



SACRAMENTO CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

Agenda Item# 8.1f

Meeting Date: September 17, 2026

Subject: Approve Minutes for the September 3, 2026, Regular Board of Education Meeting

- ☐ Information Item Only
- ☒ Approval on Consent Agenda
- ☐ Conference (for discussion only)
- ☐ Conference/First Reading (Action Anticipated: _____)
- ☐ Conference/Action
- ☐ Action
- ☐ Public Hearing

Division: Superintendent's Office

Recommendation: Approve Minutes for the September 3, 2026, Regular Board of Education Meeting.

Background/Rationale: None

Financial Considerations: None

LCAP Goal(s): Family and Community Empowerment

Documents Attached:

1. Minutes of the September 3, 2026, Regular Board of Education Meeting

Estimated Time of Presentation: N/A

Submitted by: Board Office

Approved by: Cancy McArn, Superintendent



Putting
Children
First

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING AND WORKSHOP

Board of Education Members

Tara Jeane, President (Trustee Area 1)
Taylor Kayatta, Vice President (Trustee Area 6)
April Ybarra, Second Vice President (Trustee Area 4)
Jasjit Singh (Trustee Area 2)
Jose Navarro (Trustee Area 3)
Chinua Rhodes (Trustee Area 5)
Michael Benjamin (Trustee Area 7)
Owen Naqica, Student Board Member

Thursday, September 3, 2026

5:00 p.m. Closed Session

6:30 p.m. Open Session

Serna Center

Community Conference Rooms
5735 47th Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95824

MINUTES

2026/27-7

1.0 OPEN SESSION / CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 5:09 p.m.

Members Present:

Member Benjamin
Member Jeane
Member Kayatta
Member Navarro
Member Rhodes
Member Singh
Member Ybarra
Student Member Naqica

Members Absent:

None

2.0 ANNOUNCEMENT AND PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED IN CLOSED SESSION

No public comment

3.0 CLOSED SESSION

While the Brown Act creates broad public access rights to the meetings of the Board of Education, it also recognizes the legitimate need to conduct some of its meetings outside of the public eye. Closed session meetings are specifically defined and limited in scope. They primarily involve personnel issues, pending litigation, labor negotiations, and real property matters.

- 3.1 Government Code 54956.9 - Conference with Legal Counsel:
 - a) Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to subdivision (d)(2) of Government Code section 54956.9 (One Potential Case)
 - b) Initiation of litigation pursuant to subdivision (d)(4) of Government Code section 54956.9 (One Potential Case)
 - c) Existing litigation pursuant to subdivision (d)(1) of Government Code section 54956.9 (OAH Case No. 2026050351)
- 3.2 Government Code 54957.6 (a) and (b) Negotiations/Collective Bargaining SCTA SEIU, TCS, Teamsters, UPE, Non-Represented/Confidential Management (Dan Schallock)
- 3.3 Government Code 54957 – Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release/Complaint
- 3.4 Education Code 35146- The Board will hear staff recommendation on the following student readmission for 26-27: Expulsion Readmission 1 of the 2026-27 school year
- 3.5 Government Code 54957—Public Employee Performance Evaluation
Title: Superintendent

4.0 CALL BACK TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called back to order at 6:48 p.m.

- 4.1 The Pledge of Allegiance
- 4.2 Broadcast Statement

5.0 ANNOUNCEMENT OF ACTION TAKEN IN CLOSED SESSION

There was 1 announcement that came out of closed session.

- The Board approved a settlement agreement related to OAH Case No. 2026050351 by a vote of 6-0 with Member Ybarra absent.

6.0 AGENDA ADOPTION

Public Comment:

Steve Bruno reiterated a multi-month request for a board agenda item to either suspend board stipends amid ongoing district financial cuts or publicly justify keeping them.

The Board adopted the agenda unanimously.

