



BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

August 11, 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 6:30 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 Little
James V. Robinson

Board Members Absent

Joe L. Marciano

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, and Trustee Robinson
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: Trustee Marciano

- 1.5 It was moved by Trustee Eskew, seconded by Trustee Little to approve the Minutes from the Regular Board Meeting held on July 14, 2026.

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

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS

2.1 Public Comments were heard from the following:

- Anastasia Hopper
- Ellen Schafhauser
- Jeanine Adams
- Joanna Kendrick

3.0 INFORMATION ITEMS – NO ACTION TAKEN

3.1 CAAT Material Revision Update.

4.0 ACTION ITEMS

4.1 Consent Agenda

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

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

4.2 General Business

4.2.1 It was moved by Trustee Beechinor Towse, seconded by Trustee Eskew to approve the Resolution designating September as School Attendance Awareness Month.

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

4.2.2 It was moved by Trustee Eskew, seconded by Trustee Robinson to approve the Resolution Declaring Property as Exempt Surplus Land located at 1001 Tower Way, Bakersfield, CA 93309.

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

4.2.3 It was moved by Trustee Beechinor Towse, seconded by Trustee Little to approve the Ratification of the Resolution requesting Consolidation of the Election, Ordering Election, and Requesting County Elections to Conduct the Election.

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

4.2.4 It was moved by Trustee Eskew, seconded by Trustee Little to approve the Consolidated Application.

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

5.0 REPORT OF COUNTY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS

5.1 Trustee Robinson commented on the increasingly complex and contentious nature of current local and national issues and their potential impact on Kern County communities and K–12 education. He encouraged parents, educators, community members, and elected officials to remain informed and engaged and to approach discussions surrounding challenging issues thoughtfully, objectively, and with civility. He also noted the growing influence and uncertainty surrounding artificial intelligence and emphasized the importance of understanding its potential implications for education and society. Trustee Robinson encouraged community members to stay informed about issues affecting public education and local governance, participate in the civic process, and recognize the importance of voting and community engagement. Trustee Robinson also referenced correspondence discussed at the previous Board meeting regarding the Kern Board of Education Improvement Coalition (KBOEIC). He noted that Trustee Marcano had requested that the organization consider changes to its name, acronym, website, and related materials to reduce potential confusion with the Kern County Board of Education and KCSOS, with a response requested by July 29th.

5.2 Trustee Eskew shared several recent community engagement activities, including participating in “Christmas in July” events benefiting the Open-Door Network and attending a retirement celebration for the Probation Chief. She also attended National Night Out and highlighted the Kern County Probation Department’s new community outreach trailer and its efforts to connect with youth and promote career opportunities. She noted the connection between KCSOS, Probation, and programs serving at-risk students. Trustee Eskew encouraged the community to support CALM’s upcoming Ice Cream Zoo-fari and reminded motorists to exercise caution in school zones as students return to school. She expressed her hopes for a safe and successful school year for students. Trustee Eskew also raised questions regarding state-required annual employee training that includes awareness of and sensitivity toward LGBTQ+ students. She expressed concerns brought to her attention regarding the training requirements, including whether employees may seek a religious exemption and whether participation could affect employment. Dr. Mendiburu clarified that the training is required for public employees as part of annual training requirements and is intended to promote awareness and sensitivity toward students within the school community. He further clarified that the training does not require employees to sign an agreement affirming particular beliefs.

- 5.3 Trustee Beechinor Towse wished students, families, teachers, and staff a successful start to the new school year. She expressed optimism for the year ahead and highlighted the important and positive role educators play in supporting students and helping them grow and succeed.
- 5.4 Trustee Little echoed her fellow trustees in welcoming students and staff back to school and expressed her hope for a successful school year. She acknowledged the increasingly complex issues facing educators and school staff and expressed confidence in their ability to navigate those challenges. Trustee Little commented on efforts to address chronic absenteeism, noting that progress has been made following challenges experienced during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. She also expressed her continued support for the Dream Center and recognized the important services it provides to students and young people in the community. Trustee Little raised questions regarding the availability of special education teachers and current staffing challenges. Dr. Mendiburu explained that special education teacher shortages continue to be a statewide and local concern and discussed efforts to develop career pathways that encourage students to pursue careers in special education. Trustee Little also asked about the varying school calendars throughout Kern County and how school start and end dates are determined. Dr. Mendiburu clarified that local school boards establish their respective calendars, provided they meet California's required 180 instructional days, resulting in variations among districts based on local needs and scheduling preferences.
- 5.5 Trustee Cisneros reflected on the opportunity to serve as presiding officer at the meeting, noting that it was a valuable learning experience and thanking those present for their patience and support. She also briefly commented on her upcoming campaign for Area 7 and her interest in serving as Board President in 2027. Trustee Cisneros highlighted upcoming community events in Tehachapi, including the Mountain Festival on August 15–16, featuring a parade, activities, food, music, and family entertainment. She also noted the final Farmers Market of the season, scheduled for Thursday in downtown Tehachapi.

6.0 REPORT OF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

- 6.1 Superintendent Mendiburu provided an update on the start of the 2026–27 school year, noting that districts throughout Kern County have staggered opening dates, with all districts expected to be in session by the end of the week. Superintendent Mendiburu also discussed declining student enrollment in Kern County, noting that the county has experienced enrollment declines for the past three years across the majority of school districts. He indicated that updated enrollment information would be available once all schools are in session and that he would provide the Board with additional information at the September meeting if significant impacts are identified. In response to Board questions, Superintendent Mendiburu clarified that most charter schools are experiencing stable or increasing enrollment and are not considered the primary cause of declining district enrollment. He also noted that Valley Oaks Charter School has experienced a slight increase in homeschooling enrollment, primarily related to families seeking specialized scheduling options. Superintendent Mendiburu stated that declining enrollment is largely associated with demographic changes and families relocating outside California, noting that declining student enrollment is also occurring statewide.

7.0 AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- 7.1 There were no recommendations for the September 8, 2026, meeting.

8.0 ADJOURNMENT

- 8.1 Unless otherwise posted, the next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on September 8, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.
- 8.2 The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

John G. Mendiburu, Ed.D., Ex-Officio Secretary to the Board of Education