



City/School Liaison Committee Minutes



Regular Meeting
February 20, 2014

The City School Liaison Committee met in the Council Conference Room at this date at 8:39 A.M, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California.

Present: City of Palo Alto
Liz Kniss, Vice Mayor, Committee (Chair)
Greg Schmid, Council Member
Pam Antil, Assistant City Manager, City Representative

Palo Alto Unified School District
Heidi Emberling, Board Member
Cathy Mak, District Chief Business Officer

Absent: Dana Tom, Board Member

Oral Communications

None

Approval of Minutes

December 20, 2013

MOTION: School Board Member Emberling moved, seconded by Council Member Schmid to approve the December 20, 2013 minutes.

MOTION PASSED: 3-0 Tom absent

1. Review Recent City Council / PAUSD Board Meetings.

Heidi Emberling, Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) School Board Member remarked that the PAUSD Superintendent Kevin Skelly resigned effective June 2014. The search for a new Superintendent began. There were new courses coming online and new partnerships with community colleges that were discussed at the previous School Board Meeting.

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Chair Kniss hoped the School Board would involve the Council with any decisions.

Ms. Emberling remarked that Mr. Skelly served seven years.

Chair Kniss observed that an engaged community made the job of Superintendent difficult.

Council Member Schmid noted that Council recently discussed the Cubberley lease between the City of Palo Alto and the PAUSD and the National Citizens Survey was just released. The survey compared data from 200 other cities around the country. Additionally, Council acceptance of the Annual Comprehensive Report which contained data that accessed parcels around town; 73 percent of the parcels were in residential areas of Palo Alto and were paid for by the residents. This highlighted the value of maintaining the inflow of young families in Palo Alto.

Chair Kniss remembered Proposition 13, a proposition that did not allow the maximum amount of any ad valorem tax on real property to exceed one percent of the full cash value of a property, and said two thirds of taxes were now paid for by residents, versus businesses. There was a Bill being considered now that addressed this issue.

Council Member Schmid thought it was appropriate for the City Council and the School Board to endorse a Bill similar to this. He Schmid suggested discussing this topic on a further Agenda.

Chair Kniss agreed and recalled the Bill was a Senate Bill. She was troubled because the young communities were paying the lion's share of support toward schools. She wanted to discuss the bully issue.

Ms. Emberling said the School Board was working on a new Bullying Policy that went through several reviews by departments, including the California Department of Education, the California School Board Association (CSBA), and Office for Civil Rights (OCR). At the last School Board meeting they discussed the classes about sexual harassment and discrimination; passing those classes fulfilled the Resolution Agreement for the Office for Civil Rights but the Bullying Policy was not part of the Resolution Agreement. This Item was scheduled to come back on the March 2014 School Board Agenda. As a separate issue, they had their original Bullying Policies in place, but the national dialogue made their policy clearer.

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Chair Kniss confirmed that the OCR discussion was settled and the Bullying Policy instituted will be a PAUSD Policy. She wanted to know if their Policy will be fashioned after another policy that already existed.

Ms. Emberling said PAUSD was creating their own policy and were working with CSBA. There was an optional Bullying Policy template that some school districts adopted. PAUSD wanted to focus on their community and all the information they had from their bullying training and the work they did with the OCR; she said the new policy will clearly outline the procedures parents and teachers can take.

Chair Kniss remarked that bullying was discussed at more than one meeting last year. She wanted to follow the bullying discussion at these meetings.

Ms. Emberling said bullying was a top priority in their district. In the last Strategic Plan, PAUSD created a new pillar entitled "Social, Emotional and Development of Youth"; it was a high priority, along with academic excellence.

Chair Kniss noted that it was critical for kids to know they had a plan in place if they felt this happened to them.

Ms. Emberling said safety in schools was a top priority.

2. Youth and Community Services

Rob De Geus, Assistant Director of Community Services explained to the City School Liaison Committee (Committee) how Youth Community Services (YCS) was partnered between the City of Palo Alto and the Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD).

