OUSD Legislative Coalition

September 2, 2026 · Meeting Minutes

ATTENDANCE
Bianca Alcock, Whitney Amsbary, Heriberto Angel, Beth Brunett, Kristi Eberhardt, Jolin Lang, Olga McCullough, Diana Meza, Crystal Miles, Dr. Rachel Monarrez, Dr. Rebecca Norwood, Sueann Parikh, Jacqueline Perez Chaidez, Mariam Rahman, Arash Samadani, Kyle Swarts, Kim Van Der Hoek, Nisha Verma, Harmony Welsh, Lindsay Whiddon, Joseph Wilhelm, Kaikea Wilinski, Matthew Witmer, Andrea Yamasaki

CALL TO ORDER - The meeting was called to order by Chair Lindsay Whiddon at 11:07 a.m.

SECRETARY
Beth Brunett took attendance via the sign-in sheet. Arash Samadani moved to approve the June 2026 minutes. Jolin Lang seconded. The motion passed with no nays and no abstentions.

TREASURER
Beth Brunett presented the Treasurer's Report (see attachment 1). As of June 3rd, we had $1,791.81 in our account. Between June and August, we had three $15 minimum balance fees deducted, as well as a check going out to former Secretary Nadia Hall for supplies. We also had two incoming checks for membership dues. Our ending balance as of August 31st was $1,794.43. Switching banks remains a priority passed on to the new treasurer.

- Dr. Monarrez followed up on the June question regarding the possibility of using Schools First, and we cannot use them.

LEGISLATIVE REPRESENTATIVES
We are missing quite a few of our representatives today, and we look forward to seeing them at future meetings. Today we have a couple of new faces.

- Kaikea Wilinski, U.S. Representative Young Kim
    - Representative Kim is back in DC now.
    - We're watching HR 7892, "No Aid for Ghost Students 2026," which works with the Department of Education to put safeguards on the FAFSA so it doesn't go to "ghost" students. It passed the House in June.
    - Our Congressional App Challenge is open to middle and high school students. 10/26 deadline
    - Service Academy Nominations are also open. Details are on the website. Application packets are due 11/13
- Kyle Swarts, State Senator Choi
    - We had several bills signed into law:
    - SB927: Intercountry adoption finalized in a foreign country.
        - Allows adoptees to gain status when their paperwork wasn't handled properly.
    - SB897: Re: Funding for abandoned vehicles in the City of Laguna Woods

    - SB1126: Local agencies' financial postings
        - Requires audits, etc., to be posted online to increase accountability and transparency.
    - Awaiting Governor's decision on Peer Court Reform. Possibly SB1242.
    - We hosted a resource fair in Tustin and are hoping to do one in Orange.
    - We co-hosted a health fair with Cal-Optima at El Modena High School.
    - $175,000 towards two buses for kids with disabilities is going to Santiago Charter School. It's on the Governor's desk awaiting his signature.
    - Buses are also being given to Laura's House.
    - We have bookmarks, Certificates, and more for Red Ribbon Week, so please reach out if you know of recipients.

OUSD SUPERINTENDENT AND ADMINISTRATORS

Dr. Rachel Monarrez, Superintendent

- We're launching new ways to keep families involved.
- In July, the Board approved our "District of Excellence" Belief Statements (see attachment 2).
    - We are creating a District of Excellence Advisory Team to practice and hold ourselves accountable to this goal. They will hold four meetings this school year to determine a rubric to measure progress.
    - Excellence is a journey, and we just want to keep getting better.
    - We're looking for parity between staff and OUSD families on this advisory team.
- DBAC - We're looking for student and family involvement and feedback regarding district use of technology. We need your thoughts on screen time, AI, security, etc.
- Superintendent CAFE (Community and Family Engagement team) - two members from every district school will meet with the superintendent to provide feedback. Interpretation and childcare will be available.

