



**VENTURA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING  
August 25, 2020  
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, August 25, 2020, as a teleconference/video conference meeting where one or more members participated. The public had the opportunity to submit their public comment and public comment on closed session via the public comments email address. The public streaming of the Board meeting was made available through the Ventura Adult and Continuing Education, TDC Studios YouTube Channel.

President:	Mrs. Sabrena Rodriguez
Vice President:	Mrs. Jackie Moran
Board Member:	Mrs. Velma Lomax
Board Member:	Mr. Matt Almaraz
Board Member:	Dr. Jerry Dannenberg
Superintendent:	Dr. Roger Rice
Asst. Supt. /Ed. Services:	Dr. Danielle Cortes
Asst. Supt. Certificated HR	Dr. Jeff Davis
General Counsel:	Mr. Anthony Ramos

**Adoption of Agenda**

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

Ayes: Mrs. Sabrena Rodriguez, Mrs. Jackie Moran, Mrs. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, 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 Mrs. Velma Lomax, seconded by Jackie Moran and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to go to closed session at 6:01 p.m.

Ayes: Mrs. Sabrena Rodriguez, Mrs. Jackie Moran, Mrs. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg  
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

At 7:00 p.m., Board President Rodriguez called the regular meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

**Report of Actions Taken in Closed Session** - None

**Good News**

Mr. Mike Gennaro, Assistant Principal of Anacapa Middle School, was highlighted for his new position.

**Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Dr. Roger Rice gave Kudos to the VUSD Staff for getting the 2020-2021 school year off to a great start. Dr. Rice is currently in his second week of site visits and appreciated the Principal's taking time to meet with him.

Dr. Rice gave a shout out to several individuals in the community who have been working hard and volunteering their time to the betterment of our staff. First, to Alex Wulff, who made over 1,000 face shields for the District and community members. Second, to Carmelita Young-Everard, Samantha Hsu, and Velma Lomax, who organized the "Protect our VUSD Teachers" project where they made one mask for every teacher.

Dr. Rice extended this thanks to the Athletic Director's and Coaches, along with Mr. Eric Reynolds, Dr. Jeff Davis, and Mr. Anthony Ramos, who are in the process of trying to put together a plan compliant with the new guidelines, to allow small group activities for P.E.

Dr. Rice gave a shout out to our Classified Support Staff for their hard work and positive attitude during this time and that it has been nothing short of heroic.

Dr. Rice met with Hector Guerrero, Principal of El Camino, and Deidre Monarres, Principal at Pacific, regarding the relocation of the Middle School Opportunity Program to the Pacific High School campus. Pacific High has an increased capacity to support the program, room to branch out into Career and Technical Ed, internships, and hands on project based learning.

Dr. Rice sat in on a Press Conference held by Dr. Levin this past Wednesday who announced he would make a Waiver available for Tk-6th grade schools to apply for reopening. The District Superintendent's then met with Stan Mantooth this past Friday to discuss and evaluate the Waiver.

Dr. Rice thanked Dan Nelson Nelson (VUEA President) and Carol Peek (VESPA President), in their roll in developing the Memorandum of Understanding on Coronavirus and Opening of Schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

Dr. Rice acknowledged that in the past there has been lots of upset in our community and in our schools, where conflicts arose regarding the political landscape we are in. He implored everyone to read up on Board Policy #4119.25, which states that one should not advocate for political candidates or ballot measures. Dr. Rice asked staff to stay positive and keep our focus on the kids.

**Correspondence** - None

**Public Comments**

The following individuals commented via email regarding: consistency with our voter registration policy, requests for VUSD to request Waivers to return to school, requests for increase of childcare on our campuses, concerns about High School Sports, in support of keeping our School Resource Officer's, and on access to Zoom links.

redheadbeck	Elira Garcia	Ray Mosones
Holly Jacinto	Harold Epstein	Melissa Ruiz
Alyssa Jacinto		

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

15.a **Notice of Public Hearing Regarding the Presentation of Ventura Unified School District's 2020-2021 Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan**

Dr. Rene Rickard shared that the Learning Continuity and Attendance Plan was in lieu of the Local Control and Accountability Plan for the 2020-2021 school year.

