

Nevada County Board of Education SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, February 15, 2012

2:00 p.m.

Nevada County Superintendent of Schools
Houser Conference Room
112 Nevada City Highway, Nevada City, CA ~ 95959

Minutes

- I. Meeting called to order at 2:01 p.m. by Voss
- II. Establish quorum

Altieri	present
Meeks	present
Slade-Troutman	present
Michael	present
Voss	present
- III. Salute to the flag led by Voss
- IV. Additions to the Agenda - none
- V. Adoption of the Agenda

On a motion by Slade-Troutman and seconded by Altieri, the agenda was adopted as presented. The Motion passed unanimously.
- VI. Opened public forum – Recognition of members of the audience wishing to address an agenda item may do so at this time or at the time the agenda item is heard.
- VII. Closed public forum
- VIII. Action Items
 - A. Shall the Nevada County Board of Education Approve the Petition for Renewal of the Countywide Charter for Sierra Montessori Academy for a period of 5 years?

The Board held a discussion continued from February 8th board meeting.

Meeks stated he votes to accept the risk if SMA goes bankrupt as he sees no financial risk. More important to him is angry parents and media attention which could result in not being elected in the next election. He stated his agenda is to get reelected.

Michael reviewed the material. A financial risk to the COE does exist, however; also in question is trust and confidence in the governance over SMA. Michael questioned where the student population comes from. Pam Down advised that 40% outside Nevada County; 50% PRSD; 10% varied among other Nevada County school districts.

Slade-Troutman noted improved facilities; good administration; parents are involved; advertising is in place. CCSA letter of support seems important. It was clarified that the letter addressed academic performance necessary for renewal only, not fiscal concerns. She does not want to see SMA close. Money and jobs are brought into the county through SMA.

Altieri pointed out several factors: Special Ed risk factor related to SMA not being in JPA. Budget would be qualified or negative, should SMA be held to the same standards as school districts. Risk to parents if school closes mid-year as students would be displaced; class sizes are higher in traditional schools; other charter schools have wait lists, thus limiting parents' choices mid year. In the past rent was free; now SMA has a \$60K occupancy fee

Voss had requested past enrollment trends and revenue reserves held by other charters. This information was provided by NCSOS Staff. SMA needs 101 enrolled to meet reserves. Using 4 different formulas he attempted to come up with that number, however was only able to obtain between 88 and 99. Reserve levels vary among the charters, YRC is 41%; NCSA is 18%; Bitney is 12%; SMA's is 5%.

Bietz addressed the Board and understands the concerns. He noted the budget has turned around; the Special Ed issue is not different from other schools. The trust factor is being addressed as 4 of the SMA Board members are new and are willing to attend trainings; be more involved; and have taken the CSBA Governance training. Bietz recommended a NCBOE Board Liaison to allow for input. They will address generating enrollment once they know they are reauthorized.

Should the Board approve the renewal and problems continue, the Board asked what their options were.

1. School could close itself.
2. County Board could pursue revocation.

Supt. Hermansen explained the procedures in the revocation process which are very specific. There must be an extreme threat to students; a violation of the charter petition; failure to meet outcomes in the charter petition; failure to meet accounting principals, or fiscal mismanagement; violated any provision of law.

Michael noted the probability of the schools new governance management would be able to stop history from repeating itself; therefore the future plans of improvement are strong.

On a motion by Slade-Troutman and seconded by Michael, the Nevada County Board of Education Approved the Petition for Renewal of the Countywide Charter for Sierra Montessori Academy for a period of 5 years. Motion passed (3-2)

B. Shall the Nevada County Board of Education Approve the Agreement with Tahoe Truckee Unified School District regarding renewal of Charters for Forest Charter School and Twin Ridges Home Study?

Supt. Hermansen explained that this MOU is the resolution of a 4 year legal conflict with TTUSD, regarding the process by which Forest Charter and Twin Ridges Home Study Charter obtained a county-wide charter from our office, the in lieu property tax obligations of the school district and the MOU of 2008.

TTUSD will take public action to approve the MOU; Forest Charter and Twin Ridges Home Study Charter approved the MOU; Chicago Park will take action on the MOU today.

On a motion by Michael and seconded by Slade-Troutman, the Nevada County Board of Education approved the Agreement with Tahoe Truckee Unified School District regarding renewal of Charters for Forest Charter School and Twin Ridges Home Study Charter. The Motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment at 3:37 p.m.

Approved: _____
James Voss, President

Date: March 14, 2012