

VENTURA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF
August 28, 2023

A. CALL TO ORDER

1. Call To Order, Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, and Moment of Reflection
The Regular Board Meeting of the Ventura County Board of Education, Agenda No. 23-12, was called to order by Arleigh Kidd, Board President, at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, August 28, 2023, in the Board Room of the VCOE Conference and Educational Services Center at 5100 Adolfo Road, Camarillo. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Mr. Kidd, followed by a moment of reflection.

2. Roll Call
Trustees Present
Rachel Ulrich, Area 1
Michael Teasdale, Area 2
Arleigh Kidd, Area 4
Dr. Ramon Flores, Area 5

Absent
Dr. Mark Lisagor, Area 3

VCOE Personnel Present:
Dr. César Morales, County Superintendent of Schools
Misty Key, Deputy Superintendent, Fiscal & Administrative Services
Lisa Salas Brown, Associate Superintendent, Educational Services
Dr. Consuelo Hernandez Williams, Associate Superintendent, Student Services
Dr. Juan Santos, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Dr. Julie Judd, Chief Technology Officer
Holly Minear, Executive Director, Student Services
Lisa Bork, Sr. Executive Assistant
Wanda Runcie, Executive Assistant
John Meza, Facilities

3. Approval of Agenda
Mr. Teasdale made a motion to approve the agenda. Dr. Flores seconded the motion, and the motion passed 4:0.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jasmine Duron addressed the Board and said she is passionate about Ventura County being a better place to live with Autism. She is in support of livestreaming VCBE Board meetings for accessibility and transparency.

C. HEARINGS

None

D. CLOSED SESSION

None

E. PRELIMINARY

1. Approval of Minutes of Regular Board Meeting of June 23, 2023
Ms. Ulrich made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Board meeting of June 23, 2023. Mr. Teasdale seconded the motion and it passed (4:0).
2. Approval of Minutes of Special Board Meeting of June 26, 2023.
Dr. Flores made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Board meeting of June 26, 2023. Ms. Ulrich seconded the motion and it passed (4:0).

F. CORRESPONDENCE

None

G. PRESIDENT'S AND BOARD MEMBERS' REPORTS.

1. Upcoming Events

CCBE Annual Conference	Sept. 8-10, 2023
CEC Back to School Night	Sept. 13, 2023
Odyssey Back to School Night	Sept. 13, 2023
Gateway Back to School Night	Sept. 14, 2023
Foster Back to School Night	Sept. 20, 2023
Principal for a Day	Oct. 17, 2023
CSBA Annual Conference	Nov. 30-Dec 2, 2023
2. Board Members' Reports

Ms. Ulrich is teaching full time at Oxnard College this year. Enrollment in the Sciences is up 13%.

Mr. Teasdale thanked Dr. Morales for being willing to assist him in presenting a session on Court/Community Schools at the CSBA Conference in December.

Mr. Teasdale informed the Board of a controversy at CCBE regarding AB906 (Alternative Education Grant). CCBE was criticized by CSBA for the lack of communication with the government relations team. Despite money being allocated, most of the discussion at the last meeting focused on the lack of communication. Mr. Teasdale fears members had taken the initiative outside the scope of CSBA action. The CSBA Bylaws Committee has been tasked with defining what a "Section" is and this will be discussed further at the upcoming CSBA meeting. His focus is to ensure that the services are not limited by that definition. It seems some of the Board members perceive CSBA as a gatekeeper rather than an enabler. Mr. Teasdale believes CCBE's role is to defend education in California and not be seen as a reprimanding agency. The CCBE president has resigned. After the CCBE Conference in September, there will be more information.

Dr. Flores is the chair of the CCBE Professional Development Committee. He said at the March 2024 meeting, there will be more sessions geared towards new members and seasoned members. He thanked Dr. Morales and staff for a well done Leadership Retreat at the Ronald Reagan Library.

Mr. Kidd also thanked staff for the wonderful Leadership Retreat. He attended the VCSBA Executive Board meeting at Rio School District with Dr. Morales to assist in planning meetings for the coming year.

Dr. Flores received an invitation to the new Del Sol High School opening in Oxnard on September 14, 2023.

H. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Dr. Morales noted that all school districts, charter schools and VCOE schools are in session. Kudos to staff for all their preparation for this school year.

