

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE SAN MATEO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Meeting Date: October 22, 2025

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

Board Members Present: Susan Alvaro (remotely), Chelsea Bonini,
Beverly Gerard (remotely), Patricia Love,
Mike O’Neill, Hugo Torres

Board Members Absent: Edith Arias (due to hardship)

County Attorney Present: Lisa Cho, Deputy County Attorney

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

Staff Officials Absent: Nancy Magee, Superintendent

Other Staff Present: Ian Bain, Kevin Bultema, Hector Camacho,
Tami Moore, Jae Takahashi, Mary Yung

1. **OPENING ITEMS**

A. Call to Order

Board President Hugo Torres called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Board Member Gerard noted she would attend the meeting remotely due to just cause.

Board Member Alvaro noted she would attend the meeting remotely due to just cause.

B. Approval of Agenda

After a motion by Board Member O’Neill and a second by Board Member Bonini, the October 22, 2025, agenda as presented was approved by a vote of six in favor (Alvaro, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O’Neill, and Torres) and one absent (Arias), by roll call vote.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following speakers provided live public comment:

- Larry Moody, Government Affairs Community Liaison, JobTrain
- Janice Pellizzari, San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) teacher and San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) President

3. **EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH**

- A. October 2025 Employee of the Month Lihua Yang, Educational Data Analyst, Research and Systems Planning, Center for Learning Analytics, Educational Services Division

Board President Torres recognized the October 2025 Employee of the Month Lihua Yang, Educational Data Analyst, Research and Systems Planning, Center for Learning Analytics, Educational Services Division, and honored her on behalf of the Board.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. October 8, 2025, Regular Board Meeting

After a motion by Board Member Bonini and a second by Board Member O'Neill, the Minutes of the October 8, 2025, Regular Board Meeting were approved by a vote of six in favor (Alvaro, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O'Neill, and Torres) and one absent (Arias), by roll call vote.

5. **CONSENT AGENDA**

- B. Receive Staffing Reports
- C. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 25-61 Recognizing November 2025 as National Native American Heritage Month

After a motion by Board Member O'Neill and a second by Board Member Love, the Consent Agenda was approved by a vote of six in favor (Alvaro, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O'Neill, and Torres) and one absent (Arias), by roll call vote.

6. **PUBLIC HEARING: OCEANLIGHT SCHOOL COUNTYWIDE BENEFIT CHARTER PETITION**

- A. Receive Opening Statement from SMCOE Staff (10 minute maximum)

**PUBLIC HEARING: OCEANLIGHT SCHOOL COUNTYWIDE BENEFIT
CHARTER PETITION (continued)**

Joy Dardenelle, Executive Director, District Improvement and Support, Educational Services Division, provided the Board with an opening statement regarding the Oceanlight School Countywide Benefit Charter Petition.

B. Receive Presentation from the Oceanlight Charter School Petitioners (10 minute maximum)

Oceanlight Charter School petitioners Dr. Kelly Mendoza, Don Burdette, LiLing Pang, and Jennifer Hsu presented on the Oceanlight School Countywide Benefit Charter Petition.

C. Receive Presentations/Responses from Districts (10 minute maximum per district)

Bhavna Narula, Superintendent, Bayshore Elementary School District, presented the District's response.

Michael Milliken, Interim Superintendent, Brisbane School District, presented the District's response.

Marla Silversmith, Superintendent, Burlingame School District, presented the District's response.

Josie Peterson, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services, Jefferson Elementary School District, presented the District's response.

Board President Torres noted that the Jefferson Union High School District was not present at the meeting but had submitted a letter that was included in the board packet.

Laverne Villalobos, Board Member, Pacifica School District; Martha Ladd, Interim Deputy Superintendent, Pacifica School District; and Carla Torres, Interim Director, Educational Support Services, Pacifica School District, presented the District's response.

Amanda Blanchette, Vice President, San Bruno Park School District Board of Trustees; Heather Latta, Executive Director, San Bruno Education Foundation; and Andriana Shea, Community Member and Parent, presented the District's response.

Dr. Shawnterra Moore, Superintendent, South San Francisco Unified School District, presented the District's response.

