

SOLANO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
5100 Business Center Drive  
Fairfield, CA 94534

**MINUTES**  
**Special Meeting**  
**August 24, 2010**

2010 – 2011 Planning Session

The Solano County Board of Education met in special session on Tuesday, August 24, 2010, at 5100 Business Center Drive, Fairfield, California.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Board Vice President Dr. Rozzana Verder-Aliga (Trustee Area 7) called the meeting to order at 10:08 AM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Members Present:

Larry Asera, President (*arrived at 10:25 AM*)  
Rozzana Verder-Aliga, Vice President  
Mayrene Bates  
Doug Ford  
Raymond Silva

Members Absent:

John Galvan  
Maria Kennedy

Dr. Verder-Aliga noted that a quorum was present as was Solano County Superintendent of Schools Dee Alarcón serving as Secretary to the Board.

Others Present:

County Superintendent of Schools Office –

Rob Phillips	Jay Speck	Monica Ross
Lettie Allen	Laryn Bishop	Sheldon Reber
Lisette Estrella-Henderson	Sam Neustadt	

**III. APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Motion was made by Mrs. Bates, seconded by Mr. Silva, and unanimously carried by those present to approve and adopt the agenda as presented.

**IV. 2010 – 2011 PLANNING SESSION**

Solano County Office of Education Cabinet members presented planned areas of focus for the 2010-11 academic year.

**a. Management Organizational Chart Update**

Mrs. Alarcón welcomed those in attendance and asked the Board members to write down any questions they have on the paper provided. A question and answer period is scheduled toward the end of the meeting.

She shared the most recent SCOE organizational chart and reviewed a few changes that have taken place in the past few months including title changes and replacements.

**b. Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) Areas of Focus**

Sam Neustadt, Assistant Superintendent of SELPA, thanked the Board for its support during the past 11 years since he joined SCOE. SELPA is where policy and practice come together by helping to create and communicate policy. As SELPA monitors the difficulties happening in the legislature in Sacramento regarding policy bills and budget development, it is important to note that a lot of experience is leaving due to civil servant issues, caps on the Public Employee Retirement Systems (PERS), furlough days, etc. Along with the experience goes an understanding of the connections between education and health & social services. Additionally, reductions in funding are leading to survival mode among public sector agencies that are simply trying to get their work done. To lessen the probability for dispute and strengthen important local relationships, SELPA is stepping up its partnerships, bringing many agencies together, looking at how we can all contribute to shared resources that will get the total job done for the betterment of the community.

Two of SCOE's vital interagency partnerships include North Bay Regional Center which works with autistic children, their parents, and other service providers to identify the best way to provide services; and the County Mental Health Department that provides related services to children with disabilities. Since the State has underfunded mental health mandates, SELPA must be prepared for the possibility that education may become responsible for more mental health services and continue to apply for federal funding such as MediCal, IDEA, SB90, private insurance, etc. Through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) grant, clinicians have been hired to conduct early mental health assessments to students in targeted schools.

The economy is forcing smaller service providers out of business, or they are being bought out by larger organizations. Therefore, SELPA used money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to create two new alternatives to expensive and disappearing nonpublic schools. The Sigma program serves students in grades 7 and above who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), conduct disorders, and need to recover school credits. There are currently 13 students in the program. The cost depends on the number of participating students, with the breakeven point at about 20 kids.

The second alternative is the Delta program which is tuition-based and allows us to retain the money that would normally be spent to place students in costly nonpublic schools. ARRA funds helped bring years of planning to a reality. At the present time, there are six children enrolled. These kids have profound mental, developmental, emotional, and behavioral disabilities. The breakeven point is higher for this program because these students cost more to serve.

Mr. Neustadt also mentioned the Intervention Committee which is a partnership with the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District that works to expand access to countywide services once local options have been exhausted.

**c. Administrative Services and Operations**

Lettie Allen, Associate Superintendent of Business Services and Operations, echoed the key point that workable relationships are vital to effectively survive the tough financial times our State is facing. SCOE staff works well together as an organization as well as with our districts and outside organizations.

- Internal Business Services

The Internal Business Services Department is finalizing the closure of SCOE's financial records for 2009-10. The unaudited actuals will be presented to the Board at its regular meeting in September. Since SCOE does not yet know what will happen with the State budget, we are looking at how to maximize our resources and strengthen our reserves. Due to our

conservative budgeting, we expect to end the year better than the estimate previously given to the Board.

