MINUTES
MERCED COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
September 21, 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 3:00 PM.

B. Members present were Geneva Brett, Ryan Heller, Dennis Hanks, Frank Fagundes, and Joseph Oliveira.

C. Others present: Nathan Quevedo, Caleb Hampton, Vanessa Mininger, Vesta Unrah, Tara Hill, Jacqueline Aguilar, Kristie Williams, Ceci Perez, Rosa Barragan, Lindsay Soares, Heather Baker, Noemi Gomez, Alma Reyna, Mary Whited, Laura Andrews, Martin Macias, Donna Franklin, Todd Beal, Laura Fong, Cecilia Casillas, Christa Casillas, Frank Casillas, Isreal Gonzalez, Cristina Vara, Monica Sevilla, Sengsouly Sanychanh-Vang, Pahoua Thao, Desiree Zuniga, McCoy Rice, Gloria Ortiz, Stacey Shasky, Rosa Casillas, Maria Cuevas, Yolanda Campos-Senior Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, Steve M. Tietjen-County Superintendent

II. Flag Salute – Pledge Allegiance to the Flag

III. Presentation:

A. Presentation of Plaques to MCOE Outstanding Classified, Certificated, and Management Employees for the Quarter ending September 2026

1. Classified Employee: Christa Casillas/ HR Assistant – Human Resources
2. Classified Employee: Kristie Williams/ Administrative Specialist – Educational Services
3. Certificated Employee: Alma Reyna/Teacher of SH – Special Education
4. Management Employee: Vanessa Mininger/ Program Manager – Early Education

Outstanding Employee Awards were presented to Classified Employees: Christa Casillas, Human Resources, and Kristie Williams, Educational Services. Certificated Employee: Alma Reyna, Special Education; and Management Employee: Vanessa Mininger, Early Education.

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. The Superintendent recommends approval of all consent items unless otherwise noted. *(Board Bylaw 9322)*

A. Minutes of Regular Meeting on August 17, 2026
B. **Resolution No. 2026-23** Recognizing October 12-18, 2026, as the Week of the School Administrator
C. **Resolution No. 2026-24** Proclaiming October 2026 as Character Education Month

Ryan Heller 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 Members: None.

C. Correspondence Received by Superintendent: None.

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.

Heather Baker shared concerns involving the Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) and the Merced River School District. Ms. Baker expressed discontent with current publicity towards Merced River School District and with Superintendent Richard Lopez during election year. She would like to see all 20 districts supported fairly.

Lindsay Soares is also the parent of a student attending Washington School with the Merced River School District. Ms. Soares mentioned that her student has an interdistrict attendance transfer because she chooses to send her children to Washington School. She wishes for a timeline to be shared on how the findings are communicated. Ms. Soares invites everyone to visit the school, talk to the staff, students, and parents to see the good of the school district.

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

A. Public Disclosure of Collective Bargaining Agreement (DCBA)-Presented by Rosa Casillas
   1. California School Employees Association (CSEA) Chapter #541, Fiscal Year 2026-2027
   2. Merced County Office Teachers Association (MCOTA), Fiscal Year 2026-2027

B. First Reading – Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement *(For approval at the October Meeting)*

C. Board Member's Report: Frank Fagundes attended the Sexual Harassment Prevention Training on September 8, 2026.

D. Superintendent's Report:
   1. Excellence in Education @ Merced Theatre – October 1, 2026
   2. Merced County Education Foundation Fundraiser (MCEF) and Dr. Tietjen's Retirement Dinner - Saturday, November 7, 2026
   3. MCSBA Conference – October 23-25, 2026 - Monterey, CA

VIII. Business Items for Action

A. Public Hearing – Sufficiency of Instructional Materials and Textbooks

1. Review Sufficiency of Instructional Materials and Textbooks for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 in Schools Operated by the Merced County Office of Education in compliance with Education Code 60119. Presented by Director of Educational Services, Tara Hill.
2. Open Public Hearing: Geneva Brett opened the public hearing. No comments were made.
3. Close Public Hearing: Geneva Brett closed the public hearing.