D. Questions from the Board to SMCOE Staff, the Petitioners, and the Districts

Board Member Love asked the Pacifica School District to describe the steps they took in managing the process of either closing or merging a school. The Pacifica School District explained that the initiative was a co-location, meaning two schools now share one campus and resources. To guide the transition, they formed both a visioning team, composed of parents,

**PUBLIC HEARING: OCEANLIGHT SCHOOL COUNTYWIDE BENEFIT
CHARTER PETITION (continued)**

teachers, and administrators from each school, and a transition team that included those members plus district staff to ensure coordinated decision-making. They also provided support measures including mental health services, hosted three family engagement nights, and organized staff engagement evenings led by a therapist focused on resilience-building activities to help families and staff navigate the change.

Board Member O'Neill asked the Pacifica School District about the total student enrollment at Ocean Shore before the move. He also asked how many of those students continued at Ocean Shore after the relocation, as opposed to leaving the school district entirely. The Pacifica School District indicated that although they did not have exact numbers, roughly 250 students were expected to co-locate to Sunset Ridge and approximately 190 students are currently attending.

Board Member O'Neill referred to the decision to co-locate Ocean Shore's 250 students. He asked if the grade levels were kindergarten through fifth grade. The Pacifica School District noted that was in transitional kindergarten (TK) through fifth grade. They added they were referring to the students who co-located to Sunset Ridge.

Board Member O'Neill asked the Pacifica School District how many students in sixth through eighth grade went to Ingrid B. Lacy. He said he was interested in how many students left Ocean Shore but remain in the Pacifica School District and how many more might potentially leave the district if the petition is approved. He highlighted concerns about the fiscal impact related to Average Daily Attendance (ADA).

The Pacifica School District responded that they conducted an attrition study and found a loss of roughly 100 students, dropping enrollment from approximately 2,660 to 2,560. Although they anticipated losing roughly 50 students, the addition of a TK grade level helped offset some of the decline. Most attrition occurred in fourth through sixth grades, with roughly 40 students transferring to Good Shepherd parochial school, 30 of whom were from Ocean Shore. Additionally, 40% of the students who left the district this year moved out of the area, though not out of state.

Board Member O'Neill asked whether Oceanlight, a charter school, could join the County Office's SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area) to serve special needs students. Marco Chávez, Deputy Superintendent, Educational Services Division, confirmed they could.

Board Member O'Neill asked whether the funding allocated for a student with higher needs goes to the charter school or elsewhere. Deputy Superintendent Chávez indicated that the funding follows the student.

Board Member O'Neill asked whether the charter school plans to join a SELPA and if that is standard practice. Deputy Superintendent Chávez noted that it is common for charter schools to join a SELPA, though not always the one associated with the county in which they are located.

**PUBLIC HEARING: OCEANLIGHT SCHOOL COUNTYWIDE BENEFIT
CHARTER PETITION (continued)**

Board Member O’Neill asked whether Oceanlight would have the opportunity to join the SELPA program in Santa Clara County. Deputy Superintendent Chávez explained that while that is a possibility, charter schools often seek SELPA support from other counties, such as El Dorado County, which is a popular choice. Additionally, some charter schools within our county use the local SELPA.

Board Member O’Neill discussed how the funding for a student with special needs would follow the student to the charter school, then the charter school is responsible for providing the necessary services outlined in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Deputy Superintendent Chávez confirmed that was accurate.

Board Member O’Neill asked whether Oceanlight would require parent volunteer hours similar to Ocean Shore, which had a 96-hour requirement. The petitioners clarified that, under current laws, schools cannot mandate parent volunteer hours to ensure equitable access for all families, because some may face challenges such as working multiple jobs. While there will not be a requirement, Oceanlight will offer support to help families contribute in ways that suit their circumstances.

Board Member O’Neill asked how the survey was distributed and about the target audience for that outreach. The petitioners explained that approximately 15 informational sessions were held over the summer, both virtually and in person. To promote these sessions, targeted social media ads were used to reach families with young children across North County cities. Attendees of these sessions were then invited to complete an interest survey, which formed the basis for the data in the application.