7.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

15 minutes

Members of the public may address the Board on non-agenda items that are within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board. Public comment may be (1) emailed to publiccomment@scusd.edu; (2) submitted in writing through the district's website at <https://www.scusd.edu/submit-public-comment>; or (3) provided in-person at the meeting. The submission deadline for written public comments shall be no later than noon on the day of the meeting. If you intend to address the Board in-person, please fill out a yellow card available at the entrance. Speakers may be called in the order that requests are received or grouped by subject area. We ask that comments are limited to two (2) minutes with no more than 15 minutes per single topic so that as many people as possible may be heard. By law, the Board is allowed to take action only on items on the agenda. The Board may, at its discretion, refer a matter to district staff or calendar the issue for future discussion.

Raymond Anderson introduced The Kaden Project—a K-12 early-support infrastructure powered by Kaden OS that organizes daily student data across three developmental stages into actionable workflows—and announced an upcoming 90-day validation model to demonstrate its "support before failure" framework.

Marvel Wilson advocated for removing financial barriers for volunteers, asking the district to cover or reduce upfront background screening costs so their mentors can support youth literacy, math skills, and in-school guidance without bearing out-of-pocket expenses.

Lindsay Rowe criticized board members for engaging in political theater and spreading misleading narrative distractions, calling on the board to prioritize student interests over adult political and financial gains.

Joseph Tanner challenged the board on vendor accountability and electoral effectiveness, questioning the continued funding of CBOs without statistical evidence and asking members if their voting records justify remaining in office, while also highlighting bureaucratic barriers facing senior volunteers.

Steve Bruno criticized the board for ignoring past questions about their personal accountability if the district faces receivership, while explaining that district layoffs, employment instability, and public blame undermine special education hiring—forcing a reliance on contractors—and calling out board hypocrisy regarding selective contract scrutiny.

Timothy Poole urged the creation of a unified, countywide clearance badge to eliminate repetitive \$75 background check fees for volunteers across local Sacramento school districts, preventing financial barriers from turning away willing mentors.

Terrence Gladney highlighted the ongoing partnership with the Community Schools Advisory Committee to offer the Scripps National Spelling Bee to all eligible TK-8 students at no cost to sites, urging the district and community partners to help overcome site-level capacity constraints so administrators do not turn down student opportunities.

Alysa Strayer raised severe concerns regarding racial equity, procedural integrity, and systemic failures in the district's special education department, detailing Larry P. testing violations for Black students, unaddressed autism diagnoses, severe FERPA breaches with copied template records, and unfulfilled accommodations, while demanding a formal investigation and written response from the board.

8.0 CONSENT AGENDA

Action
2 minutes

Generally routine items are approved by one motion without discussion. The Superintendent or a Board member may request an item be pulled from the consent agenda and voted upon separately.

8.1 Items Subject or Not Subject to Closed Session:

8.1a Approve/Ratification of Other Agreements, Bid Awards, Declared Surplus Materials and Equipment, Change Notices, and Notices of Completion (Gerardo Castillo)

8.1b Approve Personnel Transactions (Jake Hansen)

8.1c Approve Revised Bylaws for the Head Start/Early Head Start Policy Committee (PC) (Erin Findley)

8.1d Approve FY 2026–2027 Head Start & Early Head Start Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) Funding Allocation (Erin Findley)

8.1e Approve Head Start Lease Re-Location to Charles A. Jones Skill Center (Nathaniel Browning)

8.1f Approve Staff Recommendation for Expulsion Readmission 1 of the 2026-27 school year (David Van Natten)

8.1g Approve Minutes for the August 20, 2026, Regular Board of Education Meeting (Superintendent Cancy McArn)

8.1h Approve Labor Partner Agreements (Dan Schallock)

This is an action item.

Public Comment:

Terrence Gladney raised concerns regarding Item 8.1h's limited six-month scope and SCTA-only focus despite broad departmental staffing impacts, while advocating for flexible hiring timelines and rigorous evaluation metrics to assess external and substitute personnel performance.

Board Comment:

No Board comment

Member Rhodes moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Member Singh. The motion passed 7-0, with a preferential 'yes' vote from the student board member.

