VENTURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
February 22, 2022
ADOPTED MINUTES

Call to Order

In accordance with Governor Newsom's executive orders of social distancing due to the COVID-19, the Regular Board of Education meeting was held on Tuesday, February 22, 2022, as a teleconference/video conference meeting where one or more members participated. The public had the opportunity to submit their public comment via the public comments email address or live via the Zoom platform. The public streaming of the Regular Board meeting was made available through the Ventura Adult and Continuing Education, TDC Studios YouTube Channel or via Zoom at https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82348824751?pwd=alRzc2lBLzlEWFBrQUttS1ZBYzVuQT09
Those in attendance were:

Board President	Mr. Matt Almaraz
Board Vice President	Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez
Board Member	Ms. Amy Callahan
Board Member	Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Board Member	Ms. Velma Lomax
Superintendent	Dr. Roger Rice
Asst. Supt. /Bus. Services	Ms. Rebecca Chandler
Asst. Supt/Human Resources	Ms. Gina Wolowicz
General Counsel	Mr. Anthony Ramos

Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, Ms. Velma Lomax
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

Public Comment on Closed Session Items

The following individuals gave a public comment via email or live via Zoom* regarding closed session item 6.a:

1. Cherry Loe
2. Dana Billings* (email & live)
3. Valerie
4. Laura Belzer
5. Gaea Verneris
6. Amber Wilde
7. Alyssa Wells* (email & live)
8. Jone Smith
9. Kate Moe* (email & live)
10. Whitney Smith*
11. Chrissy*
12. Perry Geue*
13. Natalie*
14. Mrs. Larios*
15. Christina DuVarney*
16. Jesse*

Motion to go to Closed Session

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Ms. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to go to closed session at 5:25 p.m.

Ayes: Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, Ms. Velma Lomax
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

REGULAR SESSION - Ron Halt Classroom - 7:00 p.m.

At 7:16 p.m., Board President Matt Almaraz called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

Report of Actions Taken in Closed Session

None.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Dr. Roger Rice introduced the new Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Ms. Gina Wolowicz. Ms. Wolowicz thanked Dr. Rice and the Board, then took a moment to introduce her family.

Dr. Rice introduced the new Principal of Balboa Middle School, Ms. Claudia Caudill. Ms. Caudill took a moment to thank Dr. Rice and the Board.

Dr. Rice acknowledged Mr. Anthony Ramos, VUSD's in-house Legal Counsel, who is retiring this June after 17 years with VUSD. Dr. Rice thanked Mr. Ramos for his years of dedication, for always being a strong advocate for student rights and privacy, and for championing equity opportunities for all students.

Dr. Rice gave a shout out to three VUSD employees who recently received a prestigious award from the Association of California School Administration (ACSA). The first award went to Dr. Soledad Molinar, Director of Multilingual and Multicultural Education. Dr. Molinar was honored with the 2022 Valuing Diversity Award by ACSA's Region 13. The second went to Dr. Lorelle Dawes, Principal of Cabrillo Middle School. Dr. Dawes was awarded the 2022 Middle Grades Principal of the year by ACSA's Region 13. The third went to Mr. Eric Reynolds, VUSD's Risk Manager. Mr. Reynolds was awarded the Charter's 2022 Central Office Administrator of the Year.

Dr. Rice noted that the Governor's Office will be making an announcement on February 28, 2022 regarding the mask mandate. He thanked everyone who attended the Declining Enrollment Committee meeting and shared that the next meeting will take place on March 2.

Ms. Marieanne Quiroz, Director of Communications and Public Information Officer, gave a shout out to Dr. Roger Rice, who was honored with the 2022 Superintendent of the Year Award by ACSA's Region 13. Dr. Rene Rickard, Chief Innovation Officer, then surprised Dr. Rice with a few tokens of the staff's appreciation.

Student Board Members Ella Haas, representing Buena High School, Logan Bobis, representing Ventura High School, and Nina Segura, representing VACE, gave brief updates on the exciting things happening at their school sites.

Correspondence

None.

Public Comments

The following individuals gave a public comment via email or live via Zoom*

1. Hernan Cuevas concerning teachers taking an active role as political pundits.
2. Nicole Martin in favor of keeping the mask mandate.
3. Lynsey in support of removing the mask mandate.
4. Carey Silverman in support of removing the mask mandate and against CRT in our schools.
5. Danielle Boshoff in favor of allowing mask choice in the schools.
6. Melissa Sapp in favor of allowing mask choice in the schools.
7. Brittany Cox in favor of allowing mask choice in the schools.
8. Mia Russi in support of removing the mask mandate.
9. Thea Mechtenberg in support of removing the mask mandate.

10. Hayley Lanning in support of removing the mask mandate.
11. Holly Likens in support mask choice.
12. Jeana Van in support mask choice.
13. Annie Saddler in support of mask and vaccine choice.
14. Ashlee O'Hara in support of removing the mask mandate and possible vaccine mandate.
15. Kaley Chadwell in support of removing the mask mandate.
16. Jessica Vlahakis in support of removing the mask mandate and possible vaccine mandate.
17. Hillary Smiley* in favor of removing the mask mandate.
18. Courtney* in support of mask choice immediately.
19. Barbara Hernandez* concerned about increased mental issues in VUSD and in favor of removing the mask mandate.
20. Joni Boole* in support of removing the mask mandate.
21. Jennifer Taylor* in support of removing the mask mandate.
22. Brittany McHenry* in support of removing the mask mandate.
23. Erika Muhlitner* in support of removing the mask mandate.
24. Carol Peek* thanking all Education Support Professionals.

