



CONEJO VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Conejo Valley High School (CVUSD Board Room)
1402 E. Janss Road, Thousand Oaks, CA 91362

BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, October 29, 2025

MINUTES

1. OPENING PROVISIONS

A. Call the Meeting to Order

Call to Order: President Powell called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Board Trustees present: Board President Lisa Powell, Board Vice President Karen Sylvester, Board Clerk Bill Gorback, Board Trustees Lauren Gill and Cindy Goldberg, and Student Board Trustee Finneas Kerns.

Administration present: Dr. Mark McLaughlin, Superintendent; Dr. Victor Hayek, Deputy Superintendent, Business Services; Kenneth Loo, Assistant Superintendent, Instructional and Student Services; and Shauna Ashmore, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Approval of the Agenda

Trustee Gill made the motion to approve the agenda as submitted, seconded by Trustee Sylvester. There was no board discussion on this agenda item. **Motion carried: 5-0, with a preferential “yes” vote from Trustee Kerns.**

D. Comments – Public (Limited to Special Board Meeting Agenda Items Only)

President Powell announced that there were no public comment requests submitted. The board then convened the Study Session.

2. STUDY SESSION

A. Board Self-Evaluation

President Powell opened the Study Session by outlining its purpose and structure, noting that the Board agreed to conduct regular self-evaluations as specified in the CVUSD Governance Handbook, with the most recent evaluation completed in October 2023. She explained that the evaluation tool’s framework and components are research- and evidence-based to support a highly effective governing board, and she invited Trustees to discuss the efficacy of the process and consider alternative or additional methods for future evaluations. President Powell also read an excerpt from the Lighthouse Study provided by the California School Boards Association (CSBA) and asked Trustees to review the tool section by section, identify specific areas for discussion, and highlight both successes and opportunities for growth.

The Board briefly discussed a written public comment submitted by the previous Student Board Trustee and reached consensus to seek feedback from the respective former Student Board Trustee in years when the Board conducts its self-evaluation survey. The Board then discussed each section of the survey as noted:

Section 1. Conditions of Effective Governance:

- **Board Unity:** The Board discussed the overall strong results of the self-evaluation, noting that most items were rated “almost always,” indicating consistent positive performance with some areas for continued growth. The Board observed that occasional “often” responses could be interpreted similarly but may also highlight opportunities for improvement. The discussion included reflections on past experiences with Board unity and conflict, with agreement that the current Board demonstrates strong collaboration and effective disagreement. The Board also referenced the importance of governance standards and trusting relationships, as supported by research and governance training, emphasizing their role in maintaining an effective governing body.
- **Roles and Responsibilities:** The Board discussed roles and responsibilities, emphasizing the importance of maintaining clear boundaries between governance and management, and noted that allowing the Superintendent flexibility to perform his duties and to communicate if the Board moves beyond its governance role supports an effective working relationship. The Board affirmed that while the Superintendent, Board President, and Communications Department serve as the district’s primary spokespersons, individual Trustees may also speak publicly at their discretion. The Board agreed that no policy changes were needed, as the current policy already references a designee. The Superintendent expressed confidence in the confidentiality of Board communications and stated he would address any direction coming from an individual Trustee to ensure guidance reflects the collective will of the Board.
- **Board Culture:** The Board reviewed self-evaluation items with slightly lower ratings and discussed the importance of maintaining respectful dialogue and understanding differing viewpoints. Board trustees reflected on personal growth in listening to colleagues, recognizing that differing opinions contribute to better decision-making and overall Board effectiveness. The discussion emphasized the value of open dialogue, unity, and constructive disagreement, noting that not all votes need to be unanimous for the Board to function cohesively, and that such discussions also provide valuable insight to staff when preparing future agenda items.

- **Board Operations:**

The Board discussed the process for identifying future discussion topics and presentations, agreeing that the current protocol provides clear structure and transparency. Board trustees noted that including this item at the end of each meeting is effective and organized, offering an improvement over the previous method of submitting ideas through the Superintendent's Office or through the Board President.

- **Board Meetings:**

The Board discussed effective meeting practices, decision-making, and use of data to inform Board governance and district actions. The Board highlighted the value of CSBA Board President training, aligning meeting agendas with district priorities and student achievement, and continuing to base decisions on both quantitative and qualitative data. The Board agreed that flexibility, use of multiple data sources, and improved access to presentations before meetings strengthen decision-making. The use of the gavel was noted as appropriate for opening, closing, public hearings, and maintaining order during meetings.

- **Board Development:**

The Board discussed opportunities for ongoing training and professional development, noting participation in MIG, CSBA conferences, county board meetings, and regional VCSBA events. Board trustees highlighted the value of orientation sessions and informational meetings with district departments for new trustees. The Board also discussed varying practices among districts regarding Student Board Trustee participation and preferential voting.

Section 2. Board Responsibilities:

- **Setting Direction:**

The Board discussed the development of the district's mission statement, noting that while it was created without a formal community process, community input is incorporated through District Advisory Committees and open Board discussions. Board trustees acknowledged that the mission statement reflects existing district values and community engagement efforts.

- **Structure:**

The Board discussed district priorities for collective bargaining, along with the process for adopting and revising Board policies and administrative regulations. It was noted that staff typically initiate policy revisions, with upcoming work to include technology and AI policies. Board trustees agreed the system provides multiple

opportunities for stakeholder input and clarified that contracts reopen every three years, primarily addressing salary and evaluations.

- **Support:**

The Board highlighted the district's strong culture of recognizing accomplishments across academics, arts, and athletics, noting that neighboring districts have reached out to learn about its approach to student and staff acknowledgments. Board trustees also commended the effective structure of board meetings that allows time to celebrate these achievements.

- **Accountability:**

President Powell emphasized the importance of establishing clear indicators to guide priorities, measure progress, and support continuous improvement in Board performance, noting that the superintendent's evaluation is a key component of Board and district accountability. The Board discussed using indicators to adjust strategies and strengthen support for specific student groups, emphasizing the value of sharing progress with parent committees.

- **Community Leadership:**

Board trustees reviewed legislative advocacy, recognizing it as an area of potential growth. The Board agreed that partnerships and engagement with local agencies and organizations such as CRPD remain priorities. The discussion highlighted the importance of respectful governance and effective communication across all levels.

- **Closing Thoughts:**

Board trustees agreed the survey tool itself was not particularly useful for deep reflection and preferred open discussion guided by key questions, with some trustees suggesting the Board develop their own tool or use the current survey tool only as a discussion framework. The Board will revisit the self-evaluation process regularly and determine its timing based on Board needs and future membership changes.

3. ADJOURNMENT

A. Adjournment

President Powell adjourned the Study Session at 11:23 a.m. The next regularly scheduled board meeting will be Wednesday, November 5, 2025, 5:30 p.m. – Closed Session; 6:00 p.m. - Open Session, at Conejo Valley High School in the CVUSD Board Room, 1402 E. Janss Road, Thousand Oaks.

November 19, 2025



Date

Board Clerk

November 19, 2025



Date

Superintendent

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<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwMRcdezDa6wbm8DhLrV-HQ>