

Meeting Summary SCPC

School Community Partnership Council – District Council General Meeting

Date: 4/29/2013

Location: Tucson High Magnet School Cafeteria, 400 N. 2nd Ave.

Call to Order: Kathy Sutherland, 6:05pm

Pledge of Allegiance: Kathy Sutherland

Attendance: Kathy Sutherland (Moderator), Leo Masursky (Board Liason), Michelle Simon (Secretary), Gary Fowler (Co-Moderator), James Fish (District Leadership Representative), Yousef Awwad (TUSD Chief Financial Officer), Adelita Grijalva (TUSD Board President), Cam Juarez (TUSD Board Member), and appointed SCPC members and district representatives (see attendance record).

1. TUSD 2012/2013 Budget Overview:

Notes: Mr. Awwad presented the current budget and its components to the group. The budget shows the current expenditures and status. The link to all budget documents can be found at <http://tusd1.org/contents/distinfo/budget/pdfs/complete1213.pdf>. The budget is broken out into the categories of M&O, Deseg, Title I, and Other.

Additional Discussion Points on 2012/2013 Budget:

1. TUSD currently spends more than 50% of its budget in the classroom. M&O is equal to 50%, Deseg is equal to 53%, and Title I 65%.
2. Departments and Schools budget is broken into the following percentages:
 - a. Elementary: 77% Classroom and Instruction/9% Administration
 - b. K-8: 76% Classroom and Instruction/9% Administration
 - c. Middle: 75% Classroom and Instruction/9% Administration
 - d. High School: 73% Classroom/9% Administration
 - e. Alternative: 61% Classroom and Instruction/19% Student Support/9% Administration
3. The Other budget category is mainly the food service expenditures and reimbursement that occur throughout the year.
4. This link <http://tusd1.org/contents/distinfo/budget/pdfs/AdoptedBudget12-13.pdf> shows the adopted budget as of July 2012.
5. This link <http://www.tusd1.org/contents/depart/finance/Documents/budgetupdate.pdf> is the presentation given by Mr. Awwad to the group.
6. This link http://www.azauditor.gov/Reports/School_Districts/Districts/Tucson_USD/2013/Tucson_USD.pdf is to the auditor general report that lists TUSD classroom spending for FY2012. The auditor general report shows that, as compared to our peers, TUSD spends more money in the classroom per pupil within the state of Arizona, but falls significantly below the national average. The report also points out that TUSD spending per pupil increased by 11% over a 5 year period, but classroom spending was reduced by 3.7% for a net administrative increase of 14.7% per pupil.
1. Mr. Fish indicated that the purpose of this forum is the dissemination of information to the community. The LOWV is great at this type of event and he encouraged all SCPC members to attend the forum.

2. TUSD 2013/2014 Budget Update: Projections and Reductions:

Notes: The second part of the budget presentation included information about the 2013/2014 budget including projected revenues, expenditures, and cost reductions. Mr. Awwad provided

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detailed information regarding why TUSD has a budget deficit and specific areas that will continue to impact the financial stability of the district.

Additional Discussion Points:

1. **Why the Deficit?** State education reductions have resulted in an average loss of \$10 million per year for schools. The elimination of excess utility has resulted in a revenue loss of \$12 million per year as well. Reduced enrollment has resulted in a \$10 million per year loss in revenues and the reduction in the sales tax revenue resulted in a loss of \$7 million per year. These reductions combined with the increase in costs and the loss of stimulus funding has resulted in the current \$17 million deficit.
2. Areas that will continue to affect the budget include: the School Master Plan, the Unitary Status Plan, enrollment, utilities costs, costs related to the Arizona State Retirement System, healthcare costs, and sequestration.
3. Enrollment numbers have fallen consistently since 2010 for a loss of @ 6,000-7,000 children. The current TUSD projection is that enrollment will stabilize during the 2014 school year.
4. **Reductions:** The proposed changes to the budget include reductions in central administration, transportation, restructuring of medical insurance, merger of functions, and the possible outsourcing of tasks. Reductions we made after the receipt of input from the public during the evaluation of school closures. 10 schools are to be closed and many other schools will implement increased efficiencies. Research has shown that smaller school size leads to increased costs. TUSD will also suspend the Tuition Reimbursement program for the 2013/2014 school year. The reductions were listed as follows:
 - a. \$4.2 million in school closures
 - b. \$4.0 million in school funding changes
 - c. \$5.8 million in department cuts
 - d. \$5.0 million in agreement changes

Questions

1. **Are there specific statistics that support the 500:1 ratio for school counselors? What happens to the students when there is no school counselor?**
 - a. The funding for this position has been reduced across the state. The budget addresses the M&O category of spending. Some school sites have opted to use Title I funds for a school counselor.
 - b. TUSD has a triage system in place for all schools regardless of their access to a school counselor. Situations arise where counselors are needed. The use of a phone tree and on-call roster has helped to alleviate the problems that might occur at a school without a counselor.
2. **Can Title I funds be used for personnel?**
 - a. Title I funds are restricted. The site creates a plan with input from the site council. The plan is then submitted for approval to the district. Funding must be spent as indicated in the plan.
3. **Data has been provided about our spending as compared to our peers. Statistics can be skewed based on demographics. Seeping comments about comparison are unfounded. How does TUSD know it is meeting the standards that are appropriate for our demographic?**
 - a. These standards are established by the Arizona Department of Education and the Auditor General's office. They are the same regardless of the demographic.
4. **How do community members address concerns about this process? Do we speak with TUSD or the Board?**
 - a. Attendance at an SCPC meeting will result in the concerns being presented to the board through the meeting notes. Members can also contact the board members via email. **Adelita Grijalva added that the board members met with TUSD in small groups to review the budget. They strive to respond in a timely

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manner to any community member with a question. The hope is that you will be contacted within 48-72 hours, but this can fluctuate depending on circumstances.

5. **Is there a team that evaluates space allocation and if so, how is this information communicated with the school sites?**
 - a. This assessment is done with the principals and the results are communicated as the process is completed.
6. **Will Exceptional Ed see an increase in the teacher-student ratio comparable to that of the regular classroom?**
 - a. Exceptional Ed will see a 3-student increase for grades K-8 (1:20) and a 2 student increase for grades 9-12 (1:24).
7. **You have commented on costs savings because of decreased utilization of utilities and the closing off of unused school areas. What about solar power?**
 - a. TUSD has issued a RFP for solar. The upfront costs will actually increase expenditures for many years before savings are recouped. The best way is to reduce utilization. TUSD is developing an incentive program for reduced utility costs at school sites.

3. Adelita Grijalva, TUSD School Board President

Notes: Ms. Grijalva spoke about her genuine appreciation of the opportunity to address the group. She wanted to convey the message that while budget cuts are difficult, the TUSD board is very concerned about the quality of education in the school district. The Board has hope that through the realization of other savings, that class sizes can be reduced and positions like the librarian and counselor can be reconsidered.

The Board wants to help people understand the differences in funding and how TUSD is required to spend money. People see the Deseg budget and believe TUSD has lots of money. Deseg money has a clear outline for what it must be spent on. It is like having "credit on a gas card, but needing groceries." You can only purchase what is authorized. Each school has differences in funding based on a number of variables. Funding comes from M&O, Title I, Deseg, and Grants. Not all schools are the same. Money from Deseg is meant to supplement, not supplant.

Ms. Grijalva expressed an interest in hearing what the group had to say and wanted to address any concerns or comments. She also invited Mr. Juarez to comment during the question and answer session. The floor was opened for questions.

Questions:

1. **What is the SCPC's role as the TUSD Board sees it?**
 - a. The SCPC is the main link for parents to communicate with the Board as one voice. Information is presented in a format that allows Board members to reflect and respond to the concerns of the group.
2. **What is the best way to increase communication between the TUSD Board and the SCPC?**
 - a. The feedback at the SCPC meeting can be increased by Board member attendance. The Board will create a rotating schedule so at least one member can attend the SCPC meeting at all times. This will provide a continuous communication loop between the group and the Board.
3. **How does SCPC address issues regarding administrative type issues? How do we communicate the importance of the group now that site councils have been stripped of their decision-making power?**
 - a. Maggie Schaefer addressed this question first: SCPC predates the site councils. Some people see this as duplicitous. Perception is that the meetings are a waste of time. This is not the case. The meeting is not just for site council members, but for all community members. The SCPC meetings provide information that is not always out there.

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- b. Ms. Grijalva's response: As a board member, the SCPC is an important group that will let us know what community members are thinking and experiencing. This is not a third-party conversation (community member to district to board) this is a direct conversation that the Board can act upon. Potential issues should be addressed with TUSD and the Board. SCPC members should return to their school sites and make sure the information is communicated to the site councils. Their communication will help the Board make decisions.
- c. Mr. Juarez's response: This meeting is a great way to create diversity and get a bigger perspective on the issues related to our district. When we attend meetings at one school, the perspective is one-sided. This group is great for community input. The one-on-one conversation that is happening at this meeting is important.

4. What is the current process for finding a new TUSD superintendent?

- a. A search firm was hired to implement the process of finding a new superintendent. Advertisements have been submitted based on the job description that was used for Dr. Pedicone. This job description is up to date and still reflects the direction of the district.
- b. The Board is looking for someone who understands the urban nature of the district and wants to continue along the good path that has been set in place. The firm will present at least 8 candidates to the Board. The candidates will have been vetted and then smaller group interviews will happen. After these interviews, the public interviews will take place and the community will provide feedback about the candidates.

5. As a new parent to the district, why should I stay? Many of the programs I moved to the district for are being discontinued.

- a. Things can always be worked out. Each school receives funding that can be adjusted through a proposal process. There is no reason to lose programs when we can work on it.

6. Is there a plan to "brainstorm" on how to increase enrollment?

- a. This is a great idea to discuss, but the promotion of the district costs money in terms of marketing efforts. It is very difficult to spend an excessive amount of money on a marketing campaign when we are faced with significant budget cuts.
- b. Mr. Juarez interjected that if we would just recruit 1 kid to come to TUSD, we would increase our enrollment exponentially. It is time to overcome the negative and focus on the positive. We need to be innovative and seek other forms of funding/grants.

7. The GATE program has been used as a recruitment tool/draw for students to come to TUSD, yet many of the classes are being eliminated. At least 15 students from our school have left because of the removal of GATE. This type of decision-making directly affects enrollment. How will this issue be addressed when quality of education has been linked more to school size than class size?

- a. This is an area that also can be addressed through principal proposals for the use of funding. Quality education is an important part of our philosophy and we want to work to keep these programs.

4. SCPC Nominations and Elections:

- a. Ballots were handed out to the group and a request for nominations from the floor was put forth by Kathy Sutherland, Moderator.
- b. No additional nominations were made and the election roster included the following individuals:
 - 1. Kathy Sutherland-Moderator
 - 2. Gary Fowler-Co-Moderator
 - 3. Michelle Simon-Secretary
 - 4. Leo Masursky-Board Liaison

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- c. Members were asked to turn in their ballots for tabulation. All members were re-elected to their positions on the SCPS executive committee.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:05pm (Kathy Sutherland)

Summary prepared by: Michelle Simon, 5/1/2013

Summary Approved: