

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

July 10, 2007

**SPECIAL MEETING**

The Special Meeting of the Governing Board of La Cañada Unified School District was called to order at 4:45 p.m. by President Scott Tracy on July 10, 2007, in the Round Building at 4490 Cornishon Avenue in La Cañada, California. Present were Board Members Scott Tracy, Jinny Dalbeck, Susan Boyd, Cindy Wilcox, and Joel Peterson and Superintendent James Stratton.

**CLOSED SESSION**

The Governing Board adjourned to Closed Session at 4:45 p.m. in the Round Building at 4490 Cornishon Avenue in La Cañada, California. Present were the five Board Members and Superintendent James Stratton. Closed session adjourned at 5:11 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Scott Tracy, President  
Mrs. Susan Boyd, Vice President  
Mr. Joel Peterson, Clerk  
Mrs. Cindy Wilcox, Member  
Mrs. Jinny Dalbeck, Member

**REPORT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION**

Mr. Tracy reported there was no action taken in Closed Session.

**WORKSHOP: Assessment**

Mr. Tracy opened the workshop at 5:12 p.m. by asking a member of the audience to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. There were approximately 40 people in the audience.

Mr. Tracy reported that it has been the Board's goal to look at areas that would help the Board better govern the district. Some of the areas the Board has worked on this year have been Board Norms, Board Bylaws, and Board oversight responsibilities. The Board has set workshops in areas they wanted more information on. The Governing Board previously held a Student Assessment workshop and gave direction to staff to conduct a mid year review and an end of year review.

Mr. Stratton stated that a first draft of the Board Policy regarding Student Assessment will be presented at the next regular board meeting on July 17, 2007. There will be no action taken tonight.

9-12 Principal Dr. Damon Dragos and 7-8 Principal Ms. Wendy Sinnette were present to discuss the Procedures on Assessment, Teacher data, Student Survey data, Parent Survey data and Recommendations. Dr. Dragos reported that written rationales on Assessment Practices were submitted by LCHS Teachers 7-12. For those teachers who do not send home assessments the principals met with the teacher to discuss and review their policies to determine the validity of their rationale for not doing so.

Ms. Sinnette reported that the principal's approval for Assessment Rationales is given only after making sure the rationale is in accordance with best practices, adheres to LCUSD Board policy, and is a well developed rationale statement. The teacher must also have a syllabus that demonstrates frequent and open communication with parents and students. The principal looks to be sure that there is supportive information.

Dr. Dragos and Ms. Sinnette shared samples of quality rationale excerpts.

Dr. Dragos shared data regarding a 9-12 Staff Assessment Inventory Survey.

Ms. Sinnette discussed the 7-8 staff survey and reviewed the raw data. Ms. Sinnette stated she is very pleased with staff communication regarding student progress but is always looking for ways to improve.

The Student Survey was taken with a bubble scantron. The original thought was to have the students take the survey on-line but that presented problems. Ms. Sinnette thanked Mr. Kissell for his assistance in implementing the survey. 87% of the students who responded reported that the assessment policy is clearly reviewed but that students want more time to go over information. Ms. Sinnette reviewed survey results by small school.

Dr. Dragos reported that only about 140 students completed the survey. This is not the best data but it does give us some information. Dr. Dragos continued to discuss the survey results and reported that he would have better data in the fall when the survey is again presented to students in a more controlled environment.

The Parent survey received a very low response as well. Approximately 1,100 parents started the process but most of the surveys were not submitted. The survey showed several areas of concern including the number of parents unsure if the assessment policy is clearly communicated; the high number of parents stating their student would like more time to review and address weaknesses prior to the next assessment and the lack of teacher contact when there is a concern.

Dr. Dragos and Ms. Sinnette presented three recommendations. The first recommendation was for more directive language in BP 6162.5 specifically in paragraph 2 on page (b). The second recommendation was clarifying language regarding assessment rationale meetings with principals. The third recommendation would be to strengthen communicating assessment results through Pinnacle and email.

Ms. Sinnette reported that many teachers are involved in best practices but clearly there is improvement to be made. Those teachers needing improvement should ultimately be addressed through the evaluation process.

Dr. Dragos and Ms. Sinnette completed their presentation.

Mr. Tracy thanked Dr. Dragos and Ms. Sinnette for their time and opened the meeting to hear Governing Board concerns and comments.

