

OUSD Legislative Coalition

January 14, 2026

Orange Unified District Office

1401 Handy St (Panther Lab)

Orange, CA 92867

APPROVED

Present: Mariana Flores (U.S. Rep Correa), Lillian Grabowski (State Senator Choi), Jenna Poffenberger (State Assemblymember Chen), Kimberly Rangel (State Senator Umberg), Abigail Frachtmann (US Representative Kim), Paula Gurra (State Assemblymember Valencia), Rachel Monarrez (OUSD Superintendent), Sara Pelly (OUSD Trustee), Kris Erickson (OUSD Trustee), Andrea Yamasaki (OUSD Trustee), Matthew Witmer (OUSD), Christina Lin (OUSD), Jacqueline Perez (OUSD), Whitney Amsbary (OUEA), Joseph Wilhelm (OSEA), Nicol Jones (OUPSF), Arash Samadani (OUCPTA), Lindsay Whiddon (Serrano Elementary), Sueann Parikh (Nohl Canyon Elementary), Heather Johnson (Prospect Elementary), Kelsey Jay (Running Springs Elementary), Jolin Lang (Villa Park Elementary), Roxanne Castillo (West Orange Elementary), Bianca Alcock (Canyon High School), Kim VanDerHoek (El Modena High School), Beth Brunett (Villa Park High School), Crystal Miles (Member at Large)

Quorum was established.

Call to Order: Lindsay Whiddon called the meeting to order at 11:03 am. Wendy Wolf is out of town, so Lindsay will be filling in for her today. Beth Brunett will also be standing in for secretary Nadia Hall.

Secretary: Lindsay Whiddon presented the minutes for review and discussion. One change is needed: Nicol Jones was listed as representing OCPTA, but she was representing OUPSF. Crystal Miles moved to approve the November 2025 minutes. Jolin Lang seconded. The minutes were approved.

Treasurer: Beth Brunett shared that after three members paid dues, the LegCo account now has a balance of \$1,861.81. Invoices are available at the start of each meeting along with all other meeting documents. Individual receipts are given after payment. All members are asked to pay \$35 dues from their school organization. Members at Large are responsible for their dues individually.

Mariana Flores, US Representative Lou Correa

- Co-signed letter to the Department of Education regarding those impacted by the Trump administration's immigration policies
- Co-signed assigning mental health programs and nursing as professional degrees for federal loan funding resources
- There is a possibility of another government shutdown
- Hoping for more funding for education in the next budget
- Upcoming job fair for high school students, more details to follow

- Their office has a new spring intern from Canyon High School
- Free calendars available; you can request more from their office as well

Abigail Fachtmann, U.S. Representative Young Kim

- Introduced their new field representative
- Service Academy nominations completed with 35 nominations
- App challenge is complete. The winning app tracks older bills and ranks them according to their relevance to teens, even simplifying the language.
- A New Bill - College Financial Aid Clarity Act - proposes consistent, clear financial aid offers to allow families to make better, more informed decisions.
- Sergey is heading up the art challenge this spring. The winner has their art displayed in the capital for a year. High School students only.

Lillian Grabowski, State Senator Steven Choi

- Upcoming “Woman of Distinction” event. Accepting nominations now - live on website (educators, volunteers, etc.) Nominees must live in District 37. One per city, and one overall woman of the year. Deadline Friday, February 13th at 5 pm
- Summer internship applications are open. 18 and older. Great opportunity for graduating seniors. 8-week curriculum. More info on the website.
- Senator is on the Education committee again this year
- TK-12 has a \$149B budget this year in CA
- Hoping to introduce a bill this year focusing on technology education programs in OC that other counties can follow

Kimberly Rangel, State Senator Tom Umberg

- No current education bills
- Educators especially, please reach out with bill ideas
- Applications for the Young Senators program opens in February. 9th-11th graders. Learn about legislature, personal finance, and work on a bill to present to the Senator at the capital. Flyer coming soon.
- Although the Senate Education Committee met this morning, everything was higher education-related.