Soon we will start the 2011-12 budget development process, which will be easier to do if a State budget is in place by then. Updates are underway to SCOE's budget development calendar. Focus areas for the year include being very aggressive in obtaining grants to pay for programs such as professional development.

- District Business Services

Solano County's school districts are hurting financially, and several of them have interim chief financial officers right now. The County Superintendent approved four of the district's budgets on the first pass (Benicia USD, Dixon USD, Fairfield-Suisun USD, and Vacaville USD). Concerns remain for DUSD, and SCOE continues to work with the district. DUSD moved to positive status at the end of last year, but the future of its reserves is questionable, making its status tentative.

Travis USD and Vallejo City USD have been given additional time to work on and submit a budget after SCOE reviewed their negative fund balances and asked that they make further reductions. Both districts are currently in negative status. There is no state administrator in TUSD at this time, but the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) has been assigned as the district's financial advisor, and SCOE shares the cost with the district but gets reimbursed through FCMAT. SCOE continues to work with TUSD, which can make it through the next couple of years but will struggle with cash flow. A lack of cash can take a district to insolvency. Since VCUSD is already under state administration, SCOE cannot approve the district's budget because the State has the final say. The State is aware that SCOE gave VCUSD conditional approval, which gives the district additional time and support.

- Facilities/Maintenance

It was a tough decision to close the pool at the Irene Larsen Center. SCOE is currently in the process of determining the specifications for demolition. The pool house has been tested for hazardous materials, and we will soon go out for bid on the demolition. Complete removal is expected by the end of this calendar year. Once the area has been demolished, we will discuss uses for the site. A complicating factor is that, prior to the pool issue, SCOE had already sent construction plans to the State, and the plans are now under secondary review by the State Architect. To change the plans at this stage could jeopardize all the progress made thus far and further delay approval. More details will be shared with the Board as the plans develop. Mr. Asera commented that he hoped SCOE's plans included green, energy efficient buildings. There are lots of grants available to help mitigate these costs over time. Mrs. Allen responded that green construction is initially more expensive, and the State will only fund construction up to a certain amount with SCOE having to pay for any overage. Once SCOE's plans are approved, we will be in line for funding when funds become available again.

SCOE had to go through a financial review in order to qualify for hardship dollars for construction on six classrooms at the Golden Hills Education Center, and we have to be reapproved every six months as we await the availability of funding. New schools are also planned at the Larsen and T.C. McDaniel sites.

The roof at SCOE's main building had to be replaced and repairs made to several first floor offices and conference rooms due to water damage. The felt under the roof tiles had to be replaced, and window leaks are being repaired. The work is almost done. The preventative maintenance phase will come next.

- Transportation

The Transportation Department recently held its back-to-school in-service training of special education teachers and paraeducators on the proper procedures for loading and unloading students. Kerri Gardner is doing an outstanding job as manager of the department and has been working hard with the California Highway Patrol to update emergency codes, equipment, and disaster preparedness. Bus routes have been added due to the new Sigma and Delta programs.

- Information Services and Technology

The Technology Department has been working on the implementation of a student information system that will replace the California Basic Educational Data System (CBEDS) and the Consolidated Application. We have moved from using our former Aeries system and Student Accountability Information System (SAIS) to the Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement System (PROMIS), which the San Joaquin County Office of Education has specifically developed for use by county offices of education. Although change can be challenging, the PROMIS system is date and time sensitive, easy to use, and the only system statewide that has electronic signature capabilities.

Technology improvements are underway for SCOE's conference rooms and Boardroom using ARRA dollars. There is a great demand for use of our conference area and an increased need for video conferencing capabilities, so it is necessary to upgrade the audio, media, and Wi-Fi technology enabling people to hear and see presentations better and avoid travel expenses by conducting video conferences instead of face-to-face meetings.

- Human Resources

Jay Speck, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources (HR), informed the Board about Assembly Bill 346 (AB346), which is legislation initially aimed at requiring coaches to be fingerprinted and certificated, but it ended up being a requirement for all classified employees. Currently, teachers are fingerprinted for both the Department of Justice (DoJ) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and the two agencies do not share the information, so there is a separate fee for each set of prints. At this time, classified staff is fingerprinted only for the DoJ. AB346 would require classified staff to also be fingerprinted for the FBI and obtain a certificate for a cost of about \$150. The bill's details are still being reviewed, as this could significantly increase costs for SCOE and its classified employees.

Some bargaining unit officers are terming out this year, so interest-based bargaining training is being planned for the new leadership.