Jacquelin Perez-Chaidez, Deputy Superintendent

- The Governor released the budget, and we have updated information on our funding.
    - LCFF is $3-4M ongoing
    - Special Ed funding increased
    - $19.7 flexible one-time funding, to be used by June 2032
    - $2.5M restored, to be used by 2028
    - 14-week pregnancy disability pay will begin January 1, 2027. That is projected to cost approximately $1M

Olga McCullough, Asst Superintendent - Human Resources

- We are very excited about our new positions, though they are not all staffed yet.
- School Site Specialist - 2 of 7 are filled.
    - Certificated, 5 years of experience, bilingual preferred

    - Support role for those potentially interested in Administration, but not yet wanting to commit to another credential. They offer school support, without peer review.
    - Placements were based on school and student need.
- Teaching Teacher Specialist - 1 of 4 are filled.
    - Model Classroom
    - Teachers can visit to watch and learn from our best
    - Pilot program that is grant-funded for 3 years
    - Keeps great teachers in the classroom with students and mentoring peers
- Kindergarten Pilot Program - Still in Planning
    - Child Development Teacher working alongside Kinder teachers
    - Working in partnership with CSCA to create job description

Dr. Rebecca Norwood, Expanded Learning & Community Partners

- Our focus is on before and after school care and enrichment, community schools, building bridges with non-community schools, and family and community engagement
- All schools get access to wheel options you should have seen on Parent Square. Equity and access are paramount.
- Individual schools can offer additional programming through the platform if they choose.

Heriberto Angel, Executive Director - Student & Community Services

- The new cell phone policies are going well so far! (see attachments 3 & 4)
- Elementary and middle school devices have to be off and put away.
- High School devices are not allowed during class, are highly discouraged during breaks, but are allowed during non-instructional time.
- Devices are always allowed (K-12) in case of emergency, medical need, when required by an IEP or 504 plan, or when staff grants permission.
- These policy changes are research-based and required by California law.
- We will send out surveys later this year to get feedback from staff, family, and students on these changes.

OUSD BOARD OF EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVES

Trustee Andrea Yamasaki

- Thank you to our staff, administration, teachers, and everyone for a wonderful start to the school year!
- The CalOptima event mentioned earlier was amazing! Thank you, Mr. Angel, for your hard work on that. Kids were receiving backpacks, shoes, haircuts, physicals... In the future, we plan to host a similar event.
- $40M and lots of work went into our schools this summer! You will see these updates at your Back to School Nights.

- Fitch Credit gave OUSD a double A+ on how it manages its finances, and a triple A+ (its highest score) on how it pays back what it borrows for building projects.
- Upcoming change at the next board meeting – No e-bikes at the elementary and middle school levels. All high school riders must be permitted by safety class. E-bikes only, no scooters. Partnership with CHP. Registration stickers for class completers. Classes will be offered multiple times throughout the year. Implementation date TBD.
    - CVMS specifically is under consideration since they have hosted e-bike safety classes on site, and the City of Villa Park has partnered with the CHP on student e-bike safety.

OLD BUSINESS

- Welcome to the 2026-2027 OUSD Legislative Coalition Board:
  Chair - Lindsay Whiddon
  Vice Chair - Jolin Lang
  Treasurer - Biana Alcock
  Secretary - Beth Brunett
- Our Parliamentarian is Arash Samadani, but this is not a board position.

NEW BUSINESS

- We can have up to six 'Members at Large' in LegCo. To be considered, please email ousdlegco@gmail.com. We will vote on new members at the next meeting.

DISCUSSIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

- OUPSF
    - The Orange Street Fair is this weekend, and we are running Children's Street. Come sell tickets!
    - October 14th is our Celebration of Schools, and this year it is at El Modena High School. Save the date!
    - Teacher Grant applications will be accepted from the end of October into November, so spread the word.

ADJOURNMENT - Lindsay Whiddon adjourned the meeting at 12:31 p.m.

NEXT MEETING Our next meeting is October 7, 2026, at 11:00 am in the Panther Lab.
Any questions or comments? OUSDlegco@gmail.com

Minutes compiled by Secretary Beth Brunett.