MINUTES
MERCED COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
January 30, 2026

REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Merced County Office of Education Board Room
632 W. 13th Street, Merced, CA 95341

I. Opening

A. Board Chairperson, Geneva Brett, called the regular meeting of the Merced County Board of Education to order at 9:00 AM.

B. The members present were Geneva Brett, Ryan Heller, Dennis Hanks, Rodrigo Espinosa, and Frank Fagundes.

C. Others present: Trinidad Rodriguez, Emma Salgado, Isinel Salgado, Alejandra Medina, Maria Duran-Barajas, Tara Hill, Jasmine del Rosario, Melissa Reyes, Marisa Ethridge, Yesenia Alvarado, Adam Sherre, Jasmine Diaz-Sherre, Laura Andrews, Laura Fong, Stacy Shasky, Martin Fregoso, Cecilia Casillas, Nathan Quevedo, Yolanda Campos, Maria Cuevas, and Steve M. Tietjen, County Superintendent

D. Chairperson, Geneva Brett, asked that everyone present please introduce themselves

II. Flag Salute – Pledge Allegiance to the Flag

III. Consent Agenda: Items listed under Consent Agenda are considered to be routine administrative functions and will be acted on by the Board in one motion and one vote. Any items under the Consent Agenda may be discussed; however, if the item needs further clarification and discussion, it may be removed from the Consent Agenda at the request of the Board or the Superintendent and considered separately. Information concerning Consent Agenda items will be provided to each Board member for study prior to the meeting. It is understood that the Superintendent recommends approval of all consent items, unless otherwise noted. *(Board Bylaw 9322)*

A. Minutes of Regular Meeting on December 15, 2025
B. **Resolution No. 2026-01** Recognizing February 2026 as Black American History Month

The scheduled Closed Session was not required, and the meeting continued without it.

Frank Fagundes moved, and **Ryan Heller** seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted. The motion carried with a vote of 5-0

IV. Consent Agenda: Items listed under Consent Agenda are considered to be routine administrative functions and will be acted on by the Board in one motion and one vote. Any items under the Consent Agenda may be discussed; however, if the item needs further clarification and discussion, it may be removed from the Consent Agenda at the request of the Board or the Superintendent and considered separately. Information concerning Consent Agenda items will be provided to each Board member for study before the meeting. It is understood that the Superintendent recommends approval of all consent items, unless otherwise noted. *(Board Bylaw 9322)*

A. Minutes of Regular Meeting on December 15, 2025
B. Resolution **No. 2026-01** Recognizing February 2026 as Black American History Month

Dennis Hanks moved, and **Frank Fagundes** seconded the motion to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted. The motion was carried with a vote of 5-0.

V. Written Communications

A. Correspondence Received By Chairperson: None.

B. Correspondence Received By Board Member: None.

C. Correspondence Received By Superintendent: Dr. Tietjen provided an overview of the recent communication provided to both parents and staff regarding the closure of the Dual Language Academy (DLA) effective June 2026. Following the overview, Chairperson Geneva Brett explained that anyone who wished to stand and share their comments would be allowed five minutes. A total of six parents stood and shared their discontent with the closure of the DLA.

VI. Call for Public Comments on Agenda & Non-Agenda Items

The public was invited to address agenda items, submit items within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board for future consideration, or speak to issues related to the function and operation of the County Board of Education.

No comments were made regarding the agenda.

VII. Superintendent's and Board Members' Report (Information/Discussion Only)

A. Board Member's Report:

- Frank Fagundes mentioned that he, along with Geneva Brett and Ryan Heller, attended the California Teachers Association (CTA) School Board Dinner on Wednesday, January 28, 2026. The event was pleasant with casual conversations.
- Chairperson, Geneva Brett, informed everyone that during the last MCSBA committee meeting, the date and time for the next CSBA Spring Dinner had been decided. The dinner will take place on March 30, 2026, in the Hilmar Unified School District. The flyer with complete details will be emailed early next week.
- April 26, 2026, a forum will be held to hear from all the candidates. More details will be shared at a later date.
- Lastly, the dates and location for the Annual MCSBA Fall Conference were confirmed. The conference will take place from October 23-25, 2026, in Monterey.

