



**VENTURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING  
January 12, 2021  
MINUTES**

**Call to Order**

In accordance with Governor Newsom's executive orders of social distancing due to the COVID-19, the Regular Board of Education meeting was held on Tuesday, January 12, 2021, as a teleconference/video conference meeting where one or more members participated. The public had the opportunity to submit their public comment via the public comments email address or live via the Zoom platform. The public streaming of the special Board meeting was made available through the Ventura Adult and Continuing Education, TDC Studios YouTube Channel. Those in attendance were:

Board President	Ms. Velma Lomax
Board Vice President	Mr. Matt Almaraz
Board Member	Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez
Board Member	Ms. Amy Callahan
Board Member	Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Asst. Supt. /Certificated HR	Dr. Jeff Davis
Asst. Supt. /Bus. Services	Ms. Rebecca Chandler
General Counsel	Mr. Anthony Ramos

**Adoption of Agenda**

It was moved by Mr. Matt Almaraz, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the agenda as presented.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg  
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

**Public Comment on Closed Session Items**

None.

**Motion to go to Closed Session**

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to go to closed session at 5:30 p.m.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg  
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

At 7:00 p.m., Board President Velma Lomax called the Regular Meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

**REGULAR SESSION - Ron Halt Classroom - 7:00 p.m.**

**Report of Actions Taken in Closed Session**

None.

**Superintendent's Report**

**11.a Good News**

Dr. Roger Rice was unable to attend tonight's Board Meeting. Ms. Rebecca Chandler, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, and Dr. Jeff Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Certificated Human Resources, presented the Superintendent's Good News on his behalf.

Ms. Chandler gave an update on information from the Governor's proposed budget:

- Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) of 3.84%
- Safe Schools for All Grant
  - Beginning with TK-5, followed by grades 3-5
  - Need to be open by February 16, 2021
  - Requires weekly COVID-19 testing
- PERS and STRS Incentives:
  - One-time general fund buy down
  - 2% off both rates for VUSD PERS and STRS
- All high school seniors would be required to complete the FASFA
- Special Education:
  - Base allocation increased
  - 545 million in general fund
  - 300 million special education grants
- Transitional Kindergarten: 250 million early learning grants

Ms. Chandler also shared that VUSD recently received a CTE Grant in the amount of \$750,000, an increase of over \$200,000 from last year.

Dr. Davis gave an update on Human Resources' hiring plans and recruitment efforts:

- Currently processing five new substitute teachers; an additional five packets have been picked up.
- Outreach to retired teachers has occurred; outreach to former classified employees is in process.
- Posted employment opportunities on Ventura County college websites.
- Increased Indeed.com account for classified employment opportunities and have already received more than 60 new applications.
- Processing 16 student teachers who will be able to sub for their Master Teacher.
- Sent an all-district e-mail to staff with employment opportunities and links to apply.

Student Board Members Elizabeth Ferris representing Foothill High School, and Ms. Carys Garvey representing El Camino High School, gave a brief update on the exciting things happening at their school sites.

**Correspondence**

None.

**Public Comments**

The following individuals gave a public comment via e-mail:

- Mr. Timur Taluy requesting to give a public comment via Zoom and in favor of reopening our elementary schools as soon as possible.
- Ms. Meredith Ikeda sharing concerns regarding delays to reopening our schools.
- Ms. Amber Walsh regarding the need to reopen our schools as soon as possible.
- Mr. Timur Taluy regarding the right to give a public comment in front of the Board.
- Ms. Lauren Taluy requesting that we stick to the plan of reopening on February 1.
- Ms. Bonnie Galindo urging the Board to provide a quality education for all students, especially those that do not have additional resources outside of public school.
- Annette Walters urging the Board to allow elementary schools to return on February 1 and to continue pushing for middle schools to return.
- Ms. Alyssa Knowles asking the Board to consider making summer school mandatory or strongly encouraged for students who are failing more than two core classes in middle school and to put out a survey to teachers regarding year-round school.

- Ms. Delaney Shelton-Burrier regarding additional opportunities for small group learning in our high schools.
- Mr. Jenner Shelton-Burrier regarding returning to in-person Hybrid learning.
- Ms. Marisa Burrier regarding the lack of accountability regarding school attendance.
- Ms. Diana Hightland regarding keeping the reopening date of February 1.

## CONFERENCE - EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

### 14.a **Reopening of Schools Update with a Focus on Secondary Education**

Dr. Greg Bayless, Director of Instruction and Curriculum (6-12), shared data from the secondary hybrid/distance learning survey results. Ventura Unified School District (VUSD) currently has 8,469 students enrolled in our secondary schools. Of these 8,469 students, 32% chose Distance Learning, 57% chose the Hybrid Model, and 11% have not yet completed the survey. Parents/guardians will have the opportunity to change their decisions prior to April 12th as follows:

- Any student currently on Hybrid can request a change to Distance Learning.
- Distance Learning students can change to Hybrid pending seat/space availability in all courses.

