

**VENTURA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF**  
**April 8, 2022**

**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. 22-07, was called to order by Rachel Ulrich, Board President, at 8:01 a.m. on Friday, April 8, 2022, in the Board Room of the VCOE Conference and Educational Services Center. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was led by Ms. Ulrich followed by a moment of reflection.

2. Roll Call

Trustees Present:

Rachel Ulrich, Area 1  
Dr. Mark Lisagor, Area 3  
Arleigh Kidd, Area 4  
Dr. Ramon Flores, Area 5

Absent: Michael Teasdale, Area 2

VCOE Personnel Present:

Misty Key, Deputy Superintendent, Fiscal & Administrative Services  
Lisa Salas Brown, Associate Superintendent, Educational Services  
Dr. Consuelo Hernandez-Williams, Associate Superintendent, Student Support Services  
Emily Mostovoy Luna, Associate Superintendent SELPA  
Teri Page, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources  
Lisa Bork, Senior Executive Assistant  
Cathy Samuel, Executive Assistant  
Brian Meza, Conference Facilities Assistant

Darlene Avalos, Director, Human Resources  
Lisa Cline, Executive Director, Internal Business Office  
Sonia Magana, Accountant, Internal Auditor  
Christine Mahone, Director, County Program Support and Accountability  
Holly Minear, Executive Director, Special Education  
Jeanine Murphy, Coordinator, SELPA  
Dr. Phoebe Moore, Director, Local District Support Services  
Stefanie Rodriguez, Director, Alternative Education  
Nicole Salem, Budget and Accounting Specialist  
Brett Taylor, Director, Local District Support Services

3. Approval of Agenda.

Dr. Lisagor moved the agenda be approved. Dr. Flores seconded the motion, and the motion carried upon a unanimous vote (4:0).

**B. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None

**C. HEARINGS**

None

**D. CLOSED SESSION**

None.

**E. PRELIMINARY**

Dr. Lisagor moved the minutes of the Regular Board meeting of March 14, 2022, be approved. Mr. Kidd seconded the motion, and the motion carried upon a unanimous roll call vote (4:0).

**F. CORRESPONDENCE**

None

**G. PRESIDENT’S AND BOARD MEMBERS’ REPORTS**

*(Reports by Board members regarding their individual activities affecting the Office pursuant to Govt. Code Sec. 54954.2(a)).*

Upcoming Events

VCOE Teacher of the Year ..... End of April  
Impact II Awards ..... May 24  
VCOE Student Art Gallery ..... 5/29-6/5 Santa Paula Agriculture Museum  
Leadership Team Meeting ..... May 16 – Museum of Ventura County  
All Staff Gathering ..... May 25  
VCSBA Dinner ..... May 31  
VC Teacher of the Year ..... End of May  
Graduations/Promotions ..... June 3-15

Dr. Flores commented that the March 11-12, 2022, CCBE Workshop was a big success. A debrief will be held April 15th. Dr. Flores was asked to be on another committee for CCBE.

Mr. Kidd is looking forward to April 18<sup>th</sup> when he will visit the Career Education Center.

Dr. Lisagor is preparing for the Coast2Coast Advocacy Day in Washington DC. He mentioned that there is real potential to see movement in SPED funding.

**H. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

Ms. Key addressed the subject of solar energy as requested by Mr. Kidd. VCOE has explored the concept of solar being installed at school sites and administrative buildings. The cost has always been prohibitive and wasn’t feasible because of capital outlay. It can be explored again.

The Board is invited to the upcoming Leadership Team meeting on May 16 at the Museum of Ventura County. Dr. Williams said this is a continuation of this year’s theme of focusing on 805 gold. There will be a panel of superintendents from Ojai, Mesa, Rio and Ventura. The remainder of the time will be spent on team building and exploring the museum. Ms. Ulrich and Dr. Lisagor stated they will attend.

**I. LEGISLATIVE REPORT**

Ms. Ulrich was happy to hear VCOE is hosting the May Revise on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

**J. CONSENT/ACTION ITEMS**

*(All matters specified as Consent Agenda are considered by the Board to be routine and will be acted upon in one motion. There will be no discussion of these items prior to the time the Board votes on the motion unless members of the Board request specific items be discussed and/or removed from the Consent Agenda)*

None.

**K. PRESENTATIONS**

None.

**L. DISCUSSION/INFORMATION/ACTION**

1. Budget Study Session

As part of the Annual Budget Study session cycle, the following designated budgets are provided for the Board's review and discussion:

*Board of Education, Charter Support, Donation Accounts, Student Competitions, Gateway, Providence, Special Populations, Child Development and Differentiated Assistance.*

The following staff will present on the various successes and challenges within their departments.

*Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) – Emily Mostovoy-Luna and Jeanine Murphy*

*Special Education – Holly Minear*

*Alternative Education Programs – Stefani Rodriguez*

*Student Competitions – Marlo Hartsuyker*

Ms. Key thanked staff members in the audience and recognized them for their work. Emily Mostovoy Luna and Jeanine Murphy presented on Alternative Dispute Resolution. Ms. Mostovoy Luna said in 2018, before she became the SELPA lead, she attended a conference on ADR. She was amazed at the ability to solve problems in a respectful manner. It was a goal of hers to bring this to Ventura County. The funding was minimal in the beginning, but \$50 million is expected in the Governor's budget to support ADR work.

Ms. Ulrich asked if these services are available to all districts or just the ones involved with SELPA. Ms. Mostovoy Luna said these services are available for all districts in Ventura County including Las Virgenes Unified School District.

Ms. Murphy said she is incredibly passionate about working in ADR. This program utilizes communication and collaboration to support early resolution and fosters collaborative partnerships. When cases are resolved early on, there is a great cost savings and less Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH). This process allows participants to resolve their own resolutions. The child, parents and district voices need to be heard. Ms. Murphy is a neutral participant. She facilitates discussions, makes sure components are met and helps with misunderstandings and language barriers.

Ms. Ulrich asked how Ms. Murphy intervenes on behalf of both parties. Ms. Murphy said she talks with parents first and then after getting their permission, she contacts the district.

Dr. Lisagor inquired about how this service is advertised. Ms. Murphy said ADR is on Facebook and the SELPA website. For a new program, they have done really well.

Ms. Ulrich said this is a paradigm shift. Districts will start to realize it will decrease their dispute burden if they have assistance through this program. Mr. Kidd commented this service can be offered, but not required. Ms. Mostovoy Luna said this is a very big change in special education locally and statewide.

Ms. Murphy facilitates a community of practice with a group of educators who are engaging in this work throughout the state. SELPA has also formed a dynamic partnership with Pepperdine Straus Institute. They provide trainings for SELPAs throughout the state and enhance the work. Ms. Mostovoy Luna was key in putting this together.

Dr. Flores was happy to hear about services to non-native speakers and asked how they are reached out to. Ms. Murphy said interpreters are provided.

Ms. Mostovoy Luna said there has been a need for a neutral component. SELPA is building capacity within the districts to support ADR. The ADR program information is translated into Mixteco on the SELPA website. SELPA offers translators in many of their offerings.

Holly Minear said Special Education is currently serving 538 students thanks to close relations with school districts and SELPA. All students come to us through a referral program. There are 58 SPED Classrooms. All classrooms have new Line Boards. Technology Services trained staff on these boards and Ms. Minear is very impressed with staff's level of proficiency. The pandemic and school closing has required a need to address behaviors. A higher level of support staff with credential licensing has been hired. Post-secondary students are rejoining the community with work sites. Relationships have been re-established. An Art Trek enrichment program is provided weekly; their providers are very skilled.

Professional development is being provided through the Educator Effectiveness Grant. Many thanks to Christina Mahone for writing these grants.

Dr. Flores mentioned when he was a principal for a day last year and he was amazed at the compassion our staff has for students.

Alternative Education Director, Stefanie Rodriguez said once students returned to in-person learning, the needs began to surface and supports were put in place. Two instructional behavioral specialists and two additional safety workers were hired. Human Resources was instrumental in helping find these staff members. New Line Boards have been a hit, they enhance lessons, instruction and learning. This could not be done without an effective team including Christina Mahone, Consuelo Hernandez Williams and Lisa Brown.

Ms. Rodriguez said the Facilities Department has been invaluable in moving furniture and repairing and fixing whatever needs to be done. She has also reached out to Jeanine Murphy for assistance. Through the Expanded Learning Opportunity grant, Art Trek has

been available to Gateway middle school and high school students. A focus has been on STEM and the students have been very engaged.

The WASC review was just completed, and all has been recognized by WASC. The vision of a college going outcome was shared during the committee presentation with Oxnard College. Nine college bound students toured the college. There are 21 seniors projected to graduate this year.

Alternative Education also helps facilitate return to districts. Partnerships with agencies such as Ventura County Behavioral Health, Probation and our community colleges are essential in helping our students look beyond Gateway, beyond their high school career. The Alternative Network has been reinstated to assist districts who have alternative programs. This is an effort to support and collaborate. Currently we are serving 78 students at Gateway, 51 students at Providence and 14 at Odyssey.

Dr. Flores said an indicator of college success is when kids tour campuses and can see themselves there.

Dr. Lisagor mentioned Board members are happy to provide scholarships to support those students who have overcome real challenges and continue in some sort of college career path.

Ms. Ulrich is happy that VCOE has invested so much in technology in alternative education classrooms. The students there see how much we value them. Technology is huge. With the scholarship funds, it would be great to have very specific steps in writing on how the students receiving these scholarships can use them.

