

TULARE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

01/08/2025 [03:00 PM]

REGULAR MEETING

For the Regular Board Meeting of January 8, 2025, at 3:00 p.m., in the Redwood Conference Center at the Jim Vidak Education Center, 6200 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia, California.

1. CALL TO ORDER

- a. Pledge of Allegiance
- b. Welcome

President Chris Reed welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Tony Rodriguez led the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Reed asked that the record show that all board members are present, except Mike Waters.

2. BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF

Board members present: President Chris Reed, Vice President Tony Rodriguez, Judy Coble, Tom Link, Ruben Macareno, Celia Maldonado-Arroyo, and Ex-Officio Secretary Tim A. Hire. Board member absent: Mike Waters. Staff members present: Jody Arriaga, Tammy Bradford, John Davis, Jennifer Fisher, Malinda Furtado, Sarah Hamilton, Kevin Jessee, Dr. Fernie Marroquin, Chris Meyer, Anthony Paz, Brittaney Quinonez, Freddy Reyes, Dedi Somavia, and Samantha Tate. Guests present: Lily Novoa, Josh Whiteside, and Gail Zurek.

3. ADA ACCOMMODATION REQUIREMENT

Persons who are in need of a disability-related modification or accommodation in order to participate in the board meeting must make a request in writing to the Office of the County Superintendent of Schools, 6200 South Mooney Boulevard, Visalia, California, P.O. Box 5091, 559/733-6301. A request for accommodation should specify the nature of the modification or accommodation requested, including any necessary auxiliary aids or services required and the name and telephone number of the person making the request. The written request should be made as soon as possible and no later than 2 days before the meeting. The agenda, agenda packet and any written documents distributed to the board during a public meeting will be made available in appropriate alternative formats upon request by a person with a disability as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Written documents concerning agenda items are available for public inspection during normal business hours within 72 hours of a regular board meeting at the Tulare County Office of Education, 6200 South Mooney Boulevard, Visalia, California.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Members of the public may address the board on any agenda item, or other item of interest within the subject matter jurisdiction of the board during the public comment period. Agenda items may also be addressed by the public at the time they are taken up by the board. The board is not able to discuss or take action on any item not appearing on the agenda. A five-minute time limit can be imposed on public input for individuals/issues as deemed necessary.

Joshua Whiteside, attorney with Lozano Smith, introduced a new attorney in their firm with the Fresno office, Gail Zurek. Ms. Zurek was previously with the Visalia Chamber of Commerce and is a local from the Visalia area.

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. Routine Matters

1. Consent Calendar

Ms. Reed recognized Tulare Community Church for their donation of \$2,500 to the AcCEL program. Sarah Hamilton shared that their donation was for Christmas presents for the students in the Visalia and Tulare programs.

Vote Results

Yea: 6 Judy Coble, Tom Link, Ruben Macareno, Celia Maldonado-Arroyo, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

Not Cast: 1 Mike Waters

Motion: Tony Rodriguez **Second:** Tom Link

a. Approval of Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of December 13, 2024

b. Authorization of County Wide Registration of Credentials

c. Authorization of Temporary County Certificates

d. Authorization of Countywide Emergency Permit Applications

e. Acceptance of Donation from Tulare Community Church (\$2,500) for AcCEL, Maple Learning Complex -- Sarah Hamilton

b. New Business

1. Presentation of the 2025 CAC Calendar -- Malinda Furtado

Malinda Furtado presented the 2025 CAC calendar to the board. This year's title is Meeting Challenges through Partnerships in Education. This year's theme addresses how general education teachers went above and beyond to make a connection with students to overcome a specific challenge for themselves or their family. Ms. Furtado thanked the board for their support and the support of the programs that help students find success.

Ms. Reed thanked Ms. Furtado for the committee's work on creating the calendar with such meaningful stories.

Mr. Hire congratulated all of the Special Services staff for hosting the Los Angeles County Office of Education's two-day conference for over 150 attendees. Tulare County was selected for their exemplary programs for students with special needs. Part of the conference included tours to our programs, like the Dream Center and AAP. The opening keynote speaker was the director of special education and rehabilitation for the federal government. Mr. Hire

wanted to highlight the staff's exceptional work, thank them, and acknowledge that they are being noticed by the entire state of California and the federal government.

The board congratulated the Special Services staff.

2. Consideration and Approval, Special Education Alternate Dispute Resolution Grant Award 2024-2025 (\$15,157) -- Kevin Jessee

Kevin Jessee asked the board for approval of the Special Education Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) Grant Award 2024-2025 for \$15,157. This is an annual grant that helps build and foster relationships with districts and parents. The majority of the funds are used to attend the annual Alternate Dispute Resolution Conference. This year, the TCOE team, a parent, and one district are going to be on a panel. They are excited to share what we do here in Tulare County and to have a parent join them. The funds will also reimburse the district and the parent for attending the conference.

