



## Meeting of the Board of Directors – Special Session

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Thursday, April 10, 2008

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

West Hills Community College, Lemoore, CA

### Meeting Minutes

**Present:** Lee Andersen, Alan Autry, Marcelyn Buford, Kathleen Crookham, Dr. Frank Gornick, Coke Hollowell, Secretary David Long, Luisa Medina, Mike Navarro, Jeff Rowe, Stanley Simpson, Peter Weber, Vanessa Wiseman (Representing Governor Schwarzenegger's office)

**Staff:** Ashley Swearengin

### I. Convene Meeting

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Acting Chair Pete Weber called to order at 10:11 a.m. the meeting of the Board of Directors of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley (Partnership) – Special Session.

### II. Introductory Remarks

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Mr. Weber extended welcome and appreciation to Secretary David Long for attending the meeting; he also thanked Chancellor Gornick for hosting the meeting at West Hills Community College (WHCC). Dr. Gornick introduced Dr. Don Warkentin, President of WHCC, Lemoore Campus, who welcomed all participants and noted that Lemoore is California's newest community college. The campus opened in 2002 and was certified in 2006. Dr. Warkentin presented the board members with an anniversary yearbook commemorating WHCC 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Members of the board introduced themselves followed by the introduction of the public.

### III. Overview of Meeting and Ground Rules for Discussion

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At the Feb. 8 Partnership Board meeting, the K-12 Education Work Group presentation reflected several items that warranted further in-depth discussion. At that meeting, it was suggested a special session be scheduled. The agenda was developed at a meeting of the K-12 Education (K-12) and Higher Education and Workforce Development (HEWD) work groups facilitated by the Secretariat staff.

Mr. Weber introduced Lynne Ashbeck as the day's facilitator. Ms. Ashbeck is the former mayor and a current councilmember for the City of Clovis, with 25 years' experience in facilitation. Ms. Ashbeck reviewed the ground rules for the day's discussion.

Ms. Ashbeck polled the board and public for input on their expectations for the day's meeting:

- Operate/act on a regional view, leverage collective strengths, focus on outcomes for kids, and engage a wider cross section of business leaders and other stakeholders
- Identify priorities and how to move this issue/work group forward

- Reaffirm the value of education to the San Joaquin Valley
- Define a clear path forward
- Focus on key priorities, identify top actions to move K-12 work forward
- Gain a picture of the Valley's passion for kids
- Identify obtainable system reform and best practices
- Identify specific goals (e.g. improved achievement, decreased drop-out rates, increased accountability, implement school choice)
- Identify action plan for moving forward

The following shared interests were identified by the board and members of the public:

- Find 'both/and' solutions that strengthen existing work and find new 'best practices'
- Ensure that students will have the resources needed to learn in ways that work for them and appropriate support for their situation
- "Good enough" is not good enough
- Ensure that every child has access to quality education regardless of neighborhood
- Strengthen the ability of families and neighborhoods to support student learning
- Create a Valleywide, regional, integrated solution
- Leverage the influence of the Partnership and take advantage of the 'window of opportunity' presented by the Governor's leadership and his commitment to the Valley
- Sustainable solutions that have long-range impacts, produce quality outcomes, and support the economic vitality of neighborhood
- Status quo is unacceptable
- Student success is key
- "Asset-based" approach, identify opportunities in tight budget times

#### **IV. Governor's Committee on Education Excellence**

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Secretary Long recognized that a window of opportunity for education reform exists in the San Joaquin Valley and the state. Governor Schwarzenegger is passionate about education and about embracing creativity to change the system. The Governor's charge to Secretary Long was to bring back some ideas from this meeting.

Secretary Long has participated in regional and local discussions throughout California and has noticed several common threads: Accountability in student and school performance; the need for standardized and common Data Systems, Local Control of program funding, Child/School Safety and Drop-out Prevention.

Secretary Long continued to outline several items that are of high importance and further explained in the report from the Governor's Committee on Education Excellence.

- There are examples of improvement in accountability and achievement up and down the state. With the pockets of excellence, there are also pockets needing improvement. There are currently 97 Program Improvement (PI) districts sanctioned. The state of California is the first to implement "differentiated assistance" for these PI districts. For example, seven districts have been assigned trustees. By providing them with assistance that meets their individual needs, improvements and changes will be made.
- English-Language learning (EL) deficiency is one of the key areas impacting the 97 PI districts and could possibly be the biggest challenge in California.

