PFC Meeting Minutes - Unofficial

January 12, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 9:10am.

Flag salute.

November's meeting minutes were approved and the By-Laws were approved.

Ziona Friedlander, PFC Co-President, welcomed everyone. She acknowledged the Hospitality committee for everything they do and especially for the Winter Staff Luncheon. The food preparation and room decoration were amazing and it was an incredible success. Thanks also to all of the parent volunteers and to the IB Association for the fabulous dessert table. Finally, thanks to Conejo Valley Florist, a local family-run business, who donated lovely floral centerpieces for the luncheon, which were given away to teachers.

Jake Anderson, California Teacher's Association Representative, who works locally with LVUSD teachers and has kids that go to Yerba Buena, and **Craig Hochhaus, AHS Math Department Chair & LVEA Co-President**, were introduced.

Jake Anderson: With regard to the budget for this current school year: the approved state budget gave about \$250 more per ADA (average daily attendance) than was expected. There was also Federal jobs money, which helped a lot and is why the district was able to add back school days for this year. There is some reluctance on the part of districts to accept the fact that they were really getting more money, but it looks like it's actually going to come next school year. The Governor is using deferrals, which is a little frustrating but the district can count on that money.

For next year: Governor Brown came out with a budget, and last night they found out that there will be a potential cut of \$19 per ADA. There are more deferrals to come in the following school year, which will also be tied to a June special election, on which there is a ballot measure asking to extend tax rates, sales tax among others, for another five years. The budget had a \$20 billion shortfall, so the Governor's plan is that half comes in cuts & half in extended taxes. There were also cuts in medical and higher education, but not K-12 education. They are hoping things will be better next school year and there won't be the horrific cuts that we saw last school year.

Craig Hochhaus: We're hoping we won't have such a dramatic effect for next year. Big decisions won't be made until the summer or the beginning of the school year. There's a mutual goal between the district and teachers of 185 school days (180 instructional, 5 non-instructional) for next year. If a disaster happens between now & summer, they've agreed on five days during the school year that could be converted to State Reduction days (formerly known as Furlough days) if need be. This way the beginning and end of the year are locked in. They will be conservative about the budget, and those days are

already on the calendar as potential days, so parents will have advance notice of the days that could be eliminated.

A question was asked about aligning the District calendar with that of universities.

Jake Anderson: Simi Valley has already adopted their fall calendar with school starting on August 8th and ending May 31st. About 15 years ago, when LVUSD made the switch to start school before Labor Day instead of after, it created big issues with teachers, parents and the community. Many factors affect the calendar, though that is something being discussed. On Friday morning, CTA representatives have a meeting with all districts and will be asking Simi Valley how they affected their calendar change.

A question was asked about whether children who start the year earlier have an advantage when it comes to tests.

Craig Hochhaus: The STAR test schedules are based on when the school year starts. However, an earlier start would give an advantage to kids taking AP tests.

Jake Anderson: Costs have to be considered when altering the calendar as well. Electricity bills would likely be higher if school started earlier, due to the summer heat. Athletics calendars would be affected, as they are different. The School Board considers the teachers' vote, but ultimately makes the decision on the calendar.

Craig Hochhaus: There are a lot of calendar models. Some concern is that 10 weeks in summer is too much down time. On another note, the teachers proposed an Early Retirement Program that was approved last night. This will hopefully encourage teachers close to retirement to retire early with coverage until Medicare kicks in at 65 and create an opening for teachers, many of them younger, that might be pink slipped.

A question was posed as to the consequences of the Special Election results in June.

Jake Anderson: If the Special Election doesn't happen, education will be cut and LVUSD will be hit by about 1.6/1.8 million. There are lots of moving parts and unknowns with the budget. Try not to overreact to the information and wait until dust settles.

Craig Hochhaus: It is planned that the City of Agoura Hills will build 16 townhomes behind AHS, in an effort to provide affordable housing for young teachers.

A question was asked regarding how to keep young, energetic teachers from getting pink slipped while retaining some teachers who may be seen as ineffective by parents or by student performance. It is the general feeling that tenured teachers are impervious regardless of the quality of their teaching.

Mrs. Sherry Bronow, Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Instruction interjected that AHS evaluates teachers every other year, by being in classrooms and observing. It

doesn't take something immoral to get teachers out of the classroom. There are a lot more things happening in background that impact a teacher's evaluation.

Jake Anderson: If a teacher disagrees with a bad evaluation, the question is asked: was the process followed correctly, did the principal observe and talk with teacher.

Assuming the process is followed, the evaluation stays. It is also important for parents to voice their concerns both to teachers and, in the event that the concerns are not resolved, to the administration so that a paper trail can be created.

Sherry Bronow: There is a new Datawise system that will help the administration evaluate teachers. Every teacher will have access to STAR results and how students did the previous year. Looking at test scores will be used with everything else when they do teacher evaluations.

Craig Hochhaus: The greatest teacher in the world could be a Special Education teacher, whose kids' scores will not necessarily reflect the value of that teacher. Every year, kids are different; may have brighter kids one year. So, using test scores to evaluate teachers is a narrow way of judging on its own.

Jake Anderson: Meanwhile, teachers are getting together and evaluating while looking at test scores what they can do to improve them. Also, feel free to contact Jake with any questions or concerns at ianderson@cta.org.

10:15am

Ziona acknowledged the sponsors: **Dianne Addison's Heart Healthy Cooking** classes & **Fiamme Comedy Club**. She added that now that the eNewsletter is reaching so many people, local businesses are approaching the PFC to advertise. Scrip income is actually going down, which is offset by sponsorships, so she asked that parents please pay attention to advertisers on eNews. Many of the advertised businesses are owned by parents in the community & are an important partnership for us.