ACTION ITEMS

14.a **Ballot for California School Board Association (CSBA) Delegate Assembly**

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve to cast their vote for Darlene Bruno, Debra Cordes, Shelly Griffen and Daniel Sandoval, as representatives to the CSBA Delegate Assembly from Subregion 11-B.

Ayes: Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, Ms. Velma Lomax
Noes: None. Absent: Ms. Amy Callahan*. Abstain: None.
*Trustee Amy Callahan was unable to attend Regular Session

14.b **Ratification of Contract for Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources**

It was moved by Ms. Velma Lomax, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve the ratification of the employment contract for the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, Ms. Gina Wolowicz, beginning February 1, 2022.

Ayes: Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, Ms. Velma Lomax
Noes: None. Absent: Ms. Amy Callahan. Abstain: None.

14.c **Approval of K-12 Schools and Adult Education Comprehensive Safety Plans for the 2021-22 School Year**

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve the K-12 Schools and Adult Education Comprehensive Safety Plans for the 2021-22 School Year.

Ayes: Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, Ms. Velma Lomax
Noes: None. Absent: Ms. Amy Callahan. Abstain: None.

14.d **Approval of Emergency Connectivity Fund Grant Award Expenditures**

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Ms. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve the two agendized purchases related to the Emergency Connectivity Fund grant awards.

Ayes: Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, Ms. Velma Lomax
Noes: None. Absent: Ms. Amy Callahan. Abstain: None.

CONFERENCE - BUSINESS SERVICES

15.a **2021-2022 Second Interim Financial Report Preview Presentation**

Ms. Anna Campbell, Director of Fiscal Services, reviewed the 2021-2022 Second Interim Financial Report, which included the financial status of all funds in the District as of January 31,

2022. The discussion included a preliminary overview of the Second Interim Financial Report for the General Fund and the assumptions used for projections. The timeline for the 2021-22 Ventura Unified Budget Cycle was reviewed and next steps were discussed. The District will be requesting a Positive Certification.

CONFERENCE - EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

16.a **Supplement for the Annual Update for the 2021-22 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)**

Dr. Rebecca Chandler, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, and Ms. Gina Wolowicz, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources, presented an update on the annual update for the 2021 -22 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). The update included mid-year outcome data related to metrics identified in the 2021-22 LCAP, and mid-year expenditure and implementation data on all actions identified in the 2021-22 LCAP.

CONSENT CALENDAR

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve consent item #'s 17 to 20 as presented.

Ayes: Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, Ms. Velma Lomax
Noes: None. Absent: Ms. Amy Callahan. Abstain: None.

CONSENT- EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

17.a Overnight, Out of the Tri-County and Ratification Field Trips

CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Certificated

18.a Ratification of Administration's Approval of Miscellaneous & Part-Time Certificated Assignments for the 2021-22 School Year

18.b Ratification of Administration's Approval for Leave of Absence for Certificated Personnel for the 2021-22 School Year

18.c Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment and Reemployment of Substitute Teachers for the 2021-22 School Year

18.d Ratification of Administration's Approval of Resignations, Retirements and Release for Certificated Personnel for the 2021-22 School Year

CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Classified

19.a Classified Position Changes

CONSENT - BUSINESS SERVICES

20.a Office of Public School Construction (OPSC) Signatory Authorization

20.b Permission to Solicit Bids for C2-23 ATLAS K-8 Conversion

20.c Permission to Solicit Bids for C3-23 HVAC at Various Sites

20.d Permission to Solicit Bids for Telecommunication Services

20.e Ratification of Purchase Orders and Contracts

20.f Ratification of Check Payments

BOARD REPORTS

Trustee Velma Lomax attended the first Declining Enrollment Committee Meeting and shared that there was a lot of public comment. Ms. Lomax noted that Declining Enrollment is not just an issue for Ventura Unified, but for public schools everywhere. She looks forward to their next committee meeting on March 2. Ms. Lomax has also been attending a variety of Career Technical Education (CTE) meetings at several districts throughout our County.

Trustee Dannenberg attended the Teacher of the Month celebration at Foothill High School last week and enjoyed seeing all of the staff.

Trustee Rodriguez attended the Declining Enrollment Committee meeting as a community member. Ms. Rodriguez attended the DELAC meeting, where they learned about the Migrant Education Program through Ventura County Office of Education (VCOE), She also learned about the various programs offered through VACE for Citizenship, English, and Parenting Classes. Lastly, she attended a General Advisory Committee meeting and shared that you can learn more about the individual plans at https://www.planventura.com.

COMING EVENTS

Dr. Rice shared the following coming events:

- Teacher of the Month Celebrations:
  - February 23rd at E.P. Foster
  - March 2nd at J. Serra
- African American Parent Committee Meeting: February 23rd at 5:30 p.m.
- Parent Advisory Committee Meeting: March 1st at 9:30 a.m.
- Declining Enrollment Committee Meeting: March 2nd at 5:00 p.m.