In the coming year, one HR priority will be to manage the school year calendars. So far, SCOE staff has not had to resort to rollbacks or furlough days. The same cannot be said for Solano County's school districts. Travis USD has cut 5 days, Benicia USD – 2 days, and Fairfield-Suisun USD – 2 days. This creates a challenge because SCOE teachers must still work on those days, and the district pays for the services. SCOE is closely watching to see what the districts are doing, and our bargaining units understand that this is an issue that we are not sure how to resolve yet. It will be interesting to see what the effect of the federal new Jobs Bill will be. It is still unclear how the Jobs Bill money can be spent, and further guidance is needed. Vacaville USD used some of their ARRA money to offer a retirement incentive. About 75 people took advantage of that incentive, so it worked out well for all parties involved.

**d. Student Programs/Educational Services**

Rob Phillips, Associate Superintendent of Educational Services and Student Programs, said that one of the focus areas for his division in the coming year will be revenue enhancements.

- Special Education

Mr. Phillips talked more about the DELTA program referenced by Mr. Neustadt at the beginning of the meeting. It has been a good partnership with the Fairfield-Suisun USD, and, since FSUSD recently closed several of its special education programs, the district had lots of equipment available for DELTA's use.

Project Search is a partnership with SCOE's Transition Partnership Project to conduct job searches for 18-22-year-old special needs students and provide internships with businesses such as Kaiser Permanente. The goal is for 75% of the program participants to be hired by Kaiser to work full- or part-time. The program is working well with the Vacaville facility, but placements at the Vallejo site have caused some transportation issues.

Thirty Smart Boards have been purchased for use by the special education programs. The teachers are excited about this new technology, and it is fascinating to watch the teachers using them in their lessons. They introduce a fun way to learn and engage the students as they interact with the Smart Boards. SCOE is mindful of how much is spent on these and other teaching aides due to the effect on the districts' finances. Some categorical funds generated by the Alternative Education program were used to help pay for the Smart Boards.

- Alternative Education

Mr. Phillips spoke about a lot of new things happening in the Juvenile Court and Community School (JCCS) program.

The Distance Learning Academy uses Odyssey-Ware, a web-based curriculum that assists with credit recovery. This year the Academy was run as an independent study program. At first the digital divide was very obvious, as most of the JCCS students did not have internet access or computers at home. Now kids can use their iPhones to access the web or use a computer at the library. The Academy had about 20 participants last year with the students earning 15 credits in two months. The hours spent online are tracked, and they come to school for testing. SCOE is hiring a 40% teacher to manage the Academy and work with the kids this year. The curriculum starts at the fourth grade level, so there is a huge potential for growth in this area, but SCOE is starting slow to ensure everything is working well before expanding the Academy later this year. SCOE is currently meeting with the district School Attendance Review Boards (SARB) to consider this option as another viable tool to help students earn credits toward graduation from their hometown high school.

When the new Juvenile Detention Facility (JDF) opened six years ago, low-end computers were purchased to save money. Technology changes so rapidly that those computers are now old clunkers, so it was time for a technology upgrade. Classrooms at JDF and Golden Hills Education Center have been equipped with new computers for students and teachers. The teachers are excited to be able to expand the Odyssey program because it will help the students advance at a higher pace.

The Dean of Academic Assistance and Advancement is a new position this year. As the Director of Alternative Education Rick Vaccaro's duties have been increased, the Dean will provide backup support for Mr. Vaccaro so he can conduct more business off campus such as the SARB program and others as mentioned below. The Dean's workload is expected to entail about 10 days per month and will include student intakes, evaluation of transcripts, meetings with parents, and so forth. Categorical funds are being used to support the position. The JCCS

program is growing due to FSUSD's recent decision to close the Mary Bird Continuation School and place the students at Golden Hills.

The Travis Credit Union (TCU) has been conducting financial literacy classes at high schools throughout the county for a few years, and soon TCU will offer a financial literacy course at Golden Hills after the regular school day. Our partnership with TCU has been beneficial and has already served students in the Foster Youth program.

Several years ago, in addition to individual district SARBs, there was a countywide SARB to curb truancies. The group was made up of personnel from the District Attorney's office and those in each district who work with the alternative education students. Funding for the County SARB was supplied by the districts with the money returned to them due to increased attendance. Mr. Phillips and Mr. Vaccaro recently attended a conference where they saw several successful SARB models that Solano may be able to institute. One goal of the County SARB would be to stiffen penalties for violations of a district SARB's order. Mr. Phillips and Mr. Vaccaro are working with the court system to have parents charged and taken to court for the chronic truancy of their child.

