

TULARE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

09/02/2026 [03:00 PM]

REGULAR MEETING

For the Regular Board Meeting of September 2, 2026, at 3:00 p.m., in the Redwood Conference Center at the Jim Vidak Education Center, 6200 S. Mooney Blvd., Visalia, California.

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Roll Call

Present: Judy Coble, Tim Hire, Ruben Macareno, Felipe Martinez, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez, Mike Waters

Write-ins: Staff members present: Jody Arriaga, Dr. Jose Bedolla, Julie Berk, Jaime Burnitzki, Karen Costa, John Davis, Dr. Hellen Feller, Jennifer Fisher, Dr. Martin Frolli, Sarah Hamilton, Rob Herman, Kevin Jessee, Jerry Jolly, Christina Loya, Dr. Fernie Marroquin, Chris Meyer, Michelle Ramirez, Jeff Ramsay, Freddy Reyes, and Dedi Somavia. Guests Present: Allan Benton, Sandra Burnitzki, Heather Rocha, Carly Sears, Elise Vazquez, and Gail Zurek.

Absent:
.....

1. Call to Order

Minutes

Board President, Tony Rodriguez, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. Judy Coble led the Pledge of Allegiance.

a. Pledge of Allegiance

b. Welcome

2. 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.

Minutes

ADA Accommodations were met.

3. 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

Dr. Martin Frolli introduced Michelle Ramirez, the newest member of the Leadership Support Services teams. She joined Tulare County Office of Education from Monterey County Office of Education.

4. Actions Items

a. Routine Matters

1. Consent Calendar

Vote Results

Yea: 5 Judy Coble, Ruben Macareno, Felipe Martinez, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez

Nay: 0

Abstain: 0

Not Cast: 2 Tom Link, Mike Waters

Motion: Judy Coble **Second:** Felipe Martinez

a. Approval of Minutes for the Regular Board Meeting of August 5, 2026

b. Authorization of Countywide Registration of Credentials

c. Authorization of Temporary County Certificates

d. Authorization of Countywide Emergency Permit Applications

b. Old Business

1. Consideration and Approval, Second Reading of Board Policy 6159.1 - Procedural Safeguards and Complaints for Special Education - Tammy Bradford

Minutes

Kevin Jessee requested approval of the Second Reading of Board Policy 6159.1 - Procedural Safeguards and Complaints for Special Education.

Vote Results

Yea: 5 Judy Coble, Ruben Macareno, Felipe Martinez, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez
Nay: 0
Abstain: 0
Not Cast: 2 Tom Link, Mike Waters
Motion: Chris Reed **Second:** Ruben Macareno

c. New Business

1. Consideration and Adoption, Resolution 26/27-04 on Compensation of County Superintendent - - Dedi Somavia

Minutes

Dedi Somavia asked for the Board's adoption of Resolution No. 26/27-04 on Compensation of the County Superintendent. She presented an oral summary of County Superintendent's compensation package with the recommendation to increase the Superintendent's salary by 4%, which matches other management.

Vote Results

Yea: 5 Judy Coble, Ruben Macareno, Felipe Martinez, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez
Nay: 0
Abstain: 0
Not Cast: 2 Tom Link, Mike Waters
Motion: Chris Reed **Second:** Judy Coble

2. Presentation of Charter School Governance Information - Karen Costa

Minutes

Karen Costa presented the Tulare County Board of Education's two distinct governance roles when overseeing charter schools. As the governing board for locally funded or dependent charters, the Board focuses on the school's operations, including approving budgets and LCAPs, ensuring fiscal and legal compliance, and determining whether decisions are in the best interest of students and the school. As the charter authorizer, the Board takes on a regulatory role, evaluating whether charter schools meet statutory requirements, maintain fiscal and academic accountability, and serve the public interest. She emphasized the importance of the Board knowing which role they filling when making decisions.

Mike Waters arrived at 3:13 p.m.

3. Public Hearing: Eleanor Roosevelt Community Learning Center (ERCLC) Charter Renewal Petition - Karen Costa

Minutes

Tony Rodriguez opened the Public Hearing for the Eleanor Roosevelt Community Learning Center (ERCLC) Charter Renewal Petition. Karen Costa invited Superintendent Heather Rocha to present. She highlighted ERCLC's long-standing history, strong academic performance, and unique homeschool model serving approximately 694 TK-12 students. Superintendent Rocha explained that ERCLC, one of California's earliest charter schools, provides a family-centered educational environment that combines homeschooling with extensive teacher support, special education services, enrichment opportunities, career technical education (CTE), dual enrollment, performing arts, and community-building activities. The school maintains a waitlist of roughly 250 students and has demonstrated significant academic growth, moving to a performance level with no red or orange indicators on the California Dashboard while serving an increasingly diverse student population. ERCLC emphasizes individualized learning,

parent engagement, and a wide range of educational experiences including woodshop, welding, theater, 4-H, field trips, college preparation, and career pathways.