Misty acknowledged Holly Minear and Stefanie Rodriguez for their great leadership. The attendance rate drives our funding, and it has been very low through the Pandemic. These ladies have led staff with tenacity to get kids to come back to school; the attendance reflects their work.

Marlo Hartsuyker discussed Student Competitions. She mentioned John Tarkany's retirement and Andrea Rubin as the new Coordinator. (Andrea is currently on maternity leave). The Pandemic has affected these programs, however, they were all converted to a virtual format. Early on in the Pandemic, the Science Fair and Vex Robotics had to be cancelled. The goal was to keep these program/events going as they provide a meaningful platform for students. This year, over 900 students will be served in these programs. There were over 300 volunteers with backgrounds in STEM fields. In the Vex Robotics competition, there were students from places like Hong Kong and Puerto Rico who could participate virtually. One student from Chino Hills who has cerebral palsy was able to participate and control the robot with his eyes.

For the Academic Decathlon, interviews and speeches were held live through Zoom. There were 148 students representing 12 teams and 55 volunteers who participated. Westlake High School won the county competition and represented Ventura County at the state level.

Mock Trial, which is usually held at the Ventura County Courthouse took place in Zoom rooms. The performances were very impressive. There were 453 students representing 29 teams, with 200 volunteers participating. Oak Park was the winner and went on to the State Mock Trial. A student from Oak Park Unified School District won “Outstanding Clerk” at the state competition.

The Science Fair was held virtually this year serving 215 students (140 more projects than the previous year). The 35 highest scoring projects moved on to the California Science and Engineering Fair.

For the Impact II Awards, the teachers can write grants for \$1000 individually or \$2000 for a team. The teachers showcase what they are doing in their classrooms and the winning programs are put on a website so others can utilize them in classrooms.

This year, VCOE is hosting a student art exhibition. The art will be showcased from May 29 through June 5, 2022, at the Santa Paula Agriculture Museum. A virtual program will also be provided. This is just for our VCOE students.

The applications for VCOE teacher of the year just closed. The winner will be announced the end of April and will then apply for the Ventura County Teacher of the Year in May.

Ms. Ulrich asked when the competitions might be returning to an in-person format. Ms. Hartsuyker said pre-pandemic levels of student participation was at about 1400. This year, there were about 900 students. They are hoping to go back to in-person next year. She did say that she was amazed at how staff was able to adapt and still hold these events and serve students.

Ms. Ulrich asked how pivoting to Zoom affected students. Ms. Hartsuyker said Ms. Rubin is bringing a fresh perspective. Her goal is to focus on inclusion. For example, busing was an issue for the Science Fair. She is committed to breaking down barriers for kids to be involved. She is having interest group discussions and bringing in stakeholders to look at how this could look differently and ask students what they want.

Ms. Ulrich suggested looking at mentorship in the Science Fair. Ms. Hartsuyker said some schools have great programs with coaches. Ms. Rubin wants all schools to be modeled after these successful programs.

Ms. Ulrich said the Hackathon is under CEC and Oxnard College collaborates with them. Companies are following the example of high school hackathons and now having them in their organizations.

Dr. Flores participated in the Hackathon and noted the Naval Base has funding to go into classrooms and support these types of events.

Ms. Key thanked the presenters and said the information shared is a small glimpse of all the work taking place. She then proceeded to discuss the details of the Budget Study Session. This summary takes on the presumptions of information derived from the Governor’s Budget proposal in January. He presented a 5.33 percent COLA in January; the final percentage might be slightly different in the May Revise. The Ventura County

Office of Education is in a hold harmless state, meaning we get a set amount of LCFF dollars which is close to 20 million dollars (22 million with Differentiated Assistance funding).

VCOE increased our salary schedules through a market study. These positions and increases are reflected. VCOE is proud to be able to compensate employees at a higher rate keeping up with inflation and the minimum wage gap.

The pension rates on benefits continue to increase. There is a slightly higher jump in the PERS rate which is going from 22.91 to 26.1 percent. PERS has yet to take action to set the rate, this is expected to take place in April, but at this point this is a projection. For now, these dollars have been reserved. STRS rates are also increasing.

Workers Compensation has a flat rate. Health insurance premiums are not expected to increase much.

Charter School Support is a relatively small budget, but the impact of the work is remarkable throughout the county. This program is run by the fees collected from the five schools we have authorized. Ms. Hartsuyker supports these schools and also supports all of the charter schools in Ventura County in bringing them together to coordinate updates and share resources. Dr. Flores pointed out that Ms. Hartsuyker is also making an impact statewide.

The Board budget is stable and doesn't have a lot of expenditures. The work done by the Board is very important and impactful statewide.