Trustee Lomax shared that there is an upcoming First Robotics competition happening in Port Hueneme. March 4th through 6th and March 10th through 12th. It is unfortunately closed to the public, however it will be livestreamed. Also, they are in need of judges. If you are interested, please email Ms. Lomax at Velma.Lomax@venturausd.org or Dr. Rickard at Rene.Rickard@venturausd.org.

Trustee Rodriguez shared the following coming events:

- VUSD choir performance, Wednesday, February 23rd at Buena High School at 6:00 p.m.
- Buena High School Pre-Competition Band Concert at Buena at 7:00 p.m.
- Read Across America week begins February 28th
- Ventura County School Board Association Dinner Meeting on March 7th

FUTURE BOARD ITEMS

- Board Priorities & Budget – March 14
- Student DATA - TBD

BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS - (No official action will be taken)

Trustee Matt Almaraz noted that we are waiting for guidance from the Governor on February 28 regarding the mask mandate.

Trustee Sabrena Rodriguez noted that it would be good to have a COVID update at the next Board meeting on March 8.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board returned to Closed Session until 10:09 p.m. No action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ms. Velma Lomax, seconded by Mr. Matt Almaraz and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve to adjourn the meeting at 10:09 p.m. to the next Regular Board Meeting scheduled on March 8, 2022.

Ayes: Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, Ms. Velma Lomax
Noes: None. Absent: Ms. Amy Callahan. Abstain: None.

APPROVED _____ President

_____ Secretary

[redacted]

From: Cherry Loe <cllteach@[redacted]
Sent: Monday, February 21, 2022 6:59 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: vccsoffice@gmail.com
Subject: EXTERNAL SENDER- Washington School Campus & VCCS

Good morning
As a grandparent of a student that has attended VCCS from Pre K until present 6th grade, I would share this school has been an academic storehouse for her. She has bloomed socially, emotionally, and physically, as well as academically. This school has been such a blessing to our family allowing small classrooms and receiving one to one attention many years.
In the seven years she had attended we have seen dramatic positive changes in building improvements. We are a family of construction and know the costs of these improvements are enormous.
I have spoke to neighbors expressing relief when the school began meeting on the campus and all the improvements that took place. They used to put up with the homeless breaking into the building, drugs, destruction of property, and the unsightly appearance of the building. They expressed this caused them anxiety plus losing the value of their property.

I hope you will consider all these aspects as you make your decision and keep in mind VCCS as well as the neighboring properties.

Thank you
Cherry Loe
Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Dana Billings <danabillings101[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 6:11 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- RE: Request for Live Public Comment - VUSD Board Meeting Feb 22, 2022 - Future of Washington School
Attachments: The Letter to the Board.docx

As part of my request to make Live Public Comment at today's meeting, that I sent yesterday afternoon, I would like to attach this letter to the Board.
Best Regards,
Dana Billings

From: Dana Billings <danabillings101[redacted]
Sent: Monday, February 21, 2022 4:11 PM
To: public.comment@venturausd.org
Subject: Request for Live Public Comment - VUSD Board Meeting Feb 22, 2022

I would like to make a live public comment. This is my second email – the first indicated I did not do things correctly – the website clearly states to make this request via this email. Thank you.
Best Regards,
Dana Billings

Future Use of Washington School 22-Feb-2022

Dear VUSD Board Members,

I would like to thank you for your service to the community. These are unusual and challenging times for our school system, and we all appreciate those who are leading us through them.

I am writing to you about Ventura County Christian School (VCCS) and the situation being faced at Washington School.

VCCS is an amazing place. Disneyland always had a special tagline it was known for. As these past couple of years came upon us and Disneyland closed it was the hallways of VCCS that took up the tagline to become the "Happiest Place on Earth". It is that sense you get every day within the hallways. The parents love it, the teachers love it and most of all the students love it. There are 500 or so of us that consider VCCS like a second home.

Much the same as VUSD schools, VCCS provides a respected educational standard and curriculum, educational opportunity, and an educational facility. But there are differences and what VCCS offers is not what every family needs or wants. VCCS, in serving the community, serves a subset of families that for various causes sought after the things it has to offer. If you asked the families, you would find that they have come for many different reasons. In this way, VCCS takes on a role to complement what VUSD provides and helps carry the load of educating and lifting up all the children of Ventura County. VCCS has established itself within the walls of Washington School and to continue properly serving the families and students that have come, needs to remain within these walls.

To put it in words from the National School Boards Association website:
"Education is not a line item in a school board's budget—it is the only item."
Ventura County Christian School delivers solidly on education to the students and to the citizens of this county. I hope you and the Board carefully consider that fact.

Along with delivering on education, VCCS delivers on being a good tenant and it delivers on being a good neighbor to the community and it deserves the respect reserved for people and institutions working from that position. Dr. and Mrs. Geue deserve a seat at the negotiating table to try to work out keeping what is a fully functioning and fully contributing school open and available to the children and families of Ventura County.

I realize these are special times for the school district and do not pretend to know all that you are dealing with. But, in light of it all, ask that you and the Board ensure that you have gathered all the facts and taken into consideration all the viewpoints of this situation before taking action toward the lease agreement with VCCS and toward the families that have invested so much into the Washington School and into VCCS the past 20+ years.