10:20am

Mrs. Pat Brooks, Head Counselor informed us that 9th grade parent meetings are going strong and happening through the end of February. 11th grade parent meetings will focus on Naviance. She referred to the 12th grade meeting tonight at 7pm in the G building regarding financial aid. The meeting will cover how to fill out the Federal forms which helps universities know what you're eligible to receive. Junior parents are welcome too, but the information changes every year, so this is really for current seniors. The Homer Dickerson Youth Ethics Conference is coming up on Thursday, February 24th from 7:00am to noon. It is open to juniors & seniors and good for kids to have leadership experience. Please pick up forms at the College and Career Center for interested students. There are not many options for spring schedule changes, but have interested students fill out the form. The course selection for next year will be out in early March. There will be absolutely no elective changes for next year, so go in

knowing that there's no flexibility there. They will give a refresher course on Naviance for the kids. Then, between March & after Spring break they will be meeting with students regarding their schedules. Once they have a Master schedule they won't be able to change it. So, find out what they want, make sure they have the necessary prerequisites & send in any questions. 9th graders will be introduced to Naviance in their parent meeting.

A parent posed a question about when coaches turn in their lists to avoid massive schedule changes the first week of school. The administration will push the coaches to do that. The counselors need the lists by August 10th, so in parent meetings with coaches, please mention.

10:30am

Mr. Larry Misel, Principal asked that parents please email him if they become aware of coaches not intending to turn lists in on time.

Mrs. Sherry Bronow, Assistant Principal, Curriculum and Instruction noted that the new course catalog will be online in several months, and the current one is on left hand side on the website. It lists pre-requisites, lab fees, and is the best information source before kids sign up for courses. Tuesday, January 18th will be a o-6 period day. New for 2nd semester: currently, three Spanish teachers have been teaching one additional class, so AHS were able to hire a new part-time teacher, Señora Escobar, who will be taking over a few of the Spanish classes. She will be working with teachers to make for a seamless transition. They will also be opening a new game programming web design class in Period 1.

Larry Misel mentioned that Mr. Mosley is being visited by representatives from the Music Center, as he's up for a Bravo Award. The theater kids are doing fantastic stuff; Murder Mystery is this week. Regarding the film, "Race to Nowhere," he'd like to encourage people to see it. Among the many guestions the film raises are: are we teaching students to take tests - is it memorization or is it learning? Getting students into college is only part of the problem; getting them through and out after four years is the problem. The point of this movie is starting the discussion: memorization or learning. Students need to be able to apply their knowledge. Grades are subjective how do we evaluate what kids are learning & how they apply that knowledge. That is one of the challenges for the future. There are some very strong points in that film. Meanwhile, the Link Crew and teachers are providing help in preparation for finals. Also, there will be a cheerleading competition at our school on Jan 22nd. There will be 22-23 schools represented in the gym. Plus, please sit with your kids to select electives - don't get mad at the administration when we tell you kids can't switch, because we're too tight. o period is more flexible and based on number of interested kids. Once selection is in Naviance it will be locked. Summer School this year will be at Calabasas High School, don't know if a bus will be available yet. Construction update: they're still saying two years, but because of rain they're about two months behind. They're

currently doing subterranean work now. Athletics: all teams are doing well across the board.

A parent shared that her nephew went to AHS, and was not the greatest student, went to Moorpark, transferred to UCLA, and just got accepted at Harvard Law. There's no rhyme or reason about acceptances. Just don't give up, persevere.

Larry Misel added that Junior college is a great way to go, especially in these economic times. It's okay if kids don't get into that number one school; just try to keep it in perspective. We need to balance the stress. Regarding STAR scores as a grade enhancement opportunity, they are meeting as a committee to look at incentives, i.e. if kids score proficient they might get to go off-campus at lunch. The committee includes students. Westlake High School's scores went up 35% after instituting something like that. He knows he just totally contradicted himself! Next year the District will be introducing a new program with ongoing common assessments throughout the year. This will be a better system than only waiting until STAR testing at the end of the year, when it's too late to help the students. The goal is not to take away anything, just to encourage their best effort.

10:45a

Penny Sylvester, PFC Co-President, congratulated Ziona, who will be heading up the new fundraising foundation for the district.

Ziona Friedlander expressed the need for serious fundraising that PFCs can't pay for, and the need for an organization to address it. It will not be an event-driven foundation, rather more of a direct-donor, networking campaign. They'll be seeking out people who want to make significant donations to the district but don't want to have to go to events to do it. That's the future for the district. It dovetails into the Direct Appeal to the entire community being sent out by the district, followed by an open letter to the Acorn. The District is very concerned about losing a significant number of teachers & increasing class sizes. Donations will be made directly to the district, as they are in need of raising about \$500,000 immediately, so they can minimize the number of pink slips in March. However, they are sensitive to the fact that parents are a well that gets drawn from a lot, so they're widening the net to include as much of the community as possible. Talk to neighbors, friends to help educate as to why the district has to do this.

Penny Sylvester added that the school gets triple points if people log in their Oaks Mall receipts by Jan. 15th.

Ziona gave a shout out for the Theater Arts Murder Mystery, on 1/28-1/29. Next month's speaker will be Phil Scrivano, the District's new Chief Instructional Technology Officer. He'll come to tell what his vision is.

Opportunity prize drawing winners announced.

The next meeting will be on February 9, 2011.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.

Respectfully submitted,

Ami Kupetsky Recording Secretary