



# BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

October 14, 2025  
6:30 p.m.

Board of Education Board Room  
1300 17<sup>th</sup> Street, City CENTRE – Bakersfield, CA 93301

## 1.0 GENERAL FUNCTIONS

1.1 The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

1.3 Roll Call

### Board Members Present

Julie Beechinor Towse

Lori J. Cisneros

Lori Eskew

Jose E. Gonzalez, Jr.

Mary M. Little

Joe L. Marcano

James V. Robinson

Anabell Werner, *Student Representative*

### KCSOS Employees Present

Dr. John G. Mendiburu, *Superintendent*

Steve Sanders, *Chief of Staff*

Christian Shannon, *Deputy Superintendent*

Merril Clanton, *Senior Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent*

1.4 It was moved by Trustee Beechinor Towse, seconded by Trustee Robinson to approve the agenda.

Ayes: Trustee Beechinor Towse, Trustee Cisneros, Trustee Eskew, Trustee Gonzalez, Jr., Trustee Little, Trustee Marcano, and Trustee Robinson.

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

1.5 It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Marcano to approve the Minutes from Regular Board Meeting held on September 9, 2025.

Ayes: Trustee Beechinor Towse, Trustee Cisneros, Trustee Eskew, Trustee Gonzalez, Jr., Trustee Little, Trustee Marcano, and Trustee Robinson.

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

- 1.6 It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Marcano to approve the Minutes from Special Board Meeting held on September 10, 2025.

Ayes: Trustee Beechinor Towse, Trustee Cisneros, Trustee Eskew, Trustee Gonzalez, Jr., Trustee Little, Trustee Marcano, and Trustee Robinson.  
Nayes: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: None

## **2.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- 2.1 Public Comments were heard from the following:

- Rev. Angelo A. Frazier
- Lori Braschler
- Catalina Maldonado
- Lindsey Parker
- Jes Sanders
- Paul Linfesty
- Bryon Osorio
- Dennis McLean

## **3.0 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – NO ACTION TAKEN**

- 3.1 Presentation: Historical Documents Display – Mariah Gonderio, Litigation Counsel, Liberty Counsel.
- 3.2 Presentation: CALM Master Plan Update – Steve Sanders, Chief of Staff and Meg Maitland, Senior Director.

## **4.0 ACTION ITEMS**

- 4.1 Consent Agenda

- 4.1.1 It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Marcano to approve the Adoption of the GANN Limitation Resolution.

Ayes: Trustee Beechinor Towse, Trustee Cisneros, Trustee Eskew, Trustee Gonzalez, Jr., Trustee Little, Trustee Marcano, and Trustee Robinson.  
Nayes: None  
Abstain: None  
Absent: None

- 4.1.2 Accept and File Williams Act Uniform Complaint Quarterly Reports.

## **5.0 REPORT OF COUNTY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS**

- 5.1 Trustee Marcano expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the Amicus Brief that was filed. He noted that the brief was exceptionally well written and conveyed his hope that all board members had the opportunity to review it. He further stated that he was proud of the board's contribution and extended his gratitude to those who facilitated its completion.

