



**VENTURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
October 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, October 12, 2021, as a teleconference/video conference 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 Regular 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
Superintendent	Dr. Roger Rice
Asst. Supt. /Bus. Services	Ms. Rebecca Chandler
Asst. Supt. /Ed. Services	Dr. Antonio Castro
Asst. Supt./Human Resources	Mr. Brett Taylor
General Counsel	Mr. Anthony Ramos

Adoption of Agenda

It was moved by Ms. Amy Callahan, seconded by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to adopt 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 Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to go to closed session at 5:31 p.m.

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

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

At 7:10 p.m., Board Vice-President Matt Almaraz called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

Report of Actions Taken in Closed Session

None.

Superintendent's Report

Trustee Sabrena Rodriguez shared her condolences for the passing of Suz Montgomery today from her battle with Cancer. Ms. Montgomery was extremely involved in our community and a fierce advocate for adult education and worked with VACE for many years. A moment of silence will be added to our next Board meeting to honor Ms. Montgomery.

Superintendent Dr. Roger Rice, shared that buildings have been delivered for Sa'Aliyas Ranch and is excited to watch this program grow. He also shared that he has been out visiting several school sites and it has been a pleasure seeing the students engaged in the classroom as well as watching them at their sporting events.

Student Board Members Logan Bobis, representing Ventura High School, Nina Segura, representing VACE, and Nathan Arthur, ASB Secretary representing Buena on behalf of Student Board Member Ella Haas, shared brief updates on the exciting things happening at their school sites.

Correspondence

None.

Public Comments

The following individuals gave a public comment via e-mail or live via Zoom*

1. Lisa Rundle regarding concerns about the COVID nasal swab tests.
2. Lauren Cohen opposing the vaccine mandate and requesting that the Board meetings return to in-person.
3. Sarah McLaughlin in favor of putting in air conditioning in our schools.
4. Nicole Nicoletti opposing the vaccine mandate.
5. Kira Harrington opposing the vaccine mandate.
6. Hillary Smiley* opposing the vaccine mandate.
7. Jennifer Taylor* opposing the vaccine mandate, supporting a families right to choose, and requesting the Board return to in-person meetings.
8. Sarah McLaughlin* requesting that parent/teacher conferences be allowed to occur in person or virtually depending on the needs of the staff member and/or parents, due to COVID-19.
9. Matilda Dracula* requesting that parent/teacher conferences be allowed to occur in person, virtually, or over the phone depending on the needs of staff member and/or the parents, due to COVID-19.
10. Matt Lim* concerned with the vaccine mandate and hoping VUSD will remove the mask mandate.
11. Carol Peek* giving a shout out to all Education Service Providers, thanking them for their hard work.
12. Lisa Rundle* opposing the vaccine mandate and hoping that VUSD will fight against it.

ACTION ITEMS

14.a Request for Board Approval of New and Revised Middle School Elective Courses

Dr. Antonio Castro, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, gave an overview of the new and revised courses, currently being piloted with K-8 middle school students at Lemon Grove. He shared that the courses came about after receiving student input and they will also help prepare middle school students to enter CTE pathways in high school.

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Ms. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the request for new and revised middle school elective courses as presented.

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

Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

14.b Federal Emergency Relief Funding Plans

Dr. Rebecca Chandler, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services, noted that the updated ESSER III plan included feedback from the Board, the LCAP meetings, The Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting, the K-12 Principals' meeting, and survey feedback from parents, students and staff. A quick review of the changes were presented, including a reduction in COVID related funding in the out years and increased academic supports over the next two years.

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the updated ESSER III plan as presented.

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

14.c Consideration to Revise Administrative Regulation 5111 Admission and Board Policy 6170.1 Transitional Kindergarten

Dr. Antonio Castro, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, and Ms. Gina Wolowicz, Director of Curriculum and Instruction (K-5), shared that there has been a change in the law, allowing all students ages four and above to enter Transitional Kindergarten (TK), by the 2025-2026 school year. They presented a timeline of how VUSD will gradually shift the enrollment birthday requirement each year until the 2025/26 school year.