Superintendent Rocha noted that ERCLC has updated its charter petition to comply with current legal requirements, expanded staffing and organizational capacity, maintained strong fiscal management, and invested in facility improvements, including new portable classrooms and campus enhancements. The school owns its facilities, maintains healthy reserves while prioritizing student services, and continues to meet academic, financial, and regulatory expectations required of charter schools. ERCLC's leadership emphasized its commitment to serving families through tutoring, special education support, college and career counseling, and community partnerships, while continuing to improve student outcomes and preserve the small-school culture that is central to its mission.

Carly Sears, Elise Vazquez, and Allan Benton, ERCLC parents also presented their experience with ERCLC. They described ERCLC as a supportive, family-centered school that has helped their children thrive academically, socially, and personally. They shared how the school's special education services, performing arts, leadership opportunities, enrichment programs, and individualized support enabled their children to pursue interests in music, writing, teaching, photography, and career exploration while building confidence and resilience. Parents highlighted the caring teachers, educational coordinators, and strong sense of community that make students feel accepted, valued, and connected. They emphasized that ERCLC provides a unique balance of flexibility, academic rigor, and meaningful experiences that foster belonging, friendship, and a lifelong love of learning, making the school a transformative and cherished part of their families' lives.

The Board thanked Superintendent Rocha and the parents for their report. Superintendent Rocha thanked the Board and TCOE for their partnership.

Tony Rodriguez closed the public hearing at 3:52 p.m.

4. Consideration and Approval, University Preparatory High School (UPHS) to initiate and submit a material revision to the Charter for the addition of the UPHS Virtual Academy Independent Studies Program - Dr. Helen Feller

Minutes

Dr. Helen Feller requested approval of University Preparatory High School (UPHS) to initiate and submit a material revision to the Charter for the addition of the UPHS Virtual Academy Independent Studies Program. The Virtual Academy Independent Study Program is designed to better serve students whose needs are not fully met in the traditional classroom setting. She explained that UPHS regularly loses students who need greater flexibility due to health issues, family circumstances, work obligations, learning preferences, or the need for credit recovery, and the new program would allow those students to remain connected to UPHS while continuing to pursue its rigorous early college model. The proposed program would serve a limited number of students, capped at approximately 10% of enrollment, while maintaining the same graduation requirements, college credit expectations, counseling support, extracurricular access, and student services available to classroom-based students. The Virtual Academy is intended to expand educational options, reduce barriers to success, support underserved students, and provide an alternative pathway that preserves UPHS's strong college and career focus while keeping students engaged in the school community.

Vote Results

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

5. Consideration and Approval, 2025-2026 Prop 28 Arts and Music in School Site Expenditure Plan for University Preparatory High School - Dr. Helen Feller

Minutes

Dr. Helen Feller requested the Board's approval of the 2025-2026 Prop 28 Arts and Music in School Site Expenditure Plan for University Preparatory High School. She highlighted significant growth in fine arts programs including substantially expanded music offerings, with concert band growing from 15 to 33 students, a symphony program now serving 39 students, and 235 of the school's 270 students participating in one or more music courses, supported by nearly \$28,000 in investments for instruments, performances, and instructional resources. The funding has also strengthened theater arts, supporting full-scale productions, multiple theater courses, and the development of a theater career pathway, while future plans include expanding visual arts, dance, and career-connected arts opportunities as UPHS moves into its new campus and continues to grow student access to fine arts education.

Vote Results

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

6. Consideration and Approval, 2025-2026 Prop 28 Arts and Music School Site Expenditure Plan for La Sierra Military Academy - Dr. Jose Bedolla

Minutes

Dr. Jose Bedolla asked the Board to approve the 2025-2026 Prop 28 Arts and Music in School Site Expenditure Plan for La Sierra Military Academy. He highlighted how \$41,278 in funding was used to expand arts education through curriculum, enrichment activities, equipment, materials, and supplies that enhance student learning and engagement. A major focus has been growing the school's Media Arts program, including the creation of a Media Arts Club where cadets produce weekly news segments and other digital content. The Board commended the effective use of funds, noting that most expenditures directly supported student resources and opportunities rather than staffing costs, helping broaden educational experiences beyond the school's traditional military science focus.

Vote Results

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

7. Consideration and Approval, 2025-2026 Prop 28 Arts and Music School Site Expenditure Plan for Special Education - Sarah Hamilton

Minutes

Sarah Hamilton requested the Board approve the 2025-2026 Prop 28 Arts and Music in School Site Expenditure Plan for Special Education. The 2025-2026 Prop 28 Plan combines funding across Special Education, Court and Community Schools, and Early Childhood Education to expand arts instruction for approximately 650 students. After a year of planning, the programs implemented arts education through retired teacher consultants who developed lessons and instructional assistants who deliver hands-on arts activities directly in classrooms, with strong positive feedback from teachers and students. Funding also supports arts materials, music programs, and early childhood initiatives, with plans to expand arts instruction from elementary grades through adult education classes.

