



BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 9, 2025
6:30 p.m.

Board of Education Board Room
1300 17th 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 August 12, 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:

- Dr. Angelo Frazier

3.0 INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – NO ACTION TAKEN

3.1 CTE Culinary Program.

3.2 KCSOS Services Overview.

3.3 Charter School Annual Review Presentation and Reports.

4.0 ACTION ITEMS

4.1 Consent Agenda

4.1.1 It was moved by Trustee Marcano, seconded by Trustee Beechinor Towse to approve Graduation Diplomas.

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

4.2 General Business

4.2.1 It was moved by Trustee Marcano, seconded by Trustee Robinson to approve the Prop 28 Report.

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

5.0 REPORT OF COUNTY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS

5.1 Trustee Cisneros provided a detailed report with several key updates. She noted that on September 2, 2025, House Joint Resolution 118 was introduced by Representative Michael Cloud and sponsored by Representative Glenn Thompson to designate September 12, 2025, as “Day of the Bible,” recognizing the 1782 congressional approval of the first English-language Bible printed in America, the Aitken Bible. If passed, the resolution would encourage schools and civic organizations to offer educational programming and call on the president to issue an annual proclamation. She also highlighted the September 8 U.S. Department of Justice Religious Liberty Commission hearing on religious freedom in public schools, where testimonies from students and parents described cases of censorship related to religious expression, such as wearing Christian messages, refusing certain books, or including references to God in speeches. President Trump and Attorney General Pam Bondi both emphasized strengthening parental rights and student religious expression, with Trump promising new Department of Education guidance to explicitly protect prayer in public schools. Trustee Cisneros then shared that the California State Board of Education is seeking a student board member for the 2026–27 school year, encouraging

local students to apply by September 19, 2025. She offered words of encouragement to teachers, comparing the hectic start of the school year to a space shuttle reentering the atmosphere chaotic at first, but soon becoming smooth and steady and thanked educators for their critical role in preparing students for the future. Finally, she proposed that the board extend the availability of its meeting recordings on the district website beyond the current one-year limit, ideally archiving them indefinitely with linked agendas and minutes to allow easy public access to past meetings.

- 5.2 Trustee Robinson shared that the recent trip to Sacramento on the 19th was a great experience, with nearly 4,000 people in attendance and strong representation from Bakersfield and Kern County. He explained that after his visit, several bills (AB 84, AB 495, and AB 727) that had been placed in the suspend file were unexpectedly moved forward to appropriations and then to the floor for a vote. He expressed confidence, based on updates from Dr. Mendiburu, that there is positive news regarding AB 495 and that no additional trips to Sacramento will be necessary. He also highlighted a visit to the Christian Library next to Tastries Bakery on Rosedale Highway, describing it as a wonderful community resource with over 144,000 books and religious texts from around the world. He encouraged citizens to visit, check out books, and support the library, praising it as a labor of love led by Pastor Tom. Trustee Robinson emphasized the importance of supporting both the library and Tastries Bakery, which is currently facing legal challenges, and expressed how much he and the other trustees enjoyed reading to the children there. He concluded by saying that this was all good news and a very positive experience overall.
- 5.3 Trustee Marcano praised the CTE Culinary Program, highlighting the high quality of the students' work (specifically mentioning the brownie he enjoyed)! He encouraged the students to use their skills, noting they have a bright future if they pursue a career in the culinary industry. He also complimented a KETN video about the Alternative Education luncheons, calling it professional and well-produced, and gave kudos to John Lenko for producing it.
- 5.4 Trustee Eskew shared reflections on recent school visits and personal experiences, including attending open houses in Greenfield School District, specifically at Granite Point, noting Greenfield's remodeling efforts and praising the schools. She also mentioned participating in recent reading activities, dressing as Mrs. Claus, and enjoying the experience. She expressed admiration for the CTE Culinary Program, highlighting the students' progress and the leadership of Mr. Gomez, who she knew from her previous work at probation. She mentioned personal anecdotes about her past experiences in the kitchen and concluded with appreciation for the program and the students' accomplishments.
- 5.5 Trustee Beechinor Towse highlighted her participation in Kern County College Night, praising KCSOS and its partners for organizing a successful event attended by 4,000 eager high school students exploring college and career opportunities. She reflected on the evolution of education over her 25-year career, noting the renewed emphasis on Career Technical Education (CTE) and hands-on workforce skills, which she believes engages students and improves outcomes in math, science, and reading. She shared examples of impactful programs in probation and court schools and underscored the importance of career-driven learning. Additionally, she encouraged attendance at the upcoming Bakersfield College Rodeo on November 8–9, emphasizing its career, academic, athletic, and community-driven components, with student volunteers gaining valuable experience in event planning and fundraising. She concluded by expressing appreciation for CTE programs and their role in preparing students for the future.

- 5.6 Trustee Little began by reflecting on the nationwide recognition the board received after approving the Title IX resolution, describing the response as overwhelmingly positive from both sides of the political spectrum and noting personal emails she had received, which she shared with the board. She emphasized the significance of the board's action, including a public acknowledgment from the Secretary of State, and expressed pride in the board's leadership on this issue. Using a personal anecdote about her grandson, she highlighted the broader implications of gender-related sports policies, noting that decisions in this area affect both girls and boys and underscoring the need to consider the impact on all students. She provided updates on district leadership and standards, including a new interim Superintendent at Standard School District and progress on academic programs. Trustee Little then discussed the purpose of a special board meeting she had called to consider joining a federal lawsuit supporting the enforcement of Title IX. She explained that the charter school involved, along with other states, is challenging cases regarding male students seeking to participate in girls' sports, and that the lawsuit has reached the Ninth Circuit and is moving toward the Supreme Court. She clarified that the board's potential participation would be limited to signing on as a supporter, with no financial or legal liability, but would allow a district to stand firmly behind federal Title IX protections. Finally, she addressed logistical matters for the special meeting, including documentation and agenda items, ensuring board members were prepared for discussion and consideration.

6.0 REPORT OF COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

- 6.1 Superintendent Mendiburu provided a detailed update on key California legislative bills affecting local schools. He reported that AB 84 has been placed on a two-year cycle and will not advance during the current legislative session, which was welcomed by county education officials. AB 727, concerning student ID cards, successfully passed the Senate with a vote of 29–9 and now awaits the Governor's signature; this bill would require student ID cards to include specific information, with potential implications for local behavioral health protocols currently in place. He also discussed AB 495, which addresses caregiver affidavits, noting that it has been amended to clarify that "extended family" includes relatives by blood, adoption, or marriage up to the fifth degree, step- and half-siblings, and spouses of qualifying relatives, while still ensuring that parental approval remains central. Superintendent Mendiburu highlighted that the bill's precise implementation and the Governor's decision remain uncertain due to ongoing controversy surrounding the measure. Additionally, he provided an update on county enrollment, noting a nearly 4,000-student decline compared with the previous year, marking the largest drop on record. He observed that this trend contrasts with high home sales in the area, indicating that many new residents are not bringing children with them. He noted that enrollment numbers sometimes experience post–Labor Day adjustments, and while most charter schools have remained stable, CAAT has shown growth. Superintendent Mendiburu concluded by committing to keep the board informed as further developments occur regarding AB 495, enrollment trends, and any additional legislative updates.

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 October 14, 2025.
- 8.2 The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