9.0 COMMUNICATIONS

9.1 Employee Organization Reports:

- *SCTA - SCTA President Nikki Davis Milevsky and Second Vice President Jason Burke addressed the Board to highlight labor unity behind Measure M—a local ballot initiative targeting expanded early intervention and special education supports—while criticizing recent legislative efforts involving SCOE oversight and questioning SCOE’s executive staffing expenditures. Turning to district operations, Burke outlined severe special education staffing shortages across SCUSD, reporting dozens of vacant special day class, resource specialist, and speech-language pathologist positions that leave thousands of students relying on substitutes or costly external contractors, and urged the district to make fully staffing and funding special education its top priority.*
- *SEIU - Vice President Jim Riffle, a 29-year district instructional aide, raised urgent concerns regarding repeated workplace injuries—including aides being hit, bitten, and having objects thrown at them—resulting in frequent incident reports and workers' compensation claims. Attributing the core issue to a total lack of job training for incoming aides, Riffle pointed out that previously planned training sessions and contractual agreements for aide professional development have stalled, and he urged the Board to immediately implement comprehensive training so aides can protect themselves, effectively support students with diverse needs, and assist teachers in managing their classrooms.*
- *TCS – No update*
- *Teamsters – No update*
- *UPE AFSA Local 154-AFL-CIO - UPE Executive Director, Lynne Tafoya, provided an update on contract negotiations, stating that the union recently submitted a proposal to the district and is awaiting a response. Expressing optimism about closing out the 2025–2026 contract soon, she explained that once the district responds, the UPE board will review the terms for potential approval and membership ratification, or prepare a counterproposal if needed.*

9.2 District Advisory Committees:

- *Student Advisory Council - Student representatives from American Legion High School and Umoja International Academy provided an update on the Student Advisory Council (SAC), celebrating their 24-member cohort—60% of whom are new this year—and outlining their recent grounding in governance basics and community outreach. Moving into advocacy work using the Youth Participatory Action Research) model, the council announced plans to conduct high school focus groups and launch a youth survey to gather peer*

feedback on district priorities, while extending an invitation to board members to observe their weekly Wednesday meetings.

- *Community Advisory Committee - Chair Valene Byrd outlined four key priorities for the 2026–2027 school year: reducing and properly documenting suspensions of students with disabilities, implementing behavioral support training for staff, establishing measurable commitments to academic and emotional achievement, and fostering district-wide inclusive practices. Bird highlighted upcoming public sessions—including an IEP navigation workshop on September 15, the third annual "Ask SpEd" event on October 20, and a session on suspensions and behavior supports on November 10—and invited board members to attend CAC's 6:00 p.m. meetings (preceded by a 5:00 p.m. family support hour) to listen directly to families and collaborate on systemic solutions.*
- *District English Learner Advisory Committee – DELAC's next meeting is September 24th.*
- *Local Control Accountability Plan/Parent Advisory Committee – This updated is postponed. There will be a full presentation at the next board meeting. The presentation will talk about how the LCAP needs to be revised and changes to the committee.*
- *Black/African American Advisory Board - Chair Terrence Gladney addressed the Board regarding the council's ongoing work, highlighting positive student engagement with the district's AP and 11th-grade African American Studies courses. Gladney emphasized that African American history, culture, and achievements must extend beyond standalone ethnic studies or social studies classes into literature and the arts, noting that the council plans to meet later in the month and collaborate with Board Member Benjamin on capacity building and recruitment to expand culturally responsive offerings across all student demographics.*
- *Community Schools Advisory Committee - District Community School Specialist Saralyn Bienvenue and John Bidwell Community School Specialist Toneiya Donkor presented updates on the district's community schools initiatives and community events. The Community Schools Advisory Committee (CSAC) approved expenditures for expanded learning opportunities and is preparing for a potential state grant expansion on November 1 that could extend the community school model to 32 additional sites. Recent outreach efforts included a Back-to-School pool party at Cabrillo Pool with over 50% increased attendance, backpack giveaways, and a monthly drive-thru produce distribution at John Still Elementary that recently provided over 7,700 pounds of fresh food to local families. Additionally, SCUSD will become the first district in Northern California to host the Colgate Bright Smiles bus for mobile dental screenings and oral health education. John Bidwell Elementary also secured a \$140,000 two-year grant*

through the Community Engagement Initiative to strengthen family involvement ahead of its upcoming district-wide Literacy Festival on October 17. CSAC continues to hold its monthly public meetings on the third Wednesday of each month from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Serna Center.