The Leadership Retreat at the Ronald Reagan Library was a great success. The Situation Room was especially intriguing with leaders learning to collaborate, function, and practice decision making when on the brink of crisis. In today’s world, we find ourselves in crisis, and we need to hone those skills. Internally, we learned about our roles and how to leverage each other. We are promoting compassionate systems throughout our county, both internally and externally, in order to better serve and be accountable to each other.

Dr. Morales thanked Trustee Teasdale for his leadership with CCBE and CSBA.

I. LEGISLATIVE REPORT

None

J. CONSENT/ACTION ITEMS

1. Temporary County Certificates
2. Williams Quarterly Report to County Board of Education
3. Quarterly Disposal of Property
4. Consolidated Application – Application for Funding

Mr. Teasdale moved to approve Consent Items J1-J4. Dr. Flores seconded the motion and the motion passed (4:0).

K. PRESENTATIONS

None

L. DISCUSSION/INFORMATION/ACTION

1. Approval of Revisions and Additions to Board Policies
To ensure compliance of all programs and policies within VCOE Schools and Programs, the following Board Policies and Administrative Regulations have been revised or added.
 - a. Revisions – BP/AR 5113 Absences and Excuses - Update
 - b. Added – BP/AR 5113.1 Chronic Absence and Truancy - New
 - c. Revisions – AR 5125 Student Records - Update
 - d. Added – BP/AR 5125.1 Release of Directory Information - New
 - e. Replacement – AR 5125.2 Withholding Grades Diploma or Transcripts - Replaced

- f. Added – AR 5125.3 Challenging Student Records -New
- g. Added – BP/AR 5131.2 Bullying - New
- h. Revisions – BP/AR 5131.7 Weapons and Dangerous Instruments - Update
- i. Revisions – BP/AR 5144 Discipline - Update
- j. Revisions – BP/AR 5145.3 Nondiscrimination/Harassment (Students) - Update
- k. Revisions – BP/AR 5145.7 Sexual Harassment (Students) - Update
- l. Revisions – BP/AR 6173.1 Education for Foster Youth – Update

Dr. Williams thanked Christina Mahone, Michele Harding, and Holly Minear for their efforts in updating these board policies. Changes are based on the annual legislative update.

Ms. Ulrich asked if FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) is part of our board policies.

Ms. Key said our students merge in and out of being 18 and younger; a 17 year old could be a college student. These policies are not about student data privacy, however, Ms. Ulrich's point is well made with students intermingling with adult programs. If students get into trouble, the contract between agencies should address any issues.

Mr. Teasdale asked if our sexual harassment policies are grade specific.

Dr. Morales responded that these policies are defined per education code. There is a robust investigation in place to honor student rights. The harassment umbrella is broad enough that administrators know to move forward with an investigation to keep students safer.

Ms. Ulrich made a motion to approve new and revised Board Policies 5113, 5113.1, 5125, 5125.1, 5125.2, 5125.3, 5131.2, 5131.7, 5144, 5145.3, 5145.7, and 6173.1. Mr. Teasdale seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously (4:0).

2. Livestreaming Board Meetings

Dr. Morales stated the Ventura County Board of Education meetings are scheduled in the evenings to accommodate parents to attend in person. An audio recording of all Board meeting are posted on the VCOE website.

He is sensitive to the fact that our Board is an appellate Board that deals with sensitive student issues such as Interdistrict Transfer Appeals and Expulsion Appeals. The cost, staff support and technology all need to be taken into consideration. We don't currently have equipment, and cost varies depending on the system. We did use Zoom during COVID. There can be technical challenges with livestreaming which may result in a Board meeting being interrupted.

Dr. Flores would be curious to see how much audience participation there was at the Zoom meetings during COVID. He also reiterated that our Board does hear sensitive cases.

Ms. Ulrich said a livestream would not be participatory unless the person is in the room. Participating virtually is difficult to do. She is not sure about dedicating funds which would take away funding for other programs. She understands the desire, but she isn't sure it is feasible. She fears this would cost more than the Board budget itself.

Mr. Teasdale said it is a trade-off of cost and accessibility. He prefers to maintain programs.

Ms. Ulrich asked if we know how many school districts are currently doing livestreaming,

Ms. Key said school district's Board meetings and County Board meetings are different. The community is not the same.