Dr. Bayless shared information pertaining to small groups. During the first round of small groups (Quarter 2), there were a total of 37 small groups across 8 Elementary School sites, 30 small groups across 4 Middle School sites, and 78 small groups (not including athletics) across 5 High School sites. Dr. Bayless shared that for round two of small groups (Quarter 3), over 100 small groups have been submitted for approval and more emphasis on targeting high needs students.

Dr. Bayless shared data regarding secondary student's D/F Rates. Students with at least one D/F increased from 39% in Quarter 1 (Q1) of the 2019-20 school year, to 55% in Q1 of the 2020-21 school year, with the biggest increase with middle school students. Students with multiple D/F's increased from 23% in Q1 of the 2019-20 school year to 43% in Q1 of the 2020-21 school year, with similar increases among middle school and high school students.

### 14.b **Consideration for Adoption of Science Curriculum for Grades 9-12 (Action Requested)**

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Mr. Matt Almaraz and passed on a roll call vote of 4 – 0 to approve the adoption of new science curriculum for grades 9-12 as presented.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: Ms. Amy Callahan.

## CONFERENCE - BUSINESS SERVICES

### 15.a **Allovue, Inc. Software Proposal**

Ms. Rebecca Chandler, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, and Ms. Anna Campbell, Director of Budget and Finance, gave an overview of software called Allovue, a program that will provide real-time financial monitoring. District financial data is translated into spending by year, fund, category and program. Advantages to Allovue include improved accessibility, improved transparency, ease of use for reporting, user friendly views, daily updates, text search and improved oversight. The cost for three years is \$78,800.00, which includes the product, implementation, and ongoing support.

### 15.b **Facilitron Software Proposal**

Ms. Rebecca Chandler, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, and Mr. Bill Elsenbaumer, Director of Facilities, presented on a software program called Facilitron. Facilitron is a facilities use management system and work order system. Facilitron is aimed towards schools, easy to use, and has a turnkey implementation. Facilitron allows for clear and transparent communication and is cost effective.

### 15.c **Award of Bid C10-21, Ventura High School Cabling Project (Action Requested)**

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the Ventura High School cabling project, bid C10-21.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg  
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

#### **CONFERENCE - HUMAN RESOURCES - Certificated**

**16.a Report Regarding Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures Quarterly Report Pursuant to AR 1312.4 for Quarter Ending December 31, 2020.**

Dr. Jeff Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Certificated Human Resources, shared that there were no Williams Uniform Complaints filed for any school in the district for the period ending December 31, 2020.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

**17.a Resolution #21-01, Authorization to Participate in the 2020-21 California School Cash Reserve Program (Action Requested)**

It was moved by Mr. Matt Almaraz, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve Resolution #21-01, authorizing participation in the 2020-21 California School Cash Reserve Program.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg  
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

**17.b Administrative Recommendation for Student Re-Admission from Expulsion/Suspended Order, Expulsion and/or Stipulated Agreement**

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve for student re-admission from expulsion/suspended order and/or stipulated agreement for student #'s 20/08, 20/13, and 20/17.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg  
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

#### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

It was moved by Ms. Amy Callahan, seconded by Mr. Matt Almaraz and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve consent items #18-22 as presented.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg  
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

#### **CONSENT- EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

**18.a Consideration for Disposal of Obsolete, Surplus or Unusable Books: DATA Middle School and Buena High School**

#### **CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Certificated**

**19.a Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment and Reemployment of Certificated Personnel for the 2020-21 School Year**

**19.b Ratification of Administration's Approval of Miscellaneous & Part-Time Certificated Assignments for the 2020-21 School Year**

- 19.c Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment and Reemployment of Substitute Teachers for the 2020-21 School Year
- 19.d Ratification of Administration's Approval for Leave of Absence for Certificated Personnel for the 2020-21 School Year
- 19.e Ratification of Administration's Approval of Resignations for Certificated Personnel for the 2020-21 School Year
- 19.f Approval of Variable Term Waiver for Speech - Language Credential

**CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Classified**

- 20.a Classified Personnel Changes
- 20.b Classified Position Changes

**CONSENT - BUSINESS SERVICES**

- 21.a City of San Buenaventura and All City Management Crossing Guard Agreement No. 2019-106.4, Fourth Amendment for 2020-21
- 21.b Checks for December 2020
- 21.c Ratification of Purchase Orders (December 2, 2020 to December 17, 2020)

**CONSENT - SUPERINTENDENT**

- 22.a Consideration of Board Meeting Minutes

**BOARD REPORTS**

Trustee Dannenberg shared that he attended the AVID mentor session last Friday and that it was very rewarding; he really enjoyed seeing all of the students. Dr. Dannenberg added that if anyone is interested in becoming an AVID Mentor, to please contact Darcy Duffy at Foothill High School.

Trustee Callahan thanked everyone for their assistance with her onboarding as a new Trustee and shared that attended the following committee meetings:

- California Latino School Board Association's Annual Conference
- California School Board Association's Annual Conference
- CABE Parent Conference
- PAC meeting on January 5, 2020
- Weekly meetings with Superintendent Dr. Rice to orient her to her new role.

Trustee Rodriguez shared that she also attended the PAC meeting on January 5th where Dr. Rice gave an update on the County COVID data and the reopening of schools.

Trustee Almaraz shared that he is on the Athletics Committee and received an update from CIF; no new information to share. Mr. Almaraz attended the Montalvo Community Council meeting on January 12th where he give an update form the Special Board meeting last week. Mr. Almaraz also attended the Balboa Middle School Advisory Committee meeting this past December along with Trustee Rodriguez.

Trustee Lomax shared that she watched Ventura High School's drama production called "Zoomdununit" and stated the students did an amazing job and that it was a lot of fun. Ms. Lomax is also currently working with the Navy and the Department of Defense, along with VCOE to get additional money into the county for robotics. Lastly, Ms. Lomax will be attending an upcoming CTE Vision meeting.

**COMING EVENTS**

Board members shared the following coming events:

- VCOE Workshop on Governance issues and the Brown Act on January 16th
- New Beginnings Workshop for Board members on January 28th
- School Information Night on January 14th
- Elmhurst Advisory Committee Meeting on January 13th at 2:00 p.m.
- Midtown Community Council Meeting on January 14th
- DELAC meeting on January 21st at 6:30 p.m.
- Family Cooking Night at E.P. Foster and Atlas
- Family Information Nights as follows:
  - DATA, El Camino, and Mound on January 19th
  - Ventura, Sunset, Cabrillo, Balboa, and Atlas on January 20th
  - Anacapa, Lemon Grove, Buena, and Montalvo on January 21st

Ms. Rebecca Chandler, shared the following coming events:

- School of Choice window: January 15th - January 29th
- Martin Luther King Day January 18th - No school
- African American Parent Committee meeting January 20th at 5:30 p.m.
- Teacher in-service day January 25th - No school

#### FUTURE BOARD ITEMS

- Board Policies Update
- Learning Continuity Plan

#### BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS - (No official action will be taken)

Trustee Almaraz would like to see an update in a future Friday Letter regarding how many positions VUSD is looking to hire as well as the timeline for applicants to hear something back. Mr. Almaraz also watched Ventura High School's Zoomdununit and would love to see Buena and Foothill put together something all on Zoom.

Trustee Callahan would like to receive more frequent updates on secondary students D/F rates, students attendance and current enrollment numbers.

Trustee Rodriguez shared that the County's COVID numbers have more than doubled since last week. and would like to remind the community to do their part and please stay home and not contribute to the spread.

#### CLOSED SESSION

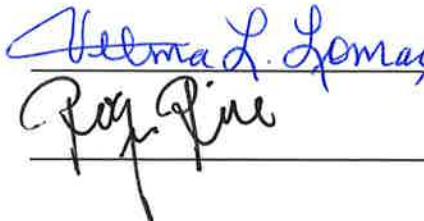
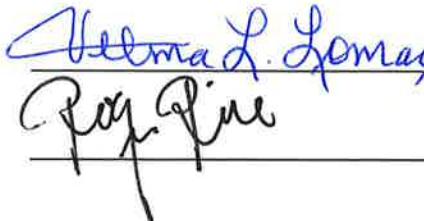
None.

#### ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Mr. Matt Almaraz and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve that the Board adjourn the meeting at 10:19 p.m. to the next regular meeting to be held at 7:00 p.m. on January 26, 2021.

Ayes: Ms. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, Ms. Amy Callahan, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg  
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

APPROVED

 President  
 Secretary

**From:** Timur Taluy <[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 11, 2021 5:35 PM  
**To:** Public Comment; Callahan, Amy; Rice, Roger; Rodriguez, Sabrena; Almaraz, Matt;  
Dannenberg, Jerry; Lomax, Velma  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- Fwd: Keep our kids safe; Keep our kids in school

Hello

I have continued concerns on this issue and request the ability to speak via zoom at the 12 January meeting. Can you confirm receipt of the message with instructions to provide public comment.

President Rodriguez, Members of the Board, & Superintendent Rice,

**Your decisions affect the safety of our children. School is the safest place for children.** Making a decision to give parents the choice to keep our children in school and increase those hours is the **only** right decision for our community. Staffing issues can be resolved with organizational realignment and emergency hiring in the job pool of so many who have lost their jobs.

CNN has reported that mental health is going to be the biggest effect of the pandemic in 2021 (1), school provides a safe place and access to counseling.

**School is the safest place for children.**

The Wall Street Journal reported an "increase, or at least a steady flow, of severe child abuse and neglect—infants beaten and killed, and children admitted for drug ingestion or falling out of windows" because "there has been a dramatic drop in child-abuse reports as teachers, day-care workers and others who are required by state law to notice and flag abuse are no longer routinely around children." (2)

**School is the safest place for children.**

Dr Fauci said "If you look at the data, the spread among children and from children is not really very big at all, not like one would have suspected," and "Close the bars and keep the schools open," on ABC (3). Our Governor closed the bars, now do your part and open the schools.

**School is the safest place for children.**

Our society relies on school not only for education, but among other things to keep our children safe and fed. If you elect to close our schools you are turning your back on the mental health and safety of children in our community.