- *American Indian Education Program Parent Committee – No update*
- *Restorative Justice Committee – No update*

9.3 Student Member Report (Owen Naqica)- No update

9.4 Superintendent's Report (Cancy McArn)- Superintendent McArn highlighted several early-year achievements, recognizing Chris Ralston and the facilities team after the César Chávez Elementary rebuild won a Sacramento Business Journal "Best Real Estate Project of the Year" award. Turnout and athletic honors were also celebrated, including C.K. McClatchy High School's flag football team earning the top section ranking by the Sacramento Bee and player Savannah Hill's selection to the USA Today Sports Preseason All-American High School Flag Football Team. Additionally, the district invited families to U-CAN's 27th Annual HBCU Recruitment Fair at Luther Burbank High School on September 16th, featuring representatives from over 30 institutions offering potential on-the-spot admissions and scholarships, while closing with gratitude to all certificated, classified, and management staff for a smooth start to the school year.

9.5 President's Report (Tara Jeane)- President Jeane highlighted several key recognitions, noting National Suicide Awareness Prevention Month and thanking Student Support & Health Services, as well as school social workers, for launching the "Feel Your Feelings" social-emotional curriculum. She underscored National Attendance Awareness Month by stressing the connection between daily attendance and academic success, encouraging struggling families to partner with school sites for support. Additionally, Jeane recognized High School Voter Education Weeks (September 14–25) to promote student civic engagement ahead of the November election and concluded by acknowledging Labor Day, expressing gratitude for labor rights and wishing staff and families a restful three-day weekend following the district's early start to the school year.

9.6 Information Sharing by Board Members- Member Ybarra commended Associated Student Body (ASB) students from C.K. McClatchy High School for hosting National Education Association (NEA) President Princess Moss during her visit to the campus as it celebrates its 90th anniversary. Highlighting the school motto "Roar with Kindness," Member Ybarra specifically recognized teacher Nate Starace and students Leica Burns-Hartso, Riley Johnson, Cassidy Blastos, and Michaela Spencer for exceptionally representing the school and district.

10.0 PUBLIC HEARING

*10.1 First Reading of Revised Board Policies and Related Resolution
Deferring Board Stipends (Board President Tara Jeane &
Melinda Iremonger)*

President Jeane presented a comprehensive update on the district's ongoing board policy manual overhaul, beginning by officially pulling Board Bylaw 9250 and its accompanying resolution from the presentation. President Jeane detailed Phase 1 of the initiative, which focused on bringing antiquated, decades-old policies into compliance with current state and federal laws through a 3-day intensive workshop with a CSBA consultant and subsequent district-wide staff review. The presentation outlined the distinction between Board Policies, Administrative Regulations, Board Bylaws, and Exhibits, while highlighting that specific high-priority policies were temporarily excluded to align with the Black Parallel School Board Action Plan. Looking ahead, President Jeane announced that the ad hoc Board Policy Committee will transition into a standing public committee to process quarterly CSBA updates, conduct Phase 2 reviews focused on local district needs, and engage community stakeholders to ensure equitable, up-to-date governance across SCUSD. This is an information item.

Public Comment:

Steve Bruno expressed outrage that the board would consider stipends or pay increases while cutting jobs and employee hours, urging adoption of their proposal to freeze stipend hikes until a positive budget certification is achieved and staff receive raises, while raising Brown Act transparency concerns over how the item was pulled following press announcements.

Terrence Gladney urged the board to implement Physical Education (PE) exemptions under Education Code 51242 for students in sports, marching band, or JROTC, arguing it would promote equity and expand course access for A-G college-prep and CTE electives.