Best Regards,
Dana Billings

[redacted]

From: navarro beach <navarro.beach[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 8:51 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- in regard to VCCS

Hello, my name is Valerie and my son Jacob is a student at VCCS. He is in the first grade. He has been and continues to be so supported by all of the staff that are involved with him (teachers, principal, recess staff, after school care, etc). It means so much to us as parents that he receives so much love and support not only academically, but socially and emotionally. The staff really takes the time to get to know each student, and what their individual needs, interests are.
We feel he is getting an excellent education! And, we are grateful for this unique school that supports each student. The staff are a really amazing team and we are grateful to have the opportunity for him to be here. Thank you for your time. Valerie

[redacted]

From: Laura Lindley <l.lindley@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 11:36 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- VCCS

Why are you trying to push VCCS out of their location? Why is that subject not public? Why is it a closed discussion?! Why are you not allowing public input?

Laura Belzer
[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Gaea Verneris <gaea.verneris@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 12:33 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: Jason Verneris
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Why is the VCCS Rent Situation being kept private

Hello,

I'm writing you as a concerned parent of an upcoming student at VCCS. I have a vested interest in what is going on as it relates to what VUSD is doing to VCCS. Why is this situation being kept private, and why is the public not allowed to know and give our input?

This is an amazing school, providing a unique education and opportunity to many children in Ventura. It is my hope that they are treated fair and able to keep their beautiful school in tack. They have put so much money into that property, and that should be taken into consideration when negotiating an affordable and fair rent agreement moving forward.

Thank you!

Gaea Verneris
[redacted]

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[redacted]

From: Amber Wilde <amberstar22[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 1:08 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: saveourschoolvccs@[redacted] stacie.galang[redacted] Almaraz, Matt; Rice, Roger
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- VCCS Lease

Hello,
My name is Amber Wilde, and I'm a life long Ojai resident and currently send my daughter to 5th grade at VCCS. This school has challenged my daughter to excel academically after attending public school, falling behind and being lost in the shuffle during the pandemic.

The curriculum and atmosphere has pushed my daughter to learn so much more than she ever learned before, and she has an atmosphere of kindness where bullying and such is not a concern.

We love VCCS, and would be devastated to lose this location and safe place for our children due to an unfair and untimely raise in rent from the VUSD.

As a mother, community member , and voter, I ask that VUSD do the right thing and not raise the rent in such a drastic way. Washington School has been improved and well taken care of by Mr and Mrs Geue and the school and we would hope because of that that respect would be given to their efforts.

VCCS gives a home to 500 people who rely on the location (great for many of us commuting from ojai) , the price (very reasonable tuition which is not available at other private schools), good education, kind and loving environment.

We hope the board considers this from an outside prospective and remains reasonable.

Thank you for your time.

Amber Wilde
[redacted]

Sent sincerely from Amber's iPhone

[redacted]

From: Alyssa Wells <abwells24@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 4:12 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Washington School site of VCCS

To the board:
My name is Alyssa Wells. I am a parent of two students at VCCS and I am writing to you today to encourage you to consider working with our school to be able to continue to rent the site at the Washington School. This historic landmark is currently home to 170 students who do not fit into the VUSD public school offerings, many of whom have siblings that DO attend a VUSD school. Our students are thriving and enjoying a program that would have otherwise not existed for many of their unique learning needs.Our school has taken care of the historic site for the last 20 years and does not plan to stop now. My own heart cannot imagine allowing such a building that is booming with laughter and love to sit empty instead of reaching a decision that would allow both the board to have it's revenue from the site and for VCCS to continue use of the building.
Thank you for your time and consideration,

Alyssa Wells

[redacted]

From: JONE SMITH <1956smithjones[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 4:24 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- VCCS / WASHINGTON SCHOOL

Good afternoon

I am sure you have all received a lot of emails regarding our beautiful school. Many of us are a little confused by Ms. Rodriguez's response to us. We know that we have all received the same response and that is ok but could you please ask her to explain what she meant by "and it would be inappropriate for us to in any way subsidize a private school."

(Please understand that I cannot comment on the negotiations that are still on-going between the district and the VCCS. However, I will share that VUSD is charged with providing a quality public education for our community's children. Any funds or resources we have are to be used for students in public schools, and it would be inappropriate for us to in any way subsidize a private school.)

What is inappropriate exactly? We are all taxpayers. VCCS has been at Washington Site for over 20 years .....Please ask her to state what she means by that comment to clarify for us. Thank you!

Jones

[redacted]

From: Kate Moe <morgkate[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 4:26 PM
To: Public Comment
Cc: saveourschoolvccs@gmail.com
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public comment-Please Pursue fair negotiations with VCCS

I am writing to urge VUSD to work fairly with VCCS in the ongoing lease negotiations and allow VCCS to stay at the Washington school facility.

-VCCS has made 3-4 MILLION dollars in renovations to the property over the years. A 500% increase in rent fails to address the enormous reinvestment VCCS has made.

- Prior to VCCS, Washington school was a magnet for vagrancy and vandalism. Many of the neighbors remember this and are so grateful this school took root there.