Mr. Kidd can see both sides. He would personally like to table this agenda item for a future meeting and get more information. This discussion has initiated questions. He is also concerned about student privacy issues. He would also like Dr. Lisagor to be a part of the discussion. He is curious to know what other County Boards do around the state and will ask around at the CCBE meeting.

Ms. Ulrich said there is really good technology that can follow voices. It is doable, the issue remains about exposing sensitive information from students. She fears there is a perception we are not being transparent.

This discussion will be brought forth at a later date after more information is derived.

3. Board Scholarship Fund

Dr. Consuelo Hernandez Williams presented information on the Board Scholarship Fund. She said out of the 17 scholarships awarded, 9 have been used to date. There is a team of five staff members who continue to call students so they can access their funds. Some of the highlights from awarded scholarships include a previous graduate who wanted to have his own business. He enrolled in barber school and through these scholarship funds he was able to purchase the tools he needed. There was also a student who pursued a phlebotomy program, and the funds went toward her scrubs and work shoes.

Mr. Teasdale commented that these stories are exactly the reasons why this fund exists. He asked if there is a statute of limitations. Dr. Williams said there are some students who have a longer term than others and the team is fully committed to following up and supporting these students.

Ms. Ulrich said it is that time of year for Board members to donate to the scholarship fund. Hopefully students at some point get to a place where they can use the money and we will still be there for them.

4. Adoption of Board and Superintendent Shared Goals and Advocacy

The Board reviewed the shared goals document. Although this goal process started in 2022, the time span is for the next two years – 2023-24 and 2024-2025. Dr. Morales discussed the advocacy portion of the goals document and said that Ventura County is the second most declining county in the state for student enrollment (behind Los Angeles County). What we can do now is promote kids going to school.

Prior to the Pandemic, average student attendance in Ventura County was 96-97%. Post pandemic, student attendance is around 91-94%. Our county is actually doing very well as

other counties are experiencing 70-80% attendance. Schools are funded based on attendance. Currently, districts are benefitting from a three year buffer in attendance. Chronic absenteeism is noted on the Dashboard. Attendance is a dependable way of looking at funding. Moving to an enrollment-based funding model isn't likely to happen so for the time being, we have to promote attendance and student engagement.

Schools and charters communicate constantly to promote their value. There is some push back with keeping kids home when they have a cold or cough; it will take society time to get back to normal. Districts are reporting high numbers of absences attributed to club sports and tournaments out of town. Are our districts right sized to the number of students? Staffing ratios also need to be addressed.

Ms. Ulrich likes the idea of promoting kids going to school by advocating to students and families. How can we help promote that idea? Her own children now appreciate her making them go to school consistently; habits were formed. This is endless work, especially with children with special needs. Lawmakers on our side. This is a goal we can work towards and see something measurable.

Dr. Morales suggested an op-ed in the newspaper and putting a video out on social media. He can work with Dave Schermer on a YouTube series.

Dr. Flores feels it is about the parents. Those relationships need to be established.

Mr. Kidd said there seems to be a consensus on school attendance being a goal.

Mr. Teasdale asked how this can be transformed into an action plan. Dr. Morales can work on an action plan.

Ms. Salas Brown said the Dashboard colors are coming back in mid-December. The state priorities around absenteeism align with getting our kids to attend school.

Ms. Key said at a CBO meeting last week while discussing attendance, it was pointed out that a 1% difference in attendance for a district like Conejo Valley Unified equates to around a million dollars.

Mr. Teasdale suggested looking at the budget 3-4 times a year aligned to what we are focusing on. Ms. Key suggested tying this into the budget updates. One thing comes to mind, which is cyber security. What do we focus on to prepare and keep users from hacking our systems?

Dr. Morales highlighted a frustration with transportation costs going up 40-60%.

The Board took a break from 7:40 – 7:46 p.m.

5. Superintendent's Salary

In accordance with Board Policy 2126, the Superintendent's salary was reviewed. The Office provided salary comparison data, including salaries of other county superintendents and other countywide elected officials.

Ms. Key noted per Board Policy 2126 the superintendent's salary is addressed annually. The July Board meeting was cancelled so this is an agenda item on the August Board meeting. She said Dr. Morales was appointed in April 2021 – the salary was set by the Board at that time and has not been adjusted since except for the \$250/month auto compensation, which is reimbursement for mileage.