Board Comment:

President Jeane requested legal clarification regarding her authority to pull Board Bylaw 9250 from the agenda. Legal counsel confirmed that because President Jeane worked directly on the matter as part of the Board Policy Committee, pulling a policy that was not yet ready for presentation fell within the committee's proper purview.

*10.2 Charter Renewal Determination Hearing for Language Academy
of Sacramento (Leah Clougherty & Eduardo de León)*

Dr. Leah Clougherty and Language Academy of Sacramento Executive Director Eduardo de León presented the charter school's five-year renewal petition, detailing its performance and operational goals. Placed in the middle performance tier based on California Dashboard data showing accelerated growth in reading and math, the school received a district staff recommendation for a renewal term from July 1, 2027, through June 30, 2032, conditional upon executing an operational memorandum of understanding by December 1, 2026. De León highlighted the school's 23-year history operating a 90/10 dual-language immersion model that yields strong eighth-grade academic outcomes, its priority enrollment for families in the local 95820 zip code to maintain linguistic balance, and the school's full commitment to working with district staff to align audit requirements, board conflict-of-interest policies, and dispute resolution procedures with recently updated state legislation in the upcoming MOU. This is an action item.

Public Comment:

No public comment

Board Comment:

Board Member Benjamin praised the Language Academy of Sacramento as a "gold star standard" program within the district and formally moved to adopt Resolution A to approve the charter school's five-year renewal with conditions.

President Jeane seconded the sentiment, emphasizing the immense value of dual-language immersion in fostering multilingual literacy before calling for the vote.

Member Benjamin moved to approve Resolution A, and it was seconded by Student Member Naqica. The motion passed 7-0, with a preferential 'yes' vote from the student board member.

11.0 INFORMATION ITEMS

11.1 Update to the Facilities Master Plan (Chris Ralston)

Chris Ralston presented an update on SCUSD's year-long initiative to refresh its Facilities Master Plan, a requirement under Proposition 2 every five years that positions the district to capture over \$100 million in potential state funding. Moving beyond a standard wish list, the cross-departmental effort integrates historical post-COVID bid data, escalation costs, Division of the State Architect timelines, and remaining bonding capacity to build an actionable capital schedule. Future project prioritization will balance the board's Neighborhood Equity Index and student outcome metrics alongside objective physical assessments—such as the Facility Condition Index, enrollment capacity, and Maintenance and Operations work order data—to ensure investments are equitable, financially realistic, and maintainable over the long term. This is an information item.

Public Comment:

Terrence Gladney cautioned against misusing the district's Equity Index to favor well-resourced schools based on facility age alone, advocating instead that bond funds be prioritized by health, safety, and community impact to support under-resourced, high-need sites with expert and public input.

Board Comment:

President Jeane inquired about the historical baseline and update frequency of the Neighborhood Equity Index data. Raised questions regarding how the Facilities team fosters interdepartmental collaboration with academic programs, Community Schools, and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) teams to ensure building designs match instructional and student support needs.

Chris Ralston clarified that the Neighborhood Equity Index includes an automated mechanism to continuously update demographic data. Detailed the district's cross-departmental review process, noting that architects collaborate directly with specialized program staff—including Special Education, speech-language pathologists, after-school providers, and Safe Schools personnel—to build tailored, flexible spaces. Highlighted the team's adaptive outreach strategy, which meets families directly at campus coffee chats, lunches, and monthly potlucks when traditional evening board meetings yield low attendance. Added that facilities planning aligns directly with Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) goals, with staff actively tracking post-occupancy metrics such as student attendance and academic outcomes.

Member Rhodes commended the Facilities team for its highly collaborative and state-of-the-art community engagement. Reaffirmed the core principle that "school building is neighborhood building," noting that the investments made will positively impact local communities for generations.

Student Member Naqica requested clarification on how student outcome data is measured and how students are directly engaged in the facilities planning process.