It was moved by Ms. Velma Lomax, seconded by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve revise Administration Regulation 5111 Admission and Board Policy 6170.1 Transitional Kindergarten as presented.

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

CONFERENCE - SUPERINTENDENT

15.a Board Meeting Processes and Protocols

Board Vice-President Matt Almaraz, led a discussion with the Board regarding board meeting processes and protocols, including whether to return to in-person meetings and the location of the meetings. There was Board consensus to return to in-person meetings to be held at the Education Service Center in the Multipurpose Room, due to City Hall not currently being available, and to move forward with purchasing the audio/visual equipment needed. The ad hoc committee consisting of Trustee Rodriguez and Trustee Callahan, suggested that at the Organization Meeting in December, we move our Open Session to a 5:00 p.m. start time and Regular Session to a 6:30 p.m. start time. The Board acknowledged that some changes to the formatting of the agenda have already taken place such as moving the Action Items up to the top of the agenda and moving routine items to Action the first time it is presented to the Board. There was also Board consensus to keep the Board meetings on Tuesdays, with staff to provide more summaries of the items the Friday before. The Board suggested that staff clarify in advance what they are looking for from the Board. Lastly, the board had consensus to create an ad hoc committee consisting of Trustee Lomax and Trustee Almaraz, to review the Board meeting calendar dates for the upcoming 2022 year.

CONFERENCE - HUMAN RESOURCES - Certificated

16.a "Sunshine" of Initial Contract Proposals from Ventura Unified School District (VUSD) to Ventura Unified Education Association (VUEA) and Ventura Education Support Professionals Association (VESPA) for Collective Bargaining. (Action Requested)

It was moved by Ms. Velma Lomax, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the negotiation of multi-year calendars, including the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years, between VUSD, VUEA and VESPA.

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 Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve consent item #'s 17-20 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

- 17.a Overnight and Out of the Tri-County Field Trips

CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Certificated

- 18.a Report Regarding Williams Uniform Complaint Procedures Quarterly Report Pursuant to AR 1312.4 for Quarter Ending September 30, 2021
- 18.b Ratification of Administration's Approval of Miscellaneous & Part-Time Certificated Assignments for the 2021-22 School Year
- 18.c Ratification of Administration's Approval of Resignations, Retirements and Release for Certificated Personnel for the 2021-22 School Year
- 18.d Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment and Reemployment of Substitute Teachers for the 2021-22 School Year
- 18.e Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment and Reemployment of Certificated Personnel for the 2021-22 School Year
- 18.f Ratification of Administration's Approval of Assignments Through Various Education Codes
- 18.g Approval of Variable Term Waiver for BCLAD Spanish Permit
- 18.h Approval of Variable Term Waiver for BCLAD Spanish Permit
- 18.i Approval of Variable Term Waiver for CLAD Authorization
- 18.j Approval of Variable Term Waiver for BCLAD Spanish Permit

CONSENT - HUMAN RESOURCES - Classified

- 19.a Classified Position Changes

CONSENT - BUSINESS SERVICES

- 20.a All City Management, Inc. Agreement for 2021-22
- 20.b Fagen Friedman & Fulfroost LLP Agreement for Legal Services
- 20.c Ventura County Office of Education Inter-district Transfers MOU for 2021-26
- 20.d Resolution #21-24, Transition Partnership Program (TPP) Agreement #31807 for 2021-24
- 20.e Disposition of Obsolete and Surplus Items
- 20.f Gifts to School District
- 20.g Ratification of Check Payments
- 20.h Ratification of Purchase Orders

CONSENT - SUPERINTENDENT

- 21.a Consideration of Board Meeting Minutes

BOARD REPORTS

Trustee Dr. Jerry Dannenberg attended the LCAP committee meeting and thanked the staff for their input on the ESSER III Plan. Trustee Dannenberg also attended several back-to-school nights and thanked the staff for their hard work.

