



FONTANA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
9680 Citrus Avenue
Fontana, California
Web Site Address: www.fusd.net

BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES

The Board of Education of the Fontana Unified School District held a Special Meeting on October 20, 2003, at the John D. Piazza Education Center, 9680 Citrus Avenue, Fontana, California. Present at the meeting were: Mr. Rick McClure, Clerk; Mrs. Kathy Binks, Member; Mr. Gus Hawthorn, Member; Ms. Laura Abernathy Mancha, Member; Dr. Debra Bradley, Superintendent; Dr. Patricia Peoples, Associate Superintendent, Administrative Services; Ms. Laurie St. Gean, Associate Superintendent, Educational Services; and Ms. Marilyn J. Corey, Interim Associate Superintendent, Human Resources. The Clerk called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Special
Meeting

The Clerk called the Public Comment Session to order and called for comments from visitors.

Public
Comments

Ms. Nancy Banales, teacher, parent and Parent Teacher Association president at Chaparral Elementary, commented that she understood the Board was coming together for a specific reason, and related how she had met Dr. Bradley and found her to be very supportive of the PTA and attended the PTA Council meetings. Ms. Banales noted that Dr. Bradley had been involved in various district and community functions, had ridden on a school bus to see how the district was run, and that the district was lucky to have her as Superintendent. Ms. Banales related that Dr. Bradley was trying to get to know everybody, had attended an Executive Board meeting of the Fontana Teachers Association, and was trying to find out how to make things work. Ms. Banales expressed her pleasure of having Dr. Bradley as Superintendent for the district.

Mr. Sam Poindexter, President, Fontana Teachers Association, spoke also as a parent in support of Dr. Bradley; that his experience had been positive. He noted her priority of reducing class size. Mr. Poindexter recounted how the FTA had come to Dr. Bradley asking to be involved in school sites that were under sanction by the state to help with their improvement plans, and that the FTA was quite pleased with Dr. Bradley.

Ms. Barbara Chavez, President, United Steelworkers of America Local 8599, read the following prepared statement "I am speaking on behalf of a large number of employees and community members. We do and will continue to support Dr. Bradley. Her ideas are realistic and without prejudice. The change she seeks only serves to increase accountability. Dr. Bradley's knowledge and background of school finance has made her an asset, especially in these tough fiscal times. Dr. Bradley has been appreciative and recognizes the value of all staff on all levels including classified support personnel. Since joining our team here at the Fontana School District Dr. Bradley has shown genuine concern for all students - isn't that what we are all here for?"

Mr. Tom Kenefick, Middle School Director for the Fontana Teachers Association, spoke in support of Dr. Bradley and of the mood and morale throughout the schools; that she was in the district to promote excellence.

Mr. Gene Swank, Fontana Teachers Association Negotiations Chair and High School Director, spoke of the recent sunshining of articles for negotiation and that they were moving toward parity for those; that the atmosphere was collegial; that the district was showing sensitivity to the needs of teachers and had worked out at least two areas and were able to resolve a number of differences, that there was a whole new demeanor toward negotiations since Dr. Bradley and Ms. Corey had been hired.

Public
Comments,
continued

Ms. Linda Young, Fontana Teachers Association Vice President and Kaiser High School teacher, expressed that she was very concerned about rumors about possible action to be taken at the meeting. She stated there was a need to hear other parts of the story, and shared the Association's experience with North Tamarind, a school under sanction this year, where the FTA talked to the staff and offered to help. The staff was asked what they wanted and needed, then they met again two weeks later and afterward met with Dr. Bradley. The Association members were very impressed with how Dr. Bradley put students as her number one priority at that site, and of how Ms. St. Gean also did what she could to help. A follow up visit was very positive; the staff seemed re-energized, and the atmosphere was very collegial and collaborative. Ms. Young stated that when it came down to it, we're all here for the kids, that it was good to have someone not worried about how or why the existing conditions came about, but how to fix the problems at the site.

Ms. Dee Dee Arganda, Truman Middle School teacher and parent, recalled her first meeting with Dr. Bradley at the welcoming reception, that she had been impressed with her personality. Ms. Arganda was also impressed with Dr. Bradley's first meeting with the Teacher Council group, that she introduced herself to everyone before beginning that meeting. Dr. Bradley was very concerned with that group's concerns and listened and wrote them down. Ms. Arganda then relayed the experience she had when Dr. Bradley met her son at a Board meeting, then later remembered him at back-to-school night, which left a very favorable impression. Ms. Arganda liked the way Dr. Bradley remembered people. Ms. Arganda spoke in favor of a management audit, saying there were too many people at the district office, that new positions were created but there was no money for raises. Ms. Arganda commented that she did not need people to come in and tell her how to run Focus On Achievement; she did not need somebody to come in and tell her how to teach; did not want these people to help her, they were needed to go back into the classroom and help with the class size; that there were too many things for teachers to do, too many tests, etc. She asked the Board to give Dr. Bradley a chance, that things needed shaking up in the district office.

