mrs. Elizabeth McCray	Mr. Martin Lonza
Mrs. Lori Albrecht	Mrs. Jennifer Long
Mrs. Susan Andreas-Bervel	Mrs. Rafaela Lopez
Mr. Danny Arellano	Mr. Brad Maberry
Mr. John Barge	Mrs. Lisa Ornelas
Mr. Rob Cobb	Mr. Raul Rangel
Mr. Joseph Elwood	Mr. Kelly Richers
Mrs. Debbie Escobar	Mr. Sam Torres
Mrs. Regina Green	Mrs. Monique Polk
Mrs. Jan Hummel	

Classified Management Present

Mrs. Karen Evans	Mr. Joe Salazar
Mr. Jeff Payne	Mr. Rick Sanchez
Mr. John Yanez	

Secretary Present

Mrs. Gracie Saldaña
Mrs. Esmeralda Quintana

Visitors

Raquel Acebedo, Clara Acosta, Shannon Affleck, Virginia Aguirre, Paul Ante, Anna Balentine, Steve Balentine, Daryl Bellis, Elida Capilla, Coral Ceiley-Jackson, Rosalinda Chairez, Dwaine Chambers, Jeffery Cooley, Lorena Cozad, Steve Davis, Walt Desatoff, Kay Espitia, Sandra Fisher, Rafael Gonzalez, Dorothy German, Monique Goodwill, Janet Grundt, Joe Hively, Ben Juarez, Marissa Juarez, Jeff Kirby, Anthony Leonis, Deana

Linstead, Chris McCraw, Michael McCray, Helen Medrano, Terri Mozingo, Arturo Navarette, Roberto Navarette,. Sharon Nicol, Denisse Normandin, Brenda Phillips, Marta Poe, Anna Poggi, Sarah Reding, Jose Rios, Karen Rowe, Martin Sandoval, Dennis Stowe, Christina Rodriguez, Cheryl Stephens, Kevin Tallon, Maria Torres, David Vaughn, Nelisa Vega, Richard Vega, Diane Villagran, Gerald Waldrip, Ted Wilson (apologies if we missed anyone)

Flag Salute

The flag was saluted.

II. Adopt Agenda

It was moved by Reding and seconded by Jones of the Wasco Union Elementary School District to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion carried. Ayes: 5; Noes: 0; Absent: 0

It was moved by Fulwyler and seconded by Wallace of the Wasco Union High School District to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion carried. Ayes: 5; Noes: 0; Absent: 0.

Mr. Braun, President of the Wasco Union High School Board, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He then explained the purpose for the meeting.

Dr. Forrest shared that since it is a one item agenda, if members of the audience have a question, to please feel free to ask it. He also asked if the Board is addressed to please identify yourself.

III. Public Comments

None

IV. Reports

Superintendent, Mrs. Elizabeth McCray introduced Mr. Dwaine Chambers of School Law Consultants who presented the Board with a PowerPoint Presentation (posted on each district's website) concerning a proposal for a unification plan, its procedural requirements, organizational/community effects, and fiscal impacts.

Mr. Chambers thanked the Presidents, Board Members and Superintendent. He described the process and the things to expect and the timelines. Upon approval we will return within 60 to 90 days, with a draft unification plan (Resolution). He shared that the Board of Trustees will have the opportunity to review the plan. The plan can be modified and changed if the Boards so chose to do so. Upon approval of the Resolution by the Districts, it will then be reviewed and approved by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools. The Resolution will then be reviewed and approved by the Kern County Committee on School District Organization. Upon their approval it will be referred to the Kern County Superintendent of Schools who will then call for an election at the next available date. If approved by the electorate, the creation of the new district shall take place "for all purposes" on July 1 of the calendar year following the calendar year in which the action is approved by the voters.

Mr. Chambers also shared the three things that unification will do for this community; 1. promote efficiency, 2. coordinate efforts, 3. promote general communication. All feeder districts to the Wasco Union High School District have the opportunity to participate in the Unification Process if they so choose.

Mr. Cruz Rodriguez (WUESD) then asked who has the right to vote yes, is it the board, current Superintendent or acting Superintendent. Mr. Chambers responded the Boards will be voting. He also explained that because of the law and to reduce the number of trustees on the board, it will have to go to a electorate vote.

