

APPROVED

MINUTES OF THE SAN MATEO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Meeting Date: January 14, 2026

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,
Educational Services Division;
Jennifer Perna, Executive Assistant

Staff Officials Absent: Nancy Magee, Superintendent

Other Staff Present: Kevin Bultema, Sarah Notch, Kris Shouse,
Jae Takahashi, 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 O’Neill, the January 14, 2026, 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:

- Janice Pellizzari, San Mateo County Office of Education (SMCOE) teacher and San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) President

3. **PRESENTATION FOR SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH**

A. Presentation for School Board Recognition Month

Deputy Superintendent Chávez made a presentation honoring School Board Recognition Month.

4. **RECEPTION TO CELEBRATE SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH**

A. Reception to Celebrate School Board Recognition Month

The meeting recessed at 7:09 p.m. for a reception to celebrate School Board Recognition Month. The meeting resumed at 7:25 p.m.

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

A. Introduction of Rachel Ye, Coordinator, Information Systems, District Business Services, Business Services Division

Rachel Ye introduced herself in her new role as Coordinator, Information Systems, District Business Services, Business Services Division.

6. **CONSENT AGENDA**

B. Receive Staffing Reports

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

D. Establish Process for Small School District Purchase of Supplies and Equipment

E. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 26-1 Honoring January 2026 as School Board Recognition Month

F. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 26-2 Recognizing January 30, 2026, as Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution

G. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 26-3 Recognizing February 2026 as National African American History Month

H. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 26-4 Recognizing February 2026 as Career Technical Education Month

I. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 26-5 Recognizing February 2-6, 2026, as National School Counseling Week

J. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 26-6 Recognizing February 17 - March 3, 2026, as Lunar New Year

K. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 26-7 Recognizing February 2026 as Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

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

7. LOCAL CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN (LCAP)

- A. Receive 2025-2026 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) Mid-Year Report, Including Information on Student Data, Family Engagement, and Intervention Programs for the Court and Community Schools

Kris Shouse, Associate Superintendent, Educational Services Division, and Sarah Notch, Executive Director, Educational Innovations, Educational Services Division, provided the 2025-2026 Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) Mid-Year Report, including information on student data, family engagement, and intervention programs for the Court and Community Schools.

Board Member Love commented that the improved attendance data is encouraging. She attributed the progress to stronger student engagement, noted how recent efforts are making a difference, and emphasized the importance of the ongoing literacy work.

Board Member Love asked for an update on having a student board member. Deputy Superintendent Chávez explained that a meeting with the Youth Commission was scheduled to work on the selection process. The team is also developing a broader process for student programs. After discussions with Board President Torres and Vice President Gerard, there is support for moving forward even if student trustees begin mid-year, and the team is actively working in that direction.

Board Member Love asked whether Hillcrest currently has seventh and eighth grade students, noting that middle school education is very different from high school education and most updates focus on high school. Executive Director Notch confirmed that Hillcrest does have some middle school students, although their length of stay can be unpredictable. Middle and high school data are separated because certain metrics, like credit recovery, apply only to high school. Including middle school students in those calculations would distort the results, so the team pulls out that data as necessary. She clarified that they follow the same practice for Canyon Oaks.

Board Member Love asked for an update on tracking the long-term success of students who have gone through the programs. Associate Superintendent Shouse explained that upcoming updates will include additional Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) progress data, as well as information from Jonas Barbour, Coordinator, Transition Services, Educational Services Division, who serves as the Workforce Navigator. His work involves monitoring students after they transition out, including whether they return to the community or finish high school. This monitoring also tracks the supports and referrals students use over time. Although this wasn't originally a Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) metric, it may become one because it provides valuable insight into long-term outcomes. This work is meaningful for the Board, especially in understanding how well students remain connected to needed resources from a whole-child perspective.

Executive Director Notch added that the County Office is required to collect post-secondary outcome data for graduates with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and track how they are doing one year after graduation. Since a large percentage of students in our programs have disabilities, this data is already being gathered. She noted that the Workforce Navigator role strengthens this work by ensuring all students, not just those with IEPs, receive transition support,

LOCAL CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN (LCAP) (continued)

both immediately after leaving the program and over time. She summarized that long-term follow-up is happening and being expanded.

Board Member Bonini asked whether any staff are responsible for actively supporting students as they transition out of Gateway and back into their home districts, including making sure they actually re-enroll, get settled, and stay connected to services. Associate Superintendent Shouse acknowledged that this area isn't as developed as it could be. While counselors follow up on enrollment and administrators communicate with district staff who handle reentry, there is no dedicated person at Gateway whose role is to oversee these outward transitions. A new law, Assembly Bill (AB) 1230, will require districts to monitor these transitions more closely to prevent students from slipping through the cracks. In the future, this work might involve the bilingual coordinator or youth development specialist, but currently no one is specifically assigned to manage transition support for students leaving Gateway.