Jenna Poffenberger, State Assemblyman Chen

- AB821 - career tech CTE counting toward graduation - goes into effect in the 26/27 school year
- AB1306 - This bill authorizes the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) to approve local teacher preparation programs operated by school districts or county offices of education that lead to an English learner-related authorization—specifically, the Crosscultural Language and Academic Development (CLAD) certificate, English Learner Authorization (ELA), or a bilingual authorization. (calmatters.org)
- AB1569 - co-authored with Davies - just introduced January 12th - Requires students K-12 parking electric bicycles (class 1, 2, or 3) to complete safety

classes.

Paula Guerra, State Assemblyman Valencia

- Accepting bill proposals by the end of the month.
- Gov. Newsom introduced a proposal to put the Department of Education under the State Board of Education. The Assemblyman would like constituent feedback on this proposal.
- Expecting a \$65M decrease in funds supporting the school meal fund.
- Looking to introduce new requirements for charter schools to prevent fraud. Similar to a previously vetoed bill, but this bill is different because it has a sunset date in 2028.

Dr. Rachel Monarrez, OUSD Superintendent

- Listening & Learning Tour themes quiz is out - Monday through Friday with force ranking. Taking previous results and asking families to prioritize them.
- Resource Optimization Coalition (ROC) will be meeting next Tuesday. Will identify a co-chair, cross-reference with Facilities Master Plan.
 - No schools have been identified for closure.
 - Jordan Elementary is now a fully dual-immersion school. If families there do not want to be in that program, they are reassigned to La Veta, or they may open enroll.
- *Question from Crystal Miles:* Fortify contract update?
 - They are just getting started. They met with IT earlier this week.

Dr. Jacqueline Perez, Chief Communications & Strategy Officer

Coming to us from Riverside School District, a larger district with more schools and students. We are thrilled to have her here!

- Parent Square - district-wide communication tool. One-third of the schools are in a pilot program. July 1st we will go district-wide.
- Training will be provided for families, admins, and staff.

Dr. Lin, Executive Director Assessment & Accountability

- LCAP Survey Focus Group - please fill out this survey today!
- LCAP Survey closes on January 16th. So far we are having a great response.
- *Comment from Jolin Lang:* Last year's podcast used AI and it was mispronouncing some words that OUSD families are familiar with, so you may want to adjust that this year.

Andrea Yamasaki, OUSD Board Trustee

- Warm Hands, Warm Hearts was a great success! Now in our 10th year, we grew to 800 students from 34 students in our first year. We may need more volunteers next time.
- Portola Middle School won the Golden Bell Award.
- The Facilities plan is on the website if you're interested.
- Stephen Glass is the new Board President. Andrea is the Vice-President, and Sarah Pelly is the Clerk. The new LegCo reps are Kris Erickson, Sarah Pelly, and Andrea Yamasaki.

Kris Erickson, OUSD Board Trustee

- So pleased to be here and to see the growth of LegCo since her time as a parent at Chapman Hills Elementary. Her children are now teachers and lawyers.
- Please go to the website and watch the Facilities Master Plan meeting.
- The Board will meet three times this month.

Sarah Pelly, OUSD Board Trustee

- So happy to be here. Former Principal at Fletcher Elementary. Looking forward to the alignment that's coming. It's the Year of the Horse, and year number one, and we're ready to run.

Old Business

- No old business at this time

New Business

- LegCo dues - \$35

Discussion/Announcements

- **OUPSF** - We finalized our teacher grants and were able to give \$50,000 to 58 teachers this cycle. We do have an unfunded grants tab on our site, so the community is able to view those needs and fulfill them if they are able. The VAPA Showcase at Chapman is coming up. It's free to attend and park. Our bands, orchestra, dance, and art can all be on display.
- **Sacramento Safari** - February 23-24th. Recommended budget of \$1200.
- It was stated that ICE was in the Community - today they are around Palmyra, but not on school grounds. The principal and staff are aware, and we have student safety protocols in place.

Meeting was adjourned by Lindsay Whiddon at 12:06 pm.

Attachments: none

Next meeting: February 4th, 2026
Orange Unified District Office
1401 Handy St (Panther Lab)
Orange, CA 92867

Questions or comments: OUSDLegCo@gmail.com

For future meetings, information, and past minutes, go to:

<https://www.orangeusd.org/departments/board-of-education/legislative-coalition>