



## Minutes

### Grow Public Schools Board Meeting

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**DATE and TIME:**

Monday, March 17, 2025, at 2:00 pm

**LOCATIONS:****Physical Location**

Grow Public Schools, Home Office – Professional Development Center  
4800 Corporate Court, Bakersfield, CA 93311

**Locations to Attend Virtually**

Grow Academy Arvin – Conference Room (Middle School Office)  
901 Nectarine Court, Arvin, CA 93203

Grow Academy Shafter – Conference Room  
471 W Los Angeles Ave., Shafter, CA 93263

**1. Opening Items****1.1 Call the Meeting to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 pm by Board Chair, Tom Mestmaker.

**1.2 Record Attendance**

Tom Mestmaker, Manuel Pantoja, Matt Look, Doc Ervin, Dr. Ric Esquivel, Kari Heilman, Janelle Ruley, Grow Academy Shafter (remote), Grow Academy Arvin (remote), and Don Pasion

**1.3 Flag Salute**

Tom Mestmaker, Board Chair, led the flag salute.

**1.4 Public Comment**

Kari Heilman, Senior Executive Assistant, shared that there were no public comments.

**2. Board Workshop**

*Presented by Janelle Ruley, Partner at Young, Minney & Corr, LLP*

**2.1 Ethics Training Course, Compliant with AB 2158**

2:08 pm Board member, Ernie Unruh arrived.

Janelle wrapped up the training, thanking everyone for their time and shared that the certificates of completion will be emailed next week.

3:53 pm The board took a recess.

4:00 pm Board member, Dr. Kristen Watson and Steve McClain, Chief Business Officer, arrived and the board reconvened.

### 3. Financial Update

Steve McClain, Chief Business Officer, presented the 2nd Interim Financial Report. He began with an overview, reminding the Board that this is the district and county's second financial update, covering financial data from July through January. This report is submitted annually on or before March 15th; this year, it was submitted to our authorizers on March 10th.

Mr. McClain noted that the financial figures have not changed much since the First Interim Report. He also highlighted that this year, we are operating under three LEAs—Arvin, Shafter, and the new Countywide. Starting next year, all operations will transition to the Countywide charter.

For Action Items, the Board will be asked to approve the Second Interim Financial Report and the resolutions to close Grow Academy Arvin and Grow Academy Shafter on June 30, 2025, allowing the organization to continue operating under Grow Public Schools Countywide Charter.

### 4. Action Items

- 4.1 Approval of FY 2024-2025 Second Interim Financial Reports for Grow Public Schools, Grow Academy Arvin, and Grow Academy Shafter.

Board Chair Tom Mestmaker asked if there were any comments from the Board. With no comments made, Tom Mestmaker called for a motion to approve.

A motion was made by Dr. Kristen Watson, seconded by Matt Look, and passed, via roll call to approve FY 2024-2025 Second Interim Financial Reports for Grow Public Schools, Grow Academy Arvin, and Grow Academy Shafter.

Board Member	Yay	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Tom Mestmaker	X			
Dr. Kristen Watson	X			
Matt Look	X			
Ernie Unruh	X			
Manuel Pantoja	X			

**Carried 5-0**

- 4.2 Approval of the Resolutions to Close Grow Academy Arvin and Grow Academy Shafter June 30, 2025, and continue to operate as Grow Public Schools Countywide Charter. Board Chair Tom Mestmaker asked if there were any comments from the Board. With no comments made, Tom Mestmaker called for a motion to approve.

A motion was made by Ernie Unruh, seconded by Matt Look, and passed, via roll call to approve the Resolutions to Close Grow Academy Arvin and Grow Academy Shafter June 30, 2025, and continue to operate as Grow Public Schools Countywide Charter.

Board Member	Yay	Nay	Absent	Abstain
Tom Mestmaker	X			
Dr. Kristen Watson	X			
Matt Look	X			
Ernie Unruh	X			
Manuel Pantoja	X			

**Carried 5-0**

**5. Consent Agenda**

**CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS/OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:**

The Consent Agenda consists of items that are considered routine and non-controversial by Grow Public Schools staff. Consent items will be considered first and may be approved by one motion. If a member of the public wishes to comment regarding an item or items on the Consent Agenda, they may do so prior to a vote being taken on the Consent Agenda. A member of the board may remove any item from the Consent Agenda, and it will be considered in listed sequence with an opportunity for any member of the public to address the board concerning the item before action is taken.

Board Chair Tom Mestmaker asked if there were any comments from the Board. With no comments made, Tom Mestmaker called for a motion to approve consent agenda items 5.1 – 5.5.

Ernie Unruh made a motion to approve consent agenda items 5.1 – 5.5.

*Moved by:* Ernie Unruh  
*Seconded by:* Matt Look

**Aye** Tom Mestmaker, Dr. Kristen Watson, Ernie Unruh, Manuel Pantoja, and Matt Look

**Carried 5-0**

- 5.1 Approval of Minutes from December 9, 2024, and February 24, 2025
- 5.2 Approval of Warrants and Credit Card Registers for February 2025
- 5.3 Approval of 2025-2026 Board Meeting Dates
- 5.4 Approval of 2024-2025 Parent/Student Handbook Update for Grow Public Schools, Grow Academy Arvin, and Grow Academy Shafter
- 5.5 Approval of Title IX Policy

**6. Closing Items**

- 8.1 Adjourn Meeting

Tom Mestmaker thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

Ernie Unruh made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:08 pm.

*Moved by:* Ernie Unruh

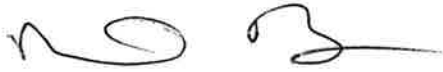
*Seconded by:* Matt Look

**Aye** Tom Mestmaker, Dr. Kristen Watson, Manuel Pantoja, Ernie Unruh, and  
Matt Look

**Carried 5-0**

#### **Certificate of Secretary**

I certify that I am the duly elected Secretary of Grow Public Schools, a California non-profit public benefit corporation; that these minutes consisting of four (4) pages, are the minutes of the regular Board Meeting of the Board of Directors held on March 17, 2025.



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Secretary