

UNAPPROVED

MINUTES OF THE SAN MATEO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Meeting Date: September 3, 2025

Meeting Location: San Mateo County Office of Education
101 Twin Dolphin Dr.
Redwood City, California 94065

Board Members Present: Susan Alvaro, Edith Arias, Chelsea Bonini,
Beverly Gerard, Patricia Love, Mike O’Neill,
Hugo Torres

Staff Officials Present: Marco Chávez, Deputy Superintendent; Jennifer
Perna, Executive Assistant

Staff Officials Absent: Nancy Magee, Superintendent

Other Staff Present: Ian Bain, Kevin Bultema, Tami Moore, Kris
Shouse, Mary Yung

1. **OPENING ITEMS**

A. Call to Order

Board President Hugo Torres called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

B. Approval of Agenda

After a motion by Board Member Gerard and a second by Board Member Alvaro, the September 3, 2025, agenda as presented was unanimously (Alvaro, Arias, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O’Neill, and Torres) approved.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no persons wishing to address the Board.

3. **EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH**

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH (continued)

- A. September 2025 Employee of the Month Amanda Lee, Administrative Technician, Educational Services Division

Board President Torres recognized the September 2025 Employee of the Month Amanda Lee, Administrative Technician, Educational Services Division, and honored her on behalf of the Board.

4. INTRODUCTION OF NEW/RECENTLY PROMOTED STAFF

- A. Introduction of Angienette Estonina, Coordinator, Inclusive Education, Educational Services Division

Angienette Estonina introduced herself in her new role as Coordinator, Inclusive Education, Educational Services Division.

- B. Introduction of Ron Campana, Coordinator, College, Career, and Community Partnerships, Educational Services Division

Ron Campana introduced himself in his new role as Coordinator, College, Career, and Community Partnerships, Educational Services Division.

- C. Introduction of Anita Tong, Principal, Anne Campbell Child Development Center, Educational Services Division

Anita Tong introduced herself in her new role as Principal, Anne Campbell Child Development Center, Educational Services Division.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. August 20, 2025, Regular Board Meeting

After a motion by Board Member O'Neill and a second by Board Member Love, the Minutes of the August 20, 2025, Regular Board Meeting were unanimously (Alvaro, Arias, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O'Neill, and Torres) approved.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

- B. Receive Staffing Reports
- C. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 25-52 Recognizing September 15 - October 15, 2025, as National Hispanic Heritage Month and Latino Heritage Month in the State of California
- D. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 25-53 Recognizing October 2025 as LGBTQ+ History Month

CONSENT AGENDA (continued)

- E. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 25-54 Recognizing October 2025 as National Dyslexia Awareness Month
- F. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 25-55 Recognizing October 2025 as National Disability Employment Awareness Month
- G. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 25-56 Recognizing October 2025 as Filipino American History Month

After a motion by Board Member Gerard and a second by Board Member Alvaro, the Consent Agenda was unanimously (Alvaro, Arias, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O'Neill, and Torres) approved.

8. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

- A. Receive Report on the Opening of the 2025-2026 School Year for San Mateo County Office of Education Student Programs

Sarah Notch, Executive Director, School Programs, Educational Services Division; Dr. Jesús Jiménez, Director, School Programs, Educational Services Division; and Freedom Siyam, Principal, Court and Community Schools, Educational Services Division, provided a report on the opening of the 2025-2026 school year for San Mateo County Office of Education student programs.

Board Member Alvaro asked if board members could also attend the virtual Back-to-School Night. Director Jiménez indicated that could be arranged and that he would follow up with the Superintendent's Office.

- B. Discuss/Act on the Proposition 28: Arts and Music in Schools Funding Annual Report

Marco Chávez, Deputy Superintendent, Educational Services Division, provided a report on the Proposition 28: Arts and Music in Schools Funding Annual Report.

After a motion by Board Member Love and a second by Board Member Gerard, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Arias, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O'Neill, and Torres) approved the Proposition 28: Arts and Music in Schools Funding Annual Report.

- C. Conduct Public Hearing Concerning Sufficiency of Textbooks and/or Instructional Materials

Board President Torres opened the public hearing concerning sufficiency of textbooks and/or instructional materials. Receiving no public comment, Board President Torres declared the public hearing closed.