I understand that there is pressure to close schools due to concerns of certain constituent groups. Dr Rice has reported in a previous board meeting that enrollment is down. **Enrollment is down because parents want their kids in school.** Parents have taken their kids to private schools, hired teachers, and created learning pods, all taking kids out of your classrooms and money out of your pocket.

**How will the teachers react when you lay teachers off** because of reduced enrollment? How will the other constituent groups that rely on your funding react when you have to decrease their expense by 30% layoffs or budget cuts that reflect a 30% decrease in enrollment.

**You have a responsibility today** and in the future **to offer choice**, otherwise you risk children's safety, the jobs of our beloved teachers and staff, financial stability of our community, and your future in public service. Not to mention the **collateral damage** the Brookings Institute points out to **parents jobs and gender equality** (4).

In the most recent election Supervisor Moran, our Board Vice President was unequivocally removed by voter referendum. Not because she is a bad supervisor, she is one of our best, recognized by you electing her to the Vice President role. She was **forcefully removed by voters because you neglected our schools and our children and put our community at risk by not having a plan** like our neighbor Moorpark did **and for not opening schools** earlier than you did.

If you do not put our children, our teachers, and our communities first, the voters will continue to vote, and you too will fall the same fate of Supervisor Moran.

I hope your predisposed choice is to open schools and this public comment is simply support for your well thought out decision, but if not, I hope you will consider the consequences to supporting our children.

- (1) <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/04/health/mental-health-during-covid-19-2021-stress-wellness/index.html>
- (2) <https://www.wsj.com/articles/child-abuse-reports-are-falling-and-thats-bad-news-for-children-11591263001>
- (3) <https://www.businessinsider.com/anthony-fauci-close-bars-school-instruction-coronavirus-infections-health-2020-11>

- (4) <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/why-has-covid-19-been-especially-harmful-for-working-women/>

Regards,

Timur Taluy  
Founder & CEO FileYourTaxes.com  
Auditor Pierpont Elementary PTA  
Father of three children 7 and under.

FileYourTaxes.com

File Your Taxes Online  
Fast, Easy, Secure

**Circular 230 Disclosure**

The items contained in this communication are provided as general information and are not intended to be tax preparation or tax planning advice and should not be used for the purposes of avoidance of penalties. For proper guidance with your specific concern, you should contact a tax professional in good standing.

**Privacy Notice**

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**From:** Meredith Murray [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 11, 2021 8:55 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- Fwd: Concerns for Delays to Returning to Hybrid

First and foremost, thank you for serving on the board and sacrificing your time for our kids. After last Tuesday night's meeting, I felt it was my responsibility to share my thoughts and ideas in hopes to us get closer to in person learning by Feb 1<sup>st</sup> in the elementary schools.

While I don't dismiss the surging COVID stats, it seems that those numbers aren't the main concern for returning to in person instruction. Below I have listed the 2 issues and possible ways to address them:

1. Limited Staffing

- What is actively being done about this issue? There needs to be better advertising for the current openings. We are desperate so relying on people to check the district's website for open positions is way too passive. I have listed a few suggestions below. I think it's important to relay if we can't fill these positions, our kids won't be able to return. We need to get applicants now so the hiring process can begin.
  - A. Regular social media postings --- daily if needed
  - B. District-wide email stating we are actively hiring and requesting help filling positions
  - C. VC Star posting/article listing contact information as well

2. Safe Schools for All

- The details of this plan have not been released yet so why are we already using this as an excuse to not return to school? Schools are already in session so this will not be some unique scenario for our district. I understand testing can potentially be an obstacle, but we need to be proactive rather than reactive.
  - A. Can we contact the County and discuss the possibility of a mobile testing unit reserved just for the district? If not, you can reserve the mobile unit as long as you have 100 employees (max 300). They have openings so we can reserve now rather than waiting til the last minute. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/covid-testing>
  - B. The FDA has approved at-home test kits. Can those be used by staff and then perhaps school site staff test kids if that's needed? Can someone contact these companies to ask if they could supply these tests? How much lead time is needed?

I truly appreciate the time all the board members invest in these meetings. However, I logged off Tuesday night's meeting with a very deep feeling of despair and helplessness. As most principals stated that night, returning in December was both safe and successful. So why are we OK with a tentative Feb 1<sup>st</sup> return date? No, we need to make that happen, but I don't detect any sense of urgency and that's what truly concerns me. I have been very patient with the district thus far, but I can't continue to watch other districts be proactive and successful while we sit on our hands. We need to get ahead of this.

Thank you so much for your time!