Board Member Bonini reflected on everything being interconnected, especially as the Budget Subcommittee works to identify priorities to elevate. She noted that transition support may need to be one of those priorities. Associate Superintendent Shouse explained that Coordinator Barbour's work is constrained by grant rules tied to probation. Because of those restrictions, he can more easily support Hillcrest students, who are directly justice-impacted, than Gateway students, who must meet a different eligibility threshold. She also noted that the probation-funded transition services currently benefiting Hillcrest students will lose their funding in about a year, which further limits the ability to expand that support.

Board Member Bonini asked whether the transition-support grant might be renewed. Associate Superintendent Shouse indicated that funding comes from a state grant routed through county probation departments, which partnered with the County Office because they couldn't run the program themselves. It is unclear whether the grant will renew, although the County Office is one of roughly eight sites participating. Given the Office of Youth and Community Restoration's (OYCR's) broader push to coordinate nonprofits and services that support justice-involved youth, she suspects an extension is likely. She emphasized the need to evaluate the program's effectiveness and decide whether it is something the organization wants to continue investing in going forward.

Board Member Bonini underscored that literacy is one of her priorities and expressed gratitude that a focused effort is underway. She asked several connected questions: what current data shows about students' literacy levels and whether trends match expectations; who is receiving training in the new Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS) approach and whether it extends beyond Hillcrest to Gateway and other programs; what the long-term plan is for sustaining this work; how the initiative will be funded; and who will own or lead the literacy effort, noting that other counties have dedicated literacy specialists.

Executive Director Notch stressed that literacy is crucial, and perhaps the most significant factor in reducing recidivism, so it remains a top priority. At the moment, the OYCR is leading the work, and the team is in the training and implementation phase. The pilot is centered at Hillcrest, but staff from other schools can be trained, allowing the program to expand to Gateway and Canyon Oaks.

LOCAL CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN (LCAP) (continued)

Although statewide data collection will focus on Hillcrest, the instructional approach will reach all sites. The intervention is designed specifically for students reading below a fourth grade level and a key strength of the model is that it is both age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate for older, struggling readers.

Board Member Bonini explained that she had spent the past year researching adolescent literacy and was involved in broader countywide efforts through the San Mateo County School Boards Association (SMCSBA). She noted that other counties are investing heavily in this area and offering trainings, and she wants to ensure that the County Office is similarly committed. Her focus is on making a meaningful impact while preserving students' dignity. She emphasized the importance of integrating literacy support into actual curriculum through scaffolding, not just isolated intervention. She asked whether this broader, curriculum-embedded approach is part of what the team is aiming to build into the literacy initiative.

Executive Director Notch assured that literacy is a priority and said the team can bring a fuller report on literacy interventions across all Court and Community Schools to an upcoming meeting. She highlighted the impact of Kris Cannon, who has created an inviting, accessible reading culture where students protest if anything interrupts their library time. She noted that it is encouraging to see students eager to read and the team's responsibility is to ensure every student has an access point that meets their needs.

Associate Superintendent Shouse underscored that a key strength of SIPPS is its flexibility to group students by specific skill needs and deliver instruction in small groups or pullouts. Because so much of SIPPS relies on practice, fluency work, and phonemic awareness, not just direct instruction, paraeducators are being trained alongside teachers. This represents a major shift in how classroom support staff are used, allowing paraeducators to meaningfully participate in literacy intervention. With both teachers and paraeducators trained, classrooms gain the ability to run two different SIPPS skill groups simultaneously, giving students targeted support and increasing instructional flexibility.

Board Member Alvaro discussed how deeply she cares about literacy, noting she has spent decades seeing firsthand how poor reading skills contribute to a harmful cycle—students struggle, fall behind, act out, and slip further through the cracks. She is grateful that SIPPS acknowledges students' true reading levels, even when that means kindergarten-level skills, and provides age-respectful materials that don't shame older learners. She offered to connect the team with the San Mateo County Library System, which provides one-on-one tutoring and literacy support. They could help students continue building skills after they leave the program, rather than stopping at a fourth grade benchmark. She volunteered to introduce staff to the person who oversees the countywide literacy programs. Associate Superintendent Shouse said the team is always open to exploring new resources that might benefit students and would gladly review the information.

Board Member Gerard asked whether the new literacy assessment approach is improving student cooperation, since past evaluations often met resistance and made it hard to get an accurate picture of students' skills. Executive Director Notch explained that using curriculum-embedded assessments, rather than standalone computer-based tests, works better. Because assessments happen naturally within instruction, students don't feel singled out or defeated by adaptive tests that

LOCAL CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN (LCAP) (continued)

lower their level in real time. This approach preserves students' dignity, increases buy-in, and produces more timely, specific, and actionable data about actual skill levels.

