



BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 8, 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
Joe L. Marcano
Lori J. Cisneros
Lori Eskew
Jose E. Gonzalez, Jr.
Mary Little
James V. Robinson

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 Beechinor Towse, seconded by Trustee Robinson to approve the agenda with the removal of closed session item 3.1.

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

- 1.5 It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Eskew to approve the Minutes from the Regular Board Meeting held on August 11, 2026.

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

2.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS

2.1 Public Comments were heard from the following:

- Jeanine Adams
- Mona Twocats-Romero

3.0 CLOSED SESSION

3.1 HEARING TO CONSIDER INTER-DISTRICT TRANSFER APPEAL - REMOVED

(Education Code section 46601)

Case No. Student A

Hearing will be held in closed session to prevent disclosure of confidential student record information unless timely request for open session is received on pupil's behalf.

3.2 EXPULSION HEARING – APPEAL BY STUDENT A

Pursuant to the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, it may be necessary for the Board to adjourn to closed session in order to prevent the disclosure of student records or personally identifiable information unless the student or representative consents to public session.

3.3 EXPULSION HEARING – APPEAL BY STUDENT B

Pursuant to the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. 1232g, it may be necessary for the Board to adjourn to closed session in order to prevent the disclosure of student records or personally identifiable information unless the student or representative consents to public session.

3.4 CONFERENCE WITH LEGAL COUNSEL – ANTICIPATED LITIGATION

4.0 INFORMATION ITEMS – NO ACTION TAKEN

4.1 JobsPlus! Program – A Day in the Life of a KCSOS Intern.

5.0 ACTION ITEMS

5.1 Consent Agenda

5.1.1 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 Marciano, Trustee Little, and Trustee Robinson

Nayes: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

5.2 General Business

5.2.1 Public Hearing Regarding the Petition to Establish Education Outside the Box Charter School.

Conduct the public hearing required by California Education Code section 47605.6(b) regarding the petition to establish Education Outside the Box Charter School. The hearing is intended to receive public comments on the provisions of the charter petition and to consider the level of support for the petition by impacted districts, teachers, and parents. No action will be taken on the petition at this meeting. The Governing Board will consider approval or denial of the petition at a subsequent public meeting.

- 5.2.2 It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Gonzalez, Jr. to approve the Resolution Authorizing Participation in Social Media Addiction and Video Game Addiction Litigation and Approval of Related Contingency Fee Retainer Agreement.

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

- 5.2.3 It was moved by Trustee Little, seconded by Trustee Eskew to approve the Resolution Establishing OPSC Authorized Representatives and Property Acquisitions and Sale.

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

- 5.2.4 It was moved by Trustee Robinson, seconded by Trustee Little to approve the Kern County Office of Education to be a member of the Kern Adult Education Consortium and appoint a designee by the Kern County Superintendent of Schools.

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

6.0 REPORT OF COUNTY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEMBERS

- 6.1 Trustee Little expressed her deep sadness regarding the recent school shooting that resulted in the loss of a young life. She acknowledged the many difficult questions that arise following such a tragedy, including what could have been done to prevent it and what actions may be taken moving forward. She noted the serious circumstances surrounding the youth involved and the challenges faced by schools, probation officials, and others working to support and monitor at-risk youth. Trustee Little stated that she did not believe the Kern High School District was at fault in this situation and recognized that, despite the efforts of those involved, there are not always clear answers following such tragic events. She thanked those who shared their perspectives and provided public comments during the meeting. Trustee Little also recognized Dr. Mendiburu for recently being honored as the first-ever "Impact Icon" at the September Kern Charter meeting. She highlighted milestones from his nearly 30-year career in education, including his decision to become a principal; a role he continues to consider among the most rewarding of his career and earning his Doctorate, an accomplishment that was especially meaningful to his mother. She shared Dr. Mendiburu's words of wisdom encouraging educators to always strive to do their best for students and parents and to remember the opportunity they have to make someone's day brighter. Trustee Little concluded by expressing her appreciation for Dr. Mendiburu and his continued commitment to supporting others and making a positive difference.
- 6.2 Trustee Beechinor Towse shared that she recently had the opportunity to utilize Bell Tower Plaza for a Bakersfield College Agriculture Department retreat. She complimented the facility and KCSOS staff, noting that the setting provided an enjoyable and productive environment for Bakersfield College staff to gather away from campus and work collaboratively. She expressed

her appreciation to KCSOS for the hospitality and use of the facility. Trustee Beechinor Towse also shared that KCSOS will host Countywide College Night the following Monday and that she looks forward to participating on behalf of the Bakersfield College Animal Science Program. She encouraged high school and junior high school students to attend the event to explore colleges, educational programs, and opportunities available as they consider their future academic and career pathways.

- 6.3 Trustee Eskew reflected on the approaching 25th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and the anniversary of Charlie Kirk's assassination. She encouraged those present to also remember September 12th and the sense of unity experienced across the country in the aftermath of 9/11. She emphasized the importance of remembering how Americans came together during that time and noted the significance of commemorating the 25th anniversary.
- 6.4 Trustee Robinson shared his personal identification as a Christian and a loyal patriot, expressing his love for his country and his Christian faith. He acknowledged that differing definitions and perspectives exist regarding the term "Christian nationalist" and stated that he is not ashamed of his beliefs. He noted that these topics may continue to be part of public discussion in the coming months. Trustee Robinson also expressed his confidence in Melissa Wheel and Duster McDaris and their efforts to establish a charter school in Kern County. Based on his previous working relationships with both individuals, he stated that he believes the school and its students will be in very capable hands and offered his support and commendation for their efforts. Trustee Robinson concluded by noting that three Board meetings remain in the calendar year and expressed his enthusiasm for an active and productive fall.
- 6.5 Trustee Marcano thanked Trustee Cisneros for filing in during his absence from the August board meeting.

7.0 REPORT OF THE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT

- 7.1 Dr. Mendiburu clarified Trustee Little's earlier comments regarding his time as a Principal, explaining that he considers it the most rewarding aspect of administration because of the daily connection with students and the reminder of why educators do this work. He emphasized the importance of administrators continuing to visit school sites and engage with students as they move into roles further removed from the classroom. He added that he greatly enjoys his current role and expressed appreciation for his recent recognition. Dr. Mendiburu announced that renovations to the Richardson Center have been completed and that a brief ceremony and tour will be held on September 25, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. He noted that the project began during Dr. Barlow's tenure as County Superintendent and highlighted the significant improvements made to the facility. Dr. Mendiburu also provided a countywide enrollment update, reporting that Kern County is approximately 6,000 students below the previous year, consistent with declining enrollment trends throughout the state. Countywide enrollment is currently approximately 175,000 students, compared with approximately 200,000 at its previous peak. He noted that most districts are experiencing flat or declining enrollment and are generally addressing staffing needs through attrition and retirements. Dr. Mendiburu concluded by highlighting the inaugural PURPOSE Awards Ceremony, scheduled for October 8, 2026, at Bell Tower Plaza. The event will recognize eleven recipients nominated by local school districts for their positive contributions to education in Kern County. He shared that the recipients were recently surprised with news of their recognition and that the event will be streamed on the KCSOS YouTube channel. The PURPOSE Awards are intended to become an annual celebration highlighting the outstanding work taking place throughout Kern County schools.

8.0 AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

8.1 There were no recommendations for the October 13, 2026, meeting.

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

9.1 Unless otherwise posted, the next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on October 13, 2026, at 6:30 p.m.

9.2 The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

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