



## Dolores Huerta

**“A Dual Language Charter Middle School”**

1480 N. Main Street

Las Cruces, NM 88001

Phone: 575/526-2984 Fax: 575/523-5407

### Special Governing Council Meeting

#### FINAL MINUTES

**Monday June 30th, 2014 5:30 p.m.**

Bertha Silva, Chair

John Vasquez, Vice Chair

Norma Martinez Arrieta, Secretary/Treasurer

Robert Del Plain, Member

Saul Hernandez, Member

Christina Devereaux, Member

Rick Serrano, Member

#### 1) Call to Order

Ms. Bertha Silva, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:43 pm and asked for a roll call.

#### 2) Roll Call

B. Silva - Present

J. Vasquez - Present

N. Arrieta - Present

R. del Plain - Present

S. Hernandez - Present

C. Devereaux - Present

R. Serrano – Absent

Total: (6) members present; (1) member absent. Let the record show that a quorum of governing council members is present, that this meeting has been called and that this meeting has been posted in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

FACULTY/ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Rosa Ana Ramos, Teacher; Diana Diaz, Teacher/Administrator; Chris Bardey, Teacher; Ruben Diaz, Teacher; Rene Salazar, Teacher; Cody Smith, Teacher;

STAFF PRESENT: Mirna Rodriguez, Administrative Assistant; Michael Davis, Counselor;

PUBLIC PRESENT: Javier Garcia, Armando Casillas-Long, Mariana Casillas, Susana Long, Paul Long, Victoria Gonzalez, Olga Morales, Patricia G. Montoya, Eddie R. Padilla, Manuel Olivas, Jessica L., Rosa Lopez, Leticia Lopez and family, Nataly Ortega, Tina Olivas, Luisa Soto, Juan Hernandez, Chris Burns, Lorena J., Eduardo J., Mayra Leon, Magdalena Marquez, Gabriela Gutierrez, David L. Mendez, Josefina Mendez, Maria E. Ramirez

#### 3) Approval of Agenda

Mr. del Plain motioned to approve the agenda. Motion was seconded Mr. Vasquez

Roll Call vote: Vasquez (Yes); Arrieta (Yes); del Plain (Yes); Hernandez (Yes); Devereaux (Yes); Silva (Yes)

Total: Yes (5); No (0); Motion was approved in the unanimous.

#### 4) Open forum-Public Input

*Public comments and observations regarding education policy and governance issues, as well as the strategic planning, are heard at this time. (Two-Minute Time Limit Per Presenter. Persons from the same group and having similar viewpoints are asked to select a spokesperson to speak on their behalf. Multiple and repetitious presentations of the same view will be discouraged and may be ruled out of order by the Chair.)*

(Mr. del Plain was timekeeper)

Diana Diaz spoke to the board in regards to her unanswered email inquiry, “Would the board be able and willing to consider a motion to amend or reconsider the contract that was proposed for Mr. Casillas?”

Ms. Silva explained that the board does not hold discussion during the public input portion of the meeting. Because this is not an emergency meeting the board cannot add an agenda item to be voted on. She continued that the agenda had already been approved as is and that all it takes is one board member to request the item to add it to the agenda for Thursday’s regular governing council meeting.

Diana Diaz confirmed that the reconsideration could be added to Thursday’s agenda and Ms. Bertha Silva stated that she would need one board member to request that it be added to the agenda.

Javier Garcia, works with FYI, Inc. representing himself and the voices of people with children. He explained that in his capacity at FYI he works with preventative services to different agencies in and around El Paso and Las Cruces and has been working closely with La Academia beginning in the Spring of 2014. Being here [at LADH] was very special to him as he found that the program that Mr. Casillas actually provides to the kids is very, very important. He stated there was no better school for our community as LADH and would like the board to reconsider what they were doing. Mr. Casillas is a very important piece of this intricate school and it is an amazing school. He stated, “I wish I had this school when I was a child and I want the board to consider that this will touch a lot of kids and their families. So just reconsider. Thank you.”

Chris Bardey who spoke as a teacher of LADH, stated he did not know a lot about what has led up to the point where his [Mr. Casillas’] contract was not renewed and now we are looking for a new principal. He was just wondering/had a few questions and he posed several questions to the board with the understanding they would not be answered at this time: “Are you all looking and thinking about how this would affect our relationship with the state and the re-charter agreement that we have and the goals that we are working towards? Are you thinking about the community relationships that we rely on that Mr. Casillas was integral in setting up? The different partners and community stockholders he [Mr. Casillas’] has brought in here that participate in our school –was that part of your consideration? How is this going to affect teachers, teachers that are going to be hired again next year? Nobody here is on contract yet. How is this going to affect programs? What about the facility plans and how are those going to go forward?” He thought he got the feeling from the board at the meeting last week that we may not get the facility on Solano, but, maybe there is another facility. He encouraged the board to open these discussions up to staff.