**CONFERENCE - SUPERINTENDENT**

16. a **Parcel Tax Update**

Superintendent Dr. Roger Rice shared that the VUSD Board succeeded in putting the Parcel Tax on the ballot and it is referred to as Measure H. Currently a small committee is forming where Board

President Sabrena Rodriguez is the Chair, Trustee Velma Lomax is the Co-Chair, and Anna Campbell is the treasurer.

Dr. Rice explained that the Parcel Tax does not increase the tax that everyone is currently paying, it is just extends it. In the past, the Parcel Tax has been used for keeping class sizes down, and to support art, music, and technology. If Measure H passes, the Board would like to receive more reports on how the funds directly affect our students.

## CONFERENCE - EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

### 17.a Reopening Schools Update

Dr. Rene Rickard, Director of Multilingual Education, shared additional updates on the reopening of schools. Currently. Last week, Elementary students received their devices and backpacks; this week, high school students are receiving their Chromebooks and backpacks. Dr. Rickard extended her thanks to volunteers from Missionary Church for helping with this process.

Dr. Danielle Cortes, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, shared that we are currently in week two of K-12 orientation. Dr. Cortes extended her thanks to all call center staff for assisting with technology questions, to our warehouse staff for getting our supplies out to the schools, and to the IT department who worked all weekend to get devices ready.

Ms. Rebecca Chandler, Chief Information Officer, shared that with help from Jesse Taylor, they have built an orientation course in Canvas for middle school and high school students. This will help teach students the tools they will be using before they begin actual class assignments and includes a digital citizenship component.

Ms. Anna Campbell, Director of Budget & Finance, shared an update on Devices. Currently, we are waiting on 3,000 iPads for our primary grades, 1,000 laptops for our staff, 4,000 Chromebooks for our secondary students, as well as additional technology supports for our special education students.

Ms. Cynthia Frutos, Director of Student Support Services, shared that the District is tracking on-line Zoom attendance and engagement. Ms. Frutos shared that there will be ongoing support and outreach to students and their families, as well as paid training and professional development for teachers and support staff.

### 17.b Consideration for Adoption of Digital-only Manzana Learning World Language Curriculum for Grades 6-12 (Action Requested)

It was moved by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg, seconded by Mrs. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the adoption of Digital-only Manzana Learning World Language Curriculum for grades 6-12.

Ayes: Mrs. Sabrena Rodriguez, Mrs. Jackie Moran, Mrs. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

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

## CONFERENCE - BUSINESS SERVICES

### 18.a Tyler Technologies Software Service Agreement 2020-23

Mr. Arie Wiberg, Director of Transportation, brought forward a proposal to purchase Traversa, a routing software system from Tyler Technologies. Traversa includes a fleet management system, a field trip management system, has a GPS that pings every one-second, and a tablet on every bus with GPS directions. Using this software, students will scan their card to get on and off a bus, allowing drivers to know instantly if they are on the correct bus or getting off at the correct stop. The program comes with a Parent Portal that allows parents to track their student including an estimated arrival time. The software would have an initial cost of \$107,258 (which could be paid for from COVID funding) and then an additional \$22,300 for the second year and \$23,415 for the third year. Once the program is purchased, it would take four to six months to get up and running.

### **CONFERENCE - HUMAN RESOURCES - Classified**

- 19.a **Ventura Unified School District and Ventura Education Support Professionals Association COVID-19 Coronavirus and Opening Schools for the 2020-21 School Year Memorandum Of Understanding. (Action Requested)**

It was moved by Mr. Matt Almaraz, seconded by Mrs. Velma Lomax and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve the MOU as presented.

Ayes: Mrs. Sabrena Rodriguez, Mrs. Jackie Moran, Mrs. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

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

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

It was moved by Mrs. Jackie Moran, seconded by Dr. Jerry Dannenberg and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to approve consent items #20-22 as presented.