He also explained that a ballot vote of the electorate will determine unification. A vote for members of the board will take place at the same time. According to the law, if we choose to have a 5 member board the trustees, the top 3 will be elected for 4 years term and the other 2 will be for 2 years. In the event of a 7 Member Board it will be the top 4 for a 4 year term and the other 3 for a 2 year term.

Mr. Barry Braun (WUHSD) then asked if it would be 15 months from the time of the election to taking their seat; will the term start upon taking the seat. Mr. Chambers responded that Mr. Braun was correct.

Mrs. Patricia Sanchez (WUHSD) then asked if the candidates for the Board of Trustees will be existing members or will others in the community have the same opportunity. Mr. Chambers explained that the old board is dissolved and therefore it is open to anyone in the boundary area who meets the requirements to run.

Mr. Rodriguez then asked if this process will violate the new law that is going to be implemented to redistrict this area due to only two Hispanics on the Board. Mr. Chambers explained that according to the California Voting Act, make up the board is to be consistent with the voting electorate. The percentage of voting Hispanic is what counts not the percentage of Hispanics in the community.

Mr. Chambers then shared that other districts have the option to join or opt out of the unification process.

He shared that upon KCSOS calling for election for next "available date", the available date can be either November, March, April or June. The issue of unification would be consolidated with the election of the new board. He also reported that a waiver may be requested to move up the effective date to an earlier date of the July 1 of the following calendar year.

Dr. Jim Forrest (WUESD) then asked Mr. Chambers to please elaborate on what the requirements under the Voting Act are that was referred to regarding the question of Mr. Rodriguez of electability and percentages of the community. He asked what the Voting Act specifies as what the board members have to look like and does it speak of that. Mr. Chambers reported that basically as long your make up on the board reflects the voting make up of the community, then it is satisfactory.

Dr. Forrest then shared that Wasco is roughly 90% Hispanic voters, what does this make up say about our elected Board. Mr. Chambers then reported that would be highly unusual but if it is, then your make up on the board will have to possibly be 3 or 4 Hispanics,

Dr. Forrest then asked if Mr. Chambers was suggesting that our Boards are in violation of the Voting Act. Mr. Chambers responded, absolutely no, but we would have to look up the county records for voting population.

Mr. Craig Fulwyler (WUHSD) then expressed the need to look at the pros and cons and then asked what the cons are.

Mr. Chambers then explained that sometimes the con of unification is a loss of community control. Although he didn't feel that would happen here. This community is directly involved.

Mr. Fulwyler then shared that high schools have a revenue limit different from elementary, then unified districts have a different one, correct.

Mr. Chambers responded that high schools have the highest revenue limit. Then elementary districts have a lower revenue and the unified district revenue is in the middle. He also shared that combining districts, your enrollment will grow. Therefore you're getting more income but we will see the fiscal revenue before the decision is made by the Boards.

Mr. Wayne Wallace (WUHSD) then stated that he did not understand how the high school would come out evenly if our revenue limit goes down and the elementary limit goes up. He then asked how that helps us. Mrs. McCray shared the State mandates the revenue, based on the type district.

Mr. Rodriguez then stated that he thought that the ball is in motion right now it just depends on who you talk to. That's all I have to say, Thank you.

Mr. Marty Jones (WUESD) had a question on item number 18 of the powerpoint regarding the revenue limit. He wanted to know if that is totally in the realm of Kern County Superintendent of Schools responsibility to determine that. Is there a formula for that or how does that happen. Mr. Chambers responded that in this particular case, the answer is yes. It is very clear as to the authority of the obligation of the County Superintendent and the revenue projection of the new unified school district. What ever the County Superintendent comes up with then that is it that is going to be the projection.

Mr. Jones then asked Mrs. McCray if she was comfortable with that. Mrs. McCray responded that yes she was. That report will be presented to the Boards. The decision this evening is not the final decision, but this vote tonight will allow the Board of Trustees to be able to see the monetary results of Unification as well as other aspects of the process.

Dr. Forrest then reiterated that the vote to move ahead this evening is not a guarantee of completion. All we are voting for is to pursue the process.

Dr. Forrest then shared that in the community, the concern reflects back to the results of collective bargaining. At this point we have no way of predicting the results of collective bargaining, am I right to respond in this manner? Mr. Chambers reported that Dr. Forrest is correct. The collective bargaining units will be negotiating a new agreement. As a result there will have to be one agreement for Classified and one agreement for Certificated. Mr. Anthony Leonis shared that there will have to be a collaborative effort between the units. It will take a time, but if we collaborate now we will save a lot of time later. The Ed Code says that classified shall not suffer any loss of salary or benefits for 2 years. Certificated is a little different but we will work towards a viable contract prior to the unification. As we prepare to consolidate 4 contracts to 2 contracts, we look forward to good faith efforts to negotiate a good and fair agreement.