- Drop-out prevention and keeping children in school is of high importance; local initiatives are being addressed with mayors and regions. A major issue is that because of multiple inadequate data systems used throughout the state, the drop-out rate is not clear.
- A data system committee has been formed, bringing some of the biggest names in technology to focus on the issue of collecting appropriate data in one data system. Expected opposition for reform will come at implementation from the legal field dealing with information-sharing. It also is anticipated that the unions will oppose if vertical scaling is implemented, which has the potential of holding teachers accountable.
- Local control is required as it relates to categorical funding and programs for waivers. There is pressure on the Senate and Assembly to approve a January proposal that will increase the flexibility of categoricals from the existing 10 and 15% flexibility to 50 and 65%, allowing local decisions regarding the budget. It is important for cities to work with school districts when making decisions about program waivers. There is expected opposition to the categorical funding reform; when money is transferred, it is important to know if the funds are for administrative salaries or student achievement. It is possible to avoid opposition through controls on the money.
- School safety is critical in the education system. In 2007, there were 15 million documented cases of bullying. If tackled, this issue has an assumed direct impact on attendance, drop-out rates and improved educational performance.
- Career Technical Education has been addressed as an important factor in educational reform.
- School finance is a system that needs a critical evaluation and major change. The Governor's proposal requests budget stabilization, spending less during the good times in order to plan for difficult times ahead. Opposition is possible from "well-to-do" districts when weighted-funding is considered.

Mr. Weber suggested that to take best advantage of Secretary Long's attendance during the morning session, the board focus on 1) Actions related to systematic reform 2) Best practices implementation 3) Joint initiatives between the K-12 and HEWD work groups.

## **ACTIONS RELATED TO SYSTEMATIC REFORM**

### **Data Systems**

Dr. Gornick referred to the meeting handout from the RAND Corporation ("California Lags Nation in Tracking Students' Educational Progress") which highlights the seven disparate institutions and databases that track students and their academic progress. He indicated that these systems are all funded but they are not integrated; nor do they provide information useful to inform action such as early intervention.

An integrated system should accurately reflect the locations and activities of students and produce data to school systems about student achievement, especially in language and math skills. Additionally, the current data systems cannot reflect that a student who dropped out of school in Arvin but enrolled in Firebaugh is a transfer and not a drop-out. Protectiveness across the entities results in separate silos; a single, integration system that is P-20 is essential. Dr. Gornick recommended that in May the full board support the Governor's recommendation on one integrated data system.

In addition to the Partnership's support for a data system, Dr. Gornick spoke about his interest in making the Cal-PASS system mandatory for all schools in the San Joaquin Valley.

Larry Powell, Fresno County Superintendent, described the difficulty involving two accountability systems. The state model is a growth model; like the long jump, students receive credit for improvement. The federal model measures against a high-jump standard with no credit for improvement. Mr. Powell believes that the state growth model is better for accountability. Secretary Long indicated that this topic is being discussed in Washington D.C. There are currently 97 PI districts in California. It is anticipated that in five to six years every district will achieve that status because of the federal measurement system.

Ms. Medina expressed her support of the recommendation for an integrated data system but questioned which system is the best to use; if Cal-Pass is the best system, why isn't it already being used by other districts. Dr. Andersen elaborated on the need to provide support to smaller schools that do not have the capacity to complete data entry on this now voluntary data system. He also suggested that this be considered for the pilot project aligning K-12 and HEWD. Further discussions with Cal-Pass will assist in determining the funding needs and feasibility for such a project.

Secretary Long clarified that the role of the Data System Committee will not replace any of the existing data systems but instead makes them more robust and pulls them into a larger system.

### **English-Language Learners (EL)**

Mr. Powell outlined that the perspective of "analog" adults is out of synch with how students function today. Students are digital natives growing up with a different mind, hardwired to see burnt orange in an F pattern rather than our black and white Z pattern. He suggested that textbooks need a paradigm shift. It is estimated that 70-75% of students in the San Joaquin Valley are EL.

Mr. Powell described the difference in academic proficiency versus speaking English. Children who are proficient in their native language are not having difficulty in the system. The current pressure is to acquire English to the exclusion of acquiring knowledge. Mr. Powell considers dual-immersion programs to be the most effective for learning; but political correctness drives an English-only model. Mr. Powell suggested avoiding the political issue by moving instruction of a second language to the earlier ages when kids are better able to learn. It becomes less political when presented in the context of future educational requirements (e.g. UC entrance requires a second language).

Mr. Powell requested that the Partnership continue supporting the English Language Learner Leadership Academy, a Partnership seed grant recipient, as well as support requests for future grants. Secretary Long indicated that EL is tied to everything else involved in education reform, and the English Language Learner Leadership Academy is the most effective way to address new techniques. He also discussed the need to engage parents and families. Secretary Long suggested a statement needs to be forwarded to the Governor with strong recommendations representing the San Joaquin Valley regarding EL.

Secretary Long congratulated the Partnership on organizing systematically for change and reminded the group that to make a difference, there is no problem with creative tension. He

encouraged the production of bold and regional recommendations from the K-12 special session.