Ayes: Mrs. Sabrena Rodriguez, Mrs. Jackie Moran, Mrs. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg

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

### **CONSENT - EDUCATIONAL SERVICES**

- 20.a Administrative Recommendation to Waive Administrative Regulation 6146.1

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

- 21.a Ratification of Administration's Approval of Miscellaneous & Part-Time Certificated Assignments for the 2020-21 School Year
- 21.b Ratification of Administration's Approval for Leave of Absence for Certificated Personnel for the 2020-2021 School Year
- 21.c Ratification of Administration's Approval of Resignations & Retirements for Certificated Personnel for the 2020-21 School Year
- 21.d Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment and Reemployment of Substitute Teachers for the 2020-21 School Year
- 21.e Ratification of Administration's Approval of Employment and Reemployment of Certificated Personnel for the 2020-21 School Year

### **CONSENT - BUSINESS SERVICES**

- 22.a Consolidated Application for Funding Categorical Aid Programs (Part I and II) 2020-21
- 22.b Ventura County Indian Education Consortium Agreement 2020-21
- 22.c Ratification of Purchase Orders (July 29, 2020 to August 11, 2020)

### **BOARD REPORTS**

Trustee. Velma Lomax shared success at receiving Department of Defense grants for the Robotics Teams and shared that the students are excited.

Board President Sabrena Rodriguez shared that she attended the Westside Community Council Meeting, where she learned that they are currently looking into providing grants for households to have access to WiFi in the neighborhood of \$125,000. The council is also working on neighborhood gardens and increasing food security.

### **COMING EVENTS**

- Dr. Rice shared the following upcoming events:
  - Back-to-School Nights will be virtual and spread out over the next few weeks as follows: Elementary Schools will take place September 1st-4th and 14th-18th; Middle Schools will be on September 3rd, 9th, 10th, and 16th; High Schools will be on September 21st-25th.
  - Learning Continuation Plan Meeting will be on September 2nd at 8:30 a.m. and repeated again at 5:00 p.m.
  - Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting will be held on September 1st at 9:00 a.m.
  - A Special Board Meeting will be held on September 9th to hold interviews and select out new Personnel.
- Trustee Matt Almaraz shared that he and Trustee Lomax will be attending the Mental Health Committee meeting on September 1<sup>st</sup>; Mr. Almaraz will be attending a three day Mental Health Conference on September 8th through 10th.

#### FUTURE BOARD ITEMS

- Public comment process
- Assessment center updates
- Student engagement with Distance Learning, especially students with IEP's
- Student Voter Registration Policy during distance learning
- Community group to discuss SRO program

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

- Trustee Almaraz would like to look into how we can honor our High School Seniors this year starting now. Mr. Almaraz gave Kudos to Ventura High School for their websites, but added that most school websites need to be updated for ease of use. Lastly, he would like to make sure that we are reaching out to our students regarding social injustices and for the social/emotional well-being of our students.
- Board President Rodriguez gave a shout out to all VUSD staff and a big thank you for getting our schools clean and ready, preparing a set of on-line curriculum, and providing answers to families that have questions and for being dedicated staff who look out for our students and community She hope that everyone is taking time to rest and recharge.
- Dr. Dice gave a special shout out to all of our Principals, as they are a tremendous group of leaders who are responding to a wide range of competing demands.

#### CLOSED SESSION

None.

#### ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mrs. Velma Lomax, seconded by Mrs. Jackie Moran and passed on a roll call vote of 5 – 0 to approve to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. to the next regular meeting to be held at 7:00 p.m. on September 8, 2020.

Ayes: Mrs. Sabrena Rodriguez, Mrs. Jackie Moran, Mrs. Velma Lomax, Mr. Matt Almaraz, Dr. Jerry Dannenberg  
Noes: None. Absent: None. Abstain: None.