Mrs. Boyd expressed concern with the number of surveys returned. Mrs. Boyd indicated that the survey asked for identification of who was answering the survey and stated her investigation indicated respondents would have preferred to be anonymous. Mrs. Boyd also felt that the timing and placement of the survey in the newsletter resulted in low response. Mrs. Boyd further stated that many parents didn't understand the term assessment and didn't understand if they should fill out a survey for each student at each grade level or only one per family. Mrs. Boyd stated she would like the survey to be mailed to all parents to give the parents time to discuss the survey questions with their children. Mrs. Boyd would like to postpone the first reading on the Student Assessment policy until we can resend and analyze the information.

Mrs. Dalbeck expressed concern about getting viable responses over the summer. Mrs. Boyd expressed concern if we wait too long the students won't remember the process from the previous year's assessment process. Mr. Peterson expressed concern about slowing down the needed modifications. He stated we already know there are areas of weakness and feels we should move forward in making those corrections.

Mrs. Boyd suggested we get the surveys in the mail now. Mr. Peterson stated he doesn't have a high level of confidence that another set of surveys would be different or that more responses would be received. Mrs. Boyd stated that a second survey would put parents on notice that the district has tried every way to get their input.

Mrs. Wilcox doesn't feel that staff should be asked to do the survey again and would like to move forward.

Mrs. Dalbeck is in favor of doing another survey but not this summer. Mrs. Dalbeck would like to move forward with the current time line then send a new survey with a better survey process and better questions later in the year.

The Board was divided on whether to resurvey now or later but all agreed to continue with the current timeline.

Mr. Stratton suggested drafting a new parent survey with feedback from a Governing Board representative, resending the survey, getting parent results in 2-3 weeks, and keeping the timeline with a second reading on the Student Assessment policy on August 14, 2007.

In looking at the current board policy, Mr. Peterson stated that clear guidelines for teachers are needed along with a way to track exceptions to the policy. Mr. Peterson wants accountability for upholding the policy and suggested putting this in the evaluation for administrators and teachers.

Mrs. Dalbeck stated that based on the survey her areas of concern are that it appears the teachers are not taking the initiative to contact the students, they are not using Pinnacle, most tests are not being sent home and test results are not shared with the student in a reasonable time.

There seem to be three issues with the board policy that clearly need to be addressed. The first is that "in a timely manner" needs to be clarified and defined.

The second issue is to make sure that the assessments address what is being taught in class making sure that the test questions are current and relevant to ensure student success and achievement.

The third main issue is how to clarify the C- contact with parents. It must be defined when the contact will happen and what tests require the contact.

Mrs. Boyd stated that the intent of the Board Policy is to return as many tests as possible and she is concerned with the survey results that indicate that some teachers return "0" tests. That does not connect to the spirit of the Board Policy. Mrs. Boyd has a problem with a blanket waiver for any specific teacher that it is ok not to return tests.

Mrs. Boyd stated that it is her opinion that "timely manner" must be clarified in the policy. No one can agree on what that means. Mrs. Boyd is also concerned about the "median score of a test". If it comes out very low, then a teacher must recover the information, and the policy should address that issue.

Mr. Tracy stated that he shares the majority of concerns expressed by Governing Board members. He stated that it appears that we can tighten the language and make procedures crystal clear.

Mr. Tracy opened the workshop to public comment.

The following audience members addressed the Board:

Linda Richmond, LCUSD Parent - spoke regarding the use of Pinnacle and the survey.

Lauren Oakes, LCUSD Parent - stated she is disappointed with the survey and suggested moving forward with changes to the policy.

Bill Slattery, Past LCUSD Parent – spoke regarding his dissatisfaction. Mr. Slattery stated that the middle child is left behind. He would like a survey regarding tutoring. Mr. Slattery requested that tests be returned and that teachers use Pinnacle properly. He asked that the Governing Board make the current Board Policy more complete

Jeffery Harris, LCUSD Parent – presented a draft of proposed policy revisions. Mr. Harris is asking for the return of assessments so parents can make their children responsible for their own mistakes.

Fernando Aenlle-Rocha, LCUSD Parent – supports Mr. Harris' proposed revisions

Sandra Harris, LCUSD Parent – read from a prepared statement regarding the importance of parents seeing their child's assessments

Valerie Aenlle-Rocha, LCUSD Parent - stated that we must give children the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and have tests sent home.

Jane Mead, LCUSD Parent - spoke about her children's challenges in school and reminded the Board that sending tests home doesn't start at high school.

