

**APPROVED**

MINUTES OF THE SAN MATEO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Meeting Date: October 8, 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, Marco Chávez, Mary  
Yung

**1. OPENING ITEMS**

A. Call to Order

Board President Hugo Torres called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. Approval of Agenda

After a motion by Board Member Gerard and a second by Board Member Alvaro, the October 8, 2025, agenda as presented was unanimously (Alvaro, Arias, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O’Neill, and Torres) approved.

**2. PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following speaker provided live public comment:

- John Hoffmann, member of the public

3. **INTRODUCTION OF NEW/RECENTLY PROMOTED STAFF**

A. Introduction of Tami Benau, Coordinator, College, Career, and Community Partnerships, Educational Services Division

Tami Benau introduced herself in her new role as Coordinator, College, Career, and Community Partnerships, Educational Services Division.

B. Introduction of Jae Takahashi, Chief Technology Officer, Business Services Division

Jae Takahashi introduced himself in his recently promoted role as Chief Technology Officer, Business Services Division.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. September 3, 2025, Regular Board Meeting

After a motion by Board Member Love and a second by Board Member Gerard, the Minutes of the September 3, 2025, Regular Board Meeting were unanimously (Alvaro, Arias, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O'Neill, and Torres) approved.

B. September 17, 2025, Retreat

After a motion by Board Member Gerard and a second by Board Member Alvaro, the Minutes of the September 17, 2025, Retreat were unanimously (Alvaro, Arias, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O'Neill, and Torres) approved.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

B. Receive Quarterly Report on Complaints, as Required by the Williams Settlement

C. Adopt Resolution No. 25-58 Establishing the Actual 2024-2025 and the Estimated 2025-2026 Appropriations Limitation (Gann Limit)

D. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 25-59 Recognizing October 12-18, 2025, as Week of the School Administrator

E. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 25-60 Honoring Mary Los on Her Retirement

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

6. **BUSINESS SERVICES DIVISION**

A. Discuss/Act on the 2024-2025 Unaudited Actuals Year-End Closing Report

**BUSINESS SERVICES DIVISION (continued)**

Kevin Bultema, Deputy Superintendent, Business Services Division; Minette Manio, Executive Director, Internal Business Services, Business Services Division; Marian Reyes, Manager, Fiscal Services, Business Services Division; and Erik Arteaga, Supervisor, Fiscal Services, Business Services Division, presented the 2024-2025 Unaudited Actuals Year-End Closing Report.

Board Member Love referred to the County Office's significant reserves across multiple funds and asked whether the current level of reserves is appropriate, whether some of the funds should be used to further support children and schools, and if there are plans for allocating those reserves. Executive Director Manio acknowledged that having either too few or too many reserves presents challenges, although having more is a "good problem." She emphasized the importance of strategically aligning fund allocation with the organization's priorities and Strategic Plan, with the goal of using the reserves wisely to support children in San Mateo County.

Deputy Superintendent Bultema added that the full impact of classified staff compensation will appear in the 2025–2026 budget. Upcoming negotiations may lead to more multi-year agreements, reducing reserve growth, and general fund dollars are being used for program improvements. Funds in deferred maintenance and Fund 40 are earmarked for facilities, while Fund 17 may support workforce housing and other strategic priorities, pending Board and Superintendent decisions.

Board Member Alvaro reminded that the amount of property tax revenue sent back to the State exceeds the district's total annual spending on both certificated and classified staff salaries, which is a significant fiscal concern.

After a motion by Board Member Bonini and a second by Board Member Alvaro, the 2024-2025 Unaudited Actuals Year-End Closing Report was unanimously (Alvaro, Arias, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O'Neill, and Torres) approved.

**7. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

A. Superintendent's Comments

Deputy Superintendent Chávez reported that County Office was honored as the Mid-Sized County Office of the Year by the California County Superintendents and recognized for its leadership in behavioral health, environmental literacy, and school safety. Superintendent Magee's contributions in these areas were specifically acknowledged.

Deputy Superintendent Chávez wished a happy upcoming birthday to Ian Bain, Executive Director, Strategy and Communications, Office of the Superintendent, on October 12.

**8. BOARD MEMBERS**

A. Discuss/Act on the School Funding Task Force Report

**BOARD MEMBERS (continued)**

Board Member Love informed that the updated School Funding Task Force Report reflects how the Task Force’s work aligns with the Board’s governance roles in advocacy and collaboration with districts. Over four meetings, they explored district funding challenges, brainstormed solutions, and received feedback from Capitol Advisors. Key focus areas include cost of living, excess property taxes, and housing. Potential next steps include drafting legislation with Senator Josh Becker’s office, aiming for a January introduction. She noted that the San Mateo County School Boards Association’s (SMCSBA’s) Advocacy Subcommittee is also actively engaged in this work.