- 5.2 Trustee Eskew began her remarks by congratulating Dr. Mendiburu on his induction into the California State University Bakersfield Hall of Fame, commending him for his achievements and contributions. She shared that she attended the Central School's Open House, expressing appreciation for the opportunity to return to where her career began and reconnect with former colleagues, and noted her intention to attend Bridges' Open House later in the week. Trustee Eskew reported that she had the privilege of speaking at Cal State's Turning Point event, which she described as a rewarding experience, and mentioned the program's need for an advisor to facilitate continued on-campus meetings. She also expressed enthusiasm for CALM's expansion and recognized the ongoing work supporting its growth. Additionally, Trustee Eskew referenced attending a Kern High School District board meeting where a Title IX resolution was discussed. Trustee Eskew shared her personal views regarding gender identity, expressing her belief in traditional gender distinctions and noting that her perspective is grounded in faith. She also shared concerns voiced by community members regarding classroom content and discussions they felt were unrelated to academic instruction. She emphasized the importance of maintaining a strong academic focus in schools, prioritizing foundational subjects such as reading, writing, and mathematics, and encouraged continued efforts to raise academic standards and ensure that schools remain centered on student learning and achievement. Trustee Eskew concluded by reaffirming her commitment to fostering educational excellence and supporting learning environments where all students can thrive.
- 5.3 Trustee Beechinor Towse shared that Bakersfield College recently hosted its annual Career Ag Expo and Manufacturing Day, a large-scale event designed to expose high school students from the Kern High School District to career opportunities in the agriculture and manufacturing industries. She explained that the event brings hundreds of students to the college campus, where they can engage directly with career vendors, learn about career technical education (CTE) programs, and explore various professional pathways available after graduation. Trustee Beechinor Towse described the event as both exciting and impactful, noting the strong participation and enthusiasm from students and industry partners alike. In addition, she promoted the upcoming Bakersfield College Rodeo, scheduled for November 8–9, highlighting it as one of the college's most engaging community events. Now in its third year, the rodeo continues to grow, attracting student athletes from across California and neighboring states. Trustee Beechinor Towse expressed appreciation for the strong community and student support behind the event. She emphasized that the rodeo provides a fun, family-friendly experience for the Bakersfield community, offering free daily admission beginning at 9 a.m., numerous vendors, and a welcoming environment for all ages. She encouraged everyone to attend and enjoy the festivities.
- 5.4 Trustee Gonzalez commented that there are two Superintendent vacancies in his area.
- 5.5 Trustee Cisneros expressed appreciation for the earlier comments regarding the Title IX resolution, emphasizing that the action taken by the Board was meaningful and impactful. She recalled that some had initially questioned whether the resolution would make a difference, but she affirmed that it has had a positive effect and that the Kern County Superintendent of Schools is leading the way in this area. Trustee Cisneros noted her excitement that the Kern High School District has followed suit and expressed hope that other districts will also adopt similar resolutions. She also shared that she has been participating in training sessions with the Association of California County Boards of Education (ACCBE), a newly established organization formed approximately two months ago. As a nominated representative, she is currently in the training phase and will bring updates and feedback to the Board. Trustee Cisneros explained that the ACCBE offers multiple training opportunities each month, and she recently attended sessions focused on effective governance practices for county boards of education and a deeper understanding of court and community schools. She noted that the experience has helped her gain greater insight into the Board's influence and responsibilities in serving students across various educational settings. Additionally, Trustee Cisneros announced that the annual

Thanksgiving luncheon at the Blanton School campus will take place on November 19, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. The event, open to board members, staff, students, parents, and administrators, provides an opportunity to share gratitude and focus on community. Reflecting on last year's luncheon, she described it as a meaningful experience where students were encouraged to reflect on what they are thankful for. Many students expressed experiencing a traditional Thanksgiving meal for the first time. She commended the KCSOS staff for providing an outstanding meal and warm atmosphere, emphasizing the importance of making students feel seen, valued, and loved.