APPROVED



President

Secretary

[REDACTED]

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**From:** redheadbeck [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 24, 2020 9:28 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- Return ALL children in-person to school

Hello, I am a parent of three children in the district, high, middle, and elementary schools. When on-line learning was first rolled out it was a temporary basis with the children returning to school. However, the children were kept out of school with the idea they would return in the fall. My children are not thriving with on-line learning they require in-person instruction. They are beyond bored. They miss their teachers, friends, sports and most of all the school experience. No matter how you "dress up" on-line school it is beyond a poor substitute not to mention the lack of physical activity. On-line school does not replace recess, PE, walking the school hallways and playing sports. The children are being robbed of their school experience due to fear mongering and teacher unions that wish to push this narrative of fear instead of instilling a narrative of being strong and resilient. Send the children back to school. Allow those that want to return the opportunity to return.

Respectly submitted

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Elira Garcia [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 24, 2020 10:06 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- Question

Is Ventura Unified School District planning to address distance learning and working parents challenges and whats the update on providing the link to the zoom/class presentation to working parents so they can watch with their child when they get off work?

Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Ray Mosones [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 25, 2020 8:43 AM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- Voucher for person to person instruction.

Will the board vote yes to receive the okay to have person to person instruction? We need to open schools as soon as possible.

Sent from my iPhone



[REDACTED]

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**From:** hollyjacinto hollyjacinto [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 25, 2020 10:53 AM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Cc:** roger.rice@venturaedu.org  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- Public comments for 8/25

As you debate Remaining distance learning online or asking the county for a waiver to return to school, I would like you to think that we are only one week into school and we have already had zoom and canvas go down. This isn't going to just fix itself after the orientation period.

I understand our teachers are trying their absolute best, but I have a first grader who has a teacher that doesn't even know how to mute all of the students. That means in a class of roughly 25 kids, 15 of which are unmuted and talking over the teacher. I have a middle schooler, who has an iep with NO current plan in place for services, have his class zoom bombed by an individual making sexualized moans. And I have a high schooler who is doing dual enrollment at VC because she claims she did not learn anything since March.

Please consider our children's emotional and academic needs at this time. Teachers are essential. They do a job that most parents are not in a position to do. In a time where there is a call to address racial and ethnic disparities, I would like to point out that it is these kids most at risk that are impacted by school closures. The minority and low socioeconomic classes. The kids that can't afford Pods or private tutors. We are not all in this together, because there's children not only in different boats, but totally different oceans. How do you explain to a parent difficulties with the zoom when they have no technical experience? Or they work in the field every single day of the week?

As an essential worker, I understand the fear that teachers may have. I work in a building that has been open to the public the entire time. But there's precautions teachers can take to stay safe and keep our students safe. This is not the best we can do. If we can safely shop at tj max or Walmart, we can find a way to safely educate our students in person. Even if that includes alternating days or schedules.

Regards,  
Holly Jacinto

Sent from my iPhone

[REDACTED]

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**From:** harold epstein [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 25, 2020 11:15 AM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Cc:** rebecca Mosones  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- Children back in the classroom

I am a grandfather of three school age children. They need to back in the classroom that is where education takes place. Being mushroom in front of a laptop is not education. Children need the classroom for the interaction with a teacher and follow students. Give parents a chose Zoom or the classroom.

Life is a risk

Thanks

**From:** Melissa J Ruiz [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 25, 2020 12:39 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** -EXTERNAL SENDER- childcare/school re-opening

My name is Melissa Ruiz and I am a local pediatrician, board member of the California district of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and am on the committee for school reopening for our local chapter of the AAP. I'm also a parent in the VUSD.

I work for one of the county Pediatric clinics and in my position take care of some of our more vulnerable families as about 80% of the families that we care for are insured by Medi-Cal.

I wanted to convey my experiences as a physician given my daily interaction with many VUSD families and share what I am witnessing in my clinic to help inform the Board's decision-making.