12.0 ACTION ITEMS

12.1 Approve General Counsel Employment Agreement (Dan Schallock)

Dan Schallock presented the key material terms of a proposed employment agreement appointing Kristy Boyes as In-House General Counsel. Effective August 31, 2026, through June 30, 2028, the agreement establishes an annual base salary of \$238,622, along with standard career longevity increments consistent with the Superintendent's Cabinet salary schedule. The contract provides health and welfare benefits aligned with classified Cabinet management, 22 annual vacation days capped at a 40-day accrual maximum, and a \$4,800 annual stipend for business-related expenses, with complete copies of the document made available at the district office. This is an action item.

*Public Comment:
No public comment*

Board Comment:

Member Singh expressed readiness to approve the employment agreement for In-House General Counsel Kristy Boyes and initiated the motion to move the item forward.

President Jeane recognized Member Singh and Member Kayatta for their long-standing advocacy over the past three and a half years to establish an in-house general counsel position for the district. Extended congratulations and a formal welcome to Kristy Boyes, calling the hiring a major step forward for SCUSD before calling for a roll call vote.

Member Singh made a motion to approve the employment agreement for In-House General Counsel, which was seconded by Member Kayatta. The Board voted 7-0 to approve the agreement, with the student board member abstaining on the preferential vote.

12.2 Approve Chief Academic Officer Employment Agreement (Dan Schallock)

Dan Schallock presented the proposed employment agreement appointing Erin Findley as Chief Academic Officer (CAO). Effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2028, the agreement establishes an annual base salary of \$212,468, along with standard health and welfare benefits for certificated Cabinet management. The contract includes a \$4,800 annual business expense allowance, 22 annual vacation days (capped at a 40-day accrual maximum), and entitlement to career longevity increments, which currently includes a 17-year increment of \$12,748 annually. Complete copies of the contract were made available upon request at the district office. This is an action item.

Public Comment:

No public comment

Board Comment:

No Board comment

Member Benjamin made a motion to approve the employment agreement for Chief Academic Officer, which was seconded by Member Navarro. The Board voted 7-0 to approve the agreement, with the student board member abstaining on the preferential vote.

*12.3 Approve Chief of Schools Employment Agreement
(Dan Schallock)*

Dan Schallock presented the proposed employment agreement appointing April Shaft as Chief of Schools. Effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2028, the agreement establishes an annual base salary of \$212,468, alongside standard health and welfare benefits for certificated Cabinet-level management. The contract provides a \$4,800 annual business expense allowance, 22 annual vacation days capped at a 40-day accrual maximum, and entitlement to career longevity increments, which currently includes a 25-year increment of \$21,246.84 per year. Complete copies of the agreement were made available upon request at the district office. This is an action item.

Public Comment:

No public comment

Board Comment:

No Board comment

Member Benjamin made a motion to approve the employment agreement for Chief of Schools, which was seconded by Member Navarro. The Board voted 7-0 to approve the agreement, with the student board member abstaining on the preferential vote.

12.4 Approve Contracts Report over \$15,000 (Gerardo Castillo)

Gerardo Castillo presented the Contracts Report over \$15,000 for Board review and approval as part of the district's ongoing effort to improve fiscal transparency, detail funding sources, and outline contract purposes. Following the pull of Item 16, the report comprised 31 items totaling approximately \$11 million across multiple funds, though Castillo emphasized this figure does not represent new discretionary spending. The vast majority of the total is driven by capital projects and self-insurance obligations, including \$1.3 million in restricted General Fund commitments for expanded learning services, a \$500,000 increase for earthwork inspections on the Fern Bacon Middle School modernization project, and \$7.62 million in the Self-Insurance Fund primarily covering workers' compensation (\$6.85 million) and AB 1200 liability funding (\$773,000). Castillo concluded by highlighting that business operations will continue refining internal contract review processes to ensure all major commitments receive rigorous scrutiny regarding necessity, cost-effectiveness, and funding alignment prior to board presentation. This is an action item.

Public Comment:

Carl Pinkston raised questions about billing rate discrepancies between external vendors and internal staff, requested details on funding sources tied to Resource Code 0000, and sought clarification regarding a \$6.85 million allocation to the self-insurance fund.

Board Comment:

Member Kayatta requested that district staff respond to the public comments submitted by Mr. Pinkston regarding worker's compensation rates, LCFF allocations, and instructional vendor pay scales.

