

Orange County Board of Education Special Meeting – 12/14/16 – Transcript

Welcome and Call to Order

Lindholm: OK. We are at our 1:00 PM meeting. I'm going to call this meeting to order. (*Sound of gavel*) and I'd like to welcome you to this meeting. This is a special meeting of the Orange County Board of Education. Any person wishing to address the board is required to complete a request to address the board card. We will only be discussing one item so there won't be any other public comments, only on this one item. Please submit the completed card to the board recorder prior to the beginning. Each individual is allowed 3 minutes per person and may not give their time or extend their time to other speakers. All persons are reminded this is a public meeting and attendees and speakers should be respectful of each other. Verbal outbursts and clapping are prohibited. Anyone deemed to be disruptive may be requested to leave and this meeting was posted according to all the rules and regulations of posting. That brings us to Roll Call.

Sisavath: Trustee Boyd?

D. Boyd: Here.

Sisavath: Trustee Bedell?

Bedell: Here.

Sisavath: Trustee Lindholm?

Lindholm: Here.

Sisavath: Trustee Gomez?

Gomez: Present.

Sisavath: Trustee Williams?

Williams: I am here.

Lindholm: That brings us to the adoption of the agenda which is the one item.

Bedell: Move approval.

D. Boyd: Second.

Bedell: Question. Is that the...this is for Ron. Is that word existing correct or should the word be potential?

Wenkart: The lawsuit was filed on Friday. We have not been served but we put existing litigation because we were able to obtain a copy of the lawsuit.

Bedell: I thought that they had pulled it back and were revising it...does that sound correct?

Wenkart: That's possible that they might amend it but it's still been filed.

Bedell: OK.

Wenkart: They may amend it, that's a possibility.

Bedell: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Lindholm: Thank you. So we have a motion for approval of the agenda which is one item. A motion and a second is on the floor. All in favor say Aye.

Several Ayes.

Lindholm: Any opposed or abstentions? OK, that motion carries. That brings us to public comments and we have one public comment.

Bedell: Paul MacGregor.

Madam President and trustees of the board, Superintendent Mijares, my name is Paul MacGregor and I am the Executive Director of Epic Charter School. I'm here today to address the lawsuit filed on Friday, November 9th, by the Anaheim Union High School and Anaheim Elementary School Districts against the Orange County Department of Education. Petitioning approval for a charter school is a long and rigorous process. The Epic Charter School model was painstakingly reviewed, deeply analyzed, and publically discussed in open forum from the start of the petition process in August of 2015, to the day the Orange County Board of Education legally authorized the charter by a vote of 4 to 1 on March 10th of this year. Epic Charter School and our authorizer share the goal of bringing an alternative method of high quality personalized education to residents of Southern California...the same model of education that has helped thousands of students achieve success in Oklahoma where the Epic model was originated six years ago. Each of those thousands of students that enrolled in Epic did so because, for their own personal

reasons, the local district facility-based school was not the right fit for them. Fortunately for these kids, there is a public charter school like Epic that is available to meet their individualized needs. The Anaheim school districts erroneously state that Epic Charter School does not meet “minimal standards of education,” despite overwhelming evidence that our school’s model is highly successful. After almost a year of intense evaluation, the Oklahoma Office of Educational Quality and Accountability released just two weeks ago an in-depth performance review of Epic Charter School in Oklahoma. The review gave the school high marks, and most notably, in areas such as special education that the Anaheim lawsuit alleges EPIC’s model cannot provide. The report also found that the school outperformed or did as well as the traditional school districts of its size in which it is compared to in the report. The Anaheim school districts are well-known opponents of charter schools in California and have authorized a lawsuit that includes several misrepresentations regarding both Epic Charter Schools and old allegations that were already publicly vetted in hearings before this very board. It’s unfortunate that taxpayer funds are being spent on a frivolous lawsuit that re-hashes topics that have already been addressed by OCBE prior to our charter’s approval. The priority for both schools should be on student instruction and student success and not wasteful taxpayer funded litigation. I want to thank the Orange County Board of Education for their support of our school. I am going to go back to work today to continue the mission of growing an incredible school that can help students succeed when the traditional brick-and-mortar school was not the right fit for them. Epic is going to continue to focus on high quality education and personalized learning while executing a proven school operation model that will create success for students in Orange County and beyond. Thank you.

Lindholm: Thank you. That concludes our public comments on this item. With that we will be going into closed session and counsel will you introduce the closed session?

Wenkart: As indicated on the agenda of the special meeting, the board will be meeting in closed session to discuss pending litigation entitled Anaheim Union High School District versus Orange County Department of Education. This litigation involves the Epic Charter School and its charter approval on appeal by the Orange County Board of Education.

Lindholm: Thank you. So we will be going into closed session. I have no idea at this time if we will be reporting out. We may not be reporting out any action so if you want to stay you can, but we will be going into closed session at this time. And if we don’t report out I will be adjourning it at this moment because we won’t be returning. Again, wishing you all who are attendants happy holidays and Merry Christmas. You’re looking at me like I’m missing something.

N. Boyd: We have to come back in to open session to adjourn.

Lindholm: OK. Well, for the people in the audience I just wanted to let them know if they’re leaving at this time, happy holidays, merry Christmas. I hope you have a wonderful time with

your family. Safe travels. We will be coming back out, I don't know if we will report anything. Alright, thank you.

Sound of gavel.

Lindholm: We're back from closed session.

Wenkart: The board met in closed session on the Anaheim Union High School District versus Orange County Department of Education case. The board authorized the executive committee to retain legal counsel if necessary.

Lindholm: That concludes...motion to adjourn?

Bedell: So moved.

D. Boyd: Second.

Lindholm: All in favor say Aye. We are adjourned until next year.