Ruben Macareno thanked the staff for the work that they do.

Vote Results

Yea: 6 Judy Coble, Tom Link, Ruben Macareno, Celia Maldonado-Arroyo, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

Not Cast: 1 Mike Waters

Motion: Judy Coble **Second:** Celia Maldonado-Arroyo

3. Consideration and Approval, 2023-2024 School Accountability Report Card (SARC), La Sierra Military Academy -- John Davis

John Davis gave a brief overview of the School Accountability Report Card (SARC). It is published annually by February 1 and reflects data from the previous school year. It provides insights into a school's performance and condition, including demographics, school safety, academic data, school completion rates, class sizes, student and teacher details, curriculum and instruction, post-secondary preparation, and staff professional development. SARCs are approved by the governing board and posted to the school's webpage.

Mr. Davis requested the board's approval of the 2023-2024 School Accountability Report Card (SARC) for La Sierra Military Academy. He read Dr. Bedolla's report to the board. Dr. Bedolla reported La Sierra Military Academy continues to raise student academic achievement as reflected in test scores and the dashboard indicators. For the 2023-2024 school year, the ELA test scores increased by 18.7 points and the math scores increased by 43 points. La Sierra received news in December that they have exited out of differentiated assistance due to academic progress. One goal for their site is to continue to improve the number of students who are college and career ready upon graduation from La Sierra.

Tony Rodriguez applauded La Sierra for their improvement in math, noting how difficult it is to increase math scores. Celia Maldonado-Arroyo noted the increase in the graduation rate. Mr. Rodriguez added congratulations to the school on the number of students enrolled in A-G courses. Ruben Macareno asked what it would take to get the La Sierra facilities to exemplary. John Davis explained that a portion of La Sierra facilities are rented. Mr. Hire shared that we are working with the owner to make sure that the facilities not only meet the Williams requirements but our expectations for a school site.

Vote Results

Yea: 7 Judy Coble, Tom Link, Ruben Macareno, Ruben Macareno, Celia Maldonado-Arroyo, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

Not Cast: 1 Mike Waters

Motion: Celia Maldonado-Arroyo **Second:** Tom Link

4. Consideration and Approval, 2023-2024 School Accountability Report Card (SARC), University Preparatory High School -- Helen Milliorn-Feller

John Davis asked for the board's approval of the 2023-2024 School Accountability Report Card (SARC) for University Preparatory High School (UPHS). Mr. Davis read Dr. Milliorn-Feller's report to the board. This year's SARC is very similar to past years. UPHS continues to have strong CASP test scores and remains at the top of Tulare County in academic performance. UPHS is starting to work on the school's moving plan to the Liberty campus. They are holding monthly meetings to prepare for the move. Mr. Davis shared that he sees excitement that UPHS will have their own campus.

Ms. Reed asked Mr. Davis to explained the difference between dependent and independent charters. Independent charters are their own LEA in both the federal and state system and have their own appointed governing boards. Dependent charters are their own LEA under the state system but under the federal system they are part of their authorizing agent. Dependent charters have a shared board with the larger organization that did the authorizing. They have an advisory board not a separate appointed governing board.

Ms. Reed asked if TCOE reviews the audit of the independent charters.

Celia Maldonado-Arroyo noted the dropout and graduate rate for UPHS had decreased. Mr. Davis explained that the number is not an accurate reflection. All students are dual enrolled with COS. Graduation is actually much higher.

Vote Results

Yea: 7 Judy Coble, Tom Link, Ruben Macareno, Ruben Macareno, Celia Maldonado-Arroyo, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

Not Cast: 1 Mike Waters

Motion: Tony Rodriguez **Second:** Tom Link

5. Consideration and Approval, 2023-2024 School Accountability Report Card (SARC), Special Education -- Sarah Hamilton

Sarah Hamilton requested approval for the 2023-2024 School Accountability Report Card (SARC) for Special Education. Ms. Hamilton noted that the reporting is difficult for Special Education. For example, their graduation rate is zero because their student earn a certificate of completion. Additionally, they use state-aligned curriculum, but not textbooks.

Vote Results

Yea: 7 Judy Coble, Tom Link, Ruben Macareno, Ruben Macareno, Celia Maldonado-Arroyo, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

Not Cast: 1 Mike Waters

Motion: Tom Link **Second:** Judy Coble

6. Consideration and Approval, 2023-2024 School Accountability Report Card (SARC), Court School -- Sarah Hamilton

Sarah Hamilton asked for the board's approval of the 2023-2024 School Accountability Report Card (SARC) for the Court School. Student growth cannot be compared because the students change from year to year. Over the last two school years, staff has increased at the Court School to provide a seven-period schedule. The Court School has a CTE program for building and trades. Court School also has music programs, including guitar and music appreciation.