Leif Erickson, Executive Director of Youth Community Services said YCS was founded in 1990; their purpose was to bring Palo Alto and East Palo Alto together through service. They wanted to engage people from diverse mid-peninsula communities in meaningful service-based learning. YCS students built leadership and life skills, empathy, sense of connection, purpose and efficacy, while making a positive difference in the people around them. There were 19,000 young people that participated in these programs in the last 23 years. Over that period of time they contributed many hours to more than 40 agencies. Alumni were involved in healthcare, public service, asset building and corporate professionalism. YCS wanted to serve, nurture,

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engage, mentor, teach, promote and invest in the community. Everything they did was tied to these strategies; they had metrics to measure their success and to help them adjust their strategies when needed. All of these strategies helped youth discover a sense of purpose, to gain skills for public service, to feel a sense of connection, to help close the achievement gap for students who were underserved and were underperforming. YCS had a Service Day where students could sign up for work at their campuses or in the community; they also offered programs such as the Leadership Development program and YCS Fellows program. YCS Fellows program was a collaboration that involved the City and Students with a Gateway (SWAG) program. In addition to all of these programs, YCS employed a Director of Service Learning to help coordinate training for educators on how to implement different service learning strategies. YCS offered ways for people in the surrounding communities to partner with students and adults in East Palo Alto. YCS and the County of Santa Clara were currently involved in a new initiative that dealt with drug and alcohol prevention.

Chair Kniss asked for more information on the drug and alcohol programs.

Mr. Erickson said YCS had a one year contract to use a San Diego State University evidence based resource. The survey took about 20 minutes and provided students with feedback about their drug and alcohol use; the survey was tied to what was important to the student, and connected student behavior to the student outcome. The survey was called e-CHECKUP TO GO, it was anonymous and gave suggested feedback at the end of the survey on how the student could make changes.

Chair Kniss asked if the program was for one year.

Mr. Erickson said yes.

Katherine Baker, Director of Secondary Education for Palo Alto Unified School District wanted to discuss the background of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and added that PAUSD provided office space for YCS operations, including vans for travel and fieldtrips, printing and copying capability, mail services, office supplies, access to meeting space, referrals to other programs, and liability coverage for student participants. The secondary school students participated in service days and sponsored YCS clubs on their campuses. YCS had Interactive and Leadership clubs at Gunn and Palo Alto High Schools; Gunn High School Service day was March 6, 2014, and Palo Alto High School Service day was April 24, 2014. They had YCS clubs at the three middle schools in Palo Alto as well. YCS Fellowship

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program was the High School Forum, which was an eight month leadership and service program that promoted diversity and tolerance in the schools and communities. There were also about 20 students participating in the middle school SWAG program. The students lead workshops and participate in other community events.

Chair Kniss suggested engaging the Council on the Service Days and asked if they invited the Mayor to those events.

Alicia Gregory, Palo Alto Youth Program Director for Youth Community Services was unaware of the Mayor being invited. She noted that one of their students was working with Council Member Pat Burt to get a special speaker for the Service Day.

Chair Kniss remarked that going to the Service Day helped people understand the interaction with students.

Ms. Gregory noted that the middle school students do service afterschool on Wednesday's.

Council Member Schmid wanted to know examples of what service was.

Ms. Gregory said some students branched out to hunger programs where they served food, some went to animal facilities and helped with cleaning out animal cages. The students were searching for programs they were interested in. Many middle school students were volunteering at Hotel de Zink, preparing food for people. Having the students find volunteer opportunities they were interested in helped them stay engaged.

Chair Kniss remarked that some students will continue on with the type of service they selected.

Ms. Gregory noted that some students volunteered with seniors, helping them to use electronic devices and to find archives; some students continued to visit the senior homes after their service was complete.

Heidi Emberling, Palo Alto Unified School District School Board Member mentioned that her son volunteered at a hunger program for two summers and it sparked interesting conversations at home. Children needed that hands-on experience to make their service meaningful.