Ron Dietel, LCUSD Parent – thinks we can do more. Mr. Dietel didn't think the survey was a particular good idea. Mr. Dietel wants all tests returned and stated that tests should be used to improve the quality of instruction; whether at home or at school. Mr. Dietel stated that without Pinnacle he would not know how his child is doing. He stated that Pinnacle is not always reliable but it is better than nothing.

Patty Compeau, LCHS Teacher – Read from the “Best Practices for the High School classroom” book. Ms. Compeau commented on how she teaches her class and stated that the major issue is for the teacher and student to reflect on whether the instruction, the learning and the test results all correlate.

Mrs. Wilcox asked that the workshop presentation and Mr. Harris' policy proposal be attached to the minutes. The Board was supportive of Mrs. Wilcox's request and directed staff to attach the documents.

Mr. Tracy announced a short break at 8:26 p.m. The meeting was reconvened at 8:33 p.m.

Mr. Tracy clarified the expectations of the Board for the July 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Board directed staff to present a proposed draft on student assessment incorporating the recommendations made by the high school staff tonight and addressing consensus areas that have surfaced.

Specifically:

- the issue of adequate time for student review before the next assessment.
- the issue of teacher initiative in contacting students who have had some difficulty with a previous assessment
- to clarify in the policy that the Board's intent is that tests going home as a rule and the process should address how exceptions are handled.
- address the concern about whether tests match what has been taught and how is it addressed in policy

Mrs. Wilcox stated that she doesn't want blanket permission for teachers to “not send tests home”. Mr. Stratton asked whether the Governing Board had any specific in mind for granting exceptions. Mrs. Wilcox stated that she wants the Administrative direction to be consistent.

Mrs. Dalbeck suggested that the policy not be overburdened and stated that some of the specifics belong in the Administrative Regulation. Mrs. Wilcox disagreed and stated that, when we are facilitating culture change, we need more detail in the policy.

Mr. Stratton asked for clarification on what the Governing Board means by a review of the principal's decisions. Mr. Peterson stated that if you can't measure it you can't manage it. He stated that we need to have a mechanism for accountability and enforceability so the Superintendent can have something to measure compliance.

Mrs. Dalbeck suggested putting into the policy that there is a process of evaluation for follow-up. Mr. Peterson is in favor of having something in writing.

A written log of principal exceptions was discussed.

Mrs. Wilcox suggested a log that the principal writes in that shows every time they give an exception and that would be open to the public. Dr. Dragos reported that the log currently exists and is kept in his office and Ms. Sinnette's office.

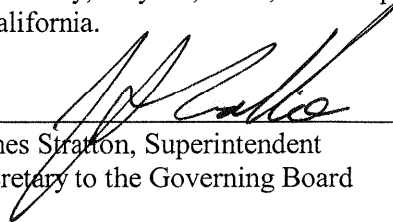
Direction from the Governing Board was given to include that it is the Board's intent that there be consistent use of Pinnacle by the teachers. Mr. Stratton reported that the issue impacts the teachers' contract language and negotiations.

The Board agreed that staff would redo the parent survey. It was suggested the survey be labeled as a new survey. Mr. Stratton suggested that staff prepare a draft survey and have Mr. Peterson review the draft for input prior to sending it out.

Mrs. Dalbeck stated for the record that if we have to pursue a new survey then at a minimum it be sent to students and parents. But that if we are not going to do both, don't do it at all and instead have staff spend time doing the draft policy for next Tuesdays' meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. The Next Regular Meeting of the Governing Board will be held on Tuesday, July 17, 2007, at 7:00 p.m. in the Round Building at 4490 Cornishon Avenue in La Canada, California.

  
James Stratton, Superintendent  
Secretary to the Governing Board

**MINUTES APPROVED**

  
Joel Peterson, Clerk

Date

7/20/07

Attachment: Proposal of Board Policy 6162.5 from Jeff Harris

Board Policy 6162.5

a) The Governing Board believes that the primary goal of student assessments should be to help students, parents/guardians and teachers identify individual students' academic accomplishments, progress and areas needing improvement in order to enhance teaching and learning. Assessment and the creation and administration of assessments is part of the teacher's job of delivering curriculum and measuring mastery in accordance with state curriculum standards.

b) Assessment is a learning experience for students and teachers and should be used to improve the quality of instruction. Assessment varies in rigor and/or weight and is found in many different formats.

c) The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that assessments are conducted for purposes of determining students' progress in the course of study, eligibility for and appropriate placement in district programs, need for supplemental instruction and eligibility for graduation.