Mr. Rodriguez thanked Superintendent McCray for the informative meeting. He shared that he was glad to hear about the classified people, most of what I see here might be concerned. That is why they are here. But I don't see too many of my community participating in this meeting but I appreciate all the input that you guys are giving, me personally, thank you.

Mr. Gerald Waldrip, Thomas Jefferson teacher, reported to the Board that at their last staff meeting it was requested of the staff to submit questions regarding the unification process. He shared that he did not know what they did with those questions. He then asked once the board approves this (unification), why does the collective bargaining process happen until after the approval. Mr. Chambers shared that there is nothing that stops the negotiations before the actual election. Mr. Anthony Leonis then reiterated that it does not prevent the parties to begin and continue with preliminary discussions on the impacts and effects. There are lots of documents to review. Preliminary discussion is not prohibited, and it is my recommendation that unions, the Superintendent, and both Boards take a look at forming committees for the purpose of discussions to be prepared as to what will or will not work in a collaborative sense.

Mr. Waldrip then shared that if it is after the fact it is too late. Mr. Leonis shared that there are stages in the unification process before it becomes final. We will have sufficient time to review the agreements throughout the unification process. Once you do the preliminary discussions, you will see both at the High School and the Elementary level what is working and what is not working.

Mr. Chambers then shared that the time line will depend on how quickly we move. We could have voting as early as November 2012. It all depends on how quickly we move.

Mr. Steve Davis, Thomas Jefferson teacher reported that he recommended a committee at last Special Joint Board Meeting. Every day at work the questions are asked, what is going to happen, what has happened. As a result there are a lot of rumors; we could stop such rumors if we had a committee with answers. If we don't know answers, then we will have uninformed parents. Would like to know the boards opinions on this matter.

Mr. Rodriguez shared that he himself would like to thank Mr. Waldrip for bring that to his attention, he was not aware of that. That is a very good question Mr. Waldrip.

Mrs. McCray said that this is the first step to get the general idea of the process. We all have questions, the Board has questions, I have questions, this is all new to all of us. This is the first step to getting information and learning about the unification process. As we go through this learning process we will try to stop the rumors. That is one of the purposes of this meeting.

Mr. Walt Desatoff stated that he was very confused and concerned. Our concern is the children. If the only negative is loss of control why have we not been unified many years ago. But as a person who pays taxes, he is concerned if the money is being spent properly for the education of our children. He shared that he sympathized with the Board members and encouraged them not to be persuaded in their decision. He then stated that he would like to hear if there were any parents (in attendance). He would like to have them speak because that is who should be here because this unification is for their children.

Mr. Wallace shared that he had a question. Back in early 60's, late 50's, the State came through and said that all schools would unify all the smaller schools. I am from Fresno County and I was working at Sanger High School. They took in three or four smaller

schools like we are talking around here. Kern County did not do that, why. Did they not think it was as good? Mr. Chambers reported that he had no idea why Fresno County would embrace unification but Kern County did not. Mr. Wallace then stated that it was most of the State. Mr. Forrest then shared that he began his teaching career in 1958 and that in the 60's it is correct that the entire state had to unify so as to benefit the children. So all up and down the State there was a movement to unify. However there were some qualifications. Some had to unify districts so that they had similar amount of students, land, and assessed value. In Kern County, to meet these three requirements, each district was going to be long and narrow and an inefficient way to operate nearly county line to county line. Upon review, the county decided it was impractical. It had nothing to do with education for children; it had to do with transportation and it was extremely impracticable. That is the reason why Kern County did not unify. Mrs. McCray thanked Dr. Forrest for the history lesson and valuable information.

Mr. Chambers again shared that his experience has been that each party is going to have to at some point in time, sit down and talk in good faith. This unification action will not affect anyone's legal rights. Units still have their rights. Seniority lists will be consolidated according to hire date. Education will continue and we do not anticipate mass layoffs.