I recently met with the parent of a first grader in a VUSD school. This child is staying home alone every day, all day with their sibling who is in junior high. Both parents work outside the home. The parent reported to me that the district had emailed a list of child care options but that they were unaffordable. Despite both parents working outside the home, they are ineligible for any financial assistance.

I would like the board to consider seeking out additional funding that the district and perhaps community members, including myself, can start working to obtain from either the state or federal level. How can we work with the district to serve these families better? Because this is not an isolated story, unfortunately. The existing after school providers used by many VUSD families are now double the cost due to their full day hours. For families that cannot afford these rates, their children might be left home alone in unsafe situations. My clinic staff and I have seen many of the families we care for in this situation, and we are extremely concerned for these children and families.

I also wanted to bring in my perspective of someone who has been speaking to local leaders as well as national leaders in the AAP about the potential for school reopening. I have reviewed much of the data about COVID-19 in young children and think we have the potential to reopen VUSD **elementary schools** in a safe way. I understand that many private schools in our county are currently applying for waivers and that some of our surrounding school districts are looking into the waiver process as well. As you can imagine, there will be a significant and lasting equity problem in our county if private schools or wealthier districts that serve families of higher means are reopened for in-person learning while Ventura public schools remain closed.

I'm happy to send members of the board all of the information I've gathered up to this point in terms of transmission data in young children (<10) as well as meet to have a more extended conversation.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments and thank you for your dedication to the children in the VUSD.

Melissa Ruiz, MD, MPH, FAAP

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Alyssa Jacinto [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 25, 2020 2:22 PM  
**To:** Public Comment  
**Subject:** Public Comment

Hello,

I am a 10th grade student-athlete at Buena High School. I am also a member of the dual-enrollment program, so while I complete my high school classes I am also taking classes at Ventura College. School has always been one of my main priorities in life. I believe schools not only should be reopened, but need to be due to the consequences distance learning presents and the advantages of in-person learning.

Attending school is important to people of every age group. It encourages social interaction that us as humans need to survive and thrive. Without the proper social interaction, younger children aren't learning the proper social skills that they would be practicing with their peers. A lack of social interaction for students can lead to mental health problems, acting out, and much more. During this pandemic, the American Academy of Pediatrics has addressed the decline in students' and families' mental health and suggested that the mental, physical, and educational gains of in-person schooling outweighs the risks of COVID-19. While COVID-19 draws fear in nearly everyone, the California Department of Public Health presented that as of August 23rd, California had 668,615 total cases which only makes up about 1.7% of California's population.

Attending school in person is also very important for kids that may be experiencing abuse in their home. In schools, teachers, school administrators, and much other staff are required to report abuse to law enforcement or social services. Through distance-learning, identifying if a child is experiencing abuse will be much more difficult if teachers cannot see their students or monitor their behaviors consistently. With in-person schooling, victims were also able to get away from their perpetrator, so without it victims may feel alone or somewhat trapped.

Distance learning also creates an environment where students don't have as much focus or motivation. In-person school presents the proper environment for students to learn and creates rules and guidelines to prevent distractions, distance learning does little to none of these things. A lack of motivation can occur in an at-home learning environment due to the lack of one-on-one conversations that take place between teachers and students and because students may not feel as challenged and competitive as they would in a classroom environment.

Distance learning also requires that technical difficulties are minimal to none and that students have constant internet access. As students, parents, and teachers learned in the first week of distance learning, technology isn't always the most reliable and websites do often crash and have other difficulties. Students school be relying on teachers for their education, not websites that can crash at any given moment. Not all students have access to a constant source of internet. I had one teacher joke that if we had no internet, we could walk to the local McDonalds and use their wifi since it's free. When distance learning asks for constant internet access for things like performing zoom calls, submitting assignments, watching videos, and such, it can be difficult to access the internet if you cant do so at home.

In conclusion, schools must prioritize our mental and physical health, along with our educational and social growth. This being said, I believe returning to in-person school and implementing guidelines that ensure students will remain physically safe will also ensure that your students remain mentally safe and that both their