B. Superintendent's Report: Dr. Tietjen thanked all the parents for attending the meeting and advocating for their children. He explained how MCOE schools are funded differently from district schools. Dr. Tietjen assured them that he and his administration would take another look at the DLA situation, but reminded them that he wasn't making any promises.

VIII. Business Items for Action

A. Outstanding Employee Selection Committee

It was recommended that the Board of Education select a Board Representative to serve on the *Outstanding Employee Selection Committee* (current rep: Frank)

Ryan Heller moved, and **Dennis Hanks** seconded a motion to select Frank Fagundes to serve as Board Representative of the Outstanding Employee Selection Committee. The motion carried with a vote of 5-0

B. MCSBA Executive Committee

It was recommended that the Board of Education select a Board Representative to serve on the *Merced County School Boards Association (MCSBA) Executive Committee.* (current rep: Geneva) [2-year term, expires 2025]

Frank Fagundes moved, and **Ryan Heller** seconded a motion to select Geneva Brett to serve as the Board Representative of the Merced County School Boards Association (MCSBA) Executive Committee. The motion carried with a vote of 5-0

C. Head Start Policy Council

It was recommended that the Board of Education select a Board Representative to serve on the *Head Start Policy Council*. (current rep: Rodrigo) [2-year term, expires 2025]

Frank Fagundes moved, and **Dennis Hanks** seconded a motion to select Rodrigo Espinosa to serve as the Board Representative of the Head Start Policy Council. The motion was carried with a vote of 5-0

D. Merced County Committee on School District Organization

It was recommended that the Board of Education select a Board Representative to serve on the *Merced County Committee on School District Organization*. (current rep: Geneva) [4-yr term, expires 2025]

Ryan Heller moved, and **Dennis Hanks** seconded a motion to select Geneva Brett to serve as the Board Representative of the Merced County Committee on School District Organization. The motion was carried with a vote of 5-0

E. Merced County Board of Education Regular Meeting Schedule

It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the Merced County Board of Education Regular Meeting Schedule for July 2026 through June 2027

Dennis Hanks moved, and **Ryan Heller** seconded a motion to approve the Merced County Board of Education Regular Meeting Schedule for July 2025 through June 2026 as submitted. The motion was carried with a vote of 5-0

F. Come Back Charter School Renewal Petition through June 30, 2031

It was recommended that the Board of Education consider and take action to either approve or deny the Come Back Charter School Renewal Petition beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2031.

Sherre Vernon, Coordinator for Educational Services, provided the reports.

1. Open Public Hearing: Geneva Brett opened the public hearing.
2. Close Public Hearing: There were no comments made. Geneva Brett closed the public hearing.

Frank Fagundes moved, and **Dennis Hanks** seconded a motion to approve the Renewal Petition for Come Back Charter School. The motion was carried with a vote of 5-0

G. School Accountability Report Cards (SARCs) 2024-2025

It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the 2024-2025 School Accountability Report Cards for the following programs/schools: Valley Community School Atwater, Valley Community School Los Banos, Valley Community School Merced, Merced County Juvenile Hall Court School, Merced Scholars Charter School, and Come Back Charter School

Sherre Vernon, Coordinator for Educational Services, provided the reports.

Dennis Hanks moved, and **Rodrigo Espinosa** seconded a motion to approve the 2024-2025 School Accountability Report Cards for the following programs/schools: Valley Community School Atwater, Valley Community School Los Banos, Valley Community School Merced, Merced County Juvenile Hall Court School, Merced Scholars Charter School, and Come Back Charter School. The motion was carried with a vote of 5-0

H. School Accountability Report Cards (SARCs) 2024-2025

It was recommended that the Board of Education approve the 2024-2025 School Accountability Report Cards for the following programs/schools: Merced County Office of Education, Special Education, and Schelby School

Maria Duran-Barajas, Director of Special Education, provided the reports.

Dennis Hanks moved, and **Rodrigo Espinosa** seconded a motion to approve the 2024-2025 School Accountability Report Cards for the following programs/schools: Merced County Office of Education Special Education and Schelby School. The motion was carried with a vote of 5-0

IX. Adjournment

Frank Fagundes moved, and **Dennis Hanks** seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting of the Merced County Board of Education at 10:04 AM. The motion was carried with a vote of 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve M. Tietjen, Ed.D.
County Superintendent of Schools
Secretary to the Board of Education

SMT/mc