Sincerely,

Meredith Ikeda

Juanamaria parent

**Dahm, Amy**

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**From:** Amber Walsh [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 9:25 AM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- Concerned Parent- also sent as an attachment.  
**Attachments:** Dear School Board.docx

Dear School Board,

I am disappointed in your decision to prolong online learning for Elementary schools. I have two kids in Elementary school. My oldest is in 5<sup>th</sup> grade special education. Her teacher is now requiring 2 – 1.5 hour zoom meetings a day. In addition to her “school” she has zoom meetings for speech and OT. It is a struggle to get her on one zoom meeting a day and has ended with tears and a fight nearly every day this year. She was not a fan of school before because it is a challenge for her and now she is completely despises it. My youngest that was in Preschool when we were shut down in March is now in Kindergarten. Her attitude and personality has already changed so much. She NEEDS in person interaction with teachers, staff, and peers. It crushes me to see her so disappointed when looking at a computer screen and the teacher does not see her hand up or does not call on her to give her a chance to talk. What is this teaching her? Do you think when she goes back to full time in person school she is going to be as willing to raise her hand after feeling that disappointment for months? Even know I am watching her online and she has no desire to participate. It crushes my heart. I know how she used to be in the classroom very outgoing and social and now all that is lost. It is soul crushing as a parent.

I know we are all concerned about our child’s health, but it is their mental health and social health that is already damaged from this. I know many of you saw the joy of the kids who were able to attend school in person if only for a short while. My kids feel as though online is a punishment and do not understand why they have to see their teachers on the computer again when they had so much fun going back to the classroom.

The thing that REALLY has gotten under my skin is that through all of this decision to shut down again for safety is that small groups are allowed to meet in person! My kids are both

struggling and yearning for in person instruction and are denied, but small groups of different subjects including recourses for High school special ed students is allowed. And my 5<sup>th</sup> grader is forced to do 3 hours of zooms and expected to do canvas work, seesaw work, and benchmark reading all on a computer 4 days a week.

This situation is not perfect and none of us expected it to be, but this decision to be all online until who knows when is incredibly disappointing. We know already know our children and students are going to be behind academically, I just hope you all realize how they are being effected mentally and emotionally as well. Please open schools up even if it's one day a week ASAP!

A Concerned Parent

**From:** Timur Taluy [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 9:34 AM  
**To:** Public Comment; Callahan, Amy; Rice, Roger; Rodriguez, Sabrena; Almaraz, Matt; Dannenberg, Jerry; Lomax, Velma  
**Subject:** Re: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Fwd: Keep our kids safe; Keep our kids in school

Members of the Board & Superintendent Rice-  
Denying public comment at your meeting is a violation of the Brown Act.

I want to implore you to understand that my goal is to support the deliberations of our elected Board, not to be disruptive. My goal is to exercise my rights in a productive and constructive way. I understand you have a lot of work to do and a lot of other considerations, but in-person testimony is critical to that process.

The other jurisdictions in which I reside like the City of Ventura and County of Ventura have found options to afford public testimony live. Perhaps you can use their model tonight to follow the intent of the Brown Act otherwise it has the unintended consequence of projecting an incorrect image that you are finding ways to stifle the public.

I respectfully reiterate my request for access to speak today in front of the Board to exercise my rights as an American Citizen and as a California Resident.

For your reference, I have curated certain sections of the Brown Act and the Governor's executive order that suspends certain aspects of the Brown Act:

Section 54953 reads

(a) All meetings of the legislative body of a local agency shall be open and public, and **all persons shall be permitted to attend any meeting**

It continues to read:

(3) If the legislative body of a local agency elects to use teleconferencing, it shall post agendas at all teleconference locations and conduct teleconference meetings in a manner that **protects the statutory and constitutional rights of the parties or the public appearing before the legislative body of a local agency**. Each teleconference location shall be identified in the notice and agenda of the meeting or proceeding, and each teleconference location shall be accessible to the public. During the teleconference, at least a quorum of the members of the legislative body shall participate from locations within the boundaries of the territory over which the local agency exercises jurisdiction, except as provided in subdivision (d). The agenda shall provide an opportunity for members of the public to address the legislative body directly pursuant to Section 54954.3 at each teleconference location.

(4) For the purposes of this section, "teleconference" means a meeting of a legislative body, the members of which are in different locations, connected by electronic means, through either audio or video, or both. **Nothing in this section shall prohibit a local agency from providing the public with additional teleconference locations.**

Section 54954.3:

(a) Every agenda for regular meetings shall provide an opportunity for members of the public to **directly address the legislative body on any item of interest to the public**, before or during the legislative body's consideration of the item, that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the legislative body

As you know attendance at a meeting is not simply viewing a meeting. 54954.3 (b) (1) specifically references "public testimony on particular issues and for each individual speaker" It is the right of the public to speak at your meetings.

Further Governor Newsom's order N-29-20 3 (iii) which amended N-25-20 11 continues to compel you to allow "members of the public to address the body **at each teleconference**". (<https://www.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/3.12.20-EO-N-25-20-COVID-19.pdf>). Note that both versions of the Governor's order compel you to allow this public to address the body.

Regards,

Timur Taluy

On Tue, Jan 12, 2021 at 8:28 AM Public Comment <[public.comment@venturausd.org](mailto:public.comment@venturausd.org)> wrote:

Good morning Mr. Taluy,

Thank you for submitting your public comment for tonight's Board meeting. Unfortunately at this time, public comments are only accepted via e-mail due to COVID-19 and the recent Stay at Home Order issued December 5, 2020. I have included additional information that is posted in our agenda below. Please know that the Board reads every public comment and will summarize the information during the meeting.