Trustee Amy Callahan shared that she enjoyed attending all of the back- to-school nights and getting to know the principals and staff. She also appreciated the special board meetings and for all of the effort that went into the ESSER III Plan.

Trustee Sabrena Rodriguez attended the California School Board Association Board of Directors meeting in Sacramento. Ms. Rodriguez also visited Ojai Unified School District to look at one of their performing art programs at Nordoff High School that is up for a Golden Bell award. She attended the Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting last week on behalf of Trustee Callahan who was out of town. She shared that they discussed the mask and vaccine mandate, as well as how parents can advocate in ways that are effective as well as reviewed the ESSER III plan. Lastly, Ms. Rodriguez visited several of our schools with the League of Women Voters to encourage students to participate to vote.

Trustee Velma Lomax attended the Special Education Department Advisory Committee (SEDAC) meeting on behalf of Trustee Rodriguez who was out of town, and appreciated hearing from all of the parent representatives. Ms. Lomax also shared she was happy to attend the back-to-school nights.

Trustee Matt Almaraz attended the ASB Improv at Ventura High School. Mr. Almaraz also attended the DELAC meeting where they discussed Latinx Heritage Month, Ethnic and Social Justice, School of Choice, CAFE and Paper Tutoring.

COMING EVENTS

- VHS Benefit Concert & Silent Auction: October 14 at 6:00 p.m., VHS Senior Lawn
- African American Parent Committee (AAPC): October 20 at 5:30 p.m.
- Family Information Night: October 21 at 6:00 p.m. at Buena High School
- Buena vs. Ventura Football: October 22
- Fall Break: October 25 – October 29
- Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting: November 2 at 9:30 a.m.
- DELAC: November 4 at 6:30 p.m.

FUTURE BOARD ITEMS

- Redistricting

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

Trustee Rodriguez shared that many young children are now experiencing vision problems due to increase screen time and from being indoors so much. She shared that a study showed huge benefits for students who spend more than two hours outside.

Trustee Lomax shared there is a huge rise in Vitamin D deficiency particularly in adults. She also commended all staff in our district for their hard work acknowledging that it has been a very difficult year.

Trustee Dannenberg thanked all support staff and teachers for their hard work in these trying times.

Trustee Callahan shared her appreciation and gratitude for all of the hard work staff has been doing this past year. She strongly encouraged everyone to engage in self care.

Trustee Almaraz thanked staff for working so hard. He wished a happy belated birthday to Trustee Callahan and a happy birthday to Communications Coordinator Marieanne Quiroz. Lastly, he wished Trustee Lomax and her husband a happy 50th wedding anniversary,

Superintendent Dr. Roger Rice thanked the Board for their guidance.

CLOSED SESSION

There was no need to return to closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ms. Sabrena Rodriguez, seconded by Ms. Amy Callahan and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to adjourn the meeting at 9:43 p.m., to the next Regular Board Meeting to be held at 7:00 p.m. on November 9, 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: [Sarah McLaughlin](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Air Conditioning for Classrooms
Date: Monday, October 11, 2021 8:06:01 PM

Dear Ventura Unified School Board of Education,

I am writing today to speak to the necessity of air conditioning in all classrooms. I watched the Special Board Meeting from Friday October 1, which included the results of the survey in regards to the Esser Expenditure Plan. It was clear that parents, students, and staff value supporting academic needs of students and air conditioning for classrooms. These two areas are deeply intertwined and not isolated from one another. When a classroom temperature is not comfortable, I can guarantee that impacts student learning. I see this first hand in my classroom. I appreciate that Trustee Dannenberg and President Lomax voiced this same concern and understand the impact that excessive heat plays on learning. I have been voicing my concerns since 2015 to no avail. This is an ongoing problem that needs to be fixed now. Our students and staff deserve better than to be in this environment. Please provide safe and healthy classrooms for our students and staff.