- VCCS consists of a 170 families with thousands of friends, relatives, and acquaintances with children attending Ventura unified school district. We have been fervently spreading the word regarding the situation and have thousands of supporters. So many in the community from all walks of life see the value of the education these kids and these kids are provided with.

- Our children are receiving a quality education based in love and Biblical principles that we hold dear and that are very important to us.

- VCCS is still willing to continue the improvements on the property. There is still much to be done. A rent increase of this size would completely prevent the school from doing so.

- We would also love to see a workable pathway to purchasing the property.

I am looking forward to the meeting this evening, Thank you so much for hearing my point of view on this and including this in the public comments.

Sincerely,

Kate Moe

[redacted]

From: Hernan Cuevas (NYCO) <hcuevas[redacted]
Sent: Monday, February 21, 2022 6:35 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Teachers and political pundits?

I am very concerned with some teachers taking an active role as political pundits, and indoctrinating in class while on-the-clock with tax payer money when they are supposed to teach.

The 11th Grade English teacher at VHS is a good reflection of this unwanted behavior and his marked adherence with CRT is disgusting.

Example: the teacher told the class that it was racist to suggest that, sometimes, race may be used politically today. This affirmation is factual. Race, sometimes -and we hope by a minority the minority of times- has been, is and may be used for political gain. There is nothing racist about this reasoning just pure common sense and factual reality.

Example: because of black history month, the civil rights assignment must only refer to a black individual. That is a racist bias from the get go. Why not celebrate white people who had a major impact on the civil rights movement and the black community too? Giants like Lincoln, or martyrs like Klunder or Liuzzon? Why Hispanics are excluded when they represent a majority of the State's population and are key to the history of civil rights in California? Or Asians?

Example: why Hispanic is equated with race which is of utter ignorance? Hispanic is a denomination of geographical origins -or belonging- regardless of race. Like being American or Asian or African. Why this fascination with skin color and separating people likewise. That is racism.

Example: why the English syllabus is so devoted to re-teach "History"? Why not concentrate in teaching English? Why classics are discarded and literature with a marxian inspiration is preferred? That so anti-American and anti-Western Civilization, our culture! What's the fascination and importance of including systemic racism or intersectionality in the English program? Very radical and discredited theories that balkanize societies and incite racial tribadism.

Example: in his lecture about the Enlightment in England and its relationship with racism (as if racism was an issue in a racially homogeneous society as Europe or Britain at the time) He stated that the Enlightment was created to give a scientific justification for the social construction of race and to support American slavery.

First, race is not a social construct but a scientific fact. There are different races. Period. People is different. But there are more differences inside populations than between populations though, and we all belong to a larger order, the Human Race. That is science. There is nothing wrong about that. Racism and science are not the same thing. Racism starts when against Dr. King's words, we start judging people by the color of their skin and not their character.

Second, racism was not invented by the Enlightenment, actually, racism has been one of the bonds of tribalism since the world exists. It is precisely the establishment of the Polis, the city states at the beginning of Western civilization, that created melting pots that placed different tribes -and races- together, collaborating and diminishing -if not ending- instinctive tribalisms.

Third, slavery is not a white creation against others. Slavery has been present all over the world, before the establishment of Western (European) civilization. Most notably, in Africa, Middle East and Asia. Many White Europeans were slaves and people, from all races even are -today- victims of human trafficking.

To believe that the Enlightenment's origins were driven by the need to justify slavery in America is preposterous. The Magna Carta of 1215, The Kett rebellion of 1549 (67 years before the first colony is established in America), the 1628 Petition of Right (only 8 years after the first 20 slaves arrived to America) are the precursors of Enlightenment, together with the ideas of Descartes, Spinoza. Enlightenment is such a great threshold in our history, that is a shame is being instrumentalized by Marxist deconstructionism by an English teacher at VHS.

America during the early years of Enlightenment was irrelevant to the rest of the world. The first settlers were not people of power, nobility or members of an elite. They were destitutes, marginalized, persecuted and with no estate or wealth. Families of working people looking to build a better future and to find freedom of worship.

Later, America embraced ideas of Enlightenment (like Hobbes and Locke) to pursue the emancipation from the crown and in establishing the governing documents after the Revolution. The objectives of the Founding Fathers were not inspired by race or the desire to support slavery. If any, the writers of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights new slavery in America has its days counted when signing those documents.

There are many great history writers. Why an English teacher is allowed to teach "history" to our children, apparently, based in the BLM or Jacobin websites, or Howard Zinn's anti-American book (a self described Communist)

These things must stop.

Thanks,

Hernan Cuevas

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

[redacted]

From: Nicole Martin <nicolejwmw[redacted]
Sent: Monday, February 21, 2022 9:24 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Masks

Hi,

I am writing as a concerned parent. I know you will be bombarded with parents who want masks removed. I haven't ever sent a public comment and wanted to now....

My oldest has asthma- We found out during the Thomas Fire. It was rough for him. He has autism and at almost 3 years old he did not understand why i had to put a mask on him or that he had to stay indoors...As we loved in a small apartment, I took him to the park at least 3 times a day....thank goodness I got an indoor trampoline. Whenever there was smoke in the air we used masks. When covid hit, I saw that I needed to prepare my family just in case. With any change my kiddo needs time, practice and patience to grow. Then he excells. I started having the kids wear them for longer and longer times. We talked about it. We all wore them. I am my grandma's live in caregiver (Advanced Alzheimers) so we have protected her.

