

**SANTA MARIA-BONITA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

SMBSD Board Room
708 S. Miller Street
Santa Maria, CA
September 23, 2026

ADOPTED

I. OPENING BUSINESS

A. Call to Order

President Cabral called the Regular Board Meeting of the Santa Maria-Bonita School District to order at 5:16 p.m.

B. Roll Call

Board Members Present:

Linda Cordero, Board Member

Ricardo Valencia, Board Member

John Hollinshead, Board Clerk

Luz Maria Cabral, President

Board Members Absent:

Ricky Lara, Vice President

II. IDENTIFY CLOSED SESSION TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

A. Public Employment/Discipline/Dismissal/Release/Resignation

Government Code § 54957

B. Conference with Labor Negotiators

Government Code § 54957.6

Agency Representative: Pete Bland, Ed.D.

Represented Employees: CSEA

C. Conference with Labor Negotiators

Government Code § 54957.6

Agency Representative: Pete Bland, Ed.D.

Represented Employees: SMEEA

III. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD - CLOSED SESSION

The Board President Luz Maria Cabral opened the public comment period for closed session items. Two members of the public addressed the board concerning Public Employee Employment Discipline/Dismissal/Release/Resignation. Each speaker was granted up to three minutes to present their testimony. There being no further speakers, public comment was closed.

Agenda Item:

- Aleks Hewitt commented on the closed session item
- Donna Atwood commented on the closed session item

IV. MOVE INTO CLOSED SESSION

The Board adjourned to Closed Session at 5:20 p.m.

V. CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

VI. ADJOURN CLOSED SESSION

VII. RECONVENE IN OPEN SESSION

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 6:01 p.m.

A. Report from Closed Session:

For Item A, B, and C: The information was shared.

The Board President announced that the Board would return to closed session to continue discussion on Public Employment/Discipline /Dismissal/Release/Resignation following the conclusion of the regular open session meeting.

B. Introduction of Interpreters:

Susana Pineda, Daniel Garcia, and Marlen Sanchez

C. Pledge of Allegiance:

Led by Board Member Ricardo Valencia

D. Recognition:

The Board recognizes Patricia McKnight and the Contracts and Procurement team for receiving the 2026 Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award from the National Procurement Institute. Matthew Beecher commended the Contracts and Procurement team for earning the 2026 Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award from the National Procurement Institute. He highlighted the significant regulatory complexity of the department's work, noting that the California Public School of Procurement is governed by over 10,000 pages of state, federal, and local regulations. He praised the team for synthesizing these laws into a comprehensive purchasing manual that turns

regulatory requirements into operational excellence, ensuring fiscal responsibility and transparency to protect taxpayer dollars for classroom use.

Patricia McKnight expressed her pride in the team for receiving the National Achievement of Excellence in Procurement Award, noting that they were one of only three school districts in California to earn this honor. She specifically recognized her team members—Patti, Angela, Jessica, and Sarah—for their hard work, professionalism, and willingness to go the extra mile.

Patricia McKnight further extended her gratitude to Mr. Beecher and Dr. McDuffie for their trust and support in allowing her department to modernize procurement procedures. She highlighted that this achievement reflects the district's core beliefs, including that all people belong, honesty builds trust, and excellence comes from perseverance. Finally, she emphasized that the award represents their collective commitment to responsible public procurement in service of the district's students and families.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD - OPEN SESSION

Non-Agenda Items:

No Comments

Agenda Items:

No Comments

IX. COMMENTS FROM ASSOCIATION PRESIDENTS

- **Santa Maria Elementary Education Association (SMEEA)**

Kristyn Lohr, president of the Santa Maria Elementary Education Association (SMEEA), delivered remarks focused on advocacy and financial concerns. Advocacy for Proposition 3: She encouraged attendees to participate in upcoming precinct walks to support Proposition 3, emphasizing that the district relies on these funds. She noted that secured funding is vital for the legacy of the district and for supporting new hires in the coming years. She discussed the complexities of state aid. She expressed concern that while the district is guaranteed a percentage of state funding, shifts in the state budget could lead to a potential reduction in overall resources, which she projected could be as much as \$71 million. She took a moment to congratulate the procurement team on their recent award, noting their professionalism in handling her questions.

- **California School Employees Association (CSEA)**

Alexander Hewitt, a labor relations representative for the California School Employees Association (CSEA), spoke on behalf of Chapter President Melissa Gutierrez.

He expressed gratitude to the Santa Maria Elementary Education Association (SMEEA) for their work regarding Proposition 3 and confirmed that CSEA members would also participate in community outreach (door knocking) leading up to the election. He noted that he had previously alluded to recent incidents between the district and CSEA during the closed session. He stated that the union decided to postpone sharing these details until a future meeting to avoid distracting the board from other pressing matters, specifically the response to an appeal filed by Miss Atwood. He concluded by emphasizing that Chapter President Melissa Gutierrez remains available to board members who wish to contact her directly regarding these matters.

- Administrators In Management Services (AIMS)
No comments

X. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AS PRESENTED

Dr. McDuffie requested that consent items XII.C.iii. and XII.C.iv. be pulled and placed under discussion. This will allow the board and staff to discuss any updates. As planned, these items will return for a third reading, so we're not seeking approval tonight. It was moved by John Hollinshead and seconded by Ricardo Valencia to approve the agenda as amended.

XI. PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

- A. Multilingual Services: Programs and Services Supporting Student Success**
Tammie Castillo-Shiffer, Ed.D. Executive Director, Multilingual Services and her leadership team presented an update on the Multilingual Services Department.

The Board of Education **ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT OF THE MULTILINGUAL SERVICES: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS UPDATE**, as presented.

- B. Student Screen Time and Digital Learning Practices**
Presented by Brian Rieke, Chief Technology Officer

The Board of Education **ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT OF THE STUDENT SCREEN TIME AND DIGITAL LEARNING PRACTICES UPDATE**, as presented.

President Luz Maria Cabral moved to items XII.C.iii. and XII.C.iv, which were pulled from the consent agenda for discussion. Item XII.C.iii. is the second

reading of the job description for Coordinator, Culture and Climate and item XII.C.iv. is the second reading of the job description for Counselor on Special Assignment. The items were presented for discussion only. They will return to the board for a third reading so no action was taken this evening.

The Board of Education **ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT OF THE DISCUSSION OF THE JOB DESCRIPTION OF THE COORDINATOR, CULTURE AND CLIMATE AND COUNSELOR ON SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT UPDATE**, as presented.

XII. CONSENT ITEMS

It was moved by Linda Cordero and seconded by Ricardo Valencia to approve the consent items as amended.

A. GENERAL CONSENT

- i. Minutes of the Board of Education

B. BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL CONSENT

- i. Contracts for Approval or Ratification
- ii. Authorization to Declare Obsolete and/or Surplus Equipment or Materials
- iii. Ratification of Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Purchases and Authorization for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Use of Lucia Mar Unified School District Cooperative Purchasing Agreement

C. HUMAN RESOURCES CONSENT

- i. Certificated and Classified Personnel Changes
- ii. First Reading of Job Description: Program Specialist Special Ed
- iii. Second Reading of Job Description: Coordinator, Culture and Climate
- iv. Second Reading of Job Description: Counselor on Special Assignment

D. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES CONSENT

- i. Approval for Jiménez School Sixth Graders to Attend Overnight Outdoor Science Camp at Camp Whittier
- ii. Approval for Libbon Elementary School Sixth Graders to Attend Overnight Outdoor Science Camp at Camp Whittier

iii. Approval for Sanchez Elementary School Sixth Graders to Attend Overnight Outdoor Science Camp at Rancho Alegre

iv. Approval for Taylor Elementary School Sixth Graders to Attend Overnight Outdoor Science Camp at Camp Whittier

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

Board member Ricardo Valencia asked for a follow up on the Dual Immersion Program.

XIV. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT REPORTS

Board Member Report - Mrs. Cordero

- Quarterly Schools Meeting: She reported on the first quarterly schools meeting, noting that district enrollment is generally flat or slightly lower, while enrollment at Hancock College has improved. The meeting included discussions on the impact of ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units) on school site enrollment and the challenges of predicting student increases due to simple approval processes. They also touched on the budgetary pressures caused by increasing costs, which affect the school district similarly to other organizations.
- Mrs. Cordero shared her experiences visiting local schools, including Alvin School for the jogathon and Dot Day. She also mentioned her interest in continuing to observe co-teaching and designated ELD (English Language Development) grouping strategies.
- She noted that she has been managing school-to-parent communications, observing that while often redundant, they help her understand various activities like "lunch on the lawn" and "lotería nights," as well as efforts to recruit members for school site councils and ELACs. (English Learner Advisory Committees)
- She highlighted an inspirational visit to the garden at Oakley School.

Board Member Report - Mr. Valencia

- He offered a belated welcome back to the school year, noting that despite concerns from labor groups, both groups are already doing great work on district campuses.
- Mr. Valencia expressed excitement about seeing administrators actively reaching out to parent groups to form school site councils and English learner advisory committees.
- In addressing previous public comments, he emphasized that the notion that board members do not care about staff is untrue.
- He asked about current district policies on screen time and device use for instructional purposes, specifically requesting an update on cell phone policies, which the administration agreed to provide.

Board Member Report - Ms. Luz Maria Cabral

- She complimented all the new pictures in the board room.

Superintendent's Report - Dr. Darren McDuffie

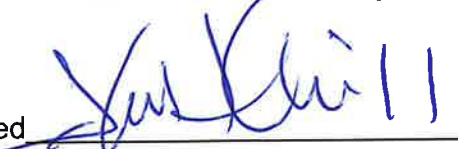
- Superintendent McDuffie shared updates regarding the recent quarterly meeting with neighboring school districts, where discussions focused on community growth, enrollment trends, facilities, planning, and responsible stewardship. He also highlighted his visit with W.E.B. students at Arellanes Junior High School and praised their efforts to promote inclusion and belonging among students. Superintendent McDuffie congratulated Board Member Linda Cordero and her husband, Mike Cordero, on receiving the Robert F. Grogan Public Service Award from the Santa Maria Valley Chamber. He concluded by emphasizing the importance of kindness and the power of words and tone to unite and strengthen the school community.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Board President Luz Maria Cabral reported that the next SMBSD Regular Board meeting will be held on Wednesday, October 14, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

The Regular Board Meeting was adjourned at 8:41 p.m. The Board returned to the Regular Closed Session to continue deliberations. Close session adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Signed


John Hollinshead
Board Clerk

Signed


Linda Cordero
Board Member