Amy

## PUBLIC ACCESS/COMMENTS

**PLEASE BE ADVISED: As a result of the recent Regional Stay at Home Order issued in-person public comment will not be available until further notice. Public comment is available below.**

In accordance with Governor Newsom's Executive Orders N-29-20 regarding COVID-19, members continue to have the right to observe the public meeting via <http://bit.ly/TDCStudios> and submit writing at [public.comment@venturausd.org](mailto:public.comment@venturausd.org). Public comment and Public Comment on Closed accepted starting 24 hours prior to the Board meetings Opening Procedure and ending a half hour before the Opening Procedure. All public comment received via the designated email address, referred to the Board of Education via e-mail at the time of public comment or at the time of the agenda item as requested by the speaker. A summary of public comment received will be given either during the public comment period, or just prior to discussing the item, if the comment is relevant for action. The public comment will also be made part of the minutes of the Board meeting. No portion of the public comment will be read in its entirety during the meeting.

Any writings or documents that are public records and are provided to the majority of Board meeting regarding an open session item on the agenda are available via the <https://www.venturausd.org/board/SuperintendentBoard/BoardofEducation/2019-20AgendasInformation.aspx>

Amy Dahm

*Executive Assistant to the Superintendent*

*Ventura Unified School District*

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**From:** Timur Taluy [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, January 11, 2021 5:35 PM

To: Public Comment <[public.comment@venturausd.org](mailto:public.comment@venturausd.org)>; Callahan, Amy [REDACTED] Rice, Roger

[REDACTED] Rodriguez, Sabrena [REDACTED] Almaraz, Matt

[REDACTED] Dannenberg, Jerry [REDACTED] Lomax, Velma

[REDACTED] Keep our [REDACTED] safe; Keep our kids in school

Hello

I have continued concerns on this issue and request the ability to speak via zoom at the 12 January meeting. Can you confirm receipt of the message with instructions to provide public comment.

President Rodriguez, Members of the Board, & Superintendent Rice,

**Your decisions affect the safety of our children. School is the safest place for children.** Making a decision to give parents the choice to keep our children in school and increase those hours is the *only* right decision for our community. Staffing issues can be resolved with organizational realignment and emergency hiring in the job pool of so many who have lost their jobs.

CNN has reported that mental health is going to be the biggest effect of the pandemic in 2021 (1), school provides a safe place and access to counseling.

**School is the safest place for children.**

The Wall Street Journal reported an "increase, or at least a steady flow, of severe child abuse and neglect—infants beaten and killed, and children admitted for drug ingestion or falling out of windows" because "there has been a dramatic drop in child-abuse reports as teachers, day-care workers and others who are required by state law to notice and flag abuse are no longer routinely around children." (2)

**School is the safest place for children.**

Dr Fauci said "If you look at the data, the spread among children and from children is not really very big at all, not like one would have suspected," and "Close the bars and keep the schools open," on ABC (3). Our Governor closed the bars, now do your part and open the schools.

**School is the safest place for children.**

Our society relies on school not only for education, but among other things to keep our children safe and fed. If you elect to close our schools you are turning your back on the mental health and safety of children in our community.

I understand that there is pressure to close schools due to concerns of certain constituent groups. Dr Rice has reported in a previous board meeting that enrollment is down. **Enrollment is down because parents want their kids in school.** Parents have taken their kids to private schools, hired teachers, and created learning pods, all taking kids out of your classrooms and money out of your pocket.

**How will the teachers react when you lay teachers off** because of reduced enrollment? How will the other constituent groups that rely on your funding react when you have to decrease their expense by 30% layoffs or budget cuts that reflect a 30% decrease in enrollment.

**You have a responsibility today and in the future to offer choice,** otherwise you risk children's safety, the jobs of our beloved teachers and staff, financial stability of our community, and your future in public service. Not to mention the **collateral damage** the Brookings Institute points out to **parents jobs and gender equality** (4).

In the most recent election Supervisor Moran, our Board Vice President was unequivocally removed by voter referendum. Not because she is a bad supervisor, she is one of our best, recognized by you electing her to the Vice President role. She was **forcefully removed by voters because you neglected our schools and our children and put our community at risk by not having a plan** like our neighbor Moorpark did and for not opening schools earlier than you did.

If you do not put our children, our teachers, and our communities first, the voters will continue to vote, and you too will fall the same fate of Supervisor Moran.

I hope your predisposed choice is to open schools and this public comment is simply support for your well thought out decision, but if not, I hope you will consider the consequences to supporting our children.

(1) <https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/04/health/mental-health-during-covid-19-2021-stress-wellness/index.html>

(2) <https://www.wsj.com/articles/child-abuse-reports-are-falling-and-thats-bad-news-for-children-11591263001>

(3) <https://www.businessinsider.com/anthony-fauci-close-bars-school-instruction-coronavirus-infections-health-2020-11>

(4) <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/why-has-covid-19-been-especially-harmful-for-working-women/>

Regards,

Timur Taluy

Founder & CEO FileYourTaxes.com

Auditor Pierpont Elementary PTA  
Father of three children 7 and under.