### **Lunch Recess 12:15 – 12:45**

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#### **English-Language Learners (EL) Continued**

Mr. Powell commented that the viability of the San Joaquin Valley is dependent on EL being successful. There are, he said, between 75 and 103 languages spoken in Fresno Unified School District alone. He is confident that dual-immersion and bilingual education at a young age are critical. Challenges are, at the front-end: the astounding amount of money required for dual-immersion programs; then the additional teachers that are required to speak two languages.

Dr. Gornick addressed the need to build capacity to support development and implementation of the skills in teachers and dual-immersion curriculum.

Dr. Gornick suggested a “Manhattan Project” for EL as a pilot project for the San Joaquin Valley. This could allow for additional multiple-language speaking teachers (Fresno County alone will lose 1,700 teachers to retirement in the next three years), forgive loans and provide incentives for dual-immersion.

Ms. Swearingin recommended the creation of a business plan that outlines financial, physical and human resources necessary for this to be accomplished. Mr. Simpson stated it is imperative that the Partnership draft a powerful message for the Governor and find supporters such as California Farm Bureau Federation, the Nisei League, and California Association of Manufacturers.

Mr. Weber agreed there is a need for a business plan covering the next 10 years, especially in the area of teacher and curriculum for EL. Mr. Weber suggested that the 10-year plan can include, as near term steps, the ongoing funding of three EL academies (Kern, Fresno and Stanislaus counties), and funding of the leadership of Central Valley Educational Leadership Institute at California State University, Fresno. This plan could be used to articulate the bold approach and be a regional beta test of the “Manhattan Project” for EL.

#### **Pre-Kindergarten**

Dr. Andersen indicated the Governor’s reform clearly recognizes that improvements are needed in preschool. In addition, attendance needs to be required for full-day kindergarten; not universally, but for those that need it most.

Merced County Office of Education Assistant Superintendent Gaye Riggs stated that children should enter kindergarten prepared to be successful in the education system but that the achievement gap begins at the door to kindergarten. Ms. Riggs requested that because pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) works very closely with the family and the neighborhood that it be added to the agenda of the Partnership, changing the K-12 Work Group to the P-12 Work Group.

Pre-K preparation is a determining factor in a child’s ability to assimilate learning by the end of third grade. Empirical evidence shows that if a student is at grade-level by the end of third grade, they will graduate high school. Ms. Riggs also requested that the Partnership Board recommend to the Governor:

- Adequately funding effective Pre-K with highly qualified, well-compensated teachers (commensurate with elementary school) and quality curriculum
- Streamlining the Pre-K system in California (single funding sources)
- Incorporating Pre-K in the data collection systems
- Combining Pre-K opportunity with an attendance requirement

Mr. Weber recommended the K-12 Work Group create a “contract with the children of the San Joaquin Valley” and present it to the Partnership Board.

Ms. Medina suggested that the First 5 Commissions be involved in this discussion. As part of the suggested contract, she recommended targeting the needs of the San Joaquin Valley and committing to work with the family.

Ms. Riggs also recognized the importance of the workforce development component.

### **Career-Technical Education/College Going Culture**

Dr. Andersen distinguished that building a college-going culture is not targeted in the Governor’s recommendations but is supported in principle. The San Joaquin Valley ranks 10% lower in college-going rates. Our growth rate is, however, higher than the rest of the state, yet we sustain that 10% deficit; so in reality there is improvement. Dr. Andersen recognized that not every kid wants to or will attend a traditional college. Career Technical Education (CTE) is the same as what was called Vocational Education. CTE provides advanced learning for livable wage jobs applicable across the region.

Dr. Christine Frazier, Kern County Office of Education, gave an overview of the K-12 work group’s College-Going Culture Plan that is under development. Dr. Frazier explained that several assessments and surveys have been implemented to gain input from key individuals in the eight counties in the development of the plan, which includes two phases. Phase one (Policy Commitment) has been approved by the work group and includes three components: Expectations with specified Systemic Change, Preparation with specified Best Practices, and Articulation with specified Key Elements. Phase two (pending work group approval) involves: Collaboration and Outreach, Implementation and Accountability, and Inventive Pathways. Dr. Frazier further suggested that the work group will clarify baseline indicators and data sets with the higher education work group. The inventive pathways will require involvement and resources of the business community throughout the region.

One of the inventive pathways the work group hopes to implement is the creation of College/Career Centers in which middle school students, parents, and school counselors will be able to quickly access resources to help students stay in school and connect them to assessments and demonstrated model programs, which promote higher learning opportunities (community colleges, four year institutions, career and vocational education). In addition, these centers will market career opportunities available after high school, which will serve as a motivational pathway for middle school students to stay in school. The College/Career Center will be developed with the intent of replicating the centers at middle school sites in each of the represented Partnership counties in the San Joaquin Valley.