- D. Adopt Board Resolution No. 25-57 Sufficiency of Textbooks and/or Instructional Materials

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION (continued)

Sarah Notch, Executive Director, School Programs, Educational Services Division, provided information on Board Resolution No. 25-57 Sufficiency of Textbooks and/or Instructional Materials.

After a motion by Board Member Gerard and a second by Board Member Bonini, the Board unanimously (Alvaro, Arias, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O'Neill, and Torres) approved Board Resolution No. 25-57 Sufficiency of Textbooks and/or Instructional Materials.

8. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A. Receive Superintendent's Response to the 2025 Grand Jury Report "'Who You Gonna Call?' Is Career Technical Education Preparing High School Students to Fill the Skilled Trade Gap?"

Lisa Cho, Deputy County Attorney, reported on Superintendent Magee's response to the 2025 Grand Jury Report "'Who You Gonna Call?' Is Career Technical Education Preparing High School Students to Fill the Skilled Trade Gap?"

Board Member O'Neill shared that he attended several Career Technical Education (CTE) advisory meetings and many participants expressed confusion about the purpose of their involvement. He felt the presentation addressed that issue effectively.

Board Member O'Neill suggested exploring partnerships with the Adult School Consortium to address gaps in services, particularly for students who haven't graduated and need a GED.

Board Member O'Neill highlighted concerns that many districts, especially those in rural or low-income areas, struggle to provide the required matching funds for CTE state funding. He recommended this issue be included in the task force's report, noting he hadn't been aware of it until reviewing the materials.

Deputy County Attorney Cho informed that the County Office is working with community colleges to offer dual enrollment in CTE programs, giving students access to vocational training while still in high school. To support coastal districts with fewer resources, a pilot program is underway to provide apprenticeships and hands-on work experiences. However, expanding these opportunities involves navigating liability and insurance concerns to ensure student safety. The County Office is actively exploring partnerships and program models that allow juniors and seniors to gain meaningful, real-world experience in a safe and structured way.

Board Member O'Neill recalled an opportunity in Pacifica where labor unions offered to teach middle schoolers how algebra applies to trades like plumbing and carpentry. Although the program was free and engaging, it was blocked by graduation and testing requirements. He emphasized how students can benefit from practical, hands-on learning.

Board Member O'Neill raised awareness about the La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District's (LHPUSD's) limited resources and small student population. Given the county's overall resources,

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT (continued)

he urged the County Board to help, for example with transportation to nearby districts to access programs.

Deputy County Attorney Cho shared that the LHPUSD plans to explore launching its own CTE program this year, which is a promising step toward equity for smaller districts.

Board Member Alvaro asked whether new grand jury members receive any onboarding or orientation, noting the significant responsibility involved. She indicated that better onboarding might help clarify their role. Deputy Superintendent Chávez reported that the County Office is invited annually to present an overview of its role and relationship with school districts to the grand jury. This year, he, along with Ian Bain, Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Office of the Superintendent, delivered an hour-long presentation. It wasn't enough time to fully cover the County Office's responsibilities, but the invitation reflects an ongoing effort to inform and engage the grand jury.

B. Superintendent's Comments

Deputy Superintendent Chávez warmly welcomed the new staff members, noting that some began offering professional development during their first week.

Deputy Superintendent Chávez congratulated the Educational Services Division team for a strong start to the school year.

Deputy Superintendent Chávez wished happy upcoming birthdays to Board Member O'Neill on September 7 and Board Member Alvaro on September 14.

9. BOARD MEMBERS

A. Receive Report on the Countywide Charter Petition Procedures and Standards for the San Mateo County Board of Education

Deputy County Attorney Cho provided a report on the Countywide Charter Petition Procedures and Standards for the San Mateo County Board of Education.

Board Member O'Neill noted that there would be a public hearing, but the vote would not be taken at that meeting. Deputy County Attorney Cho noted that correct.

Board Member O'Neill asked if the public hearing would take place in Closed Session. Deputy County Attorney Cho indicated it would be an Open Session public hearing.

Board Member O'Neill asked whether the vote to approve or deny a charter petition occurs in Open or Closed Session. Deputy County Attorney Cho confirmed that the process involves two public hearings, one at the 60-day mark, where staff present initial findings and the petitioners can respond, and another at the 90-day, or possibly 120-day, mark, where final discussion and voting

BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

occurs. The vote must take place in Open Session. The timeline is based on calendar days, including holidays, which can affect scheduling. During the process, the Board may direct staff to conduct further analysis, and the second hearing includes a formal staff report before any action is taken.

