

**PALM SPRINGS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
PALM SPRINGS, CALIFORNIA  
MINUTES**

**Regular Meeting of the Board of Education, District Administration Center, 150 District Center Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92264, February 8, 2022.**

*This meeting was held in-person and livestreamed.*

**1. OPENING CEREMONY:**

The Study Session was called to order by President Gerardi at 4:00 pm with the following persons present:

John Gerardi	President
Madonna Gerrell	Clerk
Karen Cornett	Member
Sergio Espericueta	Member
Timothy S. Wood	Member

Mike Swize, Ed.D.	Superintendent of Schools
Brian Murray, Ed.D.	Assistant Superintendent, Business Services
Tony Signoret, Ed.D.	Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Simone Kovats, Ed.D.	Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services

**2. STUDY SESSION:**

Trustee area Redistricting – The Board of Education discussed the proposed scenarios and adjustments to the trustee area map based on the 2020 Census data.

**3. HEARING SECTION:**

There were no public comments.

**4. CLOSED SESSION:**

At this time, the Board of Education went into Closed Session to take up matters identified on the Closed Session agenda.

**5. RECESS FROM CLOSED SESSION:**

Closed Session was recessed at 5:27 p.m.

**6. REGULAR MEETING OPENING CEREMONY (6:00 PM):**

a. The Public Session meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm with the following persons present:

John Gerardi	President
Madonna Gerrell	Clerk

Karen Cornett Member  
Sergio Espericueta Member  
Timothy S. Wood Member

Mike Swize, Ed.D. Superintendent of Schools  
Brian Murray, Ed.D. Assistant Superintendent, Business Services  
Tony Signoret, Ed.D. Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources  
Simone Kovats, Ed.D. Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services

Sophia Gonzales Cathedral City High School Student Board Member  
Keona Corona Palm Springs High School Student Board Member

In accordance with the California Education Code Section 35144 and Brown Act, written notices of the meeting were delivered to the Board, news media, and a copy posted seventy-two hours in advance of the time of the meeting.

**b. Pledge of Allegiance**

Student Board Member Sophia Gonzales led the Pledge.

**c. Mission Statement**

Student Board Member Keona Corona read the Mission Statement.

**7. REPORT OF CLOSED SESSION ACTIONS:**

**Gerrell:** In closed session, the Board took action to authorize the administration to issue a 30-Day Notice of Dismissal to certificated employee #227221 in accordance with Education Code section 44934 and directed the Superintendent or designee to send out appropriate legal notices.

Approved by unanimous vote

**8. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Member Wood moved and Member Espericueta seconded approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Members Gerrell, Wood, Cornett, Gerardi, and Espericueta  
NOES: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: None

**9. SPECIAL RECOGNITION**

**9.a** The Governing Board wishes to recognize and commend the following employees of the month for February 2022.

Ballesteros, Student Support Services  
Classified – Felicity-Rae Woodson, Cielo Vista Charter School  
Certificated – Araceli Wagner, Cielo Vista Charter School

**10. STUDENT BOARD MEMBER REPORT**

The Student Board Member Reports were presented by Cathedral City High School Student Board Member Sophia Gonzales and Palm Springs High School Student Board Member Keona Corona.

**11. PRESENTATION**

**a. LATE START LEGISLATION UPDATE (OE-10)**

Dr. Simone Kovats and Dr. Brian Murray provided an update to the Board of Education on Senate Bill 328, Late Start Legislation that begins school year 2022-23.

**12. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Clerk Gerrell stated that no electronic comments were received.

Executive Assistant Erika Barragan stated that no telephonic comments were received.

Member Gerardi stated there are no in-person comments.

**13. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:**

- Member Espericueta:
  - Thank you, Sophia and Keona, for your good presentations. You always do a good job.
  - I attended the Equity Community Conference last Saturday. I was very impressed starting with the Agua Caliente Tribal Bird Singers. It was a good detail from the Agua Caliente Tribe. I see that there were 117 participants which was a very good turnout. It was three hours of good presentations and conversation.
  - That same day I also attended the Black History Committee Gala at the Hilton hotel. It was a good event to honor special community members that do a good job for the community and for the children.
  - I attended a workshop for parents with children with special needs. It was a good presentation and explanation hosted by Ruby Rivera and Jim. Thank you for the explanation about how the LCAP assigned money to the special education children.
- Member Wood:
  - I want to thank Joan because she always makes sure we are scheduled and have the right materials in place for going out and talking to different organizations in our community. She put me in front of the Rotary Club in Rancho Mirage this last week. It was a nice way to connect with another part of our community and they do so much for us and every one of their chapters donate books to schools and I would like to thank them for their involvement.
- Member Gerrell
  - I am excited to hear that you Sophie have been behind the blue coming back and your broadcast is amazing. You are going to do really well with it. Thank you, Keona for the Palm Springs High School update.

