

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

June 28, 2001

The Special Meeting of the Governing Board of La Cañada Unified School District was called to order at 5:07 p.m. by President Barbara Racklin on June 28, 2001 in the Palm Crest Elementary School Cafeteria at 5025 Palm Drive in La Cañada, California. Present were Board Members Barbara Racklin, Jinny Dalbeck, Will Moffitt and Meredith Reynolds, Superintendent Lorene Gonia, and Secretary to the Superintendent Judy Mellick. There were approximately 35 people in the audience. Mrs. Racklin asked Director of Special Education Gail Crotty to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

It was moved and seconded (Moffitt/Dalbeck) to approve the agenda. The motion to approve the agenda was adopted unanimously.

Mrs. Racklin explained that, since this special meeting was called on short notice, Administrative Staff members Sue Leabo, Maureen Evans and Jim Stratton were unable to attend because of prior appointments. She also explained that Board member Jeanne Broberg was out of town. Mrs. Racklin then explained the reason and process for the meeting. The goal is to develop a process that would lead to a decision on the issue of the safety of the playgrounds at the school sites.

**1. Discussion and Action**

**a. \*Playground Safety.**

Mrs. Racklin opened the meeting to Board discussion.

Mrs. Dalbeck explained that she had suggested the creation of a committee to look into the issue of playground safety. The hope is that the committee would be able to convene as soon as possible and bring back a recommendation to the Board by the end of July. She also suggested that a process be set up by which the committee could review problems at all sites and establish an acceptable standard for playground surfaces.

Mrs. Reynolds said that she would like to get more specific on the timeline. She suggested the first meeting be the week of July 9. When the committee gets together, they can identify what their needs would be as far as when to meet and timelines. She suggested that the Bond Oversight Committee should be involved because of the Phase 2 modernization aspect of this issue. She also suggested the committee consider research on playground equipment.

Mrs. Racklin added that supervision should also be discussed. She asked for the Board's input as to whether it should be a Board Committee or a Superintendent's Committee.

Mrs. Dalbeck agreed that it should be a Board committee, since that would ensure that anyone who would like to attend could attend because the meetings would be open.

Mrs. Racklin said that a Board committee also gives a more formal look. She said she likes the idea of minutes, documentation, and a more formal process.

Mrs. Reynolds added that, if there were broad representation on the committee, the recommendation would be something that the community can live with.

Mrs. Racklin asked if it is a Board committee, can a Board member sit on the committee? She asked staff to look into that question.

Mrs. Dalbeck suggested that this study be confined to just the elementary schools, since there is no playground equipment at the high school or at Foothills School. This would allow for the comparison of data on three sites with similar equipment and similar uses of that equipment.

Mrs. Racklin said that the Board should designate the composition of the committee.

Mrs. Dalbeck said that the sites would determine a member from each site.

Mrs. Racklin said that the Board would recommend only the number of representatives from each site.

Mr. Moffitt said that he had a concern as to what to do right now to ensure safety at Palm Crest.

Mrs. Racklin asked if, since PCR is going to be under construction this summer, those sites are going to be fenced off.

Director of Maintenance and Operations Brian Goodknight replied that construction representatives at each site have been instructed to put up secure fencing around construction sites. The contractor at PCR has been instructed to put up another fence to secure the area, plus signs identifying the construction areas.

Mrs. Dalbeck said that the equipment could easily be lowered if there is a concern.

Mr. Goodknight said that there could be problems with warranties if the playground equipment was dismantled or changed in any way.

Mrs. Gonia said that Mrs. Reynolds had stated it very well, that we have to look as soon as we can at all the variables – not only the surface, but the safety of the equipment, the height of the equipment, the height of the children allowed on the equipment. Mrs. Gonia said she shares Mr. Moffitt's concern that, even with the fence, there is a safety issue that needs to be addressed right away.

The Principals explained the process for following up on causes of injuries, and how they can be mitigated.

Mrs. Racklin asked for input from members of the audience.

It was moved and seconded (Reynolds/Moffitt) to form a Board committee to look at the safety of the playground equipment at the elementary sites. The make-up of the committee will be as follows: one District staff representative, one representative from the District's risk management carrier, two parents from each elementary site, one administrator or designee from each site, one Bond Oversight Committee representative, one PTA Council representative, and one Board member. The committee will meet the week of July 9, and conclude with a recommendation to the Board by the end of July. The motion to form a Board Committee on Playground Equipment Safety was adopted unanimously.

It was moved (Moffitt) to lower the existing playground equipment at PCR or put some surface under the equipment immediately. The motion died for lack of a second.

It was moved (Dalbeck) to lower the equipment at PCR. The motion died for lack of a second.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

The Governing Board adjourned to Closed Session at 6:14 p.m. in the Palm Crest Elementary School Cafeteria. Present were the four Board Members, and Superintendent Lorene Gonia. Closed Session adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mrs. Barbara Racklin, President  
Mrs. Jinny Dalbeck, Vice President  
Mr. William Moffitt, Member  
Mrs. Meredith Reynolds, Member

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mrs. Jeanne Broberg

### **REPORT OUT OF CLOSED SESSION**

The Board reconvened Open Session at 6:50 p.m. and reported that no action was taken in Closed Session.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m. The next Regular Meeting of the Governing Board will be held on July 17, 2001, at 7:00 p.m. in the La Cañada Elementary School Library.