

Point Loma Cluster Schools Executive Minutes

Attendance: Julie Cramer Diane Ryan, Patricia Ladd, Marvin Estrin, Vicki Moats, Polly Traylor, Teresa Drew, Shelli Kurth, Christy Scadden, Matt Spathas, April Dorman, Michael Snyder, Lisa Berlanga, Steven Holguin, Dianna Carberry, Carol Hunter, Karen Barton, John Lee Evans, Clifford Weiner, John deBeck, Andrea Justus,

Introduction Matt Spathas:

1. Grade 5-8 principals invited to begin these discussions. If discussion continues others will be invited.
2. Cluster overview
3. PLCSF overview
4. Tonight's meeting includes:
 - John deBeck discussion on district split
 - Cluster Governance
 - California Charter Association
5. This meeting is informational only. There is no movement—only ideas.

John deBeck—Board Member

1. Apology for presenting split district vision too early
 2. History of deBecks board election/board beginning
 3. Reflection on what has happened over the years
 - Teacher's union not always in favor of Mr. deBeck
- Presentation of Handout given by Mr. deBeck
"Problems Needing Solutions for San Diego Schools"
(please see presentation addendum 2 in meeting notes)
4. Other Controversial Issues
 - Transporting students from one community to another creates needs that are not being met by current policies. These needs require funding. Our area gets the most bussed in. Point Loma has their bussed kids go all the way through our schools. With Title 1 funding we may not get the funding to continue this. There is a burden on receiving schools if the money doesn't come with the students (Test scores effected, APIs etc)
 - Any plan to improve San Diego City Schools must take the race issue head on. It is the law. For any reorganization to succeed a legal challenge, it must provide for this factor. Therefore, separating the district into North South boundaries is doomed to defeat.
 5. Solutions
 - Charters might be considered as a solution. We would have to pay our share of bond issues. We don't have control of facilities or taxes.
 - Splitting up the San Diego City Schools is another option. It does allow a blank page in establishing rules that cover most all of the problems talked about. This action allows for any or all of the solutions (and others) to be addressed with a new organization. The new district will look like they way the people who design it, want it.

California Charter School Association:
Power point Presentation

Lisa Berlanga, Steven Holguin

(Please see presentation addendum 2 in meeting notes)

1. What is a charter school?
 - A conversion charter school is a traditional public school that converts to charter
 - Charter schools are innovative, public schools designed by educators, parents, or civic leaders that are authorized by districts, accountable for results, and free from many rules and regulations governing conventional public schools.
 - Charter Schools are schools of choice
 - It is a rule that children who are in the service area of that particular school have preference when applying to the charter.
2. Benefits of being charter
 - Flexibility. Curriculum, budget, and staffing are often much more innovative and adaptive in charters. You can hire who fits your school. You do not have to hire from a certain pool.
 - Local Control. Teachers, parents and community stakeholders are empowered to make important decisions to accelerate a child's academic progress.
 - Autonomy. To implement programs to better meet needs
 - Involvement. Parental involvement in their
 - Community: You create the community you want
3. Challenges
 - School operations: There is more work. There are many people who can provide help for all the extra work.
 - Busing? You do not have to bus but you may choose
 - Food Services?
 - Special Education? You can have district support or take this piece on yourself. \
 - Preparations for political considerations: community questions, opposition
 - Securing the time, resources, expertise, and leadership
 - Achieving community and parent buy-in
4. Misconceptions:
 - Employee perceptions: Charter schools generally pay the same salaries and benefits as district or pay a competitive rate. Many charters keep the benefits/retirement. San Diego Unified is tough to keep up with however
Job Security: At will employees but the charter writes up the employee's terms and contacts. If the charter is not renewed however, the teacher job is lost.
5. Funding shortfalls Vs. district schools
 - We are funded at about 80% of what traditional schools get. Charters can get grants to make up the funding
6. Neighborhood enrollment restriction
 - If there becomes a waiting list there will be lottery with neighborhood kids getting priority.

Question: Can we get the bussed in children who begin at kindergarten at our elementary schools, priority in our charter for middle school.

Answer: ? We may have to think out of the box

Question: Would it be easier if we chartered the elementary Schools?

Answer: We would all have to be under one charter that would limit our funding (max 250,000/conversion school—federal \$\$) One conversion would mean we would not get that for all the schools if we all converted as one charter.