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**From:** Lauren Taluy [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 9:58 AM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment for 1/12/2021

Dear Members of the Board and Dr. Rice,

I will try to keep this short. I am writing today to ask that you please stick to your plan of reopening our schools for in-person learning on February 1st. This back and forth and constant changes are not good for the children and I am sure makes lesson planning difficult for our teachers. I want teachers to be able to focus on educating my children, not shuffling plans back and forth between distance learning and in person learning.

I also ask that you work towards increasing the amount of hours the students are in person for the hybrid program. Throughout the spring, as we head towards June, we need to get our students back on track both academically and social/emotionally. This board needs to take more initiative and creativity in giving our children more opportunities for learning.

I urge you all to read the article about how a Florida School District with over 300,000 students was able to open fully and stay open. While I realize the rules differ there, the attitude of their superintendent and board is one I hope to see more of in our district.

<https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/11/us/miami-dade-schools-open-coronavirus-wellness/index.html>

"There is no substitute, regardless of how great the technology may be," he said bluntly. "You cannot Zoom effectively into a full understanding, a full level of engagement for students."

Carvalho also sees schools as an indispensable safe harbor for children -- academically, physically and emotionally -- even or perhaps especially in the middle of a pandemic."

I also request directions for making my public comments live at the board meeting. This has been possible during other meetings and I no longer see instructions on how to do that now.

Sincerely,

Lauren Taluy

Parent of a kindergarten and second grade student at Pierpont Elementary

**From:** MB Galindo <[REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 10:28 AM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public comment for VUSD Board Meeting 1/12/2021

To whom it may concern:

Being a part of a couple Facebook groups and reaching out to those in my community that I am connected to, I realize that it is largely the privileged families at VUSD who the board is hearing from. And while all voices matter, I would like to bring attention to the fact that most of those families who are being the most vocal have options and resources available to them that does not make the VUSD their only means of their children receiving quality education. For most, they have a true love for public school and want to see it succeed and don't want to contribute to perpetuating our broken system of privilege in our country, but they will if options outside of public school are the only ways in which our children are going to receive a quality education.

My plea to the board moving forward, is that quality education access needs to be of utmost priority for those children whose families do not have any resources or other options and are held hostage to the decisions of the board. We have an abundance of studies that confirm what contributes to breaking the cycle of poverty, so I ask that as we move forward with this current school year and into the following years, a plan is put into place that does not let these families fall through the cracks, as is happening when we experience extraordinary circumstances. There needs to be an immediate "back up plan" that maintains education access for our high risk, low income, special education, and special needs kids.

Let us all look 2, 5, and 10 years down the road as 1.5-2 years of academic and social/emotional development delays will snowball into bigger issues for our community and will contribute to the continued cycle of poverty.

And unlike what happened in September 2020 after 6 months of being closed down, let's plan NOW and be prepared ASAP for the next extraordinary event our community will face so that all children, especially the ones without options, aren't the ones paying the price like they are now.

Sincerely,  
Bonnie Galindo, Montalvo parent to a 4th and 1st grader  
[REDACTED]

**From:** Annette Walters [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 10:59 AM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- Reopening schools

Dear Dr. Rice and VUSD board members,

I am sitting in my office, watching as students in my preschool play. Gosh, I think they are lucky. I think they are lucky because they have been in school since August with little to no disruption in their learning. We have not had to close any classrooms, we have not had any outbreaks, we have not had any teachers who've been exposed and had to quarantine. Has it been easy? Nope. Not at all. But it has been worth it. We've given these kids the little bit of normal that they have needed and given them an opportunity to learn and grow in a classroom setting.

I realize that I cannot compare my small preschool to your big district. But, I do know that the 4th largest district in the country has been able to reopen, and stay open, successfully. According to a CNN article, the Miami-Dade school district has 350,000 students enrolled in their schools. The article states:

*Carvalho's lack of doubt has helped win over many parents of the more than 350,000 students enrolled in his schools.*

*"When you communicate that to the parents, then there's a sense of calm and trust that parents need prior to sending their students to school," he said.*

And also:

*"I am a staunch believer that if we want to keep schools open ... if we want that normalcy and regularity to continue, if we want that protective umbrella for students, pedagogically speaking, academically speaking, in terms of their cognitive and emotional development -- if we will want that to happen, then the schools can do all they can in terms of preventative measures in terms of mitigating strategies in terms of protocols." (said by Carvalho)*

I am the parent of a second grader and a middle schooler. I am asking that you please do whatever it takes to get my elementary student back to school the first week of February and then continue to push to get my middle school student back. I am sick of hearing "kids are resilient" because I feel like this is creating major setbacks for MANY students in the areas of academics and social/emotional health. There are going to be lasting effects from this. It is also creating a lot of friction in relationships for parents, grandparents and caregivers. Parents, grandparents and caregivers have been in the school facilitating role for much too long. I am sure that this distance learning is working for some families, but not many I know. Maybe instead of always saying "we know and we want students back on campus as soon as possible" VUSD can continue to move forward and fix the issues at hand and get us back in the classroom.