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Chair Kniss hoped students would continue to stay engaged beyond the one service day.

Ms. Baker remarked that the activities young people were engaging in were local. Some of the other community service days were Make a Difference Day, Halloween for Hunger Day, Canned Food Drive, Veterans Craft Fair, Martin Luther King Service Day, and Family Service Day. The School District also partnered with YCS on their Student Services Fair. YCS supported Parent Night and shared information about their services.

Grant Althouse, Assistant Principle at Jordan Middle School shared how one goal was to improve and enhance school climate. In partnering with community projects and using developmental aspects as a guide, service to others was a gateway to resiliency and building a sense of empathy. Jordan Middle School was looking for ways students felt like they could make a difference and build a sense of meaning; middle school students needed a sense of purpose and a sense of identity. YCS worked with the School Climate Committee at Jordan Middle School to set a goal of service to improve their school culture. Last year they had about 55 student participants. In 2014 they had an Advisory Program of 1,000 students participate in exploring what it meant to serve others; they brainstormed places that were in need of service and used the student input to help plan for the upcoming day of service. The students came up with 10 projects: Hotel de Zink, the hunger program, tutoring, and many others. Last year, many students wrote notes on paper and used it to make an origami figure to give to the Lucile Children's Packard; the impact was big. YCS helped children to reflect and think about continued service, while being a guide to the School Administration to help goals.

Chair Kniss noted that service was helpful in applying to colleges.

Mr. De Geus mentioned that because of the YCS partnership, Staff was able to accomplish a lot more. A sense of purpose was important because it helped people make a difference; YCS served as an anchor to help kids get through school. The MOU with the City and YCS was scheduled to come before the Council in a few weeks.

Jessica Lewis, Teen Coordinator noted The Martin Luther King Day of Service was youth led. There were community groups there, youth performances, and some spoken word pieces, along with dignitaries that came to the event. They had a Legacy Walk where they designed boards about peaceful rights events. After the construction began at Mitchell Park, Staff noted a need for

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the Teen Program. After the first year they recognized they required a smaller group of 20 from all three middle schools. One month they focused on sustainability, the next month they were going to focus on Journey to WE Day. Journey to WE day happened all over the US and Canada. SWAG was planning an event called a Smile for a Lifetime, which was a benefit that provided free braces to those in need. Their global project was adopting a village in Haiti where the students were able to decide what they wanted their donated funds to go toward, like paying for a teacher or planting trees.

Chair Kniss asked what day WE Day was.

Ms. Lewis remarked that WE Day was on March 26, 2014.

Ms. Gregory said the purpose of YCS was to bring together multiple communities and to combine those worlds. Serving minimized the importance of money and status, and emphasized identity. Service groups helped launch discussions about identity. YCS helped in overseeing discussions on what was going on in the world and to process those messages. YCS service engaged students together and helped them see themselves as resources for their community. Seeing student enthusiasm meant YCS was reaching their goal. YCS helped with the transition from middle school to high school by having students take on leadership in the camp and helped in creating bonds in a new school. Many of the students involved in the summer camps were also involved in the school clubs during the school year.

Ms. Emberling noted that Council Member Marc Berman came out last year.

Chair Kniss remarked that an anchor in middle school was important because of the changes that kids went through.

Pam Antil, Assistant City Manager said there were a lot of activities kids were able to choose from.

Ms. Lewis remarked that many high school students mentored the middle school students. YCS relied on YCS Fellows to communicate and put on many community-wide events. The joint Staff time between City Staff and YCS staff helped each organization learn from each other. City Staff and YCS staff had the same 41 developmental aspects as their common language between the two entities.

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Ms. Gregory noted that YCS worked harder and smarter by gathering their strengths together; collaboration was at the core of their organization.

Mr. De Geus said the MOU going to the School Board and to Council will update everyone on the partnership.

Chair Kniss remarked that having this kind of program was reassuring.

Ms. Emberling observed that these programs built leadership and confidence.