Board Member Gerard asked how high-school students reading at a kindergarten to second grade level are reacting to the new literacy program, and whether it helps reduce embarrassment and shutdown. Associate Superintendent Shouse emphasized that the program works because staff focus on students' strengths first, through Career and Technical Education (CTE), hands-on learning, and opportunities to show what they can do, which builds resilience and trust. As students feel seen and supported, they become more willing to try, attend consistently, and give more effort over time. Many students have been failed by previous systems, so the team's job is to nurture them as whole learners and celebrate progress at any starting point.

Executive Director Notch shared an example of staff using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) strategies and student-centered approaches to draw out learning and provide students with multiple ways to express what they know.

Board Member Gerard asked whether Gateway and Hillcrest have their own dedicated CTE teachers. Associate Superintendent Shouse explained that they do not yet. Two staff members have earned CTE credentials in multiple areas, which allows the program to be flexible in how CTE courses are offered. Last semester, both were based at Gateway to keep staffing stable. This semester, a staffing change at Hillcrest created an opening, so one of these staff members is now teaching a patient-care CTE course for two periods a day. Master classes funded by grants continue at both campuses, but the team doesn't yet have enough established CTE pathways to place dedicated CTE teachers at each site.

Executive Director Notch added that through one of the CTE grants, the team is actively exploring how to extend CTE opportunities to Canyon Oaks. Because Canyon Oaks has a unique schedule of half-day academics and half-day therapeutic programming, they are looking for ways to offer CTE access that fits that structure and still feels meaningful for students.

Board Member Arias expressed deep appreciation for the report and for the staff who pour their hearts into supporting students. She highlighted how students of the same age can have vastly different literacy levels, yet all deserve dignity and opportunities to show their knowledge. She noted how student-centered approaches allow learners' interests and strengths to flourish, shared her enthusiasm about the growing CTE efforts, and expressed excitement about what is ahead.

Board Member Arias asked what the 20% reduction goal on disciplinary referrals is being measured against and what baseline is being used. Executive Director Notch described that the baseline is being established this year using student support form submissions as the measure of disciplinary referrals. As staff provide behavior-specific praise, teach social-emotional skills, and reinforce pro-social behaviors, more issues should be resolved in the classroom rather than becoming formal referrals. Because behavior is hard to measure, often defined by the absence of incidents, the student support form is the most reliable tool they have. Once this year's data sets the baseline, the team will be able to evaluate progress and measure reductions more accurately by year three.

LOCAL CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN (LCAP) (continued)

Board Member Arias asked for more information on the student support form. She specifically asked what information the form collects and what staff learn from the incidents and reports submitted through it. Associate Superintendent Shouse explained that the student support form is a Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS)-aligned tool used to understand the context of behavior rather than punish it. It records details such as where the behavior happened, who was involved, and whether similar incidents occur in the same location or with the same staff member. It also documents what supports or strategies have been tried and whether expectations may need to be retaught. By looking at patterns or sudden changes in a student's behavior, staff can identify what might be triggering the issue and what additional supports could help, such as check-ins or mental-health services. The form shifts office referrals from being punitive into a communication tool that helps teachers and administrators decide on next steps and respond more effectively.

Board Member Arias asked whether the student support form includes questions that help staff understand possible family or home-life factors, especially when a student's behavior suddenly changes and the student isn't sharing what is going on. Associate Superintendent Shouse assured that family contact and engagement are part of the form. It prompts staff to note whether they have reached out to the family, whether the family has communicated any changes or concerns, and if additional outreach is needed. The form helps ensure that communication with families is considered as part of understanding what the student may be experiencing.

Board Member Arias noted that some students may never disclose sensitive issues at home, such as immigration concerns or domestic violence, even though those experiences can affect their behavior at school. She expressed appreciation that the team is considering all possible factors. Associate Superintendent Shouse emphasized that staff have created an environment where students feel comfortable opening up. She has seen students engaged in deep, vulnerable conversations with administrators or teachers, which shows how approachable and trusted the staff are. Because students are already sharing so much directly, she wonders whether the behavior-tracking metric will be as necessary, since many concerns may never reach the formal support form. Board Member Arias acknowledged the complexity of these situations, especially given mandated-reporter responsibilities, and expressed appreciation for the thoughtful approach.

Board Member Arias asked what happens when a student at Hillcrest is suspended and whether there are opportunities for continued support afterwards. Associate Superintendent Shouse explained that although Hillcrest currently has four suspensions, still within the goal of fewer than five, the number may rise by year's end. Suspensions are used as a last resort, typically when a situation becomes unsafe. The count also reflects incidents, not necessarily multiple students; one youth experiencing significant challenges could account for several suspensions. When a suspension occurs, staff work closely with probation to determine whether the student can safely return to class. If probation decides the student cannot return immediately, staff provide academic support directly on the unit so the student stays connected to school. This approach reflects progress since the school was previously identified for improvement due to high suspension rates. Now, suspensions are fewer, and when they do happen, staff ensure students continue receiving services and support even while off campus.