As mentioned at the Board's regular meeting on August 11th, the Division of Unaccompanied Children Services (DUCS) program is moving forward, and SCOE anticipates entering into a contract by mid-September with the Baptist Child & Family Services (BCFS) organization to provide the educational component to students in a residential group home in Fairfield. Although the facility is within the FSUSD boundaries, the district has no desire to run the program. SCOE will receive revenue limit funds from the State as is the case with our other programs. SCOE will need to hire two teachers but no paraeducators due to the presence of other program staff on the premises. Maximum classroom capacity will be 10-12 students. These unaccompanied male minors are 14-18 years old, undocumented with no parents nearby to care for them, and they have broken the law. BCFS' goals include reunification with a family member or sponsor and helping the children obtain U.S. citizenship. The DUCS facility in Fairfield is the only one of its kind in the nation. It is funded through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security under the Department of Health and Human Services through the Office of Refugee Resettlement. The residents are not emancipated but are wards of the court that have been referred by a federal judge in San Francisco. More will be reported as the program becomes operational.

- Career Technical Education

The Career Technical Education (CTE) Department is also undergoing lots of changes including a name change. It is no longer called the Regional Occupational Program (ROP), because funding diminished for adult training, and the staff found ways to increase in other areas.

The Workforce Innovation Partnership is a joint project with Solano Community College to reach out to about 200 middle school students in the coming year. There are also plans to increase wastewater management and biotechnology courses. The partners are in the process of writing a waste water curriculum and integrating it into some middle and high schools that will be determined shortly and balanced among the districts. The partners may also consider making this an afterschool career class.

The "Connected by 25" Employment Committee works with youth, especially foster youth, to help prepare them for the workforce by making education relevant to a career. "Connected by 25" has gained status as a best practice, and SCOE is often asked by other county offices of education and ROP programs to explain how we did it so they can follow our model.

The MHS Transition Age Youth Grant will provide \$326,000 over three years and serve students 18-25 years of age that are at risk of having a psychotic breakdown or have already had one. It is tied to the “Connected by 25” Employment Committee previously mentioned.

The California Department of Education (CDE) Professional Development Contract is a one-year grant to be implemented statewide this year that involves evaluating all ROP and CTE classes and coordinating staff training on how to conduct assessments in their own district or county. Professional development, curriculum, and standards are provided. SCOE’s CTE staff will travel to 11 different regions in California to conduct the training using our CTE’s delivery model, and SCOE will receive \$455,000. We hope the State feels this is a valuable endeavor and continues the program past the current year.

- Educational Services

Lisette Estrella-Henderson, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, said her department provides district and school support as well as a lot of professional development opportunities.

The Teaching American History (TAH) grant is a partnership with U.C. Davis and instructs 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade history teachers about combating traditional methods of teaching American history by focusing on west coast and multicultural history. Recruitment of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers takes place in the fall, and training begins in December and continues throughout the year beginning with a week-long training at U.C. Davis. The grant pays for items such as substitute teachers in the classroom while the regular teacher attends training sessions, teacher stipends, travel expenses, etc. Participation is voluntary.

The goal of the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classroom Connect is to positively impact the graduation rate and close the achievement gap. KQED public media television is our partnering agency.

Project INSPIRE involves a home visiting program and parent university designed to engage and train parents in leadership skills to become more involved in their child’s education. It has shown positive results by connecting educators with parents and needed resources to develop relationships and track student progress. Parents receive support in advocating for their kids and recognizing that teachers also want their children to succeed. It opens a dialog and stresses the importance of collaboration and partnership, because neither the teacher nor the parent can do it alone.

The English Learner Administrative Institute works with rigorous student-based instruction relevant to English language learners (ELL) with a focus on data to improve instruction and give feedback to ELL teachers.

School readiness is a goal of the Priority One Child Care Providers Network. This partnership with the First 5 Children and Families Commission increases daycare and preschool slots in certain areas, namely 4-5-year-olds, and provides professional development, coaching, training, and support for childcare providers. It is a three-year grant that will ultimately allocate 18 subsidized slots when completed.

The Leadership Development Mentoring Project will provide mentors for administrators in the state’s Region 4.

Programs targeting foster youth, such as the “Connected by 25” Education Committee, provide countywide referral tracking for the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) program and credit recovery for foster and homeless youth.