A comparison table of county superintendents in Class I, II, and III counties that are most similar to ours in size and program was presented. The average salary is \$322,985/year plus the add-ons for doctorates, health benefits, longevity, retirement accounts etc. Another point of data is a comparison of superintendent salaries within the county of Ventura, although the County Superintendent of Schools position is different than a school district superintendent. The most relevant position comparison is with other county superintendents. Data was also provided on what VCOE has provided to its own employees.

Ms. Ulrich values our superintendent, that goes unsaid, he has done a fantastic job. She is conservative and with declining enrollment, she hesitates to raise salaries when we are not sure what the next couple of years will bring.

Mr. Teasdale indicated it has been two years since the superintendent's salary was adjusted, he has done a great job, especially during the Pandemic. Mr. Teasdale would support a raise that would put Dr. Morales above the average and median of Class III as we have the highest ADA in Class III. Mr. Teasdale believes inflation should also be taken into consideration.

Dr. Flores stated he would be willing to support a 4% raise which would be approximately \$291,200 per year.

Ms. Ulrich stated she is more in line with a 2% raise as we are very uncertain where we are going with declining enrollment.

Mr. Kidd noted that inflation has gone up and he would be supportive of a 4% raise.

Mr. Teasdale moved to raise the superintendent's salary to \$292,000. Dr. Flores seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion passed 4:0 with Dr. Flores, Ms. Ulrich, Mr. Teasdale and Mr. Kidd voting aye.

Mr. Kidd stated that the last few years have had record numbers for raises for California school employees and the action was appropriate.

6. Board Compensation

In accordance with Board Policy 9250, Board compensation was reviewed. The Office provided salary comparison data from districts in Ventura County and similar county offices in our region.

Education Code provides a different detail related to County Board Trustees as opposed to School District Trustees. County Board members are limited to an increase not to exceed 5% annually.

Ms. Ulrich said the compensation should stay consistent as is. Dr. Flores said the amount has been the same for 15 years since he has been on the Board. Mr. Kidd noted that no one runs for the Board to make a big stipend. County Office Trustees have big areas to represent. He made a motion to raise the Board compensation 4% considering the inflation the last few years.

Mr. Kidd made a motion to increase the Board Trustees compensation 4%. Dr. Flores seconded the motion. The motion passed 3:1 with Dr. Flores, Ms. Ulrich and Mr. Kidd voting aye and Mr. Teasdale voting nay.

7. CSBA County Nomination – Director-at-Large

Mr. Teasdale has served as the CSBA Director-at-Large for the last two years and has consented to hold this position for the next two years.

Ms. Ulrich nominated Mike Teasdale to be a 2023 CSBA Director-at-Large. Dr. Flores seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously (4:0).

M. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Dr. Flores is looking forward to the CCBE conference next week.

Ms. Ulrich will attend the CCBE conference, but will be gone September 13–20, 2023. She also noted that Oxnard College is bringing back the Geo Bowl.

Mr. Kidd said it has been a great start to the new school year. He appreciates the daily work of staff preparing for Board meetings and doing the work for students.

N. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

1. Student Board member discussion

O. FUTURE MEETINGS

Date: Monday, September 25, 2023
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: 5100 Adolfo Road, Board Room, Camarillo
Purpose: Regular Meeting of the Board

Date: Monday, October 23, 2023
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: 5100 Adolfo Road, Board Room, Camarillo
Purpose: Regular Meeting of the Board

Date: Monday, November 18, 2023
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: 5100 Adolfo Road, Board Room, Camarillo
Purpose: Regular Meeting of the Board

Date: Monday, December 16, 2023
Time: 6:00 p.m.
Location: 5100 Adolfo Road, Board Room, Camarillo
Purpose: Regular Meeting of the Board

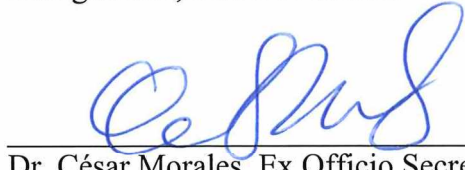
P. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kidd adjourned the meeting at 8:23 p.m.

Date: 09/25/2023


Arleigh Kidd, Board President

Date: 9/25/23


Dr. César Morales, Ex Officio Secretary and
Executive Officer of the Board