LOCAL CONTROL AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN (LCAP) (continued)

Board Member Bonini asked for clarification about who makes suspension decisions at Hillcrest and how those decisions relate to probation. Associate Superintendent Shouse clarified that only the school staff can issue a suspension, because removing a student from their educational placement is, by law, a school decision. However, in a juvenile hall setting, school administrators work closely with probation staff, who may inform them when a situation is unsafe. She provided an example in which a student became unsafe in class, affecting others, and school staff made the suspension decision after coordinating with hall administration.

Board Member Bonini summarized that managing suspensions at Hillcrest depends on strong communication and collaboration with probation staff. She expressed appreciation that the team has a system to ensure students continue receiving their education when they are removed from class. Associate Superintendent Shouse informed that this process developed during the school's Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) period, when suspension rates were much higher.

Board Member Bonini discussed how many Hillcrest students have IEPs, which raises concerns about maintaining Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), and the need to ensure suspensions are handled appropriately. Associate Superintendent Shouse confirmed that the school follows required protocols, including reviewing whether a behavior is a manifestation of a disability, so that students' rights are protected and their records accurately reflect the situation.

8. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

A. Discuss/Act on 2024-2025 San Mateo County Office of Education School Accountability Report Cards (SARCs) for the Court and Community Schools and Special Education Programs (Published in 2025-2026)

Kris Shouse, Associate Superintendent, Educational Services Division, presented the 2024-2025 San Mateo County Office of Education School Accountability Report Cards (SARCs) for the Court and Community Schools and Special Education Programs (published in 2025-2026).

Board Member Bonini asked whether the student data that isn't publicly reported because the student group is too small and could become identifiable, is still being used internally, and if so, whether the Board could view the data in a non-public setting such as Closed Session. She noted that the Board has asked about this before. Associate Superintendent Shouse explained that the data is used mainly by staff who already know the students well. With such small numbers, patterns like attendance or test performance are immediately recognizable and usually align with what staff already observe on campus. The data has been reviewed by leadership, but not yet with current site administrators, and it hasn't been shared with teachers because it likely wouldn't change their practice because they already know the students' situations firsthand.

As for whether the Board could review the data in Closed Session, Associate Superintendent Shouse indicated that she could check with other counties through the professional listservs to see if they share this data in any way.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION (continued)

Board Member Bonini raised concerns about staffing levels, noting that the program has very few teachers and often must reassign staff to cover needs. She has observed an increase in teachers working outside their credentialed subject areas over the past three years and acknowledged that while alternative education settings allow flexibility, some assignments still feel misaligned, especially for specialized subjects.

Board Member Bonini then focused on Canyon Oaks and expressed concern that the site no longer has a dedicated special education teacher, and asked whether restoring that staffing model is a goal. Associate Superintendent Shouse explained that due to the small program size and limited full-time equivalent (FTE) allocations, some misassignments are unavoidable. While they are allowed to assign teachers outside their subject areas, staffing strictly by subject would result in more teachers than students. Given enrollment levels, a differentiated-instruction model is the most practical. Financial considerations also play a role, as districts pay for placements at Gateway, and one-to-one subject-specific staffing would significantly increase costs.

Associate Superintendent Shouse addressed the Canyon Oaks concern, discussing the loss of the previous special education teacher and noting that the replacement has stepped in effectively, although not with the same credential. She affirmed that the goal is to hire a special education teacher, but assignments must remain flexible to respond to shifting needs.

Board Member Bonini discussed uncertainty about the specific disability categories represented at Canyon Oaks. Executive Director Notch explained that Canyon Oaks has a credentialed special education teacher, along with a general education teacher, who provides instruction across subjects, and a paraeducator, creating a team-based model that distributes responsibilities more effectively than when one teacher handled everything. She noted that while general education assignments have some flexibility under Education Code, special education does not, and only appropriately credentialed staff can provide specialized academic instruction.

Executive Director Notch informed that the current model was developed with Behavioral Health Recovery Services (BHRS) in response to feedback that students would benefit from teachers with stronger content-area expertise, which special education credentials do not typically provide. She clarified that past data showed teachers “out of credential area” because prior to the state’s credential bridge authorization, older special education credentials did not cover all disability categories. Compliance was maintained by pairing teachers with credentialed mentors, although this did not appear in reported data. Now that all teachers have completed the bridge authorization, they are fully credentialed to serve all current students, and future data will reflect that.