To aid Solano County’s homeless youth, a Spanish version of the homeless public awareness video, shown to the Board in the past, has been created. The Building H.E.A.R.T. (Homeless

Education and Resource Team) project brings agencies together to help provide support to displaced families. Project INSPIRE involves parent engagement training, technical assistance, and foster parent workshops held in homeless centers for the purpose of collective problem solving. There are about 400 homeless children in Solano County that we know about and who participate in SCOE's programs. This does not count those who live with other families. The Community Action Partnership (CAP Solano) is intent on bringing needed services, such as tutoring, to wherever the homeless are with the hope of eventually getting them into the school system. Toward that end, Genentech donated 400 backpacks, and Valero donated 40, stuffed with school supplies during a recent collection drive coordinated by SCOE.

The Youth Development Department has received a three-year grant from the Solano County Reducing Rates Coalition that will pay for implementation of countywide alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention programs.

The Special Events Department has expanded the Teacher of the Year program to include the Classified Employee of the Year into a larger Educator of the Year program. Teachers and classified employees will be honored together at the Joseph Nelson Center in Suisun City. This new venue will accommodate the increase in people expected to attend.

Fashioned after the Academic Decathlon, the Academic Bowl will be open to students in the New Foundations, JDF, and JCCS programs and give them an opportunity to showcase their positive talents.

#### **e. 2008 – 2011 Strategic Planning Update**

Copies of SCOE's Strategic Plan were distributed. The Plan was initially designed to operate from 2008 to 2011, but, just as the times change, it is a fluid plan that must also adapt to surrounding circumstances. Now in its final year, the Plan contains three critical issues that have been fine-tuned by meetings of community representatives. Mrs. Alarcón stated that SCOE attempts to gauge all its programs, actions, and decisions by whether or not they support or are called for by the Strategic Plan. Staff has met periodically through the years to discuss progress, ensure our actions are on track, and make necessary adjustments. SCOE's Cabinet members meet with their district counterparts each spring to find out what the districts need from SCOE in the coming year, and that is how we determine our imminent areas of focus. Mrs. Alarcón reviewed each of the three critical issues and explained what SCOE is doing to address them.

#### **V. COMMENTS FROM THE COMMUNITY**

There were no comments from the community.

#### **VI. BOARD DISCUSSION**

Board members were encouraged to ask questions or make comments about any of the departmental reports presented. Dr. Verder-Aliga requested an update on the Vallejo City Unified School District's appeal to the California Department of Education for the VCUSD board to take back its fiscal control of the district. Mrs. Allen responded that FCMAT looked at the district's recovery progress to date but did not feel it was sufficient to return control at this time. FCMAT will continue to monitor the situation and issue a progress report every 6 months.

## VII. WRAP-UP/EVALUATION

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The 10:00 AM meeting start time was perfect (Mrs. Bates, Dr. Verder-Aliga)</li><li>• The meeting pace was good (Mrs. Bates)</li><li>• The food was good (Dr. Verder-Aliga)</li><li>• Presentations by only senior staff allow for more concise reports (Mr. Ford)</li><li>• Impressed by how staff is looking at the future, and not just focusing on today's goals (Mrs. Bates)</li><li>• All topics were well covered (Dr. Verder-Aliga)</li><li>• Excellent operational management (Mr. Ford)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Would like the staff reports to show how the programs relate to the organizational chart (Mr. Asera)</li><li>• Would like to tie the reports to the budget to indicate where the programs' funding is located in the budget (Mr. Asera, Mr. Ford)</li><li>• A handout explaining common education acronyms would be helpful (Mr. Asera)</li><li>• A real strategic plan is not only focused internally on education but also looks outside so we will know how to adapt to the needs of the workforce, higher education, etc. (Mr. Ford)</li><li>• Would like to see more strategic planning next year and less operational information presented (Mr. Asera)</li></ul>

## I. ADJOURN

Mr. Speck said he appreciated everyone's comments, whether positive or negative, as this will help improve next year's meeting. The community as a whole is going through changes, and, although we cannot take the lead to fix all of the community's problems, SCOE does a good job of being connected to other agencies.

Mrs. Alarcón thanked everyone for their attendance and participation. Board members are encouraged to e-mail or meet individually with the appropriate department head whenever more information is desired or questions arise during the year.

There being no further business, Mr. Asera adjourned the meeting at 1:34 PM.

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Dee Alarcón, Secretary  
Solano County Board of Education