Board Member O’Neill asked how the petitioners plan to market the school to North County or the broader county community. The petitioners responded that Oceanlight’s initial outreach focused on North County through targeted social media ads, which led to strong interest from Pacifica due to familiarity with similar programs. However, the school’s future outreach is broader and equity-driven. Plans include a multi-site TK–8 model expanding into Daly City, South San Francisco, and San Bruno to reduce barriers such as long commutes and district boundaries. Outreach efforts feature multilingual materials, partnerships with early learning centers and family resource agencies, and transportation support such as vanpools and transit subsidies. Oceanlight aims to reflect the diversity of each community it serves and will continually adjust strategies to ensure equitable access across San Mateo County.

Board Member O’Neill questioned the charter school's commitment to equity, pointing out that while teachers are enrolled in the California State Teachers’ Retirement Plan (CalSTRS), a defined benefit plan, classified staff are only offered a 403(b), which is not. The petitioners explained that it is uncommon for charter schools to participate in the Public Employees’ Retirement System (PERS) program for classified staff, with only a few older, district-affiliated charters doing so. Board Member O’Neill questioned the charter school's commitment to equity, pointing out unequal retirement benefits between teachers and classified staff.

**PUBLIC HEARING: OCEANLIGHT SCHOOL COUNTYWIDE BENEFIT
CHARTER PETITION (continued)**

Board Member O'Neill raised concerns about the sustainability of offering teacher salaries above the county median. The petitioners explained that the higher average salary reflects the plan to hire nine experienced teachers at launch, which justifies the elevated pay.

Board Member Alvaro asked for clarification about how districts along the coastside were notified about the charter school proposal. The petitioners explained that, by law, notification letters were sent only to districts near the initial proposed location, at Hickey Boulevard and Skyline Boulevard. The Cabrillo Unified School District was not notified because it lies outside the immediate impact area.

Board Member Alvaro asked if the map presented reflects future aspirations rather than current plans. The petitioners confirmed that the map represents a long-term vision, not immediate actions. Board Member Alvaro asked if the countywide model would only unfold if the initial school is successful, with future campuses potentially opening in other parts of North County. The petitioners indicated that was accurate, with the first location focused on Pacifica and broader expansion envisioned as part of a five-year plan.

Board Member Bonini asked whether there was a specific number, percentage, or estimate of the current co-located Ocean Shore students planning to enroll in the new school. The petitioners said that the exact number from Ocean Shore is unknown, but approximately 240 families from Pacifica signed a petition expressing intent to enroll.

Board Member Bonini asked for an estimated percentage of students attending the co-located school that would attend the new school. The petitioners stated they did not have the number on hand but would follow up.

Board Member Bonini asked why the petitioners chose to pursue a countywide charter instead of applying through the Pacifica School District. She also asked about their justification that students couldn't be served as well by a district-level charter. The petitioners explained that the Pacifica School District's decision to close a long-standing program signaled a lack of commitment to sustaining it, likely due to broader budget issues. They concluded that such a program couldn't thrive within a small district and needed a larger, scalable model. Their data showed a countywide need for a unique program like Oceanlight, especially in North San Mateo County, where few charter options exist. Pursuing a countywide charter was seen as a way to expand equitable educational choices across the region.

Board Member Bonini clarified her question to ask why the petitioners did not apply for a charter directly through Pacifica School District, given that most interested families are from Pacifica and the school would still offer choice and independence. The petitioners explained that applying through the Pacifica School District would require giving enrollment priority to Pacifica residents, which conflicts with their goal of equitable, region-wide access. A countywide charter allows them to be "zip code blind" and serve students across North San Mateo County without geographic preference.

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CHARTER PETITION (continued)**

Board Member Love asked why the petitioners choose a countywide charter model instead of following examples like KIPP or Summit, which started as district charters rooted in community input. The petitioners stated that district charters require separate petitions for each new location, which can be administratively complex and inefficient. A countywide charter streamlines operations by allowing one annual Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) submission, reducing overhead and freeing up resources to better serve students. The approach is mission-driven and designed for long-term scalability.