I was so proud and happy that masks were implemented for use indoors at our schools. This has been to protect our children and all of the staff that has worked so hard this year. I see how much staff shortages have stretched and stressed our schools and we only have a few more months to go for the school year. This is where all the magic happens for our children. We have school trips (CIMI for our Mound and other schools) graduations, promotions, talent shows, dances and sports....I mean Buena is putting on a SpongeBob play!!! I do not want our kids to miss out on anything...please continue to protect our kids, the school staff and our community.

Thank you

[redacted]

From: Lynsey @ Dargans <lynsey[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 9:17 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Mask mandates

Hello, as a mother of a middle schooler in VUSD, I would like to voice my opposition of mask mandates for the students. All mandates have been lifted for adults in work and recreational settings, it makes no sense to keep forcing the masks on children in their learning environment. Studies have proven that masks are causing detrimental effects on kids health and their ability to learn, speak, understand social cues and make emotional connections. My daughter has expressed difficulty breathing at school, especially during hot days. She has stated that it's hard to understand her teacher sometimes, and that kids are not as friendly/social. Please consider changing the mandate to a recommendation and allow children and parents to decide what is best for their personal situation. Let's use rationale and stand up for our kids. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Lynsey

[redacted]

From: Carey Silverman <csnautique[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 9:38 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Ventura Parent

Hi to whom it may concern. We love our children and want them to have the best lives. The mask mandate on these kids is causing them to get in trouble w/ teachers, stressed out, can't smile at there friends, etc. My kids will stay in private school until public schools go back to normal. It's not cheap so we hope you guys change these rules asap. Kids are the least effected of this virus, so it makes no sense. Plus any transgender talk, or CRT talk with our kids we feel is very inappropriate, and will not be tolerated by us big group of normal parents. Please bring back normalcy for our kids. Thank you, Carey S.

[redacted]

From: Danielle Boshoff <danielle.boshoff[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 9:38 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public comment

Good morning . I have two daughters enrolled in VUSD elementary school, ages five and ten . As a parent, I chose to bring my daughters into this world. I absolutely believe that I should make their medical decisions. It should be parents choice to have their children where a mask or not . They had Covid in the fall and missed 3 weeks of school between all of our quarantines , and although I understand the virus is real , the mask is doing nothing to prevent infection. Staying home when you are sick , and washing your hands have always been the best prevention . My 5 year old is asking how come adults don't need to wear masks anymore but kids still do. Even she understand it makes no sense . If the mask mandate is not released , and the vaccine is mandated , I absolutely will be removing my kids from VUSD . Please let all of this be the parents choice and no one else's .

Danielle Boshoff

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Melissa Sapp <watergal79@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 9:50 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Mask Mandate

Good morning,

I am writing you on behalf of the thousands of children who are suffering on some level right now. I think we can all agree that the last 2 years has stretched us in ways we never knew possible.

Emotionally, mentally, physically...
I think we would be hard pressed to find a student who is not suffering in some way shape or form during this time. We are mandating a mask policy for a demographic that is not at risk!!! We are sending a message that it is perfectly suitable for a group of adults to sit at a bar and drink for hours on end MASKLESS, but a child must sit at a desk for 8 hours a day, masked. We are sending a message that celebrities, professional athletes, politicians can go about their life maskless, yet STILL continue to mandate these kids to wear a mask the entire day they are at school, WHY?

I keep hearing the board and other governing adults say "these kids are so resilient!" Why are we asking them to practice their resilience in this manner? Don't kids and teens have enough on their plate to juggle socially, emotionally and physically?

I am so disappointed that we are sending such mixed messages.
"It's ok me for me, not you," is what these kids are hearing and seeing.
Let's be better. Let's be unified in what we are practicing and what we are preaching.
Let's give them a CHOICE!

Thank you,
Melissa Sapp

[redacted]

From: Brittany Cox <brittanycox123@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 10:15 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Entry for VUSD Parents

I wanted to share an entry that I wrote that I have posted on my own personal social media accounts but would love for it to be shared on a larger platform if you feel that it is relevant for the current times. Please let me know if you do choose to use it.

I want to begin by empathizing greatly on how frustrating it must be to have your child wear a mask to school day in and day out, especially when it seems to make no sense as mandates are lifting in other places throughout our state and country. I have seen first hand how wearing a mask and the pandemic as a whole is already effecting our youth... anxiety, speech and language, confusion, depression etc. Although this can be beyond upsetting as a parent I want to remind you that children are extremely resilient and they will get through this and work through the challenges that have come along with this pandemic. One thing I would like to challenge you to be mindful of is that the mask mandate is protecting low-income families in our community. The ones that are forced to live in small homes and apartments with multiple generations of family members. THOSE are the people that do not have the resilience we see in our children and that might have comorbidities that could cause for them to be hospitalized or even for them to die. Again, I am not trying to discredit any frustrations or upset because I am seeing it too in my workplace but please, please understand that this might not be directly for your healthy, young family. It's for your child's friends older grandmother, or father with chronic illness or sister with cerebral palsy. It's them that we are trying to keep safe right now.