Vote Results

Yea: 7 Judy Coble, Tom Link, Ruben Macareno, Ruben Macareno, Celia Maldonado-Arroyo, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez
Nay: 0
Abstain: 0
Not Cast: 1 Mike Waters
Motion: Ruben Macareno **Second:** Tony Rodriguez

7. Consideration and Approval, 2023-2024 School Accountability Report Card (SARC), Community School -- Sarah Hamilton

Sarah Hamilton requested the board's approval of the 2023-2024 School Accountability Report Card (SARC) for Community School. Ms. Hamilton shared there is a lack of data in several sections because the student population is so small. Last school year, the highest number of students enrolled was 12. Currently, there are only eight students enrolled. All student do go through state testing. Community School also has a CTE program and their own cafe.

Vote Results

Yea: 6 Judy Coble, Tom Link, Ruben Macareno, Celia Maldonado-Arroyo, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez
Nay: 0
Abstain: 0
Not Cast: 1 Mike Waters
Motion: Celia Maldonado-Arroyo **Second:** Ruben Macareno

8. Consideration and Approval, 2023-2024 Audit for TCOE from Christy White Associates -- Jody Arriaga and Lily Novoa

Jody Arriaga reported that independent charter's budgets are reviewed by our business department and Leadership Support Services during the LCAP process. Mr. Hire added that he gets regular reports on our charters to work on any concerns prior to petition renewal.

Ms. Arriaga introduced Lily Novoa to present the summary report. Ms. Novoa is a CPA with Christy White. She explained the audit process and responsibilities for the county office of education and the auditor. Included in the audit report are four separate opinion letters on the summary, internal controls, federal compliance, and state compliance. All received an unmodified opinion, which is the best available, without any material weaknesses, significant deficiencies, and without any audit findings. One audit adjustment was to the fair value changes to the county treasury, which affects cash balance and local revenue for investment earnings. This adjustment is done every year at the county office. Ms. Novoa thanked the staff and management.

Ms. Reed thanked the business staff for their hard work and Ms. Novoa for her report. Mr. Hire noted this is the sixth year in a row with no finding in the annual audit. He congratulated and thanked the business staff.

Vote Results

Yea: 7 Judy Coble, Tom Link, Ruben Macareno, Ruben Macareno, Celia Maldonado-Arroyo, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez
Nay: 0
Abstain: 0
Not Cast: 1 Mike Waters
Motion: Tom Link **Second:** Celia Maldonado-Arroyo

6. Information (Non-Discussion Items)

- a. Letters and Communication/Correspondence
- b. Reports from Superintendent and Staff
- c. Reports from Board, Information and Questions

Mr. Hire shared that Mike Waters had been contacted by the director of CSBA Region 12. The director told Mike that he would like to nominate him to be a representative for region 12 on the delegate assembly. Mr. Hire explained that this would be a decision made by the board. Tony Rodriguez reported that he had also been contacted with a request for information from CSBA. Once Mr. Hire hears back from CSBA, he will update the board.

Mr. Hire reported that Mock Trial begins this month. The competition rounds are January 21, 23, 28, and 30. The semi-finals are on February 4, and the finals are at the Granite Hills High School Justice Center in Porterville on February 11. Academic Decathlon SuperQuiz and awards will be on February 1 in Redwood Conference Center. The SCICON Open House is rescheduled to January 26. Poetry Live will be on February 7 in downtown Visalia.

The District Leadership Institute will be on February 6 in the Redwood Conference Center. The keynote speaker is from CSBA.

The solar structure on the north side of building is complete. The east section, which is the largest phase of the three phases, is being worked on currently. It should be completed in mid- to late- February. This project was done with a \$5 million zero interest loan, which will generate \$8 million in savings.

The plans are being submitted to the State Architect's office this month for the expansion. Walnut trees on the newly acquired property will be coming down soon in preparation for the expansion. Mr. Hire reported that we are still on track with the budget of the project. Construction is planned to start in July and should take 18 months. The plan is to start moving in January 2027. The shell of the warehouse will be the first area of new construction to allow the contractor to store materials. The Special Services building will be the first structure completed. This will allow staff from the Liberty site to move in time to get UPHS moved from COS by fall of 2027.

Ms. Reed thanked Jennifer Fisher, Beth Fisher, and Jeff Lemos for assistance with the Holiday in the City village setup.

7. Next Scheduled Board Meeting

February 12, 2025, 3:00 p.m.

8. Adjournment

Minutes

Meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m.