

**Harmony Union School District  
Regular School Board Meeting  
March 14, 2024  
Minutes (draft/unapproved)**

**Board Members present:**

Andrew Cone (AL), Amanda Solter (AS), Yuri Koslen (YK), Mariah Lander (ML), Charlie Laird (CL)

**Also present:**

Suzi Heron, Stacy Kalember, Matthew Morgan

**Meeting opened:**

**Entered into closed session:**

**Entered into open session at 7:24**

**1.0 Call to Order**

**2.0 Pledge of Allegiance**

**3.0 Approval of the Agenda**

**4.0 Public Comment**

4.1 For Closed Session: Members of the public may address the Board briefly on matters not on the agenda and are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. Please state your name and address. In accordance with Board Policy 9323, speakers are to keep comments concise and limited to three minutes. The Public Comment item will be limited to a total of 20 minutes, absent approval to extend by the Board President. If there are several people who share the same issue, please choose one as your representative, and that person may be given additional time, if necessary. The Board values public comment, but by the Brown Act the Board shall not act upon, respond to, or comment on the merits of any item presented. The Board may ask clarifying questions of the presenter or refer the presenter to the District procedures.

Members of the public may address the Board regarding items on the agenda at the time the item appears on the agenda. The Board President may move any agenda item to a different place on the agenda in order to accommodate the public or improve the flow of the meeting.

*No public comment at this time*

**Info 5.0 Closed Session**

5.1 With respect to every item of business to be discussed in closed session Gov. Code Section 54957.6: CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATOR, Info/Action

Name of Agency Negotiator: Matthew Morgan  
Name of organization representing employees: CSEA

5.2 With respect to every item of business to be discussed in closed session Gov. Code Section 54957.6: CONFERENCE WITH LABOR NEGOTIATOR, Info/Action

Name of Agency Negotiator: Matthew Morgan  
Name of organization representing employees: HUTA

5.3 With respect to every item of business to be discussed in closed session Gov. Code Section 54957.6 - Personnel, Info

5.4 With respect to every item of business to be discussed in closed session pursuant to Gov. Code Section 54957.6: Update on Anticipated Litigation items, Info

5.5 With respect to every item of business to be discussed in closed session pursuant to Gov. Code Section 54957:Public Employee - Discipline/ Dismissal/ Release, Info

## **6.0 Reconvene to Open Session**

6.1 Report out on any action taken during closed session Info  
*Nothing to report from closed session*

## **7.0 Communication**

### **A) Reports**

#### **7.1 HUTA Report**

*HUTA member mentioned that teachers are busy with report cards as they head into Spring Break. HUTA members are interested in the closed session for consideration of hiring a vice principal, and HUTA would like to be involved in the job description formulation and participating on the hiring committee.*

#### **7.2 ARK Report**

*Ark member reported that gala event is happening on May 4; quality over quantity for auction; community can register donation items to the auction or event; looking for sponsors, as well—info on Ark home page.  
Yuri asked if Board can help in any way—she said she hopes staff and Board can attend and if anyone wants to volunteer.*

#### **7.3 Student Report**

*The student council representative, Brie, explained that the student body has been working on an April dance and a recess snack shack with healthy foods and non-disposable containers.*

#### 7.4 Board Member Reports

*Amanda went to the play and said it was fantastic—lots of work and effort. Congratulated all involved.*

#### 7.5 Superintendent/Principal's Report

- *Matthew reported that the play ran—congratulations to all, especially students.*
- *One HVAC system went down, and it's been fixed.*
- *Water level flagged for elevated levels of arsenic pre-treatment. Post-treatment numbers are fine. More info at the next meeting. Kicks district into another level of oversight from the state, so now the equipment has to be certified. It will lead to a certification process and likely more equipment—more info at next meeting.*
- *Collaborative Welcoming Schools training with 45 people and 3 districts. Very powerful.*
- *Youth Truth survey completed in January. Highest return rate in county.*

#### 7.6 Pathways Director Report

*No Pathways report at this time*

#### 7.7 Enrollment Report

*Suzi had nothing new to report.*

### B) Public Comment

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*No public comment at this time*

C) Correspondence

**8.0 Consent Agenda, Action**

8.1 Vendor Warrants, Action

8.2 2nd Grade Field Trip, Rotary Learn-to-Swim Program -Figueroa, Action

8.3 8th Grade end of Year Field Trip to Tomales Bay- May 1-3, Action  
*Suzi commented that the date has been corrected: May 7–9.*