Ms. Ulrich inquired about the conference room rentals for Board meetings. Ms. Key said there is adequate budget to cover expenses for room rentals and technology assistance for the Board meetings.

Lisa Salas Brown leads the work for Differentiated Assistance (DA) and LCAP support and oversight. She will present at the May 6<sup>th</sup> Board meeting. The DA budget lists the dollar amount that is provided to us from the state to provide these services. Districts are identified as being eligible for DA based on student achievement and the scores within testing. When districts are identified, this sets off a criteria to provide funding for COEs to give assistance. Currently, one million dollars are estimated for these purposes, these funds are unrestricted. Within the Governor's proposal there is an additional amount being proposed. Hopefully these funds will be increased.

Ms. Ulrich asked when we began having a budgeted amount for DA. Ms. Key said about three years ago we started receiving funds. County have been providing these services without funding since the inception of the LCAP around 2013.

Alicia McFarland will be presenting on Early Childhood Programs in May. A new program is expanding the age lower to serve students and an earlier age. UTK – Universal Transition Kindergarten and UPK – Universal Preschool Kindergarten are the new acronyms. The budget is staying relatively the same. Increasing the budget is anticipated, however, VCOE is conservatively projecting what we now know. It is anticipated this is an area of service that will probably expand and grow over time.

At Gateway, the enrollment and attendance is low. A dedication of LCFF funds far exceeds what the attendance rate is providing. We are at the minimum of staff positions to provide a safe environment.

Providence students, attendance wise, show up for school. There has been a recent increase in enrollment in the spring. Staff is doing their best to provide instructional services to these students. This budget is similar to Gateway with low enrollment and revenue exceeding the amount of the funded formula.

Ms. Key discussed scholarships and donations. There isn't an expenditure list. As the school year opens up and students are identified, this will be adjusted.

VCOE Special Populations Department serves a diverse and unique population of students in Ventura County. We connect with students to give them access to education and what they need to be successful. The funding is steady, and we don't know what we will be awarded until way into the school year. We anticipate funding levels to be steady with a possible increase in foster youth funding.

Student Competitions has a small budget but has a big impact on students. They do receive donations from vendors.

Mr. Kidd asked if hold harmless hadn't gone into effect in 2013, what would we look like today? Ms. Key said it would probably be about 15 million instead of the 22 million.

Dr. Lisagor participated in webinars on UTK and UPK - there are so many moving parts. One point had to do with Human Resources in terms of certifications. He will be interested to hear more about this next month.

2. Approval of Resolution 22-04, Holding Virtual Board Meetings

Dr. Flores made a motion to approve Resolution 22-04 Holding Virtual Board Meetings.

Dr. Lisagor seconded the motion and the resolution passed upon a unanimous roll call vote (4:0).

Ms. Key noted AB 361 allows for a transition to virtual meetings, however, it needs be adopted every 30 days.

3. Reschedule April 25, 2022, Board Meeting

Dr. Flores made a motion for the April 25, 2022, Board meeting to be held virtually. Mr. Kidd seconded the motion and it passed unanimously (4:0).

**M. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Dr. Lisagor informed the Board of the passing of Jack Parham; he was an attorney who worked with VCOE for many years. He noted Mr. Parham was a wonderful person and helped VCOE through many challenging times. Mr. Kidd sat at the bargaining table with Mr. Parham for many years, he will be missed throughout the county.



Mr. Kidd said he would like to hear more about solar energy. Simi Valley went solar eight years ago with zero capital outlay and have saved millions of dollars. It is part of our responsibility as leaders to leave our students a healthy planet. He would like to see RFPs (Requests for Proposals) from companies that cost nothing and would like to continue this conversation.

Dr. Flores serves on the Ventura County Committee on School District Reorganization and wished to thank Cathy Samuel and Ms. Key for the work they do on behalf of this committee.

Ms. Ulrich thanked everyone for their presentations. The information received enables Board members to get a better understanding of day-to-day ongoing at VCOE.

**N. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Solar energy

**O. FUTURE MEETINGS**

Date: Monday, April 25, 2022  
Time: 6:00 p.m.  
Location: 5100 Adolfo Road, Board Room, Camarillo  
Purpose: Regular Meeting of the Board

Date: Friday, May 6, 2022 (*Budget Study Session*)  
Time: 8:00 a.m.  
Location: 5100 Adolfo Road, Board Room, Camarillo  
Purpose: Regular Meeting of the Board

Date: Friday, May 6, 2022 (*Governance Retreat*)  
Time: 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
Location: 5100 Adolfo Road, Board Room, Camarillo  
Purpose: Regular Meeting of the Board

Ms. Ulrich adjourned the meeting at 9:34 a.m.

**P. ADJOURNMENT**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Rachel Ulrich, Board President

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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