Sincerely,

Annette Walters  
Director, Sonshine Preschool  
[REDACTED]

**From:** Knowles, Alyssa  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 11:29 AM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** Board, Dr. Rice and Community Members

Please consider making summer school (Brick & Mortar summer school) mandatory or strongly encouraged for students who are failing more than 2 core classes in middle school. I understand why its important to offer summer school for HS students, especially with credit recovery but I'm asking for your consideration in looking at funding summer school for MS students as well.

Also, I am respectfully asking that you put out a survey to ask if parents and VUSD teachers would value a year round model (of course, paying our teachers a large stipend or bonus) to catch up on academics, social skills and school routine to better prepare students for the 2021-2022 SY. I am not requesting Edgenuity or APEX, I am requesting in person, face to face instruction when we get out of the Purple Tier. I am hopeful this will be where our county is by June? If we give students 2 months off in the summer, I believe we will be even further behind and the gaps will be so insurmountable that our limited interventions in MS will be even more exposed. If this is not possible, I would respectfully ask that monies/funding be set aside for intensive interventions in the MS setting under the Academic and Social Emotional Domains. i.e. Apex licenses in Math, SEL curriculum at all 5 MS

My very best,

Ventura Unified School District

Cabrillo Middle School

<http://www.venturausd.org/cabrillo/home.aspx>

For the future of every student



**From:** Marisa Burrier [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 1:54 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- student comment

Dear School Board,

My name is Delaney and I'm a 9th grader at Ventura High School. As a freshman in high school, juggling sports and other activities, being on Zoom classes and distance learning has been quite difficult. I feel as though I'm not able to connect with fellow classmates and teachers and fully understand the material we are supposed to be learning. I would love an opportunity to actually be on my high school campus. I understand we can't go to school right now, but would love an opportunity to do small group learning.

As soon as it's safe, and allowed, please let all students have an opportunity to return to school.

Thank you for your time,  
Delaney Shelton-Burrier

**From:** Marisa Burrier [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 2:07 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- student comment

Dear School Board,

My name is Jenner and I'm a 4th grader at Juanamaria. I liked going to school to learn, and I dont really like zoom class. It is hard for me to learn on zoom. I was happy when I was learning in my classroom with my teacher and friends and we wore masks and followed the rules. I love my teacher but I dont like zoom. So im letting you know I want to go back to hybrid because my mom says what i think is important. I hope you think it is important too.

Thank you,

Jenner Shelton-Burrier

**From:** Marisa Burrier [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 2:23 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- attendance

VUSD School Board,

I am a 5th grade teacher in the District and I have some major concerns regarding the lack of accountability regarding attendance. I have several students who have missed more than 40 days of school (I also have several students who have missed 30 or more days of school) , with no consequences. There have been countless hours spent trying to contact parents and get kids to login to Zoom and/or get their work done. In my opinion, we are not getting the point across that school is not an option, and that participation is required. With our current "distance learning only" plan, we REALLY need to address this issue and move forward with more accountability for parents and students. How can we say that distance learning is the best option right now if we can't even get kids to participate? Please make this a priority.

Thank you,  
Marisa Burrier

**From:** Diana Hightland [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2021 4:58 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- Would like our kids back to school

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Hi,

I am a parent of a 2nd grade TWI student at Montalvo and a 7th grader at Anacapa. I would really like both of my children, but specifically my TWI student back into school February 1st.

My husband and I have been fortunate enough to work full time since covid started and that I have a flexible enough job that I can come and go as I please. However that does not mean there is any less stress of having to distance learn two children. Luckily I work close to home and my children are mature enough to be at home intermittently during the day alone.

I did not want my 2nd grader's year to be wasted when we found out we were not returning to school after March. I found a tutor to help out 3 times a week and I was able to put my child into a Wilderness class geared towards Spanish. All of these things have a cost. I was not making more money, but I was definitely putting more out. The parents in TWI are amazing parents and we will do whatever we can to help reinforce their love for a dual language. We were so lucky to have Maestra Quezada, Olmos and now Carbajal that with Kinder and half of First grade under our belt my daughter at least had a good grasp on the language.

Distance learning wasn't exactly ideal, but we made it work. I printed out many worksheets and made flash cards to ensure my child was still getting something to keep her going. I know that not all families are so lucky or fortunate so I do feel bad complaining to the board at all.

The two weeks that we did go to school, was it inconvenient to have to leave work after 3 hours to pick up my child, yes, but those 2 days and 3 hours and 20 minutes really had an impact on my child. She was so happy to go to school and to see her friends. She did complain about not being able to play like normal at recess, but it was still so great for her to go to school. I feel that the TWI program students are going to suffer greatly if we don't get back to school because they need to hear the language in person.

I was not expecting this as all weren't, however with my High School Spanish it is not good enough to give my child what she needs with this program. I am not able to talk to her and ask her the questions in Spanish which is what she needs. Without a tutor and these extra activities I don't know where my child would be. I don't want my child to just do the bare minimum or that everyone will be behind so it's okay.

I don't want this year wasted and I really think that we can safely go back to school.

Please do everything that we can to get back to school because our children are the ones that are suffering the most.

Thank you so much

Diana Hightland