

**LA CAÑADA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD**

July 25, 2001

The Special Meeting of the Governing Board of La Cañada Unified School District was called to order at 8:02 a.m. by President Barbara Racklin on July 25, 2001 in the La Cañada Elementary School Library at 4540 Encinas Drive in La Cañada, California. Present were Board Members Barbara Racklin, Jinny Dalbeck, Will Moffitt, and Meredith Reynolds, Superintendent Lorene Gonia, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services Maureen Evans, and Secretary to the Superintendent Judy Mellick. There were approximately 11 people in the audience. Mrs. Racklin asked PTA Council President Penny Ledbetter to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**REPORT**

**1. Playground Safety Committee Report and Recommendation**

Committee Chair Andrea Terry introduced the Committee members present: Gayle Friedmann, Annie Honch, Dawn Witte, Lauren Oakes, Lee Gregg, Ron Dietel, Donna Robinson and Craig Steele. She then read the Committee Report. The Committee has met five times, visited each elementary school playground as well as La Cañada Flintridge Memorial Park, and researched safety conditions at each site. Members conducted considerable research into safety materials and testing, reviewed individual school safety reports, and reported their findings back to the full Committee. The Committee's review of research and testing has concluded that, while poured rubber meets minimum safety standards, it does not provide as safe a surface as either a wood chip or shredded rubber loose fill surface. The Committee has received a cost estimate of approximately \$9 per square foot for poured rubber, or a total of \$16,200, and a cost estimate of \$18,820 to install a complete Fibar wood chip system. The estimate for the Fibar system includes \$10,000 for the removal and reinstallation of the play equipment. Based on the Committee's foregoing research and information, the Playground Safety Committee recommends the following:

1. That either a wood chip or shredded rubber loose fill surface be installed under the Palm Crest Elementary play structure as soon as possible and according to manufacturer's specifications.
2. That the decision as to which specific wood chip surface or shredded rubber products and installers are considered and which are chosen, be made in consultation with three PCR Committee representatives. Should a representative be unavailable, an alternate member from the Committee may be chosen to take that individual's place.
3. That, in accordance with the recommendations of the July 2000 Certified Playground Safety Audit, the installer of the surface protection material provide a document to the District stating that the Critical Height Value of the installed surface protection material is equal to or greater than the maximum horizontal surface height of the play structure protected.
4. That the installer certify in writing that the surface is ADA compliant.
5. That the District bear the full cost of installing the recommended safety surfaces and that it aggressively pursues an offset or cost recovery from the original vendor.
6. That, until the surface is completed, a standard construction fence equal to or greater than fences

Mrs. Reynolds asked for clarification as to whether the area for the shredded rubber did not need to be as deep as for wood chips. Mrs. Terry replied that this is true according to the Safety Audit. Mrs. Racklin said that one of the advantages of shredded rubber is there may not be the necessity to remove and reinstall the play equipment. Mrs. Terry said that there is also less maintenance required with the shredded rubber.

Mrs. Gonia asked what maintenance would be necessary for the shredded rubber. Committee Member Dawn Witte said that visual inspection is necessary, but not the level of raking required for wood chips. Maintenance and Operations Director Brian Goodknight said that the Committee has not done research on the maintenance of shredded rubber. It would be necessary to see what the use is and what the manufacturer recommends.

Mrs. Evans said that the estimated maintenance cost would be \$6,500 annually. Committee Member Lauren Oakes said that it is necessary to follow only manufacturer's recommendations for maintenance. Mrs. Gonia said that, while the Committee's research indicates it is only necessary to maintain the surface per manufacturer's recommendations, the district would still be liable for any foreign materials in the surface, such as broken glass or animal waste. Mrs. Dalbeck asked if anyone had actually seen the shredded rubber product. Mrs. Oakes replied that Committee members have talked to a number of people, but have not actually seen the surface. Committee Member Ron Dietel clarified that, because of the time issue and cost involved at PCR, the Committee is recommending the shredded rubber as the best surface for this site.

Mrs. Reynolds asked if there was any data on how much maintenance is necessary for the shredded rubber as far as how much needs to be added during the year. Mrs. Oakes said there is only anecdotal information available. Mr. Goodknight said that there would be no way to know what kind of maintenance is necessary until the surface is actually there and being used.

Mrs. Dalbeck asked if PCR Principal Deitra Reed, who is a member of the Committee concurred with the recommendation. Mrs. Terry said that PCR Teacher Specialist Esther Salinas and Mrs. Reed are sharing the position on the Committee. Mrs. Salinas was there for the vote, and the vote was unanimous with one member abstaining.

Mrs. Dalbeck thanked the Committee for all their research. She suggested the District try the loose rubber surface. There will be a year to evaluate it during the modernization and the District could evaluate to see if it would be viable for other sites.

Mrs. Evans said that she does not believe there are avenues for pursuing the poured rubber vendor to recoup the cost. Committee Member Craig Steele commented that the District should not let pursuing the vendor deter them from putting in the surface. However, the vendor has indicated that the original pour at PCR was not done properly. The vendor should be approached and encouraged to make some kind of credit to the District for the work that was done improperly. Mr. Steel said he believes the District should try to capitalize on the vendor's desire to keep a good image with clients. Mrs. Dalbeck said that, when the vendor was on site to do the pour, they said they would do whatever the District wanted them to do. Mrs. Evans said that she did not get that indication from the conversations she has had. Mr. Goodknight spoke with a representative from Play Specialties.

Mrs. Reynolds said that she thought it would be good to pick the same surface for all sites, since it would be better to buy product in bulk and have the same maintenance at each site. Mrs. Racklin said the Committee

supervise children on the playground, there would be enough people to make sure there would be no holes in the loose fill surfaces.

It was moved and seconded (Dalbeck/Moffitt) to accept the recommendation of the Committee on the loose fill material and that the district would work with members of the Committee to choose the product. Mrs. Gonia asked if the Board had thought about a timeline for the installation of the surface at PCR. Mrs. Racklin indicated that they would like it to be done as soon as possible. The goal is to have the work done before school starts at the very latest. Mrs. Gonia asked if the Board was approving an open budget for the product. Mrs. Reynolds suggested that, since this is a safety issue, there could be an emergency resolution so it would not be necessary for the item to come back to the Board for approval after going out to bid. Mrs. Racklin stated that the Board direction is to put in the shredded rubber surface, no matter what work is necessary, including removing and replacing the play equipment. It was moved and seconded (Reynolds/Moffitt) to amend the motion to authorize the work to be done at PCR in light of the emergency situation because there is no surface at this time. The motion to amend was adopted unanimously. The motion to accept the recommendation of the Committee on the loose fill material, as amended, was adopted unanimously.

Mrs. Racklin thanked the Committee for all their hard work and diligence, and the hundreds of hours put in on the research for this issue.

Mrs. Reynolds asked if the Committee would come up with a timeline for recommendations for other sites. Mrs. Terry said that the Committee has talked about making reports on a monthly basis, and they hope to have a recommendation for surfaces at the other sites by the August 21<sup>st</sup> Board meeting.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 a.m. The Next Regular Meeting of the Governing Board will be held on August 21, 2001, at 7:00 p.m. in the La Cañada Elementary School Library.

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Lorene Gonia, Superintendent  
Secretary to the Governing Board

### **MINUTES APPROVED**

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Jinny Dalbeck, Vice President of the Governing Board

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Date