Mr. Weber indicated that in Fresno County there is not an unemployment problem (9%); rather, there is a mismatch between skill sets and jobs available.

Dr. Frazier stated it is imperative that there is a link between schools and businesses. Elements of this partnering are being seen in the school-within-a-school model which is one of many viable (though expensive) college and career models.

Mr. Weber provided the example of the Center for Advanced Research and Technology (CART) and the involvement of business sponsors in that model due to direct interest in the students after graduation. Mr. Weber requested input on how the Partnership could accelerate the school-within-a-school model. Dr. Frazier added that specializations such as CART are expensive; business needs to come to the table with funding for the special technologies and skills, including single-subject teachers. The models demonstrate successful implementation.

Mr. Randy Wallace, Tulare County Office of Education, added that community collaborative models are available and can maximize the state's investment by tailoring and maximizing the specific initiatives and building on them. Mr. Wallace suggested that the Partnership focus on business participation and through the K-12 and HEWD work groups leverage workforce and local institutions to build the models and skills appropriate to the San Joaquin Valley. Mr. Weber suggested the benefit of having the Economic Development Work Group join in this discussion as well as Regional Occupation Programs (ROPs).

Ms. Wiseman stated that to reduce the brain drain, emphasis also should be placed on retaining the human resources once they're trained.

Keith Griffith, Stanislaus Alliance, provided a handout "CTE: Transforming the San Joaquin Valley's Economy" and noted that the eight County Offices of Education had also received the recommendations therein. Mr. Weber commented that it is important to identify existing best practices that can be leveraged across the region. Dr. Andersen commented that there are many forward thinking CTE activities in each county. Hope is to find leverage points to build up programs to spread effective practices across the region, and seek support for those collaborative efforts. Dr. Andersen cited the example of Jorge Aguilar at UC Merced who partnered with many COEs and sponsored a successful collaborative conference with K-16. He suggested this model be expanded and that invitations be extended to business for participation and support. Mr. Simpson suggested that personal contact be made with business, articulating the need for their involvement and support.

## **V. Implementation Opportunities**

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Mr. Weber stated the importance of clearly articulating the Partnership's expectations for all stakeholders. Having a regionally united front on education reform is critical for the San Joaquin Valley.

### Next steps and work products

1. Work group consultant to prepare a resolution to support or advocate for the Governor's reform initiatives, capturing San Joaquin Valley-specific items for full board consideration at the next quarterly meeting.
  - a. Propose San Joaquin Valley as a pilot site for reform initiatives
2. Dr. Gornick to lead the development of a plan to expand Cal-PASS in all eight counties.
  - a. Encourage all districts to participate rather than issue a mandate
  - b. COEs support smaller districts without the resources to implement

- c. Budget implications of this system are \$2 to \$5 million for training, technology, support
- 3. Mr. Powell to prepare a resolution recommending alignment of the state accountability model and the federal model for full board consideration at the next quarterly meeting.
- 4. Work group consultant to draft resolutions.
  - a. Adopting Pre-K
  - b. Modification of work plan
- 5. Work group to complete Action Plan for developing a college going culture, linking options for Career and Technical Education to expand post secondary options for students across the San Joaquin Valley
- 6. Joint meeting with K-12, HEWD, Economic Development work groups and ROPS to discuss college and career options for students such as the school-within-a-school model.
- 7. Work group consultant to add business leaders and other stakeholders to the K-12 work group
- 8. Work group consultant along with Mr. Powell to coordinate the development of a 10-year Business Plan for EL (dual immersion or second language). The plan will address how the San Joaquin Valley will reform and make necessary changes in the education systems that address the real opportunities and challenges based on the following principles:
  - a. Build on best practices, replicate what is already working
  - b. Include business/private sector alliances and support
  - c. Status quo is not acceptable
  - d. Include alliances around kids – not just around schools
  - e. Clearly define roles and accountabilities of all the stakeholders in school performance
  - f. Include Pre-K → 20 continuum of education
  - g. Engage foundations and alternate funding sources
- 9. Elements of the plan suggested include:
  - a. New ways to measure success, explore waivers in testing standards for students in the San Joaquin Valley
  - b. Pre-Kindergarten
  - c. Increase capacity of teacher training with emphasis on multicultural learns
  - d. Support expansion of EL academies (three) and K-12 Work Group
  - e. Strengthen teaching training/coaching in EL
  - f. Regional beta site similar to the Manhattan Project
    - Launch pilot projects
    - Expand teacher training/capacity
    - Propose new ways to measure the success of our kids
    - Loan forgiveness/other financial incentives
- 10. Draft “Contract with San Joaquin Valley Kids – 2020”

## **VI. Adjournment**

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Acting Chair Weber provided closing remarks and at 3:05 p.m. adjourned the meeting of the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley.