



## **School Liaison Sub-Committee Meeting DRAFT Minutes of April 22, 2019**

Chair Esparza called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Roll call was taken as follows:

### **ROLL CALL**

Present:

Chair Esparza, Fresno City Council  
Councilmember Arias, Fresno City Council (arrived at 6:09 p.m.)  
Trustee Vang, Sanger Unified  
Trustee Cox, Central Unified  
Trustee Perea, State Center Community College District  
Board President Cazares, Fresno Unified  
Trustee Rosas, Fresno Unified  
Trustee Islas (arrived at 6:09 p.m.)

Absent:

Councilmember Chavez, Fresno City Council  
Trustee Carillo, Central Unified

Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

### **APPROVE AGENDA**

On the motion of Trustee Rosas, seconded by Trustee Cox, the agenda was approved.  
The motion duly carried, RESOLVED by the following vote:

Aye: 6 - Esparza, Vang, Cox, Perea, Cazares, and Rosas  
Absent: 4 - Arias, Chavez, Ikeda, and Islas

Chair Esparza welcomed everyone to the very first meeting of the School Liaison Committee. He stated that today's meeting is part of the City of Fresno and Local School District history. Although various groups have met in the past this committee is the most formalized of that collaboration. Since this is the first meeting of the School Liaison Committee, there were no minutes to be approved. Chair Esparza announced that this committee is subject to the Brown Act and the public is welcomed to the meeting. He also mentioned that the Act calls for one meeting to be held at City Hall and another to be held at one of the local School Districts. Chair Esparza is open to suggestions regarding a place to host future meetings.

### INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions were made. Chair Esparza thanked his staff for staying late to assist with the meeting. The topics for discussion are based on suggestions Chair Esparza received from the leadership in each school district in response to the invitations he sent out. Chair Esparza stated that this Sub-Committee doesn't have the authority to approve any action items; however he would like to get consensus between the City and our school districts that can result in some concrete action.

Chair Esparza distributed the following information to the sub-committee: Agenda, the School Liaison Act, and the agreement between the City of Fresno and Fresno Unified School District pertaining to contracting services from the Fresno Police Department.

### ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

#### A. Infrastructure/safety around schools

1. Funding
2. Evaluating dangerous crosswalks

Trustee Cazares spoke to this issue. She has noticed the children don't always use the crosswalks or go to the traffic signal to cross the street. There is a lot of speeding and she would like to have a more robust program where the Police Department could go out more regularly to the schools. Trustee Cazares also would like to see more crosswalks to be identified with flashing crosswalks and have the Police Department out enforcing the speed limit more often. She would like more consideration to be given to this issue. She would like for Public Works Department or the City Council to look more closely at this issue.

Councilmember Arias stated that Trustee Cazares and the Council majority are on the same page. Currently the city staff only looks at traffic, counts and accidents to determine crosswalks, intersection lights, etc. There was discussion regarding the city about to receive the gas tax; we are requesting the administration prioritize safe routes

to schools, especially where there are no sidewalks and kids have to walk in the streets. We should be able to include the school districts in that process.

Trustee Vang spoke on the item stating that the Sanger Unified School District is unique because it incorporates the City of Fresno as well as other small communities. He stated that as far as he knows, there are no Sanger Unified schools located within the City of Fresno. However, about 30% of the residents living in Sanger Unified lives or has a Fresno street address and this is a great concern to him because two years ago we had a 7<sup>th</sup> grader who was killed crossing a T intersection to get to John Walsh Elementary. The main concern of the parents and students of this elementary school is to install stop signs or red lights and that continues to be a work in progress. Trustee Vang mentioned that Councilmember Chavez is working to either have a stop sign or a stop light at that intersection. He echoed the concerns of his colleagues on the board that unfortunately we are a reactive agency. Today they still don't have any safety protocol installed at that T intersection. His hope is with this committee we can accelerate and cut the red tape as soon as possible.

Trustee Cox spoke stating that she reiterates and agrees with the Trustees who have already spoke. She believes that they all have the same issue. Central Unified is on the outskirts of the City of Fresno has an added impact, our walkways don't exist, our students are on country roads and sidewalks do not exist. We don't have a lot of students walking to school because of the area we cover. We have a lot of roads, but we don't have sidewalks or crosswalks. Our students are forced to cross a country road in the fog. She would like to take a look at prioritizing areas around the schools to make them safer.

Trustee Islas stated that this topic is of great interest to her. We have immense poverty. The only way we will be able to work ourselves out of poverty is assuring that all children coming from disadvantage communities has a safe pathway to education. She agrees and wants to underscore that we really should be prioritizing roads and infrastructure around the immediate proximity of schools. Crosswalks are faded or non-existent and they need to be looked at regularly. Traffic calming is an absolute necessity. We have sight and hearing impaired crossing intersections that are not ADA compliant. We also need to look at public transportation and bike routes. Some students are in County islands and we need to partner with the Board of Supervisors to make improvements there. She wants to consider the double fine for citations around schools which could create an investment to help fund safety improvements.

Trustee Rosas expressed her gratitude that this conversation is taking place. In her district kids travelling to and from school safely is a high priority. How do we get the

best bang for our buck? It really comes down to prioritization and better communication with schools and staff. Loose dogs are also an issue and the children do not feel safe when they are around.

Trustee Perea asked about the free bus program for City Colleges and asked if the program is offered to the Districts too. Councilmember Arias responded. Trustee Cox also spoke on this topic. Trustee Perea asked about City buses going to the West Fresno area. Councilmember Arias responded. Trustee Perea asked about the plans for FAX routes from West Fresno to Uta, Amazon, Phoenix and Southeast Fresno. Councilmember Arias responded and suggested a list of the stops be made and submitted to the City.

A discussion ensued regarding rural areas. Councilmember Arias stated we may want to discuss set asides in our budget in order to match the cost.

Chair Esparza stated that he wanted to conduct this meeting prior to the City's budget because they may be able to adjust the projects lists accordingly. He spoke about jogging and noticing the problems with the lack of sidewalks. Trustee Islas asked about using Fresno to help prioritize the areas with the most complaints. Councilmember Arias responded. Trustee Cox asked as a school district what can we do to help identify those priority areas. Chair Esparza and Councilmember Arias responded that the school districts compile a prioritized list for the City. Trustee Rosas suggested there be a point of contact at the City that the districts can use. Councilmember Arias suggested that there be a joint meeting with our grant writers.

#### B. School Resource Officers (SRO)

Trustee Rosas stated that it is important that SRO's build a relationship with our students and diversity is also important and should be reflective of our community. Chair Esparza stated that he has heard some of the same concerns. Councilmember Arias talked about the purpose of a SRO and stated that they should be able to communicate with the population that they serve and that he would put that on his list for the incoming Police Chief.

Trustee Vang stated that they only have two SRO's one for Middle School and one for the High School. He feels that the SRO has to adapt to the school and the changing environment. We need a strong presence of police. He hopes that the new Police Chief will look into the out of the box training for SRO's. There was a discussion on the purpose of the SRO and the cost of an SRO.

Trustee Islas requested clarification on the cost (95% or 100%) Councilmember Arias responded. There was more discussion regarding the cost and the services performed by SRO's. Councilmember Arias suggested that they should come up with a standard agreement for all districts and we ask the Police Chief and the Superintendents to come in and present the data to us on how much are these contract and what recommendations will they make going forward. There was more discussion regarding the SRO's, community relations and the agreement. Trustee Cox questioned why they are paying for an SRO for 12 months when they are only there for 9 months. Councilmember Arias feels that there should be a standard agreement that applies to all districts.

C. After School Programs

No Discussion.

D. Green and Blue Space/Joint-Use

Councilmember Arias wants to point out the partnership with the School Districts. The joint green space has a PARCS staff person out there for 1-2 students. He wants to get a report from the various staff, how many people have been using the joint green space and blue space.