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve **Resolution No. 2026-25,** Declaration of Sufficient Instructional Materials and Textbooks for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 in **Schools Operated by the Merced County Office of Education**

Frank Fagundes moved, and **Dennis Hanks** seconded, a motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-25, Declaration of Sufficient Instructional Materials and Textbooks for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 in Schools Operated by the Merced County Office of Education as submitted. The motion was carried with a vote of 5-0.

B. Public Hearing – Sufficiency of Instructional Materials and Textbooks

1. Review Sufficiency of Instructional Materials and Textbooks for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 at Merced Scholars Charter Schools Operated by the Merced County Office of Education in compliance with Education Code 60119. Presented by Director of Educational Services, Tara Hill.
2. Open Public Hearing: Geneva Brett opened the public hearing. No comments were made.
3. Close Public Hearing: Geneva Brett closed the public hearing.

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve **Resolution No. 2026-26,** Declaration of Sufficient Instructional Materials and Textbooks for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 at **Merced Scholars Charter School** Operated by the Merced County Office of Education

Ryan Heller moved, and **Joseph Oliveira** seconded, a motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-26, Declaration of Sufficient Instructional Materials and Textbooks for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 at Merced Scholars Charter School Operated by the Merced County Office of Education as submitted. The motion was carried with a vote of 5-0.

C. Public Hearing – Sufficiency of Instructional Materials and Textbooks

1 Review Sufficiency of Instructional Materials and Textbooks for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 at Come Back Charter School Operated by the Merced County Office of Education in compliance with Education Code 60119, presented by the Director of Educational Services, Tara Hill.

2. Open Public Hearing: Dennis Hanks opened the public hearing. No comments were made.

3. Close Public Hearing: Dennis Hanks closed the public hearing.

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve **Resolution No. 2026-27,** Declaration of Sufficient Instructional Materials and Textbooks for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 at **Come Back Charter School** Operated by the Merced County Office of Education

Frank Fagundes moved, and **Dennis Hanks** seconded, a motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-27, Declaration of Sufficient Instructional Materials and Textbooks for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 at Come Back Charter School Operated by the Merced County Office of Education as submitted. The motion was carried with a vote of 5-0.

D. **Resolution No. 2026-28** Bylaw Exhibit-1 9270 (Conflict of Interest Code)

It is recommended that the Board of Education approve **Resolution No. 2026-28** Revising the Merced County Board of Education Conflict of Interest (Board Bylaw Exhibit-1 9270 Conflict of Interest)

Ryan Heller moved, and **Frank Fagundes** seconded, a motion to approve Resolution No. 2026-28, adopting the revised Merced County Board of Education Conflict of Interest Code (Board Bylaw 9270 - Conflict of Interest)

E. CSBA 2025 Annual Education Conference & Trade Show

It is recommended that the Board of Education authorize Board Members to attend the CSBA Annual Education Conference & Trade Show, Dec. 3-5, 2026.

Dennis Hanks moved, and **Joseph Oliveira** seconded a motion to authorize the Board Members to attend the CSBA Annual Education Conference & Trade Show.

The Board identified closed session agenda item(s) and proceeded into Closed Session.
The public was invited to comment on identified items before adjournment into Closed Session.

The Board proceeded into Closed Session.

IX. **Closed Session # 1** Pursuant to Education Code 35146 to Hear Appeal of Denial of Interdistrict Attendance Request - **Appeal # 2026-13**

X. **Closed Session # 2**
Conference with real property negotiator, property management, Rick Marchini, Negotiator of Real Property/Land Development issues, pursuant to Government Code Section 54956.8.

The Board proceeded into an Open Session. - Disposition of Interdistrict Attendance Appeal

XI. On the request for an appeal #2026-13, it was moved by **Joseph Oliveira** and seconded by **Dennis Hanks** to overturn the appeal for the 2026-2027 school year, Merced Union High School District's decision to deny the request for an interdistrict transfer to attend school at Livingston High School in the Merced Union High School District.

Vote (by roll call)

Brett	YES
Heller	YES
Hanks	YES
Fagundes	ABSENT- Left the meeting early
Oliveira	YES

XV. **Adjournment**

Joseph Oliveira moved, and **Dennis Hanks** seconded, to adjourn the regular meeting of the Merced County Board of Education at 4:42 PM. The motion was carried with a vote of 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

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

SMT/mc