Written by: Brittany Cox, ASW

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Mia Russi <miathatsme@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 11:12 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Masks..

Aloha...
We are voting for the mask mandate at the school to please be lifted.
This is very unhealthy for our children. I'm not going to take the time to list why.. I'm sure you've heard them all... If you have any questions please email us.
Aloha
Mia Russi

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Thea Mechtenberg <theamechtenberg[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 11:22 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Students and Masks

Good Morning -
I understand you are having a meeting this evening to address the issue of students continuing to wear masks or not. I am a parent of two VUSD students who have weathered the entire pandemic with VUSD. As a person who values science and the past recommendations to mask, I feel the time has come in the pandemic to unmask safely.
The numbers show the the height of the surge has fallen. Children do not spread Covid at the same rate as adults nor do they become as ill as adults.
Since the state has lifted the mask mandate indoors I feel VISD should follow suit.
It's time for our children to take safe steps to remember their lives before this awful time. Removing masks at school AND while playing sports is an excellent first step in getting back to normal. I appreciate your consideration of my thoughts when making your decision tonight, thank you.

Thea Mechtenberg

[redacted]

From: Hayley Lanning <hayleyraelanning[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 11:23 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Mask

As a mother of a middle schooler ans elementary schooler in VUSD, I would like to voice my opposition of mask mandates for the students. Masks mandates have been lifted for adults in recreational amd work places, it makes no sense to be forcing the children to wear masks in their educational environment. Studies have proven masks are causing detrimental effects on kids health and their ability to learn, speak, understand social cues and make emotional connections. My kids have expressed difficulty breathing on hot days and my son has developed many sinus infections due to constant mask wearing. Please consider changing the mandate. Allow the parents to decide what is best for their children. They need to hear their teachers loud and clear and to breath freely.
Sincerely
Hayley

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android

[redacted]

From: Holly Likens <holly@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 11:28 AM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Masking should be a choice!

I am in favor of No masks, or masks by choice!!
There is no science to support the continued mask mandate.

--
holly@[redacted]
Wilder Public Relations

[redacted]

From: jeanascarlett@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 12:20 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Masks/vaccines

I just wanted to share with you my thoughts before the board meeting tonight. First off my kids love going to school. I have two in elementary and one in middle school in the VUSD. I haven't made it a big deal that they have had to wear masks everyday. But now I am starting to get irritated. Covid will never go away. We need to move on. Unmask these kids like everyone else in California and all over the world. We all know it doesn't help anyways. My kids have had it, they were fine, and they should not be required to wear a mask anymore. As far as the possible vaccine mandates in the future, you will give me no choice but to pull my kids out of school. Is that what they will want, no. Is that what I want, no. But if I am backed in to a corner there is no way I will give my kids a vaccine that does nothing. I think people should have the right to choose. Please unmask the kids and don't go through with Covid Vaccine mandates. Thank you for your time.

Jeana Van

Sent from my iPhone

[redacted]

From: Annie Saddler <ampatter[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 1:11 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Letter From a Prospective Parent

Dear members of the Ventura Unified School District,

First – thank you so much for creating the committee to address declining enrollment and being open to hearing from parents. I also want to thank all of you who are in this business of educating and serving the kids of our community and investing in their education through your work. It isn't easy in "normal" times, and I applaud all of you for your commitment under an even more difficult (to put it lightly) set of circumstances we've had the last 2 years.

I am a mother of a 2 year old and 4 year old, and my son will be starting Kindergarten this fall. I have said constantly how grateful I am as a parent to have had little ones during these crazy times. I cannot imagine having to navigate the extreme changes to school life, home life, and friend life that children and teens (along with their parents) have experienced in this state over the last 2 years. We're considering both private school and public school for my son, and will not be making any final decisions until we hear more about what is happening in the current climate at VUSD.

While the handling of Covid-19 strategies shouldn't be a political issue, it has become one. Therefore I feel I also need to state that I am a political "moderate". I have voted for Democratic candidates in the past, as well as Republican. My opinions on these issues are not fueled by watching too much Fox News, or as part of a conspiracy theory group.

I recognize that there are many who have suffered loss due to Covid-19, and I want to acknowledge and express my sincerest condolences to you and your families if you have been personally impacted. In writing asking you to take a stand for our children, I hope it is clear I am not implying that there were not some very important precautionary measures that needed to be taken so others did not suffer the same loss. However, the time and place for those protective measures has passed as this virus has changed. It's time California (and specifically Ventura Unified) follow suit with so many others, and focus on getting back to what is normal not just because "we're tired of dealing with masks", but because it's vital to our children's social and emotional well-being. Yes, children are adaptable but the toll this is taking on our kids I fear is greater than we realize right now.

I certainly have more to read but this article has stood out the most for me when trying to get to the bottom of the Q "Are masks in schools an effective mitigation strategy?" The article is from Aug 2021, so yes pre Omicron surge, but there are insightful data points to consider regarding the effectiveness of masks. I urge you to read it and consider as you're formulating the District's position with regard to masking children.