Gerardo Castillo clarified that workers' compensation is a required payroll percentage calculated against total estimated salaries through the Schools Insurance Authority, which gets adjusted at year-end to reflect actual payroll. Confirmed that the 00 code items are funded through the base LCFF grant rather than supplemental or concentration funds. Mr. Castillo addressed vendor pay inconsistencies, explaining that Item #16 was pulled to establish a unified rate structure across Special Education and after-school programs before returning to the board.

Member Singh made a motion to approve the Contracts Report over \$15,000 with Item #16 removed. The motion was seconded by Member Kayatta. The Board voted 7-0 with a preferential 'yes' vote from the student board member.

12.5 Approve 2026-27 Special Education Non-Public Agency and Non-Public School Contracts (Erin Findley, Frances English, & Betty Jo Wessinger)

Chief Academic Officer Erin Findley presented a comprehensive cross-departmental strategy to address escalating special education costs—which have nearly doubled over the last three years—while ensuring continuity of legally mandated services for over 8,000 students with disabilities across more than 75 schools. Joined by leadership from Special Education, Business, Facilities, Human Resources, and Legal Counsel, Finley outlined an operational realignment that shifts business functions, contract tracking, and vendor negotiations away from Special Education leaders to business and facilities leads, freeing instructional experts to focus on inclusion, IEP service fidelity, and returning students from non-public placements to in-district classrooms. Supported by dedicated retiree CBO expertise to stabilize fiscal operations, the team presented a second installment of contracts for board approval, including flat-rate operational software through SCOE, pass-through funding for the SCOE Infant Program, essential assessment tools through Everway, and specialized day-program placements. Finley noted that targeted vendor rate reviews for previously deferred contracts will return for board consideration on September 17, underscoring that tonight's recommended approvals preserve student services while establishing disciplined internal controls to safeguard district solvency. This is an action item.

Public Comment:

Jason Burke urged earlier public posting of meeting materials and raised major fiscal concerns over paying SCOE up to \$1.7+ million for 36 specialized students, questioning why these services are not provided in-house, delaying 1-on-1 aide contracts, and reiterating calls for a forensic audit of special education vendor spending.

Carl Pinkston voiced strong concerns regarding retroactive multi-million-dollar SCOE contract approvals, urging the district to bring specialized medical services in-house for a least restrictive environment and demanding advance board notice for expenditures exceeding \$1 million.

Board Comment:

Student Member Naqica expressed serious concern over the \$3 million cost associated with specialized placement contracts through SCOE, raising public interest regarding the financial and operational feasibility of serving those 36 students in-house. Inquired whether bringing these specialized programs back to district sites could reduce expenditures and better utilize local bargaining partners, noting that failing to approve mandated placements puts the district in a position of compromising required student services.

Erin Findley clarified that the SCOE contracts in question cover services rendered during the 2024–25 and 2025–26 school years, which were deferred from last spring. Reaffirmed the district's commitment to educating students alongside their peers in neighborhood schools whenever possible, explaining that the operational realignment will allow instructional leaders to conceptualize models, cost estimates, and infrastructure requirements for bringing specialized programs back in-house.

Member Rhodes emphasized that every board member shares the ultimate goal of bringing specialized education programs in-house rather than paying external county entities. Commended the cross-departmental alignment, specifically noting Facilities Support Services Director Chris Ralston taking over contract negotiations and tracking to ensure stronger fiscal oversight and limit legal liabilities. Highlighted that board scrutiny over special education spending stems from deep care for community outcomes and long-term district solvency. Expressed concern upon learning that SCOE had withheld pass-through property tax revenues due to unpaid contract balances, calling it an unhelpful approach to partnership, but advocated for fulfilling the district's financial commitments to maintain continuity of care for students.