8.4 6th Grade Field Trip for Yosemite- May 6-10, Action

8.5 Approve the minutes from the regular meeting held February 28, 2024, Action

8.6 Approve the Consent Agenda, Action

*Mariah commented that she is proud of the school for continuing to be able to offer these amazing experiences.*

*Motion: ML*

*Second: AC*

*All in favor—motion approved*

**9.0 Information/Correspondence/Discussion**

9.1 School to be in session on calendared emergency days April 22 and April 29 due to use of emergency days for power outages in February. Info/Action

9.2 Update on bond Measure D, Info

*Matthew shared outcome of bond measure: at first votes didn't meet 55% threshold to pass the measure, but once additional votes came in, 55.51% were in favor (this is passing at the moment). Next release of data will be Friday—whether it passes depends on the turnout numbers of registered voters (Matthew shared numbers and informal projections—at this point it could go either way).*

*No public comment at this time*

A) Board Member Development

9.3 Discussion to set special open session meeting date for the board to review the Board Self Evaluation, Info

*CSBA recommends special open session meeting—Board should set date.*

*Board set the meeting for April 17 at 6:30 pm.*

*No public comment at this time*

**10.0 Action Items**

10.1 Consideration of District's 2nd Interim Report of Budget and Financial Progress for the 2023-24 school year, Action

*Stacy explained what the 2nd Interim is: 2nd update from June's budget plus governor's update and any changes between Oct. & Feb. Unaudited actuals happen in September.*

- *Increase in property sales led to higher than average property tax revenue.*
- *Budget for COLA lower than originally projected for next two years.*
- *LCFF funds: district gets money for average student daily attendance.*
- *TK enrollment is at 18, but 13 have birthdays after April 1, so district only gets funding for 5 students; next year the state will fund students turning 5 before June 2, and the following year all TKers will be funded.*
- *Special ed costs have continued to increase—non-restricted property tax funds covered these this year. Projections of more special ed costs in next two years.*
- *Looked at form that shows property taxes and ADA, and they are apportioned between the 3 schools.*
- *Deficit spending this year—deficit spending at 1st interim with more unexpected costs over last few months. Attorney fees for legal case with bond settlement—settlement will probably come soon. Walkies and security cameras were purchased.*
- *\$25,000 moved into Fund 14—state requirement.*
- *Smaller ending balance.*
- *Higher in ADA than we originally thought—higher-than-projected enrollment.*
- *8-year budget included in packet.*
- *Info on revenue and expenses in packet.*
- *Info on Fund 14 in packet: new lawn mower purchase, HVAC, tree work, poison oak cleanup.*
- *Info on Fund 17: moved \$255,000 out (hand radios, special ed settlement).*
- *Info on Fund 20: post-employment benefits for retirees*
- *Info on Fund 40: \$ for bond project. Will have extra money if all goes as planned.*
- *Info on flow of this year's budget.*
- *Info on funding sources and expenditures.*

*Andrew asked why supply costs went up sharply and are expected to fall. Stacy said it's due to technology purchases, curriculum purchases, COVID expenditures, and inflation.*

*Amanda asked what could be cut (in face of deficit). Stacy answered, need to look at what you are allowed to cut. Could cut service contracts and materials and then programs/services. Matthew mentioned not doing deferred maintenance and going lean on supplies. Preserve staff who interact with kids. Matthew talked about how the district is lucky to be Basic Aid compared to other small schools in the area—Matthew shared things other districts do to save money. Matthew discussed the mental health situation with students, and noted the significant impact on lower grade staff this year.*

*Amanda asked about budgeting and the possible passing of the bond measure, and whether the bond can offset costs. There may be some money that can be used for project management, but it should be used for facilities improvement. It can also be used for deferred maintenance.*

*Yuri asked if the budget stabilization fund would be used for emergency facility issues. Matthew said the bond should cover things, and the district is pursuing grants.*

*Andrew asked if, because district is in deficit spending, the district could pursue renewable energy to save \$, and he asked if taking care of the land (like poison oak mitigation & forestry) could be paid for by bond). Matthew said yes, but the district should be careful to stick with what they promised with the bond.*

*Yuri asked if the district doesn't expect to incur the same kinds of expenses next year—Matthew and Stacy said yes. Matthew said paying for special ed is an obligation in order to fulfill the needs of the kids—don't know what population will look like in the future.*

*Mariah asked how state expects schools to pay for special ed. Special education staff in county are under duress, and they need to be compensated and cared for. Matthew wondered if it were possible to build in-house programs for a lower cost, but a consortium is valuable and they are running a tight margin. Stacy mentioned that special ed funds come from a variety of sources (\$250,000) but still need \$680,000 to cover all costs. These numbers are reported to the CDE (20% of budget goes to special ed). CDE can't ignore data and can ask government for more \$.*