Question: Have you ever taken an entire cluster of schools charter

Answer: No. The closest thing we have seen is 13 schools in LA have chartered and that is growing to 33

7. Requirements:

- Charter petition covering 16 different elements
- Detailed budget and financial statements projecting revenues and costs for the initial 5 years.
- Signatures from 50% of all permanent status teachers presently employed at school
- Approval from authorizing School Board

8. Keys to success

- Creating a vision and communicating it
- Engaging teachers early and significantly—don't do anything in the shadows
- Engaging community stakeholders and partners early
- Mobilizing stakeholders and supporters

9. How Can CCSA help?

- Technical and expert assistance
- Template Language and Best Practice Sharing
- Advocacy and Strategizing Support
- Resource and service referrals
- Legal help—giving you the tools

Charter School Conversation

Patty Ladd

1. Why think about charter?

1. Correia AYP scores released tomorrow. Federal gains are hardest to make: particularly in Second Language Learners and Special Education

2. Options:

- Change structure—don't want to do
- Change administrators—already new.
- Give to the state—
- Change the staff—
- Charter
- Someone to take over—no one wanted to do it

2. Even if we meet AYP tomorrow. The rules are that you must do it two years in a row. That is very hard to do. We must be prepared to do something.

- Three most important things that conversions to charter need are;
 1. autonomy for curriculum
 2. autonomy for budget

3. who's on the bus

Question: How long does it take?

Answer: Keiller had first meeting in September and petition submitted in January. We would need to have the petition filed in April to get a July 1 start date. John deBeck doesn't know if we could do it so fast since administration might not be so supportive.

Q: How much work?

A: Keiller had lots of support from staff and district so the staff did a lot of the work. District also offered incentives. 40% of staff left. Rewarding and exciting work. Could tailor the school to the needs of the community.

Q: When working at Keiller did you look at all the options?

A: Yes, there was support from district to go charter.

Q: What does an outsider coming in and running the school look like?

A: Edison. The running of the school is contracted out with an outside service (like Edison). The contract has renewals etc. This comes down to a board decision
John deBeck adds: When a school is in program improvement it is the District's job to fix it (not the schools)

Q: Did Keiller have the challenges talked about

A: No, Keiller contracted with city schools

Matt Spathas adds: outside contracts might be less and better

John deBeck Comments: Same would be true if we split the district

Matt Spathas: If we split the district would we have a clean slate to get a 21st century collective bargaining contract.

John deBeck: We would have to honor the teacher contract but have a unified view when renegotiating. If we split district we get the taxes and the property. He thinks charter won't work unless we could be a "federation of charters" and that doesn't exist.

Q: Julie Cramer: Who would design the new school district?

A: John deBeck: People from each cluster of schools

B: Teresa Drew: Is it possible to charter a cluster

A: John deBeck: There is charter district (San Juan Capistrano) If you charter a district you could still get the taxes.

Obstacles: it will never work if it seems you are trying to separate races.

Q: Bobby Samilson: Was it the charter that saved Keiller or Patty Ladd?

A: leader is essential.

Q: Julie Cramer: Could we solve the the program improvement needs with cluster governance?

A: John deBeck: You need a cluster budget to have cluster control.

Matt Spathas:

In the collective bargaining agreement there is a Maintenance of Standards: Locks in practices from the time contracts are signed. This will most likely be passed. How can we protect our schools from this old style of bargaining.

John deBeck: If clusters could elect their own board member you could have control

Q: Polly Traylor: Do any of the models presented tonight seem like a better model than the one we have now?

A: Patty Ladd: First year at Correia: 60% of her time dealing with 3 staff members. Due to collective bargaining etc. Education is not here for the benefit of adults. Unfortunately, the rights of adults seem to overpower the rights of children.

Comment-- John Evans Liaison: The teaching workforce gets left out of this mix. A lot of people are in the system who shouldn't be teachers. There is a problem with the way teachers are trained.

Comment:--Robert Ross: Graduate of PLHS. It is about the motivation to be a good teacher. If you pay well you get better results.

Comment--Clifford Weiner: Attorney for the school district. Must identify problem first. If problem is with staff, there is a way to work with it. The secret is the culture of the school site. The peer group on the school site can influence the staff that doesn't want to change. Union reps can be helpful if they are on board with the site culture.

Bobby Samilson: There has been huge transformation in Point Loma. 50% staff turnover, 100% digital classrooms. Credit recovery. Online classrooms. Collaborative teaching.

Next Meeting October 6th @ 6:30