Board Member Love asked why the SARC shows a large number of twelfth grade students in the special education program and whether those students have since exited or moved into transition. Executive Director Notch explained that Special Services serves students from kindergarten through age 22, and any student in the post-secondary transition program is automatically coded as twelfth grade for reporting purposes. The twelfth grade group includes both true twelfth graders and up to four additional years of post-secondary students, which makes the graph appear heavily weighted towards grade 12. In terms of enrollment patterns, the program has seen steady turnover, with

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION (continued)

students aging out each year and one or two new students joining, so there have been no major shifts in overall numbers, just the reporting structure that makes the data look skewed.

After a motion by Board Member Gerard and a second by Board Member Bonini, the 2024-2025 San Mateo County Office of Education School Accountability Report Cards (SARCs) for the Court and Community Schools and Special Education Programs (Published in 2025-2026) were unanimously (Alvaro, Arias, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O'Neill, and Torres) approved.

B. Receive 2025 Williams Annual Report on Countywide Compliance Reviews

Joy Dardenelle, Executive Director, District Improvement and Support, Educational Services Division, and Jeff Schmidt, Coordinator, District Improvement and Support, Educational Services Division, provided a presentation on the 2025 Williams Annual Report specific to compliance reviews conducted in the county by San Mateo County Office of Education staff.

Board Member Alvaro asked who typically files complaints. Coordinator Schmidt explained that complaints can come from a range of people connected to the school. Teachers, students, staff, and parents file complaints, depending on the issue. Parents and students have submitted instructional materials complaints, while teachers often file facilities complaints about issues such as heating or air-conditioning that aren't being fixed promptly. Unlike charter schools, all non-charter Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) must publicly post their complaint procedures, and anyone who uses the facilities or is part of the school community can file a complaint.

Board President Torres thanked staff for the work involved in preparing schools for Williams Act visits, noting that as a former principal he remembers how stressful those visits can feel. He acknowledged the efforts required and expressed his appreciation.

9. BUSINESS SERVICES DIVISION

A. Receive 2024-2025 Fiscal Audit Report

Kevin Bultema, Deputy Superintendent, Business Services Division, introduced Sheldon Chavan, Certified Public Accountant and Partner with the firm of Chavan & Associates, LLP, who presented and commented on the 2024-2025 Fiscal Audit Report.

Board Member Bonini asked whether Proposition 28 funds had to be returned. Deputy Superintendent Bultema clarified that the County Office can file a waiver once the Controller's Office issues the necessary documentation. That paperwork has not yet been received, so no funds have been returned, but the County Office plans to file an appeal as soon as the waiver is available. Board Member O'Neill asked about the phrase referring to "hold harmless" in the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and the note that the County Office might receive additional funding in the future. Mr. Chavan explained that for county offices of education, the "hold harmless" concept is meant to ensure they maintain at least a certain level of funding over time, with the theory that

BUSINESS SERVICES DIVISION (continued)

eventually they should receive more money to support programs. However, he was unsure whether this will actually materialize. The LCFE formula is very complex and he would need to review the details in order to provide a more complete explanation.

Board Member O'Neill asked whether the hold harmless funding issue connects to the Task Force examination of why the County Office returns so much money to the state. Mr. Chavan explained that the topics are related in a broad, tax-based sense, but there isn't a direct one-to-one connection between them.

Deputy Superintendent Bultema added that when the new funding formula for county offices of education was introduced, the County Office was receiving more money than the formula would have generated. So we are being held harmless at that funding level. Board Member O'Neill summarized that we are being funded at a higher level than under the old formula.

Board Member Bonini discussed how the funding language can be confusing and noted that discussions about flat funding and the old hold harmless clause predate her time on the Board, but that clause kept the County Office funded at the same level for many years. The situation changed only recently and she connected the history to ongoing conversations in the Budget Subcommittee about reserves, explaining that when the funding rules shifted, the County Office began setting aside money as a precaution.

Board Member Alvaro commented that "hold harmless" is misleading language. While it sounds like protection or support, in practice it means the state won't provide additional funding because it believes the County Office is already receiving enough. This isn't directly tied to the issue of returning excess funds to the state, although it makes the issue more frustrating.

Board Member O'Neill reflected that in all his years on the city council and the school board, he had only heard "hold harmless" used in a legal context, not in the funding sense being discussed.

10. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

- A. Public Hearing on the Initial Proposal from the San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) to the San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools for Negotiations Relating to the Results of the Classification and Compensation Study

Board President Torres opened the public hearing on the initial proposal from the San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) to the San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools for negotiations relating to the results of the Classification and Compensation Study. Receiving no public comment, Board President Torres declared the public hearing closed.

- B. Public Hearing on the Initial Proposal from the San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools to the San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) for Negotiations Relating to the Results of the Classification and Compensation Study

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT (continued)

Board President Torres opened the public hearing on the initial proposal from the San Mateo County Superintendent of Schools to the San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) for negotiations relating to the results of the Classification and Compensation Study. Receiving no public comment, Board President Torres declared the public hearing closed.