- I had the pleasure to present to the Thousand Palms Community Council meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup>. I had a short time to present but I learned a lot about the Thousand Palms community, and I encourage all of the members around the Thousand Palms area to attend the meetings on Zoom and learn about the community.
- I received information from Joan Boiko about our attendance and this first weeks in January and it is so refreshing to see the dashboard and to see that our attendance rates are up and that more students are attending every day. That is so positive.
- Joan Boiko gave us coverage for the Equity Conference and discussions cultural topics and differences. And thank you Joan for helping us connect with the community. It is so critical. And thank you to all of the team and Malik Mohammed, the keynote and all of the people that presented throughout the morning. It was the second annual conference; I am excited to see more than one year
- Member Gerardi
  - Thank you, Sophia and Keona, your presentations were very well done. You make me long for spirit week and again. They sounded very fun.
  - Bravo to the people that put together the Equity Conference, it was so well done starting with the singers to welcome us in the morning and Dr. Muhammed, gave a very poignant and well received opening remarks. I was so impressed, and I learned so much about how poverty affects education and student learning.
  - I want to remind everyone that the district has an agreement with Food Now in Desert Hot Springs to provide 120 backpacks every weekend to students who need food over the weekend. That agreement continues and the Pontus Family in Desert Hot Springs has donated a thousand dollars a month for this entire school year to help fund that program. I wanted to thank them for their generosity.
  - I wanted to thank staff, I have been here for eight years, and I have always wanted our study sessions to be more informal in the round so to speak, so we could have discussion. Dr. Swize made that happen to night and I appreciate that effort and the effort of the maintenance staff to make it happen. I think that it just lends to better dialog amongst us.

**14. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

- Public Health Update: I have good news to report this time. Since our last meeting we had a case rate of 255 per 100k in Riverside County and today it is at 107.1 out of 100k. Our positivity rate is down from almost 30% to 23% and our district dashboard shows 195 students and 19 staff members that currently are positive. We continue to offer testing and vaccination clinics all across the district. We purchased additional home tests for the students that we have distributed. Thank you to Renee and her department who worked very hard to make that happen. Also each staff member has been given two tests for home use and we will be giving students another round of home tests to take. We are trying to determine when the best time for us to do that will be, but it will be coming soon.

- I had a very special day today that I want to share with the public and the board. Last week some classrooms at Sunny Sands were talking about kindness and for kindness week they wrote letters to me expressing their gratitude and encouraging me to continue to be a kind leader and let me now that they were being very kind. That is something that really warmed my heart and as you know that is something that I take very seriously in the district, is treating ourselves with kindness and respect. After I received these beautiful letters, some of which Joan Boiko will be posting later, I went to the schools to answer some of their questions and thank them for their letters and to encourage them to practice kindness every day. Thank you to Monica and Erika for giving me goodie bags to take to the teachers to treat the students and I promised to be back.
- The Equity Conference has already been mentioned, but what a great day it was on Saturday. So proud of all the work and all of the people who made that happen.
- Another event that happened recently, Member Espericueta and I were at the Every Student Succeeding awards sponsored by the Palm Springs Leadership Association, where one student from every school was honored for overcoming incredible odds. That was a great ceremony, and it was very nice to be there with Member Espericueta. There was a great story in the Palm Springs Post and I want to thank them for their partnership.
- On tonight's agenda, there are three separate contracts for a company called Vytrac and Vytrac is a company that we are using to test for COVID-19. We also work with them to do contact tracing as well as staffing out care rooms across the district. We have separate contracts with this company because they are separate services. The largest contract is for our rapid testing which again they are the people who are doing the testing when I so proudly say that we offer testing to staff, students and families. In the consent agenda we have increased the amount of the contract to extend their services for contact tracing and also to ensure that we continue to have high quality staff working with us from Vytrac so you will see those contracts this evening.
- There is also a board agenda resolution for the district to have the ability to hold remote board meetings if necessary. This is required for us if we needed to go back to Zoom board meeting. We would be required to approve this every month, so I am recommending that we do that for the foreseeable future just to continue to give ourselves flexibility. We are bringing a resolution for February and then at the next meeting on the 22<sup>nd</sup> we will bring another resolution for March.
- I also want to mention our study session with the board regarding our Trustee Area Redistricting. The board will be voting at the February 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting on the trustee areas. I want to share that I have been sharing that information publicly. Last night I was honored to attend APAC our African-American Parent Advisory Council meeting. There were excellent presentations on some local history, a great discussion, and I had the opportunity to review the trustee area redistricting process as well as answer questions.