Vote Results

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

8. Public Hearing for Adoption of Extended School Year Waiver for Tulare County/District Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) - Sarah Hamilton

Minutes

The item regarding Public Hearing for Adoption of Extended School Year Waiver for Tulare County/District Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) was tabled until notice of public hearing can be given.

9. Consideration and Adoption, Extended School Year Waiver - Sarah Hamilton

Minutes

The item regarding Consideration and Adoption of Extended School Year Waiver for Tulare County/District Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) was tabled until public hearing is available.

Vote Results

Yea: 6 Judy Coble, Ruben Macareno, Felipe Martinez, Chris Reed, Tony Rodriguez, Mike Waters
Nay: 0
Abstain: 0
Not Cast: 1 Tom Link

10. Presentation of the 2025-2026 Unaudited Actuals Financial Report - Jody Arriaga

Minutes

Jody Arriaga presented the 2025-2026 unaudited actual financial report.

11. Consideration and Approval, Budget Revisions through June 30, 2026 - Jody Arriaga

Minutes

Jody Arriaga presented a review of the final Budget Revisions through June 30, 2026. She went over the following: the County School Service Fund estimated ending fund balance is \$134,194. La Sierra has an estimated ending fund balance of \$190,311. University Preparatory High School has estimated ending fund balance of \$970,408. Special Education Pass Through has an estimated ending fund balance of \$2,504. Child Development Fund has an estimated ending fund balance of \$9,076,084. Cafeteria Fund for SCICON has an estimated ending fund balance of \$61,532.

Cafeteria Fund for La Sierra and University Preparatory High School have an estimated fund balance of \$0.00. Forest Reserve Fund estimated ending fund balance is \$304,805. The Foundation Trust Fund (Levis Trust) has an estimated ending fund balance of \$1,698,919.

Vote Results

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

12. Consideration and Approval, Resolution 26/27-01 Authorizing filing of application for State Allocation Board administered programs - Jeff Ramsay

Minutes

Jeff Ramsay requested the Board's approval of Resolution 26/27-01 Authorizing filing of application for State Allocation Board administered programs.

Vote Results

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

13. Consideration and Approval, Resolution 26/27-02 Acknowledging that the remaining School Facility Program bond authority is currently exhausted - Jeff Ramsay

Minutes

Jeff Ramsay asked for the Board's approval of Resolution 26/27-02 Acknowledging that the remaining School Facility Program bond authority is currently exhausted. This resolution acknowledges that TCOE will be put on a waitlist.

Vote Results

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

14. Consideration and Approval, Resolution 26/27-03 Adopting bridge financing for the New AcCEL Center School Building Program application - Jeff Ramsay

Minutes

Jeff Ramsay requested the Board approve Resolution 26/27-03 Adopting bridge financing for the New AcCEL Center School Building Program application. He explained there is no amount on the application due to the fact that during construction some changes to the project may occur. Throughout the application process, we will have to submit a detailed list of expenditures for the project.

Vote Results

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

15. Public Hearing, Determination of Sufficient Textbooks or Instructional Materials for the 2026-2027 School Year (Education Code 60119) - Julie Berk

(THIS PUBLIC HEARING MUST NOT TAKE PLACE BEFORE 4:30 P.M.)

Minutes

Tony Rodriguez opened a public hearing at 4:35 p.m. for Determination of Sufficient Textbooks or Instructional Materials for the 2026-2027 School Year (Education Code 60119).

Julie Berk explained these are the materials, for La Sierra, UPHS, and Court and Community Schools.

Tony Rodriguez closed the public hearing at 4:36 p.m.

16. Consideration and Adoption, Resolution No. 26/27-05 on Determination of Sufficient Textbooks or Instructional Materials for the 2026-2027 School Year (Education Code 60119) - Julie Berk

Minutes

Julie Berk asked for the Board's Adoption of Resolution No. 26/27-05 on Determination of Sufficient Textbooks or Instructional Materials for the 2026-2027 School Year (Education Code 60119).

Vote Results

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

5. Information (Non-Discussion Items)

a. Letters and Communication/Correspondence

b. Reports from Superintendent and Staff

Minutes

Superintendent Hire highlighted several upcoming countywide events, including College Night on September 8 at the Visalia Convention Center, the Educator of the Year Awards on September 17, and the Pursuing Victory with Honor High School Huddle on September 24. He also shared positive observations from a visit to La Sierra Military Academy, noting the remarkable growth of a student leader and commending staff for their impact on students' lives. Additionally, he reported that major construction projects remain on schedule, with significant progress on new administrative buildings, classrooms, warehouse space, special education facilities, and the library/media

center, with the UPHS campus expansion expected to be ready for students by August 2027 and the main expansion project completed by October 2027.

c. Reports from Board, Information, and Questions

6. Next Scheduled Board Meeting

October 7, 2026 - 3:00 p.m.

7. Adjournment

Minutes

The meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.