

TULARE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

03/12/2025 [03:00 PM]

REGULAR MEETING

For the Regular Board Meeting of March 12, 2025, at 3:00 p.m., in the Redwood Conference Center at the Jim Vidak Education Center, 6200 South Mooney Boulevard, Visalia, California.

1. CALL TO ORDER

- a. Pledge of Allegiance
- b. Welcome

Minutes

President Chris Reed welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. Celia Maldonado-Arroyo led the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Reed asked that the record show that all board members are present.

2. BOARD MEMBERS AND STAFF

Minutes

Board members present: President Chris Reed, Vice President Tony Rodriguez, Judy Coble, Tom Link, Ruben Macareno, Celia Maldonado-Arroyo, Mike Waters, and Ex-Officio Secretary Tim A. Hire. Staff members present: Jody Arriaga, Dr. Jose Bedolla, Julie Berk, Tammy Bradford, Vanessa Cantu, John Davis, Nani Dodson, Dr. Helen Feller, Jennifer Fisher, Sarah Hamilton, Rob Herman, Carin Hernandez, Dr. Fernie Marroquin, Delia Martinez, Devann McClellan, Ciera Myers, Anthony Paz, Freddy Reyes, Gina Rodriguez, Juan Sanchez, Sarah Smigiera, Dedi Somavia, Paula Terrill, Sue Wallace-Sims, and Katelyn Williford. Guest present: Robert Arroyo, Monica Batanero, Ella Cain, Ron Cain, Ava Dodson, and Sumeet Kaur.

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.

Minutes

No public comments were received.

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. Presentation of 2025 Tulare County Youth Poet Laureate - Paula Terrill

The newly awarded Youth Poet Laureate will recite one of her original poems to the board to kick off her 2025 speaking engagements promoting poetry and literacy.

Minutes

Paula Terrill announced that last month, TCOE hosted the annual Poetry Live! in partnership with the Arts Consortium and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Youth Poet Laureate promotes poetry and literacy in Tulare County. Ms. Terrill introduced the 2025 Tulare County Youth Poet Laureate, Caydince Huston. Miss Huston recited "The Feeling of the Butterfly".

President Reed congratulated Miss Huston and thanked her for her recitation.

Miss Huston shared that her school was very excited that she was the Youth Poet Laureate. She thanked the Board for their support.

b. Department Presentation - Student Future Ready Events - Paula Terrill

Minutes

Paula Terrill presented information about the Student Future Ready Events department. Their two-person team coordinates 18 of the 40 student events hosted by TCOE. Ms. Terrill explained that student events enhance learning and give students real world experiences that are tied to what is learned in the classroom. Student events cover all major content areas and all grade levels. Some of the events that their department coordinates include Math Superbowl and Academic Decathlon. These events promote collaboration and teamwork skills. Reading Revolution helps students gain networking skills. Student events are fun activities where students show off what they learn in the classroom and enhance their learning experience. E-sports are coming next year for middle school students. Over 400 staff, including TCOE staff and community volunteers, work to put on these events. Ms. Terrill invited the Board to attend or volunteer at the events.

Ms. Maldonado-Arroyo inquired how students are selected for Academic Decathlon. Each school decides how they want to choose students for their team. At most schools, students compete at their school site for a spot on the team. TCOE allow extra students to compete if they are not part of the team as an individual to get the experience.

Chris Reed commented how special these events are for students. She thanked Ms. Terrill for her presentation on Student Future Ready Events.

c. Routine Matters

1. Consent Calendar

Minutes

Ms. Reed thanked Peterson Trap for donation to the AcCEL program for Special Olympics.

