



# School/City Liaison Committee Special Meeting Agenda



## School/City Liaison Committee Meeting Wednesday, September 23, 2009

8:15 AM to 9:30 AM  
Palo Alto Unified School District Office  
Conference Room A  
25 Churchill Avenue  
Palo Alto

### City of Palo Alto

John Barton, Council Member  
Larry Klein, Council Member  
Steve Emslie, Deputy City Manager

### Palo Alto Unified School District

Camille Townsend, Board Member, Chair of Committee  
Melissa Baten Caswell, Board Member  
Bob Golton, District Co-Chief Business Officer/Bond Program Manager  
Cathy Mak, District Co-Chief Business Officer  
Tina Allen, Secretary, Superintendent's Office

1. Oral Communications
2. Approval of Minutes – September 2, 2009
3. PAUSD 11<sup>th</sup> Day Enrollment
4. PAUSD Measure A Update
5. Update on Safe Routes to Schools & Traffic
6. Future Meetings and Agendas

Upcoming meetings:   October 28  
                                  November 25

**MINUTES FOR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 2, 2009**

<p><u>Opening</u></p>	<p>The School City Liaison Committee held a meeting in Room A, 25 Churchill Avenue, Palo Alto, California. The meeting was called to order at 8:19 a.m.</p> <p><b><u>City of Palo Alto</u></b>                  John Barton, Council Member                  Larry Klein, Council Member                  Steve Emslie, Deputy City Manager                  Joe Saccio, Deputy Director, Administrative Services</p> <p><b><u>Palo Alto Unified School District</u></b>                  Camille Townsend, Board Member, Chair of Committee                  Melissa Baten Caswell, Board Member                  Kevin Skelly, Superintendent                  Bob Golton, CBO                  Cathy Mak, CBO                  Carol Zepecki, Director, Student Services                  Nancy Dirgo, Interim IT director                  Tina Allen, Secretary, Superintendent's Office</p>
<p><u>Oral Communications</u></p>	<p>There were no requests to speak.</p>
<p><u>Approval of Minutes – May 27, 2009</u></p>	<p>MOTION: Barton moved to approve the minutes from the May 27, 2009 meeting. Baten Caswell seconded. Motion carried 4-0.</p>
<p><u>Expiration of Comcast Franchise Agreement and Its Effect on PAUSD</u></p>	<p>Golton said a meeting regarding this topic took place on August 19, 2009. He said the District currently had very good connectivity, enabling streaming video for classrooms and video editing. In addition the price of this contract, negotiated by the City of Palo Alto, the price for internet connections is free for the District. The users of this contract include a number of cities and school districts. Emslie said this 10 year contract was negotiated with Comcast when the Media Center was taken over by the City. Klein said there was no control over Comcast or AT&amp;T anymore, so getting another major concession now would not be possible. Emslie said the City was in talks with Comcast, as this contract expired July 2010. At this point, Comcast was offering two options: 1) a managed service agreement which would cost over \$250,000 per year, and 2) lease of dark fiber lines which would not be eligible for E-Rate funding.</p> <p>Barton said the City had its own dark fiber network, though he did not know how hard it would be to make connections to the schools. Dirgo said she had had discussions with Glen Lu about other alternatives as well, and she was also looking at AT&amp;T.</p> <p>Baten Caswell asked if there was an advantage in the dark fiber lease. Dirgo said the first option was a better alternative.</p> <p>Golton noted that the City, District, and Comcast were all under budget pressure. He believed that while negotiations should continue, negotiating with Comcast would have a very different character because it was such a large company, so it would not have much concern for the District. He said this project was just starting, and some possibilities included a public relations campaign and legislation, although Comcast had a very strong lobbying presence. Barton and Klein said legislation would not succeed based on past attempts at passing legislation.</p>

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### Update on Student Mental Health

Zepecki said many conversations and meetings had occurred since June, with a third student death bringing increased focus. A couple hundred people attended the panel meeting, with many good ideas being shared by students. The District had been in touch with Cal Train as well. Discussions had occurred about forming a panel including multiple stakeholders in order to coordinate efforts. Cal Train had taken over and would be forming a regional group to pull together Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. There were also other smaller groups such as the medical community's coalition and the interfaith group. Within the District, a smaller group including psychologists and counselors, had also met several times to discuss a 14 point plan listing items to be tackled, such as community involvement.. Zepecki said she had also met with all concerned parents and had gathered information on a number of programs. The Mayor sent her an e-mail saying he had been contacted by 13 people who were interested in participating as well.

Townsend asked for more detail on the Cal Train "umbrella". Zepecki said her contact was Mark Simon, who was a former columnist and had arranged the recent press conference. Baten Caswell asked what the focus of that group was. Zepecki said the focus was to bring everyone together and to make sure someone had knowledge of what all the groups were doing. She said a 50% District position would be created to coordinate efforts through the District and local groups such as the clergy.

Baten Caswell said it seemed Cal Train's need was to make sure the train tracks were safe, but not necessarily beyond that. She asked when the goal was hit, if Cal Train would stay involved. Zepecki responded that Cal Train's only role may be to provide a place for all the groups to meet, and to make sure information was shared in a larger group with a few representatives from each smaller group. Smaller groups would continue to work together apart from Cal Train. Zepecki said ideas had been coming in from many people about making the train tracks safer. She had been sending the input to Mark Simon, who said all ideas were being considered, and those that appeared practical and affordable were being enacted.