C. Superintendent’s Comments

Deputy Superintendent Chávez wished everyone a happy new year.

11. **BOARD MEMBERS**

A. Discuss/Act on 2026 Board Subcommittee Assignments

Board President Torres proposed improving transparency for both new board members and the public by providing clearer information about each subcommittee. He suggested adding details

such as when each subcommittee was established, its purpose, and its authorizing powers, as well as listing which staff serve as liaisons. This information would be posted on the website to support better communication.

The chart below indicates the chosen assignments of Board members:

SAN MATEO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
2026

AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEES

ASSIGNMENT

TRUSTEE

1) Superintendent’s Salary Subcommittee

Trustee Torres (Chair)
Trustee Gerard
Trustee O’Neill

2) Interdistrict Attendance Appeal Subcommittee

Trustee Gerard (Chair)
Trustee Arias
Trustee Love

3) YMCA Partnership Subcommittee

Trustee Alvaro (Chair)
Trustee Love
Trustee Torres

4) Board/Superintendent Advocacy Subcommittee

Trustee Love (Chair)
Trustee O’Neill
Trustee Torres

5) Board Policy Subcommittee

Trustee Love (Chair)

BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

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| | <u>Trustee Alvaro</u>
<u>Trustee Bonini</u> |
| 6) Workforce Housing Subcommittee | <u>Trustee O’Neill (Chair)</u>
<u>Trustee Gerard</u> |
| | <u>Trustee Torres</u> |
| 7) Gateway Subcommittee | <u>Trustee Bonini (Chair)</u>
<u>Trustee Arias</u>
<u>Trustee Gerard</u> |
| 8) Budget Subcommittee | <u>Trustee Bonini (Chair)</u>
<u>Trustee Gerard</u>
<u>Trustee O’Neill</u> |
| 9) San Mateo County Community College District
Joint Meeting Planning Subcommittee | <u>Trustee Bonini (Chair)</u>
<u>Trustee Gerard</u>
<u>Trustee Love</u> |
| 10) Board Governance Work Group Subcommittee | <u>Trustee Torres (Chair)</u>
<u>Trustee Gerard</u> |

Trustee Love

REPRESENTATIVES

ASSIGNMENT

TRUSTEE

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 11) SMCOE Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) Representatives | <u>Trustee Bonini, Trustee Gerard</u> |
| 12) San Mateo County School Boards Association (SMCSBA) Area Representative | <u>Trustee Arias</u> |
| 13) County Committee on School District Organization (CCSDO) Liaison | <u>Trustee Love</u> |
| 14) Association of California County Boards of Education (ACCBE) Representative | <u>Trustee Torres</u> |
| 15) Coalition for Safe Schools and Communities Representatives | <u>Trustee Gerard, Trustee Love</u> |
| 16) Big Lift Representatives | <u>Trustee Gerard, Trustee Torres</u> |
| 17) Representatives to the Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) | <u>Trustee Arias, Trustee Bonini</u> |

After a motion by Board Member Love and a second by Board Member Alvaro, the 2026 Board Subcommittee Assignments were unanimously (Alvaro, Arias, Bonini, Gerard, Love, O’Neill, and Torres) approved.

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

Board Member Love reported that the Board/Superintendent Advocacy Subcommittee met with Senator Becker’s staff, who recommended drafting a letter for the Senator to send to the Legislative

BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

Analyst's Office requesting a review of funding disparities among districts and how those inequities developed. A draft letter was sent and the Senator's staff responded positively and plans to make minor adjustments. She highlighted strong collaboration with SMCSBA, noting that Trustee David Lee, who chairs its Legislative Action Committee, formally sent the letter to Senator Becker. She emphasized that this partnership brings multiple districts together on the issue and expressed enthusiasm about moving forward.

Board Member O'Neill added that the Subcommittee has additional legislative meetings scheduled and is working to schedule several more.

Board Member Alvaro informed that the YMCA Partnership Subcommittee met and received updated information about the costs of the new housing project. The plan is to hold another meeting soon to clarify and prepare next steps and they expect to bring an update to the full Board in February. The subcommittee is moving to the stage where the full Board needs to discuss how the money will be spent and what will be built. Once the Subcommittee organizes its recommendations, they will schedule a Board-wide discussion.

Board Member Bonini shared that the Budget Subcommittee met on January 12 with a follow-up meeting with staff planned for later in the month. They spent time reviewing how the current budget aligns with the Strategic Plan, Board priorities, and potential future goals, including work that may emerge from the upcoming Governance Workshop. She also discussed whether certain priorities would require reallocating general fund dollars or drawing on reserves. Another major topic was transparency, particularly in connection with the Facilities Master Plan and related discussions from December. Some policy-related items will stay with the Budget Subcommittee, while others will be referred to the Board Policy Subcommittee. She noted that her rejoining the Board Policy Subcommittee will help with that transition. Overall, the meeting was productive and set the stage for deeper conversations with staff.

