



BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

February 10, 2026
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 6:32 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 Little
Joe L. Marcano
James V. Robinson

Board Members Absent

Lajaya Austin Turner, *Student Representative*

KCSOS Employees Present

Dr. John G. Mendiburu, *Superintendent*
Christian Shannon, *Deputy Superintendent*
Steve Sanders, *Chief of Staff*
Merril Clanton, *Senior Executive Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent*

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

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

Abstain: None

Absent: Lajaya Austin Turner, *Student Representative*

1.5 It was moved by Trustee Eskew, seconded by Trustee Beechinor Towse to approve the Minutes from the Regular Board Meeting held on January 10, 2026.

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

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Lajaya Austin Turner, *Student Representative*

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS

3.1 Public Comments were heard from the following:

- John Harte
- Helen Acosta
- Ellen Schafhauser
- Lori Braschler
- Kaleb Tuttle

3.0 INFORMATION ITEMS – NO ACTION TAKEN

3.1 Presentation: Leaders in Life - Russell Sentes, Deputy Superintendent – Local Initiatives and Innovation and Lourdes Bucher, Assistant Superintendent – Student Support.

4.0 ACTION ITEMS

4.1 Consent Agenda

4.1.1 It was moved by Trustee Little, seconded by Trustee Robinson 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: Lajaya Austin Turner, *Student Representative*

4.2 General Business

4.2.1 It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Gonzalez, Jr. to approve the 2024-2025 Annual Audit Report.

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

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Lajaya Austin Turner, *Student Representative*

4.2.2 It was moved by Trustee Little, seconded by Trustee Eskew to approve the 2024-2025 School Accountability Report Card (SARC) – Court School.

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

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Lajaya Austin Turner, *Student Representative*

4.2.3 It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Eskew to approve the 2024-2025 School Accountability Report Card (SARC) – Community School.

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

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Lajaya Austin Turner, *Student Representative*

4.2.4 Accept and File the Mid-Year 2025-26 LCAP Update.

No Action Taken

4.2.5 It was moved by Trustee Little, seconded by Trustee Eskew to vote for Antonio Rodriguez and approve the California School Boards Association 2026 Delegate Assembly Ballot.

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

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Lajaya Austin Turner, *Student Representative*

4.2.6 It was moved by Trustee Cisneros, seconded by Trustee Robinson to approve the Resolution Celebrating America’s 250th Anniversary and Inspiring RISE Students through Civic Education.

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

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: Lajaya Austin Turner, *Student Representative*

4.2.7 Consideration and Possible Approval of Increased Monthly Board Member Compensation Pursuant to Education Code 35120 as amended by AB 1390.

No action was taken on this matter.

5.0 REPORT OF COUNTY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS

5.1 Trustee Cisneros shared that spring is approaching and noted that it has already been feeling like spring lately. She expressed enthusiasm about planning the upcoming spring barbecue and highlighted the importance of students in the community.

5.2 Trustee Little inquired whether there had been any parental notifications calls to the office and was reassured by Dr. Mendiburu that there were no calls at this time. She expressed appreciation for the Leaders in Life participants attending the meeting and voiced her support for continuing the program. She also commended the resolution presented, describing it as outstanding, and supported moving forward with its adoption.

5.3 Trustee Eskew shared her positive experience attending the prayer breakfast and expressed appreciation for the sense of unity and prayer within the community. She also praised the resolution, thanked Lori for her work, and noted her own sense of patriotism. She suggested the possibility of inviting Turning Point to participate in a future presentation, proposing April rather than March to allow time for coordination, and asked for feedback from the Board President on

the idea. Additionally, she addressed concerns regarding ICE, stating that after researching the issue, she confirmed that ICE is not allowed on school properties and has not been permitted since the issue first arose. She wanted to ensure the Board was aware of this policy.

- 5.4 Trustee Robinson asked for clarification regarding the Kern County Superintendent of Schools policies on artificial intelligence, particularly concerning student use of AI tools such as ChatGPT. In response to information shared about ongoing training, policy development, and collaboration with districts—including guidance on platforms like Copilot and Gemini as described by Dr. Mendiburu, Trustee Robinson acknowledged that AI is already embedded in educational systems but expressed concern about how extensively it should be integrated into K–12 classrooms. Drawing from a recent presentation he attended, Trustee Robinson referenced concerns about the rapid advancement of AI, its potential societal and economic impact, and studies suggesting that overreliance on AI by students could negatively affect critical thinking skills. He emphasized the need for caution, careful oversight, and strong buy-in from teachers, parents, and students before allowing widespread student use. While agreeing that AI must be understood and managed, he described the technology as powerful and potentially unsettling if not properly controlled. Additionally, Trustee Robinson spoke about the role of elected officials, emphasizing that board members were chosen by voters to exercise independent judgment. He referenced the concept of “lesser magistrates,” stating that elected representatives have the authority to question or object to higher-level governmental decisions when necessary. He reaffirmed his commitment to expressing his views, including on First Amendment matters, while acknowledging and appreciating public feedback.

6.0 REPORT OF COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

- 6.1 Dr. Mendiburu addressed the recent fog delays and school closures across the county, noting that the severity of this year’s fog conditions is unusual and something he has not experienced in over 20 years. He explained that the office has been working closely with school districts to navigate these disruptions, including pursuing an ADA waiver (J-13) to provide districts with attendance forgiveness for days affected by closures or extended delays. He clarified that individual school districts are responsible for calling their own fog delays or closures, which are then communicated through district alerts and posted online. He described the wide variation in how districts have responded—some implementing delays, others closing entirely, and in some cases even returning students home after conditions worsened. On one particularly challenging day, 34 districts were on delay or closed. Dr. Mendiburu also reminded trustees about the upcoming Trustee Dinner on February 25th at CTEC and encouraged their attendance. Finally, he expressed heartfelt appreciation to the Board for their understanding and support following his father’s passing, thanking them for their flexibility and kindness during that time.

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 March 10, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.
- 8.2 The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

