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### MINUTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING OF MARCH 17, 2009

#### Call to Order

The Board of Education of Palo Alto Unified School District held a Special Meeting in the Room A at 25 Churchill Avenue, Palo Alto, California. Barb Mitchell, President, called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

#### Members present:

Ms. Barb Mitchell, President  
 Ms. Barbara Klausner, Vice President  
 Ms. Melissa Baten Caswell  
 Mr. Dana Tom  
 Ms. Camille Townsend

#### Staff present:

Dr. Kevin Skelly, Superintendent  
 Mrs. Ginni Davis, Assistant Superintendent  
 Mr. Scott Laurence, Assistant Superintendent  
 Dr. Robert Golton, CBO  
 Ms. Cathy Mak, CBO  
 Dr. Burton Cohen, Director  
 Mr. Michael Milliken, Principal  
 Ms. Carmen Giedt, Principal  
 Mr. Don Cox, Principal  
 Ms. Sharon Offek, Assistant Principal  
 Ms. Christine Regalia, Assistant Principal

#### Others present:

Mr. Tom Hodges, O'Connor Construction Management

Skelly introduced principals and assistant principals in attendance, then described the purpose of the meeting.

Laurence reviewed December 2008 Lapkoff & Gobalet demographic and enrollment projections focusing on:

- Middle schools, the bottom line
- New housing
- Middle school students living in each attendance area
- Hypothetical students assuming 100 kindergarteners
- Kindergarten residents of older housing in the middle school attendance areas
- Middle school enrollment components
- Middle school enrollment forecasts
- Enrollment forecasts summarized

Board members requested additional information on residential population projections for 2013 and 2018, why the demographers are projecting growth to slow down in 2013, and a further understanding of intradistrict transfers.

Laurence reviewed the Board policy on School Size and Enrollment, including the Board's values.

Giedt described the differences between Terman, which is a smaller site with lower enrollment, and Jordan and JLS, which are larger sites with higher enrollments. She then explained the use of teaming at Terman. In addition, Terman has fewer periods of some subjects, such as Art. She said growing Terman would change the character of the school and cause space issues, because most of the classrooms are already used throughout the day. Terman is currently housing two Special Day classes, and both are specific. There are students who also need a more general Special Day Class, which is only available at the two larger schools. Classrooms for Special Day Classes and other subjects such as science and home economics cannot be used for other subjects.

Milliken said Jordan can add more electives and support classes as its enrollment grows. If more students are added, some additional elective classes would likely be needed. Currently, over 30 elective courses are offered for students in seventh and eighth grades. His concern was about loss of personalization as enrollment grows.

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Cox said one of the biggest challenges at JLS was facilities needs at the different grade levels. Sixth grade is a smaller community and teachers have students for a longer period of time. In seventh and eighth grades, individual teachers teach separate subjects. He said that in spite of the concerns mentioned, it was possible to continue to give students a rich education if enrollment increases, with the right support systems. Operational adjustments would be needed, such as splitting lunch and brunch breaks into two groups. Use of space and building out would need to be considered, and teachers would need to be engaged in conversations to make sure everyone is on the same page.

Board member discussion included keeping a sense of community at a growing site and how other large high-performing schools in California manage their sites; asking what constituted a "large" school; asking what the size of middle schools in comparative districts are; and noting a possible need for principals to bring different options.

Milliken presented two slides depicting:

- Jordan enrollment – current
- Jordan enrollment – maximum

He explained how students groups were managed currently, and how he believed they would be managed in the case of enrollment growth.

Further Board member comments asked about the teacher piece, saying it was most important to get the best teachers and not part-timers if possible; expressing concern that elective teachers were getting the short end of things; noting the strategic plan required early parent input, suggesting parent input be solicited; asking if enrollment growth will require a new teacher structure; asking about connection by interest, stating students could still maintain an amount of personalization through subject interests; looking at other successful models, and suggesting involving parents in this discussion.

Laurence asked Giedt about potential future growth at Terman. Giedt said Terman was currently at capacity. Skelly said that boundaries currently fell along Alma, so if they were changed, students would cross Alma. One Board member indicated having no problem with going to two stories; however, it appeared boundaries and specialized facilities preclude further growth at Terman.

Laurence said it was easiest for middle schools to plan in sets of and averages of 50 students, so adding a thirteenth strand in sixth grade becomes awkward. The trigger for a fourth middle school would be 1,200 each at JLS and Jordan. A Board member noted enrollment projections through 2018 fell below this capacity.

Skelly said the district was expecting enrollment to grow; however, it could fall, and staff will need to discuss this in the future. Board member comments included potential flexibility with sixth grade in the future and examining other local middle school programs.

### Public Comment

Pat Markevitch, PTA President at Jordan, suggested adding two classroom times to the day and staggering start times.

Golton said high school and elementary funds had already been allocated. He said that for secondary schools, essentially everything in the 20-year plan was funded. AEDIS had been having conversations with middle school principals, and hoped to have a fixed amount to spend at each site, prioritizing projects with the principals. Golton said this program needs a general program reserve and described the proposal as listed in the Board report.

Board comments included asking about paving priorities and drainage issues at the middle schools; asking why money would be taken from the middle school contingency for any grade level; asking if each middle school got a budget, how would middle schools be sure to adhere to the District's values; suggesting that a timeline for master planning might be needed; noting the urgency to move forward, but expressing concern about updated enrollment projections for middle schools and possible inconsistencies; having fundamental agreement about enrollment; asking whether current funding will support enrollment variations; suggesting maintaining flexibility K-12, because things would likely change over time; suggesting double checking with Lapkoff & Gobalet regarding their projections; and strongly supporting communication among the three middle schools during master planning to maintain consistency across the District.

The Board requested a timeline for middle school master planning. Skelly suggested returning to the Board with this in the near future. Laurence said the work of the high school master plan steering committees could be a good framework from which to work.

### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

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Secretary to the Board