(cf. 5123 - Promotion/Acceleration/Retention)

(cf. 6146.1 - High School Graduation Requirements)

(cf. 6146.4 - Differential Graduation and Competency Standards for Students with Disabilities)

(cf. 6146.5 - Elementary/Middle School Graduation Requirements)

(cf. 6164.4 - Identification of Individuals for Special Education)

(cf. 6164.6 - Identification and Education under Section 504)

(cf. 6171 - Title I Programs)

(cf. 6172 - Gifted and Talented Student Program)

(cf. 6174 - Education for English Language Learners)

(cf. 6175 - Migrant Education Program)

(cf. 6177 - Summer School)

d) The Board desires to use a variety of evaluation measures to reach the above-stated goal. Multiple measures are the most effective way to assess student strengths. Various forms of assessment are used to address different learning styles and content areas, e.g. semester exams, tests, quizzes, oral presentations, listening, participation, projects, portfolios, demonstrations, cooperative work, labs, research papers, essays, write ups of observations, and any other assessment considered to be material in the semester grading process as decided by the teacher and, if necessary, the principal of the school.

To achieve these and other objectives as provided in this Section 6162.5, the following shall apply to all assessments:

1) To have validity, assessments must correspond to the material that is being taught and reliably measure the extent to which students meet specified standards of achievement.

2) No copyrighted material or any intellectual property owned by any person or entity other than the District may be used in any assessment so that there is no legal bar to review by parents and students of the validity and reliability of assessments and no legal impediment to delivery of assessments through the students to the parents in compliance with subsections (e) and (f) of this Policy. Teachers are reminded that work performed on school grounds by them during normal business hours is the property of the District and that assessments and their creation is part of the duty of the teacher as provided under Subparagraph 6162.5(a).

e) At the beginning of each school year, teachers shall distribute to students and parents course assessment guidelines, including make-up procedures and grading scales. Teachers shall also distribute to students and parents sample test questions and rubrics that are representative of the tests students will take and the rubrics that will be used to score tests. ~~Whenever possible, as determined by teachers, and in~~ In keeping with the board's Board's desire to encourage require the return of appropriate graded assessments, individual graded all assessments will be distributed to students and through them to parents in a timely manner for review; except as specifically provided herein:

1) Teachers who ~~elect~~ wish not to return particular tests shall through the students to the parents may submit a request for exemption of one (and only one) assessment for each semester, including the specific rationale for exemption, and must secure prior written approval of ~~their~~ the principal- prior to administration of the assessment. Until written approval is granted, all assessments subject to the request shall be returned consistent with the provisions of this section 6162.5 (as if the request were rejected). It is anticipated that "final examinations" likely will be the assessments for which relief from the requirement of return of assessments under Section 6162.5 (e) will be requested by educators. The educators are specifically reminded that assessments for which relief has been granted remain subject to the restrictions of section 6162.5 (d)(1) (prohibition on use of copyrighted material), subject to return to parents under the provisions of section 6162.5(f)(3) and other provisions of this section 6162.5.

2) No multi-test or "blanket" requests shall be requested by the teacher or approved by the principal. A report of all such approvals granted by the principal shall be transmitted to the District and the Board by the principal on a monthly basis, no later than 15 calendar days after the end of each calendar month for the approvals granted during the prior calendar month. The overriding preference of the Board, the District and the principal shall be to approve requests for exemption under Section 6162.5(e)(1) only on an exceptional and limited basis in favor of free and unfettered access by parents and students to assessments to provide a successful learning environment in an extremely competitive educational environment.

3) Compliance with subsection (d) of Board Policy Section 6162.5 shall not excuse noncompliance with subsection (e) of (f) of Board Policy Section 6162.5 or any other subsection or provision of Board Policy Section 6162.5.

f) Tests and other assessments shall be graded ~~by teachers~~ and reviewed by teachers and further reviewed by teachers with students ~~and teachers~~ in a timely manner as specifically provided herein. Teachers shall be reasonably available to address assessments with students and parents. ~~Teachers~~ To comply with the first sentence of this paragraph, teachers shall grade and review assessments and review with students assessments no less than three (3) school days prior to administering the next ~~similar~~ assessment in an instructional sequence and notify

students and parents within the same time period of issues or concerns identified through assessments. In addition to the requirements of the immediately preceding two sentences, and notwithstanding compliance with the immediately preceding two sentences, teachers shall grade and review all assessments and review with students all assessments no less than fifteen (15) school days after first administering the assessment, regardless of whether the next assessment is in an instructional sequence and shall notify students and parents on a timely basis of issues or concerns identified through assessments.