Board Member Love asked how Proposition 39 applies to students outside of Pacifica. She also asked about the logistical and financial implications of serving these students, especially with fewer than 80 students in some areas. The petitioners explained that Proposition 39 requires districts to provide facilities only for students residing within their boundaries. Currently, only Pacifica qualifies based on petition signers. For out-of-district students, facilities would be arranged through lease agreements, which generate rental income for the district. Negotiating these agreements can be complex, but funding support is available, and they are also exploring independent rental options to avoid relying solely on Proposition 39.

Board Member Bonini asked what would happen if 50% of students from the co-located Ocean Shore choose to attend the new charter school – would the existing school be able to sustain its current programming for those who remain. The Pacifica School District responded that losing half the student population would result in a financial impact totaling millions of dollars, which is significant for a small district. They emphasized the high cost of special education services, noting that 27% of their students are eligible for autism-related support, well above county and state averages, making continued programming financially challenging.

Board President Torres advised that any unanswered data-specific questions should be sent to Lisa Cho, Deputy County Attorney, who could provide the requested information.

Board President Torres asked how the charter school's environmental justice and literacy programs differ from or enhance what the County Office already offers, given its strong track record in this area. Deputy Superintendent Chávez informed that the team is still in the process of fully analyzing the charter petition. They are committed to reviewing the program in more detail and providing a follow-up comparison.

At 9:13 p.m., after a motion by Board Member Bonini and a second by Board Member Alvaro, the Board approved a five-minute recess by a vote of six in favor (Alvaro, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O'Neill, and Torres) and one absent (Arias), by roll call vote.

The meeting resumed at 9:20 p.m.

E. Public Comment (1 minute maximum per speaker)

**PUBLIC HEARING: OCEANLIGHT SCHOOL COUNTYWIDE BENEFIT
CHARTER PETITION (continued)**

Deputy Superintendent Chávez reported that the following comments related to Item 6 had been submitted electronically in advance of the meeting.

- Sara Johnson, parent, wrote in favor of the petition
- Heather Latta, San Bruno Education Foundation, wrote in opposition to the petition
- Alexis Petru, parent, wrote in opposition to the petition

The following speakers provided live public comment related to Item 6:

- Karen Gnusti, community member, spoke in favor of the petition
- Shivani Ganguly, Oceanlight Board Member, spoke in favor of the petition
- Ellie Swiedler, student, spoke in favor of the petition
- Lena Starrett, student, spoke in favor of the petition
- Vivi Burdette, student, spoke in favor of the petition
- Aria Ching, student, spoke in favor of the petition
- Conor Fagan, student, spoke in favor of the petition
- Ruby Rinehart, student, spoke in favor of the petition
- Grace Cassidy, student, spoke in favor of the petition
- Liam Cassidy, student, spoke in favor of the petition
- Brik Holle, student, spoke in favor of the petition
- Monica Howell, parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Amanda Anthony, Board President, South San Francisco Unified School District, spoke in opposition to the petition
- Margaret Lamont, parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Tiffany Hanna, community member, spoke in opposition to the petition
- Amy Burnett, community member, spoke in favor of the petition
- Rachel Reimers, community member, spoke in favor of the petition
- Jessika Welcome, EdTech, spoke in favor of the petition
- Deborah Sherwin, community member, spoke in favor of the petition
- Christina Lee, Oceanlight Board Member and parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Grace Sobieski, parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Tarra Knotts, community member, spoke in favor of the petition
- Nicole Sachkar, parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Jessica Paul, educator, spoke in favor of the petition
- Jana van den Boom, parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Andi Gustavson, parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Erika Torres, parent and psychologist, spoke in favor of the petition
- Beccy Howarth, teacher and Oceanlight founding member, spoke in favor of the petition
- Alex Sobieski spoke on behalf of a teacher in favor of the petition
- Brennan Pang spoke on behalf of a teacher favor of the petition
- Marguerite Rodigou spoke in favor of the petition
- Ethan Pang, student, spoke in favor of the petition
- Joan Weideman, Oceanlight founding member, spoke in favor of the petition
- Faith Holle, community member, spoke in favor of the petition