Board Member Bonini informed that she and Board President Torres attended the Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) Governing Board meeting on December 16 as board liaisons. They appreciated the presentation from staff about billing processes for districts. At the meeting, she asked for an update on the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), noting the need to restart the process for appointing a community representative for the schools.

Board Member Bonini referenced a public comment at the SELPA Governing Board meeting which also expressed concerns with CAC engagement. When she later tried to find out who submitted that comment, she was told she would need to wait until March for the approved minutes or file a Public Records Act request. She expressed frustration with that response and suggested that staff could have resolved the issue more easily.

Board President Torres requested that all subcommittees schedule an initial meeting if they haven't already done so, in order to bring new members up to speed. He noted that no formal report-out is required unless the subcommittee feels it is needed. The goal is simply to build momentum and start the year on a strong footing.

BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

Board Member Alvaro asked whether the staff liaisons for each subcommittee will remain the same. Deputy Superintendent Chávez explained that staff will review and update the liaison assignments at the upcoming Core Cabinet meeting, and then share the list with the Board.

Board Member Arias asked how she will know the meeting dates for the new subcommittees she had joined. Board President Torres clarified that each subcommittee chair is responsible for organizing meetings. Board Member Arias asked if the chairs will coordinate dates directly with members. Board President Torres said yes.

C. Suggested Topics for Future Board Agendas

Board Member O'Neill suggested that the Board revisit the status of the Rollins Road property as part of the Facilities Master Plan. He noted that the property was listed for lease in March but has received no interest. He proposed a discussion about whether the property should be incorporated into the Facilities Master Plan and what potential uses the Board might want to consider for it.

Board Member Bonini followed up several previous agenda item requests. The first request was to publish a monthly list of expenditures on the Consent Agenda, similar to the practice used by LEAs. The second request was an agenda item about creating a contract portal. Similar to the monthly expenditure list, this would improve transparency in light of recent concerns. The third request was an update on the cell phone policy and practices, in light of the new law that had recently gone into effect. The fourth request was a discussion about the student board member position.

Board Member Bonini had a new agenda request. She would like to invite the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission (JJJPC) to present to the Board, in order to pass along information on their ongoing community projects, inspections, and related work so the Board can understand how the JJJPC's work connects to their own responsibilities.

D. Board Member Comments

Board Member Alvaro

Board Member Alvaro shared that Supervisor Mueller hosted an event last week to introduce the new sheriff, Sheriff Bender. She attended and spoke briefly with the Sheriff to introduce the Board and offer openness to future conversations.

Board Member Alvaro reflected on the resolution recognizing January 30 as Fred Korematsu Day. Reading the resolution again reminded her how severely the country violated the rights of its own citizens during and after World War II. She emphasized that the day serves as a warning not to become complacent or allow such injustices to happen again.

Board Member Arias

Board Member Arias reported that in early January, she attended the first annual *Prevention in Action: Schools, Communities, and Youth Voices Conference* organized by the JJJPC. She noted how deeply the conference shaped her advocacy framework for 2026. The keynote, sessions, and youth panel collectively underscored the need to disrupt the traditional model of education and

BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

confront the stark inequities across San Mateo County. She attended sessions on supporting staff in providing social-emotional and mental health support and on a peer-led alternative to suspensions. What stayed with her the most was the courage of the youth panelists whose stories reinforced her belief that adults in governance roles must take responsibility for the conditions and supports provided to young people.

Board Member Arias shared that on January 12 she participated in the SMCSBA meeting, where Associate Superintendent Shouse presented on transforming student outcomes through access to CTE. She was struck by the high level of engagement from trustees across districts and the presentation reinforced that meaningful, student-centered learning can open pathways to careers.

Board Member Arias noted on January 13, she visited the San Bruno Park School District and met with Superintendent Duffy, who shared an overview of the district's preschool, elementary schools, and middle school. She toured Allen Elementary School, a newly completed, state-of-the-art campus funded by Measure X and was impressed by the modern facilities. The visit left her energized by the district's willingness to think creatively and try new approaches that reflect the community's demographics and needs.

Board Member Arias discussed her attendance at the Association of California County Boards of Education (ACCBE) meeting, where the California Collaborative for Educational Excellence (CCEE) presented on the *California Secondary School Redesigned* initiative. They are working toward a statewide *Portrait of a Learner* to guide innovation and identify essential competencies for students in grades 9–12. This prompted her to reach out to Deputy Superintendent Chávez to ask whether the County Office has its own portrait, especially since other trustees in attendance represented districts already engaged in this work.