Vote Results

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

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

- a. Approval of Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of February 12, 2025**
- b. Authorization of Countywide Registration of Credentials**
- c. Authorization of Temporary County Certificates**
- d. Authorization of Countywide Emergency Permit Applications**
- e. Acceptance of Donation from Peterson Trap Company LLC (\$500) to AcCEL, Caldwell CBI**
- f. Acceptance of Donation from TCOE Staff, Various District Staff, and Community Partners (\$5,700) to Red Ribbon Committee**

d. Old Business

1. Consideration and Approval, Second Reading of Board Bylaw (BB) 9221 - Trustee Areas - Tim A. Hire

Minutes

Superintendent Hire asked for the Board's approval of Board Bylaw (BB) 9221 - Trustee Areas. He noted that the trustee area description only includes Tulare County districts and not any non-Tulare County districts. Mr. Hire thanked Vanessa Cantu for her work on updating the language in the bylaw.

Vote Results

Yea: 8 Judy Coble, Tom Link, Ruben Macareno, Ruben Macareno, Celia Maldonado-Arroyo, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez, Mike Waters
Nay: 0
Abstain: 0
Not Cast: 0

Motion: Ruben Macareno **Second:** Tony Rodriguez

e. New Business

1. Consideration and Approval, Red Ribbon Donation to CASA of Tulare County (\$5,700) - Jennifer Fisher

Minutes

Jennifer Fisher requested the Board approval of the Red Ribbon Donation to CASA of Tulare County in the amount of \$5,700. She shared that this was successful year fundraising for CASA of Tulare County. Staff and community partners participated in events, including shirt sales, movie night, bake sale, and a raffle.

Chris Reed thanked Ms. Fisher and the committee for their events.

Vote Results

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

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

Not Cast: 0

Motion: Tom Link **Second:** Mike Waters

2. Consideration and Approval, Contract with University of California, Los Angeles to support California Services to Science Academy Pilot Evaluation - Nani Dodson

Minutes

Nani Dodson asked for the Board's approval for the contract with University of California, Los Angeles to support California Services to Science Academy Pilot Evaluation. Ms. Dodson explained that the contract is a pilot program that evaluates prevention programs in order to place innovative practices in repository for other programs to access. This contract runs through June 30.

Vote Results

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

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

Not Cast: 0

Motion: Tony Rodriguez **Second:** Celia Maldonado-Arroyo

3. Consideration and Approval, Resolution No. 24/25-28, Friday Night Live Month, April 2025 - Nani Dodson

Minutes

Nani Dodson invited Ella Cain and Ava Dodson from Redwood High School's Friday Night Live Club to present. They shared how the club in working to create positive change on campus and in the community. Currently, they are working on project about the risks of vaping. They asked the Board to recognize April 2025 as Friday Night Live Month.

Mike Waters asked Miss Cain and Miss Dodson to share more information about the project that they are working on. In conjunction with San Diego State University, the club is collecting samples for a third hand smoke research project. Samples have been collected from various youth based locations in Visalia and shipped to San Diego State University for testing.

Vote Results

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

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

Not Cast: 0

Motion: Judy Coble **Second:** Ruben Macareno

4. Consideration and Approval, Resolution 24/25-24 Exception to the 180-Day Wait Period for Retirees (Strathmore Union School District-Jones) - Sarah Smigiera

Minutes

Sarah Smigiera requested approval from the Board for Resolution 24/25-24 Exception to the 180-Day Wait Period for Retiree for the Strathmore Union School District Business Manager. Ms. Smigiera explained that Ms. Jones has been asked to oversee the district's audit and transition to a new business manager. Ms. Jones will work on a temporary part-time as needed basis.

Vote Results

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

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

Not Cast: 0

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

5. Presentation of the California Community Schools Partnership Program for La Sierra Military Academy - Julie Berk and Dr. Jose Bedolla

Minutes

Julie Berk and Dr. Jose Bedolla presented the California Community Schools Partnership for La Sierra Academy. Ms. Berk wanted to clarify any confusion between community day schools and community schools. This grant does not involve Mid-County, TCOE's community day school. This program is a grant to support a school's community needs in response to the pandemic. A community school is both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. These grants are for five-year grants. There are 24 LEAs and 89 schools that are serving communities through these grants. TCOE received technical assistance grants to support our districts. John Davis is the administrator for this grant. Sue Wallace-Sims, Carin Hernandez, and Delia Martinez are part of the team.