Trustee Islas stated there has been under utilization of the green space. It's important to understand that the green space is underutilized because we're in Fresno and it's hot. We may want to look at opening indoor space. Before we scrap this program we need to take an analysis of what has been working, how do we improve that? Trustee Cox stated that she visited the green space and was disappointed by the usage. Trustee Rosas suggested combining after school with green space and blue space which is highly utilized. In regards to green space, she feels that coordinating with school site staff and PARCS staff in getting the word out. She also spoke about wear and tear.

Trustee Perea stated that the State Center Community College District doesn't currently have any joint use agreements with the City of Fresno, but it is something that she would like to explore in the future.

Councilmember Arias gave a summary of where we are with the green and blue space. Each district spoke about how they are currently set up. Trustee Islas noted that the after school program has a parallel back to the transportation issue. Some youth are not attending the after school tutoring or programing due to lack of transportation. Transportation is an area that we should be looking at to strengthen and provide public transportation in the evening for students.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

The following members of the public spoke: Carol Mills (Homeless), Councilmember Arias stated that the Homeless Task Force will prioritize school proximity. Evelyn Gamble (SRO), and Eric Payne (Transportation).

## E. COMMON LAND PLANNING

Councilmember Arias spoke about the need for a presentation from school districts on where their future schools will be built so the City can be aware of any land use issues. It would also be helpful if the City Council could have a presentation once a year from each District Superintendent or Board President.

Trustee Cox stated that she appreciates that the City is preparing the Specific Plan. Councilmember Arias added that when the administration plans for growth, they should be talking to the school district that will be impacted.

Trustee Rosas stated that the City is constantly building new projects and new developments and the school district is constantly playing catch up. Trustee Vang said that the greatest growth for the Sanger District is on the east side of Fresno. We are playing catch up on where to build our newest High School, Middle School and Elementary School. He is glad that the conversation is now happening between the school districts and the city council. Trustee Islas gave examples of the challenges her district face. In the future we need to be thoughtful and communicate with each other. Trustee Perea discussed first responder training and keeping the lines of communication open. Trustee Cazares spoke about communicating better in the future.

## F. Homeless Impact on Campuses

Trustee Islas introduced this item. There is encroachment of the homeless at the various schools in her district. We need to think creatively on how to solve this problem with dignity. We do not have enough shelter space, substance abuse counseling or affordable housing. Tiny houses are going to be built where needed. We need to address this issue immediately. Councilmember Arias spoke on the citywide solution. The City will receive \$3.1 million dollars for affordable housing. DPU goes in and sanitizes areas at no cost.

Trustee Cox stated that it would be helpful if the City would provide each school contact with City resource numbers to ensure they are able to reach the proper person for their issue. Trustee Cazares requested the contact numbers for the SRO's on their campus. Councilmember Arias spoke on this subject explaining that it has been decentralized. Trustee Islas spoke about getting regular patrolling around the schools.

### MEMBER COMMENTS

Trustee Rosas hopes we can keep this discussion going because this was very valuable. She hopes there is a follow up meeting and that we can get started working on some of these items.

Trustee Perea thanked Chair Esparza and Councilmember Arias for making this committee a priority, it is long overdue. She stated that her colleague Trustee Ikeda will be present at future meetings.

Chair Esparza confirmed that the Committee was created by and Act in 2015 and this is the first time they have met.

Councilmember Arias added that this Committee was created under our current Mayor Brand in October 2015, since then they have never met. It took a new crop of elected leaders to bring this forward. All of us here have the privilege of having good relationships which makes it easier for us. We have the first meeting out of the way and now it's time to make progress on some of the areas we discussed today. The real work is the oversight and monitoring. My hope is that we will come back fairly soon and that next time we will have the executive administrative staff here from our respective bodies reporting to us.

Trustee Vang thanked the councilmembers, trustees and staff who are here late on a Monday night. He looks forward in working with the City of Fresno. Several of the Trustees thanked the councilmembers for arranging this meeting and they look forward to future meetings.

Chair Esparza stated that the next meeting will be scheduled in the fall. He provided the committee with the School Liaison Act. A group photo was taken.

The meeting adjourned at 8:07 p.m.