*Stacy also said that transportation-related revenue will increase.*

*Amanda asked how much we'll be receiving from Prop. 28 (arts and music in the schools). Stacy said district receives \$25,000 and \$2274 but we don't know how much it will be next year.*

*Yuri asked if there were any public comments on this issue:*

*A member of the public who is a special education nurse thanked Matthew for supporting special ed. And appreciated everyone's attitude. Question for Stacy: money from state for SE and behavioral health? Stacy answered that yes, there are small mental health funds and it depends on what the CDE decides the schools need. Matthew said there will likely be small funds that come through a settlement through the county. Stacy spoke about knowing more about funds in the summer and pointed to small amounts of revenue from various sources in budget. Matthew spoke about a grant for therapy services and paying for therapy from general fund. Member of public appreciated the school for healthy food and outdoor time. She also asked about a special ed lawsuit and the bond settlement. Matthew said the district is recouping \$ from poor work by contractor.*

*A staff member asked about the bar chart for the revised budget: were confidential salaries rolled into certificated. Matthew's is; Stacy's and Suzi's aren't.*

*Another member of the public asked about Prop 28 and asked for a recap because Matthew's mic wasn't working. Matthew said that they'd hoped the Prop 28 \$ would be significant this year, but it wasn't. A lobby group indicated that they expect the legislature to reduce the amount of \$ to go down next year, but it's impossible to know until the end of the year.*

*Motion: AS*

*Second: CL*

*All in favor- motion carried*

10.2 Consideration of and Possible Action on Resolution Regarding Certificated Reductions in Force (1.20 F.T.E. – Layoffs), Action

*Matthew explained the March 15 deadline for alerting staff re cuts. Matthew and Stacy felt that music should be reduced from 1.0 to a .8 position in light of next year's budget (no more K and 1 with a way to find coverage for K and 1 teacher prep time). May be able to reinstate later if district has the budget. The temporary teaching position will also be eliminated and the teacher could apply for potential other positions.*

*A staff member talked about the powerful impact on morale of getting a pink slip. A few years out, numbers look better, and he wouldn't want a short-term solution. Matthew agreed with the point about morale. Matthew also talked about funding for a staff position for SRT and student support. The vice principal position is competing for that. Stacy and AManda clarified procedures for pink slips.*

*Amanda asked about history of part-time music teacher at school. Matthew discussed the way it was designed, with required instructional minute time and teacher prep.*

*A staff member stated that it's hard to come by good music teachers, and it would be a shame to lose a good music teacher.*

*A member of the public echoed the previous speaker's comments.*

*A staff member stated that the incredible things the music teacher does (i.e., middle school marching band). A .8 teacher may not bring the same heart.*

*A member of the comment advocated for the music program. Question: How does school funding work to hire a certificated teacher for drama? Her preference is to hire a full-time music or Spanish teacher. Matthew said that if drama happens during the instructional day, it needs a certificated teacher (2022 new legislation). Drama could be after school, but teachers would need prep coverage.*

*A staff/community member asked that the board not agree to reduce the music teacher position to .8. She spoke highly of the music program.*

*Another member of the public voiced support for keeping music teacher full time. She also asked if part of the transportation budget could be allocated to other areas. Matthew said no on lowering transportation costs (JPA board), and there may be benefits (and responsibilities) to breaking off and doing transportation on own.*

*Another member of the public asked if there were possibilities for Ark or private fundraising. Matthew said that grants would help, but will they be realized? Matthew said fundraising is challenging if it's targeted for a specific program/individual and becomes a line-item guarantee if the community doesn't come through. General block grants to pay for programs are better. Andrew asked if there are examples of arts foundations at other districts and how they organize it. Matthew said SR City Schools has such a foundation but doesn't know how they run it.*

*Yuri asked if the board members had any further comments:*

*Amanda appreciated community support for the arts and commented that Matthew and Stacy work hard to keep the district fiscally solvent. Amanda feels that reducing the music position by .2 would be damaging to the community and not worth the money savings.*

*Mariah is appreciative of everyone speaking up. She wants more brainstorming and creative thinking. Worries about losing music teacher through this process—would like more time to figure this out. Could revisit this next year.*

*Motion: AS (to split the .2 from the 1.0 and move forward with the 1.0 layoff)*

*Second: AC*

*All in favor- motion carried*

*Andrew underscored that public comment does matter (he changed his mind about his vote).*

*Yuri advocated raising funds for music and other programs through Ark.*

10.3 First Reading for future adoption:BP 0410 Nondiscrimination in District Programs and Activities BP 1312.2 Complaints Concerning Instructional Materials AR 1312.2 Complaints Concerning Instructional Materials E(1) 1312.2 Complaints Concerning Instructional Materials BP 1312.3 Uniform Complaint Procedures AR 1312.3 Uniform Complaint Procedures AR 1312.4 Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures E(1) 1312.4 Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures E(2) 1312.4 Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures BP 5145.3 Nondiscrimination/Harassment BP 6143 Courses of Study AR 6143 Courses of Study BP 6161.1 Selection and Evaluation of Instructional Materials AR 6161.1 Selection and Evaluation of Instructional Materials E(1) 6161.1 BP 6161.11 Supplementary Instructional Materials BP 6163.1 Library Media Centers OPTION 1: , Info/Action

*Matthew explained how the policies are developed and discussed the fact that most of the policies hitch anti-discrimination to curriculum as a consequence of challenges to requirements by a few CA districts.*

*No public comment*

*First reading only—no action*

10.4 Consideration of HUSD Calendar for 2024-25 School Year, Action

*Matthew mentioned that he was interested in public comment on the current version of the calendar; it's largely in alignment with the high school district calendar. Admin also needs input from staff.*

*Motion tabled until April*

10.5 Consideration of Revision of Facilities Use Fees, Action

*Matthew has a question for the board regarding the steep fee structure for the OCC.*

*Yuri said a different fee structure may bring in more people.*

*Matthew said the Occidental Community Council wanted the district to manage the facility, and the county has helped. A grant will be available, and the Occ. Comm. Council may receive the grant and may be positioned to take over management responsibilities.*

*No further comments or questions*

*Not an action item—no action needed.*

10.6 Consideration of lease of classroom to the West County Consortium, Action



Matthew shared background about the special ed consortium. They've been housed at Parkside (4 classrooms) and Twin Hills (1 classroom)—students have to be housed on gen ed campuses. Parkside will no longer be able to house 3 special ed classrooms. Matthew believes that Consortium classrooms need to be good classrooms, not leftovers. Forestville has 2 non-ideal rooms and it may not be permanent. Guerneville may have a room. We currently don't have room on site. Costs of rent were not full costs—SUSD subsidized. HUSD was approached to see if the district can make room for one class. Consortium board decided to consolidate 2 classes, but it may not work. Matthew is coming to the HUSD board so that they will consider housing a class. May have fewer costs (in relation to how much district spends to place students) if we house a class; may be more expensive to pay other districts to house classes. Housing classes has impacts on sites on which they are housed, i.e., mainstreaming students w/aides where the cost is covered, adding another section of a class and billing consortium, administrative response since consortium director is not on site with cost billed to consortium, liability issues, etc. Not ready to build right now, but may do so in the long run if the district took this on. If district took this on, it would be housed in the Rainbow Room. Also need bathroom with privacy close to classroom.

Mariah worries about responsibility falling on principal/superintendent's shoulders.

Yuri asked about the time frame of a potential agreement. Might only need 2 classrooms after next year, so probably short-term.

Andrew said it's appropriate to offer as an ethical obligation. In practice, make sure facilities and admin time will work.

Matthew said it would probably involve a classroom (Rainbow Room) and bathroom on corner of gym. If the 6th grade class is consolidated, one of the cottages or the room next to Taryn could become the Rainbow Room.

Matthew will talk to staff about concerns and bring something back to the board in April.

Charlie expressed concerns, and Mariah said that this should be part of visioning session. Amanda appreciated ethical concerns, but if bond passes and facilities are built, it would put the district in a different position. Mariah wants to know the time frame—Matthew imagines it would be longer than 1 year.

Andrew commented on unfunded mandates for special ed, and this has impacts on kids, caregivers, and staff. Maybe district should write a letter and petition legislature.

A staff member commented on process—teachers are open and have the same types of questions as board members—moral imperative exists, timeline is challenging, and change in working conditions need to be addressed.

A parent and consortium employee spoke and thanked board and Matthew about speaking to the ethics. She said that they take no admin time outside of IEPs and management because things are handled "in house." Collapsing classes makes for a lot of students with significant needs in the classroom. Consolidating classrooms would be a real challenge. Bathrooms are essential to the Consortium classroom, especially in younger grades, and the bathrooms by the gym could work. Harmony is not a long-term solution but considering the ethical needs of the students is a big deal.

Not an action item—no action needed.

## **11.0 Next Board Meeting**

*April 11, 2024*

## **12.0 Adjournment**

Agendas have been posted at the Harmony School public bulletin board and the Harmony Union School District Website at [www.harmonyusd.org](http://www.harmonyusd.org).