Article: NY Magazine: The Science of Masking Kids at School Seems Uncertain

In addition to masking, I have an urgent concern regarding Senate Bill 871 requiring Covid-19 vaccination for all 5+ children to attend school. While this may not feel like something that the district will have control over when all is said and done, I think there are many parents who will be writing off public school if this bill passes which should *absolutely* be a concern based on the data that was presented on the last zoom meeting regarding declining enrollment.

Based on the science, it is not medically necessary for my child to be vaccinated against Covid-19. I'll speak for myself and say I have vaccinated my kids against other viruses and diseases, but to mandate this for children (without personal belief exceptions) is absolutely extreme, and a response fueled by funding of those

in power – plain and simple. I hope VUSD will consider taking a stand and not following through with these requirements, despite what the state says. California is a very large state. Our community schools need to reflect the views of those in the community, and I know both Democrats and Republicans alike who are not convinced this is a necessity for their child and have an issue with not being allowed to make that choice as their parent. What's saddening about this is my husband I and I feel confident that private schools, even if mandated, will fight or choose to not enforce this specific requirement. I cannot say I'm convinced public school districts will do the same.

When it comes to things like masks and vaccines, I hope you recognize that school districts SHOULD have the right to decide. If enough districts make their own decisions, then the state laws are powerless. The high school district I personally attended (Roseville Joint Union HS District) has said they will make masks optional based on parent input. The high school district where I went as a teen (Roseville Joint Union HS District) has said they will make masks optional based on parent input, despite what the state is mandating. (Info here if you're interested: https://edsource.org/2022/some-california-school-districts-are-defying-state-law-and-making-masking-optional/667805)

There are other reasons we are considering private school for next year outside of Covid mandates. For example, I want my children to go to a school where they're challenged appropriately and there is a strong focus on learning by doing. I want to have an appropriate amount of transparency re the curriculum being taught to my kids. I want accessibility to school leadership; while I know many principals appreciate hearing from parents, there often isn't the ability for them to do that due to the business of running larger schools. Bottom line, I want school to be about learning about all aspects of the world and allowing children to make their own opinions of what happens in it. I found myself using the "clap" emoji during the last meeting when one committee member said something to the effect of "there has been so much emotion and a shift in focus to social issues in schools or the most disadvantaged groups, rather than an emphasis on fundamentals and learning. Parents don't want that anymore." I cannot agree more with that statement.

Thank you for your time, and I sincerely appreciate you, reader, making it to the end of this letter. Thank you!

Annie Saddler

ampatter[redacted]

[redacted]

From: Ashlee O'Hara <ashleemarieohara@[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 2:17 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public comment for school board meeting

Good afternoon,

I have a few ideas as a parent on why the enrollment is decreasing yearly.

1. mask mandates. How can our children learn properly with a mask on? They are the lowest percent effected by this virus with a 99.9 perfect survival rate. Yet, we are masking them for 6 hours a day. Our children are facing speech issues like never before!! How can our students with speech issues learn speech WITH A MASK ON?! They can't see their teachers mouths.

2. Vaccines. If we think the rates are decreasing now, wait until next year! Once that Covid vaccine mandate hits we will see a mass exodus of the public school system like NEVER BEFORE.

Remove these masks from our kids. Stand up for the children is VUSD and please do what we know is RIGHT. Our children deserve better than this.

[redacted]

From: Kaley Chadwell <kchadwell2[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 2:35 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Please unmask

To whom it may concern,

Please unmask the children! As a NICU RN, I find it completely irrational to keep the children masked anymore. I'm tired of the anxiousness and anxiety that can arise from my child. He needs love and happiness!! Not to mention the fact that he's learning to read! How hard is it to be able to make sounds without seeing the lips move!? Sounding out words is nearly impossible without being able to see I don't like him relying on YouTube either! That's what we pay our teachers for!!!! So much room for error and making our children fall behind in class. Masking our children bring so much more anxiety and insecurity than needed. Let them be free!!

Jackson Chadwell
TK-Lincoln elementary

Kaley Chadwell
[redacted]

Dahm, Amy

From: Jessica Vlahakis <jesslo92[redacted]
Sent: Tuesday, February 22, 2022 3:45 PM
To: Public Comment
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- General Comment

Dear Board Members,

I am a parent of a child in the district. I am writing to you today to talk about masks and what the board can do.

It has come to my attention that Governor Newsom is being pushed to keep the mask mandate in place by the CTA. This is no longer about science, it is all about politics and consequently putting our kids last.

Just recently Jen Psaki the press secretary for the White House said, "it's always been up to school districts. That's always been our point of view and always been our policy from here" regarding covid regulations.

So my point is this. The school district has power. They have the power to make masking optional.

Recently, districts around the state have ended their mask mandate policy because the board made the choice and they are not loosing their insurance.

So I ask you to make masks a choice in schools. I request that the board puts masking in the their next agenda and vote on it if Newsom continues to please the CTA instead of putting our kids first.

There is are also quite a few bills in the legislature that I ask you to take a stand against. One of which is SB871, which will mandate the covid vaccine for schools. I know you recently started a committee due to drops in enrollment. More students will get pulled out if this bill passes. I ask that the board take a stand against this bill and write a letter to our Governor letting him know that the board does not support this bill.

Thank you for your time