Board Member Bonini discussed how the property tax issue has seen past legislative interest and may benefit from additional historical context. She suggested continued research and collaboration and expressed appreciation for the Task Force’s work and their efforts to advance the issue.

Board Member Gerard commended the Task Force’s effort to address funding inequities, noting that the work has sparked important conversations about disparities that were previously ignored. She appreciates the issue being brought to the forefront and to the Association of California County Board of Education (ACCBE), where it has been a priority from the beginning.

Board Member Alvaro discussed expanding the conversation publicly, through editorials or media coverage, to raise awareness about funding disparities and the issue of property tax revenue being diverted to non-educational uses. She emphasized the importance of correcting misconceptions about school funding and encouraged the Board to publicly support and advance the report’s findings. Board Member Love agreed that the Board could work with the Superintendent’s Office to issue a press release.

Board Member Arias expressed appreciation for the extensive efforts behind the report and emphasized the importance of addressing disparities in San Mateo County, where student opportunities vary widely. She hopes the work will lead to positive outcomes for all students.

After a motion by Board Member Gerard and a second by Board Member Alvaro, the School Funding Task Force Report was unanimously (Alvaro, Arias, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O’Neill, and Torres) approved.

**B. First Reading of the New Board Policy Regarding Student Board Members**

Board Member Bonini noted that while the new board policy includes language about receiving applications from the county, as required by law, it also outlines the appointment of two student board members – one as liaison and one from our schools. She expressed concern that these elements seem disconnected and suggested clarifying how they interact, especially if an application is also submitted.

Board Member Bonini recommended changing the policy language regarding student board member eligibility from “shall” select two student county board members to “may” to allow flexibility. Using “shall” implies a mandatory action, which may not be feasible every year due to unforeseen circumstances.

**BOARD MEMBERS (continued)**

Board Member Bonini suggested revising policy language to state that student board members receive support from both the Superintendent and the Board, rather than just the Superintendent. This change would reflect a shared responsibility and ensure the Board plays an active role in supporting students.

Board Member Love acknowledged the comments received. She noted that the Board Policy Subcommittee didn't find the application section confusing but will revisit it for clarity. She affirmed that staff have historically provided strong support to student board members and the policy was building on that history.

Board Member Alvaro explained that legal requirements mandate keeping application language in the policy, even if the Board only accepts applications from Court and Community School students. She added that Lisa Cho, Deputy County Attorney, advised that the Board can decline general applications if designated slots are already filled. Board Member Love noted that applications would be limited to Court and Community School students, as required by legislation.

Board Member Bonini suggested prioritizing certain student groups and emphasized the need for clearer policy language regarding student board member selection, citing a past instance where a county school student was unsure how to apply. She plans to review the policy further and possibly consult with Deputy County Attorney Cho to ensure clarity for all students.

Board Member Alvaro discussed efforts to engage students, including staff outreach and visits by board members to explain the role and encourage participation. While the intent is reflected in the policy, some supportive language is implicit due to legal wording constraints.

Board Member Bonini stated she was supportive of staff helping students with recommendations and statements for applications but recommended adding an option for students to apply independently, to make the process more inclusive and accessible.

C. Discuss/Act on the Formation and Topics to be Addressed by an Ad Hoc San Mateo County Community College District Joint Meeting Planning Subcommittee

Board Member Bonini shared that the idea for forming a subcommittee originated from past joint meetings with the San Mateo County Community College District (SMCCCD). This Subcommittee's purpose will be to conduct preliminary brainstorming and coordinate with SMCCCD representatives to set an agenda and organize a future meeting. She discussed how continued collaboration would be beneficial due to several shared initiatives.

Board Member Alvaro asked for clarification about the timing of a proposed meeting with the SMCCCD, noting that both the Board's calendar and the SMCCCD's calendar are full for the current year. Board Member Bonini stated the timing had not been determined.

Board Member Alvaro said she would prefer to plan the joint meeting for the next school year, suggesting it be included when setting the Board's calendar, since the current calendar is full. Board

**BOARD MEMBERS (continued)**

President Torres proposed beginning the pre-planning and planning stages now, with the goal of launching the meeting in the summer or at the start of the next school year.

Board Member Love expressed that the Subcommittee can move forward at any time and doesn't need to be included in the full Board schedule.

Board Member Bonini discussed how the Subcommittee is intended to develop an agenda for a full joint board meeting between our Board and the SMCCCD board.

Board Member O'Neill asked whether the Adult School Consortium, a state-funded partnership jointly managed by the SMCCCD, K-12 high school districts, and the adult school division, will be included in the joint meeting. He highlighted challenges the Consortium faces and recommended inviting them to participate. Board Member Bonini noted that if the joint meeting addresses issues related to the Adult School Consortium, they and other relevant groups should be included. She emphasized that the Subcommittee's initial task is to determine who should be involved and what topics should be discussed.