Mr. De Geus noted that the accessibility of the programs made them great.

Council Member Schmid thought the original vision of YCS was to include East Palo Alto (EPA) and wanted to know how active the schools were with Palo Alto.

Mr. Erickson remarked that YCS was very involved with the Sequoia District, the High School District, and the Ravenswood District. Occasionally they brought students from EPA and Palo Alto to serve together.

Council Member Schmid asked how many participants there were in the programs.

Mr. Erickson said there were around equal numbers of participants from the two Cities; there were about 1,200 students overall.

Council Member Schmid asked if the children in the Sequoia District were just EPA students.

Mr. Erickson remarked that they worked with kids that had the greatest need.

Council Member Schmid wanted to know if YCS had relationships with other school districts in other cities.

Mr. Erickson said the original MOU agreement was between many organizations.

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Council Member Schmid confirmed that YCS was still in touch with all of these organizations.

Mr. Erickson yes.

Council Member Schmid wanted to know what message YCS would give Lytton Gardens.

Mr. Erickson said YCS made frequent visits at Lytton Gardens.

Ms. Gregory added that at the Gunn Service Day they baked cookies and interacted with the patrons there.

Council Member Schmid wanted to know if there was a comparison with the Youth Survey on drugs and alcohol in Palo Alto and the San Diego State University Survey.

Mr. Erickson said the San Diego Survey was not complete and their survey was different because it gave individual feedback by using the California Healthy Kids statistics as a comparison.

Ms. Emberling clarified they were talking about the County Survey.

Mr. Erickson was discussing the San Diego State survey.

Chair Kniss noticed there was warmth and comfort that ran throughout these programs.

3. Future Meetings and Agendas.

Chair Kniss wanted to talk about doing tours.

Heidi Emberling, Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) School Board Member said the City School Liaison Committee (Committee) did a tour last year.

Council Member Schmid agreed that a tour would be good.

Chair Kniss wanted to devote one meeting to a tour. There were some Items from the 2013 Agendas that did get enough attention and she wanted

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to revisit relationships with the foreign cities. Clarification on the Committee meeting schedule conflicts with the School Board Meetings was important.

Pam Antil, Assistant City Manager said the next meeting date was March 20, 2014 and asked if anyone had a conflict.

Ms. Emberling remarked that School Board Member Dana Tom was absent and wanted to know if there was an e-mail sent out marking all the third Thursday's for meetings.

Ms. Antil remarked that she would work with Cathy Mak to agendaize annual Items, like the City Budget, the School District Budget, and Safe Routes to School.

Chair Kniss wanted to know when the different school breaks were.

Ms. Emberling said the Palo Alto break was the first week in April, 2104.

Chair Kniss thought she had a schedule conflict with May 15, 2014 meeting. She suggested people send in ideas for Agenda Items; she wanted to discuss the County Drug and Alcohol program, including discussion on programs relevant to Palo Alto.

Ms. Emberling wanted to have the PowerPoint presentations sent to the Committee.

Cathy Mak, District Chief Business Officer said she would send on the PowerPoints to all the School Board Members.

Council Member Schmid suggested that the Committee discuss suggestions regarding the potential Tax Bill for the next meeting. The Housing Element was going to be released, which related to the schools.

Ms. Emberling noted there was discussion of opening a thirteenth elementary school.

Council Member Schmid recalled there was a discussion on enrollment, and a more detailed demographic report that was released.

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Ms. Mak added that the Enrollment Growth Report would be released in late September, 2014.

Council Member Schmid asked if there was another more detailed demographic report that was released.

Ms. Emberling remarked that there was Priority Enrollment Report that was released last year.

Chair Kniss remembered there were two reports discussed last year and wanted to revisit the Long-range Projections. She asked if the School District were considering Garland as a place for their next middle school.

Ms. Emberling remarked that Garland or 525 San Antonio Road were two considerations for the next middle school.

Adjournment: This meeting was adjourned at 10:08 A.M.