Board Member O'Neill asked who handles negotiations with charter school applicants. Deputy County Attorney Cho reported that if a charter petition is approved, the County Office leads negotiations using a State Board of Education-issued template memorandum of understanding (MOU). It outlines detailed operational expectations not covered in the petition, including liability,

financial reporting, audits, and academic accountability and places a significant responsibility on the charter school to maintain regular communication with the County Board.

Board Member Gerard asked for clarification on who is responsible for identifying the school location in a charter petition. Deputy County Attorney Cho confirmed that it is the petitioner's responsibility to provide the proposed school site.

Board Member O'Neill requested a brief timeline explaining why Oxford Day Academy is chartered by the County Office rather than a school district. Deputy County Attorney Cho informed that the school originally submitted its petition to the Sequoia Union High School District (SUHSD), but it was denied. The petition was then appealed to the County Board, which ultimately approved the charter.

Board Member O'Neill asked if meeting minutes were available to explain why the County Board chose to authorize Oxford Day Academy. Deputy County Attorney Cho confirmed they were available. Board Member Alvaro explained that when a charter petition is denied by a local district and appealed to the County Board, they must either approve or deny it. There is no option to remand it back. If approved, the charter automatically becomes the County Board's responsibility. This was the case with Oxford Day Academy, which was originally denied by the SUHSD and then approved on appeal. Deputy County Attorney Cho agreed that Oxford Day is now accountable to the County Board, not the original district.

Board President Torres asked whether, during the initial charter petition stage, the decision options include conditional approval like in renewals. Deputy County Attorney Cho clarified that at this stage, the Board may only approve or deny the petition.

Board Member O'Neill asked who funds a charter school and whether the County Board, as the sponsoring agency, provides financial support. Deputy County Attorney Cho explained that charter schools must submit their own financial plans and receive funding through Average Daily Attendance (ADA) allocations from the state, similar to traditional public schools. The County Board does not provide direct fiscal support. Kevin Bultema, Deputy Superintendent, Business Services Division, added that charter schools like Oxford Day receive funding through the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), similar to other local educational agencies. This funding comes from a mix of state aid and in-lieu property taxes, which are allocated by the sponsoring agency. While the County Board does not directly fund the school, it facilitates the pass-through of these funds, and timing can affect the flow of property tax allocations.

BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

Board Member Love asked whether charter schools receive additional funding if they are located in a basic aid district. Deputy Superintendent Bultema clarified that charter schools receive funding based on the LCFF, not basic aid dollars. Deputy County Attorney Cho noted that operating across multiple districts might raise additional funding considerations, but she deferred further details to the financial experts.

The following speakers provided live public comment related to the countywide charter petition:

- Liling Pang, Ocean Light Charter School lead petitioner
- Don Burdette, Ocean Light Charter School Board Member

- Sandy Mills, retired elementary school science teacher
- Christina Lee, Ocean Light Charter School Board Member
- Dr. Kelly Mendoza, parent and staff member at Design Tech High School

Board President Torres asked whether charter schools, district- or county-authorized, are subject to the same restrictions on student admissions. Deputy County Attorney Cho clarified that charter petitions propose alternative operational models and their admissions policies are governed by the petition itself and any MOU with the County Board. While charter schools differ from traditional public schools, they must still comply with Education Code requirements, especially regarding protections for vulnerable student populations.

Board Member Love asked whether a countywide charter school must be open to all students in the county, including those in Special Education and English learners, or if it can serve only part of the county. Deputy County Attorney Cho clarified that there is no legal minimum or maximum number of districts a countywide charter must include. However, the Board should consider whether limiting the school to one region truly serves the county's students. This issue can be explored further during the public hearing process.

Board Member O'Neill asked whether a countywide charter school in northern San Mateo County could enroll students from San Francisco. Deputy County Attorney Cho informed that countywide charters are intended to serve students within the county's jurisdiction. While interdistrict transfers could be a consideration, they would require further discussion and may intersect with broader board responsibilities. The focus remains on serving San Mateo County students.

Board Member Bonini asked why fiscal impact, typically considered in district charter reviews, wasn't addressed in the countywide process. Deputy County Attorney Cho explained that the petitioner has notified several districts of its intent to potentially use district facilities, which would require separate negotiations. While the County Board cannot mandate facility use, it can consider fiscal impacts, including potential loss of ADA funding, as part of its review. These factors represent legal and logistical hurdles that must be addressed district by district.