Board Member Gerard agreed that the Subcommittee should be formed now to begin planning for the future, regardless of whether the joint meeting happens later this year or next. She emphasized that starting the process is essential to making progress.

Board Member Alvaro clarified that her comments were not intended to delay forming the Subcommittee; she was only suggesting that the joint meeting take place in the next school year. She underscored that the Subcommittee should begin its work immediately.

The Board discussed selecting members for the Subcommittee. Board Member Bonini, Board Member Arias, and Board Member Gerard volunteered to serve.

After a motion by Board Member Love and a second by Board Member Gerard, the formation of an Ad Hoc San Mateo County Community College District Joint Meeting Planning Subcommittee comprised of Board Member Bonini, Board Member Arias, and Board Member Gerard was unanimously (Alvaro, Arias, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O'Neill, and Torres) approved.

Board Member Bonini shared that her list of potential discussion items for the joint meeting include the topics already mentioned, along with Project Change, the evolving Middle College program, and collaborative efforts in areas like early education, career technical education (CTE), apprenticeships, and trades. Board President Torres added the Adult School Consortium as another priority.

Board Member O'Neill discussed the recent grand jury report highlighting inadequate education, particularly General Educational Development (GED) programs in jails. He recommended that the issue of continuing high school education in jails be addressed in future discussions.

Deputy Superintendent Chávez offered his support in helping to coordinate the meeting or contacting the SMCCCD if needed.

**BOARD MEMBERS (continued)**

**D. Receive Reports from the Board Ad Hoc Subcommittees and Representatives**

Board Member Bonini reported that the Gateway Subcommittee met on September 23 to review progress and priorities from the previous design committee. Key focus areas included expanding partnerships with the community college, improving student transitions, and enhancing staff professional development. They received updates on staffing changes, program outcomes, and ongoing efforts to strengthen Gateway's offerings, and discussed how the Board could support these initiatives through budget priorities and outreach, especially to districts that could benefit from Gateway's services. The meeting was informative and aligned with the broader goals of equity and collaboration.

Board Member Gerard agreed that the Gateway Subcommittee meeting was informative and filled with valuable discussions. Some tough questions were asked and the responses were thoughtful and helpful. She assured there would be more updates as the work progresses and future meetings take place.

Board President Torres shared that the Workforce Housing Subcommittee has received multiple requests from districts pursuing their own housing projects, which differ from the Subcommittee's original plans. As a next step, the Subcommittee will meet to establish clear, equitable parameters for evaluating and supporting these requests. The goals are to ensure consistency and fairness across districts seeking assistance and align as a team before presenting a unified approach to the Board.

Board Member Bonini explained that the Workforce Housing Subcommittee's original charge was specifically tied to the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Housing Endowment and Regional Trust (HEART) and focuses on providing quick feedback on property reviews, which is not feasible within regular board meeting timelines. The Subcommittee has been actively engaged in this work, which primarily aims to benefit the County Office staff and teachers, although it could eventually have broader county-wide impact. With new housing requests emerging from districts, the Subcommittee is now considering whether to expand its scope. Before doing so, they plan to work with staff to develop clear parameters and bring those back to the full Board for guidance.

**E. Board Member Comments**

**Board Member Love**

Board Member Love expressed appreciation for the well-written media release announcing the County Office's Mid-Sized County Office of the Year award. She congratulated the County Office for the well-deserved recognition.

Board Member Love shared her enthusiasm for the progress made by the Task Force, highlighting the initiative as a strong example of positive teamwork between the Board and Superintendent Magee. She is excited about continuing the efforts.

Board Member Love referred to the Retreat and asked about next steps. Board President Torres confirmed that next steps are being planned and communication will be sent to the Board soon.

**BOARD MEMBERS (continued)**

Board Member Love discussed the ACCBE meeting scheduled for the following day and encouraged board members to attend.

**Board Member O’Neill**

Board Member O’Neill reported that he attended the California School Boards Association (CSBA) County Board Conference in Monterey and participated in workshops on charter school oversight and development of a methodology for legislative lobbying. He learned about potential services that could benefit San Mateo County districts, including a predictive algorithm that helps forecast school closures due to declining enrollment and a digital document vault for foster youth, allowing children who frequently move between homes and schools to securely store important documents. He suggested the County Office consider offering these services and support.

Board Member O’Neill shared that he attended two community events; the first was the County Historical Association’s ceremony honoring Anna Eshoo as a history maker and the second was the Pacifica Resource Center’s annual fundraiser supporting holiday needs and family programs.

Board Member O’Neill highlighted the upcoming Farm Bureau Dinner on November 7 in Half Moon Bay, which honors veterans and features locally sourced food, showcasing San Mateo County’s \$100 million agriculture industry. Additionally, on November 1 he will serve as a panelist at the Youth Leadership Summit in Burlingame.