Mrs. Sharon Nicol shared that she had to leave early in the meeting so she may have missed this but asked if there will be a vote to approve or disapprove unification. Mr. Chambers responded, both. As a parent who has a child here in Wasco High, I do not see the advantage of unification. I have been a huge supporter of Wasco High School. I have supported in such events like walking the streets to support the bonds, etc, I will do the same thing to prevent this from happening.

Mr. Wallace then asked that if we (the Board) vote for it but the community votes against it, will it still happen. Mr. Chambers responded that no, the unification will not happen.

Mrs. McCray thanked Mr. Leonis and Mr. Chambers for their attendance. She then turned the meeting over to the Board Presidents.

Mr. Braun then thanked Mr. Leonis and Mr. Chambers as well. He also thanked those in attendance. It is good to see a good turn out.

V. Discussion and Action

1. It was moved by Fulwyler and seconded by Acebedo of the Wasco Union High School District on the approval of Proceeding with the Proposed Unification Plan. Motion carried. Ayes: 3; Noes: 1(Sanchez); Abstain: 1 (Wallace); Absent: 0.

Mr. Fulwyler shared that since he has served on this board this issue has come up several times. He thinks the plan has merit. In talking to education professionals through the time he has been serving on the Board, it has often been asked why a small community like Wasco has two districts. It's a good question and thinks it needs to be pursued. He reiterated that he would like to review the pros and cons. The bottom line is our children are going to be served better in a unified district. The economy of scale and to be able to funnel more funds to the educational processes for our students then it is a win. I understand it is a process and will continue to look at the whole picture.

Mr. Jesse Acebedo shared that he has been on boards across Wasco for 20 years now. He has always been for unification. It is long overdue for Wasco. It is a win, win

situation for both districts. The most important thing is that it is going to streamline education K-12 which is going to be a big plus for the community of Wasco and the students.

It was moved by Jones and seconded by Reding of the Wasco Union Elementary School District on the approval of Proceeding with the Proposed Unification Plan. Motion carried. Ayes: 3; Noes: 2(Rodriguez and Sanchez); Absent: 0.

Mr. Reding shared that he came to this district as a teacher in 1961 and his question was the same, why hasn't this district been unified since 1961. Where I came from in Kentucky, they were unified. Two districts very small, it didn't make since to me and we will still have our local control. We do not live in Los Angeles or in those big communities. I agree with Jess, it is a win, win situation. We are local people here and live here.

Mr. Jones shared that when he decided to run for the Board of the Wasco Union School District, part of his platform was unification. I was working for the school district the last time unification was explored and it almost made it. He was disappointed when it did not happen. He is very excited to see this process progress this far. He also reported that he is thoroughly convinced that this community, children and employees of both districts will be better off. He is excited about the prospects of this venture. Our community deserves the best possible chance of being successful. We are right on the verge of something very exciting happening. He is excited to be a part, this is a good thing. Let's not allow naysayers to stop this. Let's be excited and do something good for Wasco. We have a good chance to do something great here. Let's get behind it and be a part of it. Let's look back at the end of our careers and say, I was there when that happened. This is a milestone and I would like all of you to make this happen. So let's make it happen.

Mr. Rodriguez shared that he was on the Board when this occurred maybe 16 years or 8 years ago. The Board voted to do it and for some reason it did not happen. He did not want to say the issue why he thought it didn't happen. He stated that he did not want to but that he was going to not vote for this unification. He reported if he is wrong, he is leaving it up to the people in my community to vote for. He then stated that, that's where I stand. I don't want any of these people out here losing their jobs after two years. I don't see why they should; we have to have a strong board. Each Board Member has their say so and should not ever reflect on someone else. So if it happens, it happens, but right now I am still not ready to make a decision so I am voting no against it myself. And I have been on the board for 19 years.

Dr. Forrest reiterated that it will take a community vote to pass this. Who employs all of us, the community. It is ultimately their decision. Our obligation is to get all the information out to the community. He shared that he would like to see a dissemination of information to the employees to inform them of what is going on. I think it is a win, win, and it is far over due.

Motion carried by both Wasco Union High School District and Wasco Union Elementary School District, to proceed with the proposed unification plan.

VI. Adjournment

It was moved by Wallace and seconded by Fulwyler of the Wasco Union High School District to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Ayes: 5; Noes: 0; Absent: 0.

It was moved by Jones and seconded by Reding of the Wasco Union Elementary School District to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried. Ayes: 5; Noes: 0; Absent: 0.

Meeting adjourned at 6:41 p.m.