Sincerely,
Sarah McLaughlin
5th grade teacher
Junipero Serra Elementary

From: [Lisa Rundle](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- COVID Nasal SWABS
Date: Monday, October 11, 2021 5:22:14 PM

I am very concerned about these nasal swabs that are currently being used on our students. My son is an athlete and has had to submit to 2 of them in the last 5 days. One last Thursday and one today, Monday. The nasal swabs contain a substance called, ethylene oxide. See attached link

<https://www.medicaldesignandoutsourcing.com/cdc-ethylene-oxide-may-have-more-health-effects-than-cancer/>

There are other schools using the saliva testing and considering the cancer risk, I don't think VUSD wants to be liable for using these swabs which are soaked in this cancerous ingredient on our children.

I am attaching a link to these saliva tests.

<https://www.uillinois.edu/shield>

It is called shield testing.

If you would like to discuss this, please give me a call.

Thank you,

Lisa Rundle

Concerned parent

██████████

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: [Nicole Nicoletti](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public Comment for Tuesday, October 12
Date: Tuesday, October 12, 2021 11:27:06 AM

VUSD Board Members:

My name is Nicole Nicoletti, and I am the mother of a sixth-grade student at Sunset School. He has attended Sunset school since first grade, as had my other two children until this school year. I pulled my younger two children from Sunset this year, not because I felt the teachers or administration failed to serve my kids but because I have lost faith in YOUR ability to serve our children adequately. I've watched board meeting after board meeting over the last 18 months, and I have been disappointed and at times disgusted with the decisions made. My son loves his school and the community, but we are also prepared to pull him from the district.

I'm writing today in regards to the impending mandate of the COVID-19 vaccine for children. Vaccination is a personal medical decision that should be made between a parent, their child, and a medical provider. The argument that this vaccine is comparable to other vaccinations required for school is false and misleading. COVID-19 poses little to no threat to our children, and natural immunity is more robust than any vaccination available at this time. This fact has been proven in study after study. I implore you to research these topics on your own; many peer-reviewed studies are available. Please do not make decisions regarding our children's health based on fear and news headlines. We need to look at the data. The numbers are not in favor of this mandate.

As a parent, it is my job to protect my children, and I will not stand idly by while the government attempts to enact unlawful policies by unlawful means.

We will gladly remove our remaining child from the VUSD school district if you choose to enforce this mandate.

Sincerely,
Nicole Nicoletti

From: [Kira Harrington](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Vaccine Mandate
Date: Tuesday, October 12, 2021 1:33:03 PM

I am messaging regarding the recent vaccine mandate among Ventura County and surrounding school districts. This mandate has caused a sudden panic among the community and should be stopped. Myself along with a large portion of our community do not want our young children to be forced to receive this vaccine and many are willing to take drastic measures as far as removing our children from the school completely. I am not anti-vaccine but my children will not be receiving the COVID vaccine due to the lack of information we have been provided regarding side effects and the very short testing period it has been given to achieve those results. This mandate is being suddenly forced upon us and is taking away a parent's rights to choose what they believe is best for their children. Let's encourage vaccination rather than activate the personal liberty culture wars that result in people becoming more entrenched in their opposition. The notion that we have to vaccinate every living, walking American – and eventually every newborn – in order to control the pandemic is based on the false assumption that the risk of dying from COVID-19 is equally distributed in the population. It's not. We have always known that it's very hard for the virus to hurt someone who is young and healthy. And that's still the case. The goal of our pandemic response should be to reduce death, illness and disability, but instead what you're seeing is a movement that has morphed from being pro-vaccine to vaccine fanaticism at all costs.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Lauren Cohen](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: -EXTERNAL SENDER- Vaccine mandates
Date: Monday, October 11, 2021 6:03:33 PM

I am writing in the hopes that the board will take the time to discuss these new mandates regarding vaccines for students. Please do your research on more than what the governor and CA DEPT of Public Health tell you. Look at VAERS and check the survival rates for children vs covid. Then please provide all the scientific research to support your decision.

This mandate is extremely unnecessary and could cause more harm than the virus ever could. Will you accept liability for any side effects that occur?

Put this topic on the agenda and let us parents speak to you IN PERSON.

Thank you

Lauren Cohen