Board Member Bonini

Board Member Bonini asked Deputy Superintendent Chávez to extend heartfelt thanks for the gifts from the students, noting how special and meaningful they were.

Board Member Bonini expressed appreciation to Associate Superintendent Shouse and Executive Director Notch for the LCAP presentation, especially their focus on literacy. The information was valuable and it is important that students are being given expanded opportunities.

Board Member Bonini thanked Associate Superintendent Shouse for her engaging CTE presentation at the SMCSBA meeting, sharing how proud she felt of the strong work happening in the county and how energized the discussion was among the trustees who attended.

Board Member Bonini reflected on attending the JJDPC Conference, offering gratitude to their team for creating such a powerful inaugural event. The day was emotionally heavy yet filled with connection, meaningful conversations, and moments of joy, and she was honored to participate in the follow-up debrief.

Board Member Bonini shared an update about the 17th District PTA, which has supported the Court and Community School programs for years. She announced the upcoming winter luncheon

BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

on February 4 at Gateway, inviting staff to attend and noting that volunteers will be preparing food to make the event special.

Board Member Love

Board Member Love expressed gratitude for the Board appreciation celebration and the gifts.

Board Member Love discussed her attendance at the JJDPC Conference, sharing that she agreed with Board Member Arias' reflections on it.

Board Member Love praised Associate Superintendent Shouse for the highly engaging CTE event, highlighting the practical tools districts can take back to their teams.

Board Member Love commended the evening's reports and appreciated the thoughtful dialogue between the Board and staff.

Board Member Love recalled the December 15 meeting, explaining that she left feeling unsettled about how Deputy Superintendent Bultema was treated. She described him as transparent, wise, and committed to building leadership, and expressed regret for not speaking up in the moment. She apologized publicly, emphasizing the importance of the Board reflecting on its own behavior and modeling the partnership and respect it expects from the County Office. She underscored the need to stay focused on students and shared that not speaking up remains her greatest regret from her past year on the Board.

Board President Torres explained that he and Deputy Superintendent Chávez hope to engage in restorative healing work in response to the December 15 meeting, and the process will move forward when everyone involved feels ready. He informed that Deputy Superintendent Chávez will gather feedback from Cabinet to discuss at the upcoming Governance Workshop, if time allows.

Board Member O'Neill

Board Member O'Neill expressed support for Board Member Love's comments about Deputy Superintendent Bultema, stating that he felt the Board's treatment was inappropriate. He noted that he sent apologies the next day to Deputy Superintendent Bultema and Deputy Superintendent Chávez and later apologized to Deputy Superintendent Bultema in person.

Board Member O'Neill announced a meet-and-greet with the Silicon Valley Community Foundation for those interested in nonprofit connections or potential donors.

Board Member O'Neill mentioned an upcoming January 26 event focused on supporting San Mateo County agriculture and exploring farm-to-fork food options for schools.

Board Member O'Neill raised concern about a federal proposal to allow offshore oil drilling near San Mateo County, noting that coastal residents strongly oppose the idea.

Board Member O'Neill reported attending the CTE Advisory Committee, where he helped coordinate two field trips for students and participated in budget and advocacy committee meetings.

BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

Board Member O'Neill highlighted the local history of Japanese internment in San Mateo County, noting that remnants of a Pacifica internment camp still exist. He emphasized the importance of remembering this history.

Board Member Gerard

Board Member Gerard shared that she attended the JJDPC Conference and found it eye-opening. She wished more board members could have experienced the powerful networking and invaluable information. She highlighted a particularly impactful session on the legally mandated process for transitioning students into and out of court school and noted the challenges of fully implementing it due to staffing constraints.

Board Member Gerard provided ACCBE updates, announcing several upcoming events including the January 22 training for new and current board presidents, the January 28 one-year celebration on Zoom, and the February 20 – 21 conference in Modesto. This is the first of three statewide conferences and she encouraged her colleagues to attend, noting that the offerings will be informative and different from past years.

Board Member Gerard asked to be signed up for the March 20 site visit.

Board President Torres

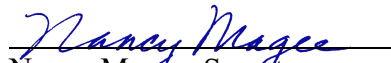
Board President Torres offered thanks to the students for the gifts and expressed appreciation to staff for the care, time, and effort that went into making the celebration happen.

Board President Torres thanked the Board for being responsive to his emails about setting up the subcommittees, noting that their feedback and suggestions helped the process go smoothly.

Board President Torres thanked the entire team for their hard work, especially as everyone returns from break, and acknowledged their willingness to stay late and tackle the work ahead.

12. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:14 p.m. Board President Torres announced the next meeting would be the special meeting Governance Workshop on Saturday, January 31, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. The next regular meeting will take place on Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.


Nancy Magee, Secretary
jlp