La Sierra received a community school partnership grant. Dr. Bedolla thanked Julie Berk and John Davis for their guidance. Dr. Bedolla started as site principal in October 2022. As a staff they did a couple of needs assessments to find their needs for improvement. They began a tiered approach to address learning loss and students' social and emotional needs from the pandemic. In the spring of 2023, La Sierra applied for the first phase of the planning grant, which was a two-year grant. La Sierra wanted to implement a teaching model to motivate their most at-risk students. La Sierra used the planning grant to create a community school teaching position. Dr. Bedolla introduced Mr. Sanchez, La Sierra's community school teacher, who started in the Spring of 2024. Students come to La Sierra for different reasons, sometimes, for discipline, a new beginning, or more support. This position provides academic support as well as a lot of behavioral or social support. One celebration for La Sierra is that all of their metrics have improved on the dashboard. Part of the process is connecting the students, the schools, and families. Last spring, La Sierra applied for the implementation grant for five years. The 2024-2025 school year is year one of the implementation grant. One of the school's missions is to get students to be college and career ready. Their graduation rate increased from 87.5% in the 2021-2022 school year to 97.4% in the 2022-2023 school year. Their suspension rate has gone down five percent from the 2021-2022 school year to the 2023-2024 school year. Dr. Bedolla thanked the entire team at TCOE.

Mike Waters congratulated Dr. Bedolla and his team on the graduation rate increase and the suspension rate decrease.

Chris Reed thanked Dr. Bedolla for his hard work and how he has reached out the students.

6. Consideration and Approval, Budget Revisions through January 31, 2025 - Jody Arriaga

Minutes

Jody Arriaga presented to the Board the actual expenditures for budget revisions through January 31, 2025. The County School Service Fund has an estimated ending fund balance of \$108,055,545. There was a net increase to LCFF, a net decrease to federal and state revenue, and a net increase to the local revenue. Expenses include capital outlay for the administration and Liberty site expansion and the new solar project. The La Sierra Fund had an estimated ending fund balance of \$600,689. The University Preparatory School Fund had an estimated ending fund balance of \$975,168. The Special Education pass through had an estimated ending fund balance of \$2,504. The Child Development Fund had an estimated ending fund balance of \$5,243,223 The SCICON Cafeteria Fund had an estimated fund balance of \$61,532. The UPHS Cafeteria Fund had an estimated fund balance of \$1,416. The Forest Reserved Fund has an estimated ending fund balance of \$4,522. The Foundation Trust Fund had an estimated fund balance of \$1,613,319.

The Board thanked Ms. Arriaga for her report.

Vote Results

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

Motion: Mike Waters **Second:** Tony Rodriguez

7. Consideration and Approval, Second Interim Report as of January 31, 2025 - Jody Arriaga

Minutes

Jody Arriaga explained to the Board that county superintendents are required to certify twice a year regarding their ability to meet their financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year and for the subsequent two fiscal years 4 of 6 with adequate reserves. Ms. Arriaga reported a positive cash flow for the next two years and the ability to meet fiscal obligations.

The Board thanked Ms. Arriaga.

Vote Results

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

Motion: Celia Maldonado-Arroyo **Second:** Mike Waters

8. Consideration and Approval, Vote for 2025 CSBA Assembly County Delegate for Region 12A - Chris Reed

Minutes

Chris Reed asked for a nomination for the 2025 CSBA Assembly County Delegate for Region 12A. Celia Maldanado-Arroyo moved to vote for both Felipe Martinez and Jorge Sanchez.