- B. Discuss/Act on Nominations for California School Boards Association (CSBA) Directors-at-Large: African American, American Indian, and County

BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

The Board took no action on this item.

C. Receive Reports from the Board Ad Hoc Subcommittees and Representatives

Board Member Love reported that the Adequate School Funding Task Force met on August 25 with strong participation from various school districts and Capital Advisors, who shared valuable insights. The report summarizing the discussion and current status will be revisited in upcoming meetings.

Board Member Gerard updated that the Workforce Housing Subcommittee is actively exploring property options and plans to present a more detailed report at a future meeting.

D. Suggested Topics for Future Board Agendas

Board Member O'Neill suggested it might be prudent to begin forming a nonprofit and establish policies for workforce housing, as they did in the Jefferson Union High School District (JUHSD). He emphasized the importance of early planning, including criteria for tenant eligibility and duration of residence. Deputy County Attorney Cho reminded that the County Office has an MOU with the Housing Endowment and Regional Trust (HEART) for identifying and acquiring a building, which differs from constructing a new one. She offered to follow up and possibly provide a memo outlining the JUHSD's process, including documents and policy development, for the Board's reference.

Board Member Bonini suggested pairing the agenda item on forming an Ad Hoc San Mateo County Community College District Subcommittee with a discussion to gather input from the Board on what issues or topics the subcommittee should address.

E. Board Member Comments

Board Member Love

Board Member Love noted she enjoyed meeting the new staff, celebrating the Employee of the Month, and hearing the evening's reports.

Board Member O'Neill

Board Member O'Neill shared that he attended the Memorial Walk in Pacifica honoring families who have lost loved ones to fentanyl overdoses. Over 200 participants joined, the names of victims were read aloud in a moving tribute, and the county contributed \$10,000 through Measure K to fund Narcan dispensers. It was an incredibly powerful and meaningful gathering.

Board Member Alvaro

Board Member Alvaro expressed appreciation for the chance to connect informally at the social dinner before the meeting.

Board Member Alvaro indicated she plans to meet with the new superintendents of the Cabrillo Unified School District and the LHPUSD, with follow-up reports to come.

BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

Board Member Arias

Board Member Arias reported that she enjoyed sharing a meal with colleagues before the meeting at the social dinner.

Board Member Arias extended birthday wishes to Board Member O'Neill and Board Member Alvaro.

Board Member Arias discussed attending Cultura Fest in South San Francisco and appreciating the community outreach from the County Office's Safe Routes to School program. She found the information clear and helpful, especially regarding district collaboration with the county.

Board Member Arias said she attended her first Board Policy Subcommittee meeting and expressed gratitude for the opportunity.

Board Member Bonini

Board Member Bonini thanked the Board for approving the joint resolutions Recognizing October 2025 as National Dyslexia Awareness Month and Recognizing October 2025 as National Disability Employment Awareness Month, highlighting their continued importance.

Board Member Bonini shared updates from the San Mateo-Foster City School District, including her participation in a project-based learning launch at LEAD Elementary and a ribbon cutting at Meadow Heights Elementary for a new multipurpose room. She noted the district's launch of a community strategic plan focused on shared decision-making.

Board Member Bonini recognized September as Suicide Prevention Month, distributing awareness ribbons, sharing materials, and encouraging participation in related events hosted by the county.

Board Member Gerard

Board Member Gerard extended birthday wishes to Board Member O'Neill and Board Member Alvaro, emphasizing the importance of celebrating personal milestones.

Board Member Gerard shared plans to attend the upcoming California School Boards Association (CSBA) County Board Conference in Monterey and expressed hopes to bring back valuable insights.

Board Member Gerard announced she rejoined the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) at Franklin Delano Roosevelt Elementary School and looks forward to participating in meetings.

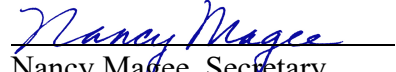
Board President Torres

Board President Torres shared he enjoyed sharing a meal with colleagues prior to the meeting in a relaxed setting at the social dinner and expressed hopes to do it again.

Board President Torres discussed attending Cultura Fest in South San Francisco. He found it uplifting to see diverse communities come together and celebrate culture, especially during politically challenging times.

10. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m. Board President Torres announced the next regular meeting would be the Retreat on Wednesday, September 17, 2025.


Nancy Magee, Secretary
jlp