Member Singh supported having Facilities lead contract negotiations and underscored the board's fiduciary duty to scrutinize contracts to ensure cost-effectiveness without sacrificing outcomes. Highlighted the vast disparity between general state funding averages (\$25,000–\$35,000 per student) and the nearly \$50,000 per-pupil cost charged by SCOE for specialized placements, arguing that special education funding remains unsustainably underfunded at both state and federal levels. Initially proposed withholding approval on the two SCOE specialized day program contracts to preserve cash flow while under county fiscal oversight, but ultimately agreed to approve the full package after staff confirmed SCOE had withheld a comparable amount in pass-through property tax revenues.

Member Kayatta reminded the board that he had authored the April 16 motion deferring payment on the two SCOE contracts into the new fiscal year to provide short-term cash flow flexibility. Stated that the board should honor its commitment to fulfill the payments after July 1 rather than moving goalposts. Expressed surprise at learning SCOE withheld pass-through property taxes over the outstanding balance, but maintained that the district should fulfill its obligation to cover rendered services.

Gerardo Castillo confirmed that the liabilities for the SCOE specialized day program contracts were booked in the 2025–26 fiscal year and explained that SCOE withheld a comparable amount of pass-through property tax revenue owed to SCUSD due to the outstanding multi-year balance.

President Jeane contextualized special education underfunding by contrasting SCOE's \$50,000 per-pupil charge with the district's base grant funding of \$10,000–\$13,000 per student (or approximately \$23,000–\$24,000 including supplemental and concentration grants). Criticized the

federal government's decades-long failure to deliver on its 40% funding promise for special education, emphasizing that districts are forced to navigate significant structural deficits while serving students aged 3 to 22.

Member Singh moved to approve all five special education contracts with an added directive for staff to present a future conceptual plan for bringing specialized day programs in-house, seconded by Member Kayatta. The Board voted 7-0 to approve the motion, with a preferential 'yes' vote from the student board member.

13.0 BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION/REPORTS

Receive Information

13.1 Community Schools Expansion Information and Eligible Site List (Saralyn Bienvenue)

President Jean announced the Community Schools expansion eligible site list, celebrating the potential addition of 32 new school sites to the district's existing roster by November 1. Encouraging fellow board members to proactively contact their local campuses to facilitate the application process, President Jean highlighted eligible sites including Sacramento New Tech, Arthur A. Benjamin Health Professions, John Morse Therapeutic, School of Engineering and Sciences, New Joseph Bonnheim, American Legion High, Capital City Independent, John F. Kennedy High, Bowling Green, Bret Harte, Camellia, Caroline Wenzel, Elder Creek, H.W. Harkness, Hollywood Park, Isador Cohen, Leataata Floyd, John Cabrillo, Mark Twain, Nicholas, O.W. Erlewine, Peter Burnett, Sequoia, Tahoe, Albert Einstein, Sam Brannan, Umoja International Academy, Susan B. Anthony, James Marshall, Golden Empire, Martin Luther King Jr., and Father Keith B. Kenny. President Jean concluded by urging the district to secure the community school designations and corresponding grant funding for these campuses.

14.0 FUTURE BOARD MEETING DATES / LOCATIONS

- ✓ *September 17, 2026, 5:00 p.m. Closed Session, 6:30 p.m. Open Session, Serna Center, 5735 47th Avenue, Community Room, Regular Workshop Meeting*
- ✓ *October 1, 2026, 5:00 p.m. Closed Session, 6:30 p.m. Open Session, Serna Center, 5735 47th Avenue, Community Room, Regular Workshop Meeting*

15.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

Cancy McArn, Superintendent and Board Secretary

NOTE: The Sacramento City Unified School District encourages those with disabilities to participate fully in the public meeting process. If you need a disability-related modification or accommodation, including auxiliary aids or services, to participate in the public meeting, please contact the Board of Education Office at (916) 643-9314 at least 48 hours before the scheduled Board of Education meeting so that we may make every reasonable effort to

*accommodate you. [Government Code § 54953.2; Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, § 202 (42 U.S.C. §12132)]
Any public records distributed to the Board of Education relating to an open session item will be available for public inspection at the Serna Center, at 5735 47th Avenue, Sacramento, during normal business hours or on the District's website at www.scusd.edu.*