Vote Results

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

Nay: 0
Abstain: 0
Not Cast: 0

Motion: Celia Maldonado-Arroyo Second: Ruben Macareno

6. Information (Non-Discussion Items)

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

Minutes

Superintendent Hire called the Board's attention to the Brown Act handbook, Special Services revised dates, the Foundation Donor Appreciation dinner invitation, SCICON Barbeque flyer, and CAC luncheon save the date in their packets. He also noted that the keynote speaker for the CVEC luncheon on April will be Jennelle Kubinec, CEO for WestEd. Mr. Hire shared that he and members of Chinese Cultural Center announced Educators of the Year winners on last Friday and Tuesday. The Elementary School Educator of the Year is Alicia Bovetti from Rocky Hill Elementary in Exeter. The Middle School Educator of the Year is Carmen Diaz from Alpaugh. The High School Educator of the Year is Ricardo Florez from Tulare Union High School. The National History Day best of event winners were Never Forget: The Fight for the 9/11 Victim Compensation Fund presented by Lincoln Graves from UPHS and The Physiological Consequences of the Holodomor by Magali Villegas from Dinuba High School. Palo Verde took first place in the 6th grade competition and Monson-Sultana took first place in the 7th grade competition at the Anti-Tobacco and Marijuana Challenge Bowl. Sarvadnya Kadam, won the Tulare County Spelling Championship. This is his third year in a row. Green Acres placed first for middle school and Redwood placed first for high school at the Science Olympiad. The Growing Health Leaders Conference will be March 6 at the Administration Building. Poetry & Prose will begin on March 25 and run through April 4. Math Super Bowl is March 27 at Visalia Convention Center. Young Authors' Faire's virtual exhibit begins April 1. The Huddle Jr., the middle school student-athlete conference, is on April 2 in the Administration Building. The College & Career Expo will be held at Visalia and Tulare COS campuses on April 4.

Superintendent Hire updated the Board about the messaging that he's been doing around the transition in Washington D.C. and the potential impacts that it's having here in Tulare County. He read an article this morning that the intent right now is to reduce the Department of Education from just over 4,100 employees to around 2,100 employees. The Department of Education was established by Congress. It would take a vote of Congress, both houses, in order to completely eliminate it.

Title I and IDEA, Special Education Funding, have made national news. He doubts that we're going to see a significant cut to Title I. IDEA, he thinks, also is an area where we may see some small reductions but not significant. We're only receiving about 10% of the cost of educating our students with disabilities. Immigration has been a hot button. We have been providing information. We have been instructing our staff to make sure that we educate parents, students, and families about their rights with regards to immigration. In Education, we do not collect immigration status of students.

We did receive notice from the federal government that our Teacher Quality Partnership Residency Program and our Teacher and School Leader Incentive Grant Program, the funding would halt. Consequently, we're going to finish out the year right now. We're fighting for those programs to continue.

They're doing what they can to try to investigate whether or not we'll be able to get those funds reinstated and continue those programs. Or whether maybe those funds will be reallocated in a different format with a different narrative requirement. And we would intend to apply to that so that we can carry on the work that we've been doing to get qualified teachers in classrooms.

Mr. Hire thanked and complimented Dedi Somavia, Tammy Bradford, Chris Meyer and Martin Frolli for their hard work. We have met personally with those who were seeing layoff notices. They have spent hours and hours pouring over budgets with Ms. Arriaga's help and her staff, and looked at doing other reductions in order to save as many jobs as possible.

Celia Maldonado Arroyo asked about ethics training for Board members. Mr. Hire shared that we will be working with Lozano Smith to provide the ethics training to the Board.

Chris Reed shared about her attendance at the first annual School Safety Symposium. She was surprised by the FBI's presentation and the need for cyber security on the internet to protect Tulare County children who have been targeted.

Mr. Hire shared over 250 people registered for the event. The first keynote speaker in the morning was one of the young lady who survived the Virginia Tech shooting. She was actually shot three times and goes around and tells her story and has started a non-profit. Another keynote speaker was the founder of the Sandy Hook Foundation, who lost one of her two sons in the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

Ruben Macareno thanked Mr. Hire for his leadership and confidence based on his experience. He appreciates the strong leadership that he provides during these uncertain times.

7. Next Scheduled Board Meeting

April 9, 2025 - 10:00 a.m. at SCICON

8. Adjournment

Minutes

The meeting was adjourned at 4:28 p.m.