- 1) A "sampling" or "spot review" of assessments by the teacher for areas of strength and weakness shall not constitute compliance with this subsection.
- 2) Types and quantity of assessments shall be reviewed periodically by teachers at each grade level or subject to ensure consistent coverage and measurement of course curriculum.
- 3) Any assessment in any course in which the median "unweighted" or "raw" score of 70% is not achieved shall be reported by the teacher to the principal, the District and the Board within three 3 school days of the teacher's grading the assessment in conformity with the provisions of Board Policy 6162.5 and the principal and the District shall determine if further evaluation of the assessment is appropriate. Any such assessments shall be released to the parents of all students in the class within 5 school days of the timely grading and review of the assessment by the teacher, notwithstanding any approval to withhold release of the assessment under Section 6162.5(e)(1) this Policy or the AR. For that reason, the use of copyrighted works remains prohibited FOR ALL ASSESSMENTS, even on assessments that are initially granted an exemption from the return of assessment requirements under Section 6162 (e)(1).
- 4) For purposes of this Policy, the date an assessment is first administered shall be the reference date for calculating compliance under Board Policy section 6162.5 (e) and Board Policy 6162.5(f).
- 5) The absence of one or more students from the first administration of an assessment shall not excuse compliance by the teacher with respect to grading and reviewing the assessment and reviewing the assessment with the students as provided herein for the benefit of those students in attendance at the first administration of the assessment.
- 6) Teachers must keep a log of assessment administration dates and assessment return dates and may use the PIV or other District approved computerized record keeping systems for that purpose. The log must be available to parents and administrators at all reasonable times.

(cf. 0410 - Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities)

(cf. 5121 - Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement)

(cf. 6011 - Academic Standards)

(cf. 6142.7 - Physical Education)

(cf. 6162.51 - Standardized Testing and Reporting Program)

(cf. 6162.52 - High School Exit Examination)

(cf. 6162.53 - Golden State Examination)

(cf. 6162.54 - Test Integrity/Test Preparation)



g) The effectiveness of the schools, teachers and district shall be evaluated in part on the basis of these student assessments.

(cf. 0500 - Accountability)

(cf. 0520 - Intervention for Underperforming Schools)

(cf. 0530 - Awards for School Performance)

(cf. 4115 - Evaluation/Supervision)

(cf. 6190 - Evaluation of the Instructional Program)

h) When districtwide and school-level results of student assessments are published, the Superintendent or designee may provide supplementary information to assist parents/guardians and the local community in interpreting test results and evaluating school performance.

(cf. 0510 - School Accountability Report Card)

i) Individual Record of Accomplishment

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that each student, by the end of grade 12, has an individual record of accomplishment that includes the following: (Education Code 60607)

1. The results of the achievement test administered under the Standardized Testing and Reporting program pursuant to Education Code 60640-60647

2. The results of any formal standardized end-of-course examinations taken

3. The results of any vocational education certification examinations taken

Legal Reference:

#### EDUCATION CODE

51041 Evaluation of educational program

51450-51455 Golden State Seal Merit Diploma

60600-60649 Assessment of academic achievement

60800 Physical fitness testing

60810 Assessment of language development

60850-60856 Exit examination

#### CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

850-870 Standardized Testing and Reporting program

880-901 Designated primary language test

1200-1216 High School Exit Examination

Management Resources:

CDE PROGRAM ADVISORIES

Students with Disabilities: Guidelines for Testing the California Standardized Testing and Reporting Program

0327.86 Reporting norm-referenced standardized achievement test scores to parents

CSBA ADVISORIES

0306.01 California Assessment Update

0313.00 Districts must ensure that all required student data is submitted to the publisher, or face financial penalty #00-01

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS PUBLICATIONS

The Use of Tests as Part of High-Stakes Decision-Making for Students: A Resource Guide for Educators and Policy-Makers, December 2001

WEB SITES

CDE: <http://www.cde.ca.gov>

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OCR>

Policy LA CANADA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

adopted: September 12, 2006 La Canada Flintridge, California