Board Member O’Neill discussed attending the Jefferson High School District’s housing board meeting and participating in SMCSBA meetings. He described how Senator Alex Padilla’s staff expressed interest in meeting with board members to discuss education issues and invited any interested trustees to join that conversation.

**Board Member Alvaro**

Board Member Alvaro shared that she attended the Court and Community School Open House via Zoom and was the only participant. She engaged in a conversation with staff about the ongoing challenge of parent engagement, noting that timing, not lack of interest, is often the barrier. The event was recorded and will be made available to families.

Board Member Alvaro discussed meeting two new district superintendents, Michelle Ross in the La Honda-Pescadero Unified School District and Dr. Ramon Miramontes in the Cabrillo Unified School District. She and Superintendent Ross discussed Cal Fire’s new station being built on district land across from the high school, a critical development given the area’s role in emergency evacuations. They also talked about rural district challenges such as transportation, power outages, and geographic isolation. With Superintendent Miramontes, the conversation focused on leadership instability, particularly the frequent turnover of principals in recent years. Despite these challenges, she was impressed by the enthusiasm both superintendents bring to their roles and communities.

Board Member Alvaro stated she was looking forward to the upcoming ACCBE Zoom meeting.

**Board Member Arias**

**BOARD MEMBERS (continued)**

Board Member Arias expressed gratitude for the Retreat, emphasizing its value in fostering teamwork and shared purpose among board members and the Superintendent. As a newly appointed trustee, she hope such retreats occur more frequently.

Board Member Arias noted that she missed the September 29 SMCSBA quarterly meeting due to facilitating and interpreting at a community event focused on relationship abuse and healthcare, but was pleased that insights from a recent conference she attended were incorporated into the presentation.

Board Member Arias requested access to the County Office’s protocols regarding ICE raids because she wants to better understand and represent community concerns.

Board Member Arias informed that she is currently attending a weeklong Spanish-language leadership training, Arte Del Liderazgo, which she finds deeply enriching for her role as a board member. She reflected on the importance of board participation in subcommittees and task forces, and always centering San Mateo County students and families in decision-making.

Board Member Arias reported that she attended the Mexican American School Board Association (MASBA) Conference in San Antonio, where she received the book *Transformative Student Voice*. The book’s message about partnering with youth for equitable school improvement resonated with her, reinforcing the importance of student representation in governance.

Board Member Arias shared pride that her 27-year-old son is beginning his fire academy training.

**Board Member Bonini**

Board Member Bonini thanked those who attended the SMCSBA’s first quarterly meeting, which focused on supporting immigrant students and families amid fears of ICE activity, as well as broader community challenges. The meeting featured district speakers who shared strategies for engaging families and improving attendance, and the San Mateo Union High School District (SMUHSD) presented its emergency response protocol, prompting interest in whether similar plans exist at the county level. *Faith in Action* contributed resources to support families and an attorney from the California Latino School Boards Association (CSLBA) joined via Zoom.

Board Member Bonini announced an upcoming event hosted by the Building Trades Council of San Mateo County on October 16 at the Plumber’s Hall in Burlingame. The “Hope and Opportunity Program” will showcase joint apprenticeship training center programs, provide dinner, and encourage educator participation to explore partnership opportunities with local districts.

**Board Member Gerard**

Board Member Gerard noted that she attended the SMCSBA quarterly meeting and found it highly informative, although some of the content was unsettling, particularly regarding student safety in schools. She praised the SMUHSD for its comprehensive emergency response program.

**BOARD MEMBERS (continued)**

Board Member Gerard reflected on the Retreat and expressed gratitude for Dave Patterson's leadership. She noted that although Dr. Patterson cannot commit to ongoing facilitation due to scheduling conflicts, he offered to help identify a suitable replacement and will facilitate the Governance Workshop on November 5.

Board Member Gerard shared excitement about the ACCBE Zoom meeting scheduled for the following evening, which will be the first in a three-part series focused on court and community schools. She encouraged all board members to attend, noting that there will be guest speakers and valuable information shared in the sessions.

**Board President Torres**

Board President Torres discussed the Governance Workshop on November 5. Once a new facilitator is confirmed, either through Dr. Patterson's recommendation or the County Office's search, additional retreat dates and details will be planned.

Board President Torres shared that he attended the SMCSBA quarterly meeting, which was informative and enjoyable with great food and company.

Board President Torres thanked the Board for approving his attendance at the MASBA Conference, which he was invited to for the first time. The two-day event featured impactful presentations, legislative updates, and student performances including folklorico dances, mariachi music, and a student art auction. He appreciated the celebration of student culture and inclusion, and expressed hopes to attend again next year.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m. Board President Torres announced the next regular meeting would be take place on Wednesday, October 22, 2025.



Nancy Magee, Secretary

jlp