**PUBLIC HEARING: OCEANLIGHT SCHOOL COUNTYWIDE BENEFIT
CHARTER PETITION (continued)**

- Sandy Mills, retired teacher, spoke in favor of the petition
- Eric Chávez, community member, spoke in favor of the petition
- Karen Kee, Oceanlight founding member, spoke in favor of the petition
- Dustin Patenaude, labor relations representative, spoke in opposition to the petition
- Alexandra Cook-Milligan, parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Stephanie Ching, parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Fran Dickinson, Executive Director, San Carlos Charter School, spoke in favor of the petition
- Stefanie Suguwara, parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Kathleen Beebe, California Teachers Association (CTA), spoke in opposition to the petition
- Sheila Gamble-Dorn, retired teacher, spoke in favor of the petition
- A community member spoke on behalf of Marie (no last name), parent, in favor of the petition
- Tanya Guido spoke on behalf of Marianne Knox, former student, in favor of the petition
- Tony Rinehart, parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Jonathan Markham, community member, spoke in favor of the petition
- Wiley Clothier, educator, spoke in favor of the petition
- Danielle Lee, parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Carla Torres, community member, spoke in opposition to the petition
- Judy Lee, parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Alexander Gann, parent, spoke in favor of the petition
- Julie Ulmer, parent and teacher, spoke in opposition to the petition
- Megan McKenna, community member, spoke in favor of the petition
- Danish Rehman, parent, spoke in favor of the petition

7. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A. Superintendent's Comments

Deputy Superintendent Chávez had no comments.

8. BOARD MEMBERS

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

Board Member O'Neill asked about the capacity interview. Deputy Superintendent Chávez explained that it is a meeting between County Office staff and the petitioners to address questions raised during the board meeting and through further analysis. Deputy County Attorney Cho added that the Board may submit questions via email to be included in the interview.

BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

Board Member Bonini asked when the capacity interview is scheduled to take place. Deputy County Attorney Cho confirmed it is scheduled for October 30.

B. Board Member Comments

Board Member Love

Board Member Love asked whether the Pacifica School District's letter regarding a housing proposal would be followed up on. Board President Torres confirmed that the letter had been forwarded to County Office staff for follow-up.

Board Member Bonini

Board Member Bonini acknowledged receiving almost 90 emails from the public and expressed appreciation for the input and comments shared during the meeting.

Board Member Bonini reported that she visited the El Portal, Palos Verdes, and Canyon Oaks sites and thanked staff for their support.

Board Member Bonini noted she also visited Baywood Elementary in the San Mateo-Foster City School District and highlighted the school's shift to community-based visits that include parents, volunteers, agencies, and county office staff.

Board Member Bonini expressed enthusiasm for attending several additional school visits in the coming weeks.

Board Member O'Neill

Board Member O'Neill had no comments.

Board Member Alvaro

Board Member Alvaro shared that Bill Burns, a longtime educator and administrator, passed away recently at age 84. He worked in various roles supporting high-risk youth, community schools, and jail education programs. She requested to adjourn the meeting in his memory.

Board Member Gerard

Board Member Gerard thanked everyone who spoke during the meeting and acknowledged receiving and reading all emails, even if not all were individually responded to.

Board Member Gerard expressed full support for adjourning in memory of Bill Burns, praising his exceptional contributions to education, especially for at-risk and community school students, and sharing appreciation for having known him.

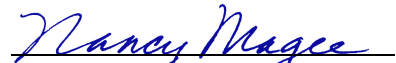
Board President Torres

Board President Torres expressed gratitude to the County Office staff for their support with setup, logistics, technology, and community engagement, emphasizing that their contributions were essential to the meeting's success.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:42 p.m, in memory of William “Bill” Burns Jr., a dedicated educator who spent decades serving at-risk youth through General Education Development (GED) programs, career prep, and community schools. After retiring, he continued teaching through library and jail programs. His lifelong commitment to education and equity was honored with heartfelt condolences to all who knew him.

Board President Torres announced the next regular meeting would be the Governance Workshop on Wednesday, November 5, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.



Nancy Magee, Secretary

jlp