- 5.6 Trustee Robinson began his remarks by clarifying several points related to earlier discussions about the posting of the Ten Commandments in schools. He explained that from the very beginning, Angelo Frazier's proposal focused on displaying the Ten Commandments alongside other historical documents in the common or public areas of school campuses, not within individual classrooms. He further emphasized the importance of correcting that misconception. Trustee Robinson addressed what he viewed as misunderstandings surrounding the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution, asserting that the display of the Ten Commandments in public school areas does not violate the clause. He encouraged anyone referencing the Establishment Clause in their arguments to study it carefully to ensure its meaning and intent are accurately represented. He then expressed appreciation for the recent comments by Trustees Beechinor Towse and Trustee Eskew regarding the importance of returning to fundamental literacy skills such as reading and writing, noting that these abilities form the foundation for communication and civic engagement. Additionally, Trustee Robinson shared that he will be attending an upcoming general meeting of the Leaders in Life organization, which brings together student leaders from across Kern County. He explained that his renewed involvement with the group was inspired by an article written by Rick McDill and published in *Community Voices of The Bakersfield Californian* on October 16. The article highlighted the work of the Kegley Institute of Ethics at California State University, Bakersfield, and its efforts to promote civil discourse, ethics, and respectful debate among students. Trustee Robinson noted that local leaders, including representatives from the Kern County Superintendent of Schools, are working to establish partnerships with the Kegley Institute to engage high school students in these programs. He described this initiative as particularly timely and necessary in light of recent divisive events, emphasizing the importance of helping young people learn to express themselves confidently, think critically, and engage in meaningful public discussions. Trustee Robinson stressed that the ability to listen, speak, read, and write effectively are essential life skills that once were the standard expectation for all students. He expressed concern that these core abilities are no longer as prevalent as they once were and encouraged renewed focus on developing them. He also reflected on the value of promoting civil dialogue in schools and the community, observing that disagreement does not need to be hostile or personal. As board members, he said, they have modeled this approach by engaging in open discussion, considering different perspectives, and maintaining civility even amid differing viewpoints. He encouraged others to do the same by engaging in respectful, informed, and articulate debate. Trustee Robinson concluded by sharing his enthusiasm for the upcoming Leaders in Life conference, noting that approximately 4,000 students attended last year's event at Mechanics Bank Convention Center. He praised the program for encouraging youth leadership, communication, and civic involvement, and expressed optimism that such opportunities will continue to grow and strengthen the community's culture of respectful engagement.
- 5.7 Student Representative Werner expressed support for the teaching of history, stating that all aspects of history should be included in instruction. While noting that the posting of the Ten Commandments in public school areas is not a necessity. She also commented on the presentation of activities at CALM, describing them as enjoyable and positive, and concluded by expressing appreciation and well wishes.

- 5.8 Trustee Little provided an update on several legislative matters affecting education. She discussed AB 27 and AB 727, referencing the Trevor Project and noting prior audience engagement on these topics. She also mentioned the recent veto of SB 714, the charter school bill, and indicated that the California Teachers Association is expected to pursue AB 84 in the future, emphasizing the need for preparedness. Trustee Little expressed particular concern about the recently passed AB 495, describing it as highly problematic. She explained that the bill allows an adult with a fifth-degree familial relation to claim guardianship of a child using a simple one-page form, without requiring parental consent, background checks, fingerprints, or other safeguards. She characterized the bill as creating potential risks for child safety and warned that it could facilitate abuse or exploitation. Trustee Little shared a personal anecdote illustrating how even existing court orders would not prevent the law from taking effect, noting that many in the public may not fully understand the implications of this bill. She also indicated that lawsuits related to the bill are highly anticipated. Additionally, Trustee Little highlighted Proposition 50, which proposes the redistricting of legislative boundaries in California, noting that its passage could have wide-ranging impacts on the economy and local governance, and encouraged all to participate in voting. She concluded by noting that 17 districts in California have now adopted Title IX resolutions, acknowledging that this movement is gaining traction, and suggested that legal challenges related to these resolutions may arise.

## **6.0 REPORT OF COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT**

- 6.1 Superintendent Mendiburu provided several updates for the Board. He noted that Valley Oaks Charter School is celebrating its 25th anniversary, having grown from 150 to over 1,000 students, and was recently recognized as School of the Year. He also highlighted a new partnership between the Kern County Superintendent of Schools and Mayor Goh to launch a kindness initiative with local high schools, in collaboration with the Character Strong program, which will recognize students who demonstrate kindness and provide them with development opportunities. He reported that recent student test scores have been released, showing an uptick in students meeting or exceeding standards. The Board will receive a comprehensive presentation next month on countywide test results, including targeted focus areas in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science. Superintendent Mendiburu also shared details about upcoming KCSBA school board dinners: the October 20th event hosted by McFarland Unified School District, emphasizing student-centered programming, and the spring dinner at CTEC in the Kern High School District to celebrate student achievements. Finally, he provided an update regarding the previously approved resolution to provide funding to the Semitropic School District. To date, the district has not required any of the approved funds, as they are working to make necessary adjustments in response to a decrease in enrollment. The district is expected to continue on this path without needing the allocated funds at the present date.

## **7.0 AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

- 7.1 There were no recommendations for agenda items for the next meeting.

## **8.0 ADJOURNMENT**

- 8.1 Unless otherwise posted, the next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on November 13, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.
- 8.2 The meeting was adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