Townsend asked if members of the media were being brought in as participants, rather than just reporters, so they would have a responsibility. She also noted that suicides off the Golden Gate Bridge were no longer reported. Zepecki said it was hoped the press would become more responsible, adding that Superintendent Skelly had turned down a number of interview requests in order to reduce sensationalism.

Klein said that in all the e-mails he had read, there appeared to be two strains of thought: mental health and blaming Cal Train. Baten Caswell agreed, wondering if the suicide cluster around the train tracks would have occurred elsewhere if the train tracks did not exist. Zepecki said she had some of the same concerns. At the pre-press conference meeting, mental health was the focus and she was optimistic this would continue. At the Palo Alto Medical Foundation (PAMF) meeting held at the end of June, the focus was truly on the medical side. Dr. Saul Wasserman was involved in 2002 and 2005 efforts, and at that time the person convening the Santa Clara County focus was from the San Jose Police Department. Now, Zepecki hoped someone would come forward to coordinate efforts, hold meetings, take minutes, etc. Having Cal Train at least doing the initial convening was a good start.

Baten Caswell said she heard the County Mental Health Department was convening a program. Zepecki said this was just one of the organizations involved.

Barton asked how many of the three students who took their lives in the past months had been of concern to District staff. Zepecki said one of them was more involved in counseling than the others. Barton said the regional work was great, however these were Gunn students and Palo Alto residents, so he believed City and District efforts needed to be closely considered.

Zepecki said that she had been describing the big picture. The 14 step group was still meeting and discussing the steps they planned to take, including staff and parent education presentations, review

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of depression screening and gate keeping programs, peer to peer counseling options, collaboration with PAMF, and adding to the Living Skills curriculum. She said getting to the heart of kids' mental health issues was a big challenge. The goal was to know as many struggling kids as possible and to provide additional resources.

Baten Caswell said that sometimes parents would share with an individual teacher, which is confidential, and she hoped this protocol would be discussed. Teachers may not be qualified to handle these issues by themselves. Zepecki said a lawyer would meet with the group to discuss confidentiality.

Townsend suggested an update be brought forward again in five months. Baten Caswell said the PTA would have a meeting in October. Zepecki said a national day designated for looking at mental health would occur in late November.

Klein said that as this was a very significant issue, and suggested it be brought back in two months.

Golton said Mak would be giving a budget update to the Board on September 8, adding that this was a very challenging time and the situation was changing frequently. Mak said the 2009-10 District budget was adopted in June. Since then, two major changes occurred that would affect the budget. First, the state approved additional budget reductions to school districts in late July, with basic aid district being especially hard hit. PAUSD would lose about \$2.6 million in one time funding this year and \$4.4 million, presumably in ongoing funding, next year. Second, property tax growth had been reported as 2.6%, which was lower than the District's projection. For next year, CPI growth through June was negative so there would not be an automatic 2% increase. Mak said one-time resources, including Federal stimulus money, general fund balance, and categorical funds, could cover the \$2.6 million loss. For 2010-11, a structural budget problem was projected and a solution had not yet been found.

Baten Caswell asked how much money was represented by 1% property tax growth. Mak said about \$1 million.

Saccio said the City of Palo Alto faced similar problems. In 2008-09 an \$8 million gap was realized and covered. During this current fiscal year, there was a \$10 million gap, with the solution being one third cuts to each of the following: permanent funding, one-time funding, and salaries. There was weakness in sales and other taxes, such as the Transient Occupancy Tax, which strongly affected the City. This year, if things did not turn around soon, there was potential for further weakness in revenues. The state was reducing the City's funding by over \$2 million as well. He said the City Council signed off on the budget in June, and it was being carefully monitored.

Townsend asked if there was a hiring freeze. Saccio said an internal decision was made to form a group that would review positions as they were vacated to determine whether or not they were essential. Klein said the City got about 7% or 8% of property tax money. He said head count was already reduced by 20 by attrition.

Townsend asked how it was possible for the state to take municipal money. Barton said a law was passed stating the state could only take money in a fiscal emergency and it had to be repaid. This caused bookkeeping difficulties, and there were doubts about the money being paid back. Klein said that since Proposition 13, the state had taken a lot more money from local agencies.

Mak asked if the City/District Joint Maintenance agreement would be affected by the City's budget cuts. Golton and Barton said it should not be affected, because costs had also gone down. It was a maintenance agreement rather than a capital improvement agreement.

City of Palo Alto and  
PAUSD Budget Updates

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### Update on Embarcadero Road Improvements

Emslie said the driveway at Palo Alto High School had been shifted ten feet to align with the Town and Country driveway, so a traffic signal could be installed. The existing pedestrian signal there would also be improved, as well as the pedestrian landing area and the sidewalk. The City Council would award the contract for these improvements soon. This work should coincide with the completion of the new Trader Joe's, which should open in late October. Emslie said there would be brief closures during construction and detours would be provided.

Baten Caswell asked about parking for the new Trader Joe's. Emslie said he believed there would be adequate parking, and Klein said more parking was being added in the back.

### Future Meetings and Agendas

It was agreed that Safe Routes to School and traffic would be added to the September 23<sup>rd</sup> agenda, which also included an enrollment report and a Measure A update. A mental health update would be given at the October 28 meeting and the police building update would be deleted.

### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.