**15. BOARD ACTION ITEMS:**

**15.a. APPROVAL OF AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES (OE-6)**

Member Cornett moved and Member Wood seconded approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Members Gerrell, Wood, Cornett, Gerardi, and Espericueta  
NOES: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: None

**15.b. APPROVAL OF DECLARATION AND FINDING FOR TEMPORARY STAFFING FLEXIBILITY (OE-4.12)**

Member Cornett moved and Member Espericueta seconded approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Members Gerrell, Wood, Cornett, Gerardi, and Espericueta  
NOES: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: None

**15.c. APPROVAL OF MONITORING REPORT, GOVERNING POLICY: OPERATIONAL EXPECTATIONS, ASSET PROTECTION (OE-7)**

Member Cornett moved and Member Wood seconded approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Members Gerrell, Wood, Cornett, Gerardi, and Espericueta  
NOES: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: None

**15.d. APPROVAL TO AWARD P0075610 TO VYTRAC HEALTH, INC. FOR DISTRICT WIDE COVID-19 PCR AND RAPID ANTIGEN TEST ADMINISTRATION, PROCESSING, REPORTING, RESULTS AND APPOINTMENT SETTING FOR DISTRICT WIDE TESTING (OE-6.2).**

Member Wood moved and Member Espericueta seconded approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Members Gerrell, Wood, Cornett, Gerardi, and Espericueta

NOES: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: None

**15.e. APPROVAL TO AWARD BID NO. 02-22; DHSHS GYM FLOORING REPLACEMENT (OE-6.2)**

Member Cornett moved and Member Gerrell seconded approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Members Gerrell, Wood, Cornett, Gerardi, and Espericueta  
NOES: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: None

**15.f. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 2021/2022-81; APPROVAL TO AWARD RFP NO. 22-01; E-RATE FOR INTERNAL FIBER REPLACEMENT (UPGRADE), INTERNAL CONNECTIONS (NETWORK ELECTRONICS) & INTERNAL CONNECTION (FIREWALL – PALO ALTO) (OE-6.3)**

Member Wood moved and Member Espericueta seconded approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Members Gerrell, Wood, Cornett, Gerardi, and Espericueta  
NOES: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: None

**15.g. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION NO. 2021/2022-83; AUTHORIZING REMOTE TELECONFERENCE MEETINGS FOR THE PERIOD FEBRUARY 1, 2022 THROUGH FEBRUARY 28, 2022.**

Member Espericueta moved and Member Wood seconded approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Members Gerrell, Wood, Cornett, Gerardi, and Espericueta  
NOES: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: None

**15.h. APPROVAL OF EXPULSION CASE 2021/2022-027, RECOMMENDATION AND FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSION OF**

**LAW (OE-11)**

**15.i. APPROVAL OF EXPULSION CASE 2021/2022-028,  
RECOMMENDATION AND FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSION OF  
LAW (OE-11)**

Member Espericueta moved and Member Cornett seconded approval for item 15.h and 15.i with the change from split expulsion to full expulsion for expulsion case 2021/2022-27.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Members Gerrell, Wood, Cornett, Gerardi, and Espericueta  
NOES: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: None

**16. SUPERINTENDENT'S CONSENT ITEMS:**

**16.a. APPROVAL OF ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS (OE-6)**

**16.b. APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 WITH MILLSTEN ENTERPRISES, INC. FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW CONCRETE RAMP AND ACCESSIBILITY UPGRADES AT RANCHO MIRAGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AGREEMENT NO. C0004163 (OE-12.17)**

**16.c. APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER NO. 1 WITH REED FAMILY ENTERPRISES, INC. FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO NEW OFFICE ADDITIONS AT THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION CENTER, AGREEMENT NO. C0004097 (OE-12.17)**

**16.d. APPROVAL TO FILE THE NOTICE OF COMPLETION WITH REED FAMILY ENTERPRISES, INC. FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF TWO NEW OFFICE ADDITIONS AT THE DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION CENTER, AGREEMENT NO. C0004097 (OE-12.14)**

**16.e. APPROVAL OF CERTIFICATED AND CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE TRANSACTIONS (OE-4.4)**

**16.f. APPROVAL OF PURCHASE ORDER REPORT (OE-6.2)**

**16.g. APPROVAL OF AGREEMENTS UNDER TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS (OE-6.2)**

**16.h. APPROVAL OF AGREEMENTS TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS OR MORE AND OTHER CONTRACTS (OE-6.2)**

Items 16a – 16h: Member Wood moved and Member Espericueta seconded approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Members Gerrell, Wood, Cornett, Gerardi, and Espericueta

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

**17. BOARD CONSENT ITEM:**

**17.a. Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 25, 2022**

Member Cornett moved and Member Wood seconded approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Members Gerrell, Wood, Cornett, and Espericueta

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: Gerardi

ABSENT: None

**18. INFORMATION**

**18.a. SUBMISSION OF EARLY HEAD START AND HEAD START REPORTS PER REQUIREMENTS FOR THE HEAD START ACT FOR OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 2021 (OE-10.1)**

**19. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

None

**20. SETTING OF THE NEXT BOARD MEETING:**

**a. Regular Board Meeting:** February 22, 2022

**21. DEBRIEF:**

No Debrief

**22. ADJOURNMENT:**

Member Cornett moved and Member Espericueta seconded approval.

The motion carried by the following vote:

AYES: Members Gerrell, Wood, Cornett, Gerardi, and Espericueta

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NOES: None  
ABSTAIN: None  
ABSENT: None

The meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Recorder: Erika Barragan