Ruben Diaz as a member of the staff of teachers, voiced his views that, “in the past few weeks the staff of LADH has been grossly left out of important conversations.” He stated that he understands there are laws and protocols that are in place that keep what happens between our administration and the board away from our judgment/away from our knowledge. “But when it comes to decisions of this nature, I, and I think that I can speak for the rest of my staff, we would really appreciate if there was a way to keep us in the loop. It has been very stressful for us for the last few weeks since we have become aware and will honestly say that I feel, on behalf of our staff, that a decision like this will affect us more than anyone (and the students and the school), and I don’t feel that is being respected. So I would like to put this out there. I am not upset, but I would like to see a better effort in the future to help decisions such as this come to us as well. I think our voice is critical and we should at least be aware more of what is going on.”

Paul Long, parent of a student and two previous students, community member, and a taxpayer stated he was very concerned about what is going on here. He asked any of the members that were able-- to address the concerns of Ms. Diaz at the next meeting. He urged each board member to ask for that to be put on the agenda. He stated, “I think there are some serious concerns, and I think everyone here has serious concerns that the board has the best interests of the students and parents in mind.”

Olga Morales, mother of a former student/recent graduate of LADH. “I’m very concerned about what’s going on. I have no idea what’s led to this point, but I can tell you from experience from working very closely with the school over the last three years that my kid was here, that I’ve seen the school change and I’ve seen a lot of things happen since Mr. Casillas was here. So it comes to me as a surprise. Nothing against boards, but you guys are elected to represent the interests of the school kids and I don’t feel that is the case right now when you are removing the leadership of the school. I know that you guys are serving in a leadership position, but really, the face of the school is not yours-- it is the administrator’s and he has taken this school to a very high level. And I can say that from experience, not only for myself, but for a lot of the parents that are here today. I feel that if you remove that leadership and that role from this school and that level of commitment, you will change radically the foundation and the purpose and the mission and the vision of this institution. Denying the opportunity to future generations of the same opportunity

my kid had. I invite you to reconsider the position, especially if there are personal differences and I have nothing to base that on other than I don't think it has to do with performance because I've seen his performance. I've seen the performance of the teachers under him. There is a leadership that in my mind, is being overlooked. I invite you to reconsider whatever decision have been made for the future kids of LADH.”

Magdalena Marquez asked, “What does it take to have another special meeting? For one of you guys to call it? Can you guys do that today? Can one of you guys commit to something like that?”

Ms. Silva stated there is another regular governing council meeting this week on Thursday at 6pm. Ms. Silva explained that the board is not able to put something on the agenda to vote on unless it is posted 72 hours in advance. She continued that today, the board is not able to add something to vote on for the regular governing council meeting on Thursday due to the fact that there is less than 72 hours notice.

Olga Morales stated that the board would be able to discuss it, but not vote on it.

Ms. Silva stated that she needed just one board member to request something be added to the agenda for Thursday's meeting as the agenda will be posted by 8am tomorrow morning.

Mr. John Vasquez stated he had requested that the re-consideration be put on the agenda for Thursday's regular governing council meeting.

Mr. del Plain, board member, made the following statement to the public, “I think it was really a confluence of events that happened that required that actually ended up making this happen. There were several times where the board was ready to vote on a contract and it was moved by people other than the people on the governing council. Things that happened, other than by people on the governing council, that prevented a vote coming to approve. At a time when I think members of the governing council were most likely, I mean I can't speak for everyone on the council, but, I can speak for myself, that people were ready to vote “yes” on a contract that was ready. What ended up happening at the last governing council meeting, based on the law something needed to be on the agenda, and things like those types of requirements, basically made it so that...I mean people could've vote yes or no but pretty much made it so that for most people had to vote no. And that what we are doing tonight does not preclude Mr. Casillas from being the head administrator. But the way the events unfolded, and we can't necessarily state all the events publically because things have to be behind closed meetings based on law. And based on those things it made it happen... in my opinion. And personnel issues are behind closed door issues. So what we vote on today, does not preclude Mr. Casillas from being necessarily the head administrator. But if we approve the item which is before us today, we open it up to the possibility of more than just Mr. Casillas it could be other people as well that apply or are considered.”

## Action items

### 5) Approval of committee to appoint interim and begin search for Head Administrator.

Ms. Devereaux motioned to approve a committee comprised of (2) board members, (1) faculty, (1) staff, (1) parent/community member to appoint interim and begin search for Head Administrator. Motion was seconded by Mr. Vasquez.

Roll Call vote: Vasquez (Yes); Arrieta (Yes); del Plain (Yes); Hernandez (Yes); Devereaux (Yes); Silva (Yes)

Total: Yes (6); No (0); Motion was approved in the unanimous.

### 6) Adjourn

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Vasquez and seconded by Ms. Devereaux.

Roll Call vote: Vasquez (Yes); Arrieta (Yes); del Plain (Yes); Hernandez (Yes); Devereaux (Yes); Silva (Yes)

Total: Yes (6); No (0); Motion was approved in the unanimous.

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

\*Any individual attending a board meeting may sign in to participate in the Public Input section of the Agenda, if any. Such persons may speak on any item after the individual is recognized by the President of the Board and introduces himself/herself at the podium. The Governing Council of La Academia Dolores Huerta will not take action on any item presented under Public Input, until an opportunity to do so is afforded. La Academia Dolores Huerta will provide an interpreter for the Hearing Impaired upon request. Requests should be submitted to the head administrator's office three days prior to the meeting. Simultaneous Spanish translation will be provided at the meeting.