

**MARK WEST UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Minutes of the Regular BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**  
**Tuesday, December 9, 2025**

The meeting was held in the District Office Learning Center  
 305 Mark West Springs Rd.  
 Santa Rosa, CA 95404

The meeting opened to the public 4:00pm

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

**Board Members**

Sara Azat, President  
 Brian Burke Clerk  
 Tracy Lavin-Kendall  
 Victor McKnight  
 Aaron Smith

**Staff Members**

Dr. Rachel Valenzuela, Superintendent  
 Renee Loeza, Chief Business Official  
 Kate Westrich, Director of Instruction & Student Services  
 Principals: Bennett Holley, Kelli Osorio, Emily Todd  
 Lisa Chapman  
 Mason Nakamura, Director of Maintenance & Operations  
 Alicia Mills, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Trustee Smith was absent

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*At this time, members of the public may seek clarification about any item on the Closed Session agenda for as long as the item is under the jurisdiction of the Board. Comments shall be limited to three minutes per person for a total of 20 minutes. Any person interested in the following items on the agenda will be allowed an opportunity to address the Board at this time.*

**2. CLOSED SESSION: 3:30PM**

2.1 Public Employment (Resignations, Hirings, Leaves, Contracts, Reassignments, Layoffs) (Government Code 54957)

**3. STUDY SESSION: 4:00PM – Open to the Public**

3.1 Kate Westrich, Director of Instruction and Student Services – Ms. Westrich presented an overview of the 2025 California Dashboard

**4. GENERAL SESSION: 5:00PM – Open to the Public**

4.1 Pledge of Allegiance

4.2 Introductions

4.3 Approval of Agenda Order

On a motion by Trustee McKnight, second by Trustee Burke, the Agenda Order was Approved. Aye=4, Nay=0, Abstention=0, Absent=1

4.4 Report Out of Closed Session

There was no report out of Closed Session

**5. PRESENTATIONS:** Students from Ms. Burbank's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class at Mark West Elementary have been using the newly adopted Discovery Science curriculum to explore and study the life cycles of various organisms and have integrated the unit's learning goals to strengthen their thinking and writing skills. In addition to their written work, students presented a "holiday" song based on the life cycle of various organisms.

## **6. BOARD CORRESPONDENCE**

*(Board Correspondence is provided for the purpose of reviewing correspondence addressed to or received by the Board.)*

## **7. BOARD COMMUNICATIONS/MATTERS**

*(Board Communications/Matters item is provided for the purpose of sharing school-related activities, school visitations, conferences attended, meetings scheduled. Board members may share any district related issues with other members of the Board and Staff. No formal Board of Education action will be taken.)*

- Trustees Azat, Burke, Lavin-Kendall and McKnight all attended the Mark West Area Chamber of Commerce's Holiday Tree Lighting event at Mark West Elementary. All commented on how talented MWUSD choral and music students are and what a wonderful program Kara Kaufman has established. "Always such a special community event."
- Trustee Lavin-Kendall returned to Mark West Elementary for a site visit with Superintendent Valenzuela. She commented that it was "wonderful to see the students so engaged."

## **8. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

### **8.1 School Reports/Principals**

#### John B. Riebli Elementary – Emily Todd

- The turkeys and leaves have changed to holiday cheer
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade students are working on their cardboard arcade projects, 5<sup>th</sup> graders are currently attending an overnight camp, 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders participated in a viewing of "Screenagers" presented by school counselor, Lionel Cooper, and TK students have been practicing their roles for the Gingerbread Man play
- Middle of the year assessments are underway; coops are coming up next week. Teachers working on first trimester progress reports
- Boys basketball is wrapping up. Riebli is currently tied with San Miguel with another game pending
- PTA is prepping for the "Big Event"

#### Mark West Elementary – Kelli Osorio

- School tours for families entering TK/K in the 2026-2027 school year are going strong
- Recently hosted the "Read On Sonoma" assembly. Mark West Elementary students achieved the highest goals they have ever achieved!
- Staff and students participated in the "Safe Routes to School" program
- December 18<sup>th</sup> is the "Heritage Feed"; a wonderful event celebrating the cultures of all 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through the sharing of food that represents their families culture and history

#### San Miguel Elementary – Bennett Holley

- Teachers are working on working on Oran Gillingham methods
- Mr. Music visit the campus next Friday
- Teachers are currently mid way through coops
- San Miguel Elementary students excelled in achievement of their Read On Sonoma goals
- Shout out to TK teacher, Sonja Gonzalez as she was welcomed back from her leave

#### Mark West Charter School – Lisa Chapman

- 7<sup>th</sup> grade is working on their memory books in English/Language Arts
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade is learning about the foundations of "taxation without representation" in history
- School counselor, Mr. Garcia, presented a suicide prevention program; only one student opted out
- In site collaboration, the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Green Team at Mark West Elementary will be presenting to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders
- 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will soon be going to read to their 3<sup>rd</sup> grade buddies
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys won the basketball championship and 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys are about to start the playoffs

- Coops are underway – grade level teams; ren star based data. For the most part, all students are in the green; a lot of growth happening

### **8.2 Director of Maintenance and Operations/Mason Nakamura**

- Mr. Nakamura highlighted some of the projects recently addressed by the department including; having the San Miguel pump replaced and general cleaning of all school offices

### **8.3 Superintendent's Report/Dr. Rachel Valenzuela**

- TK/Kindergarten Online Enrollment for the 26/27 school year opened on December 1, 2025. Dr. Valenzuela updated the Board on current numbers of completed enrollment packets which have been received
- Dr. Valenzuela extended appreciations to the four Board members who were able to attend the Chambers Annual Tree Lighting event in partnership with the district; the choral and music students did a phenomenal job
- Site visits are always Dr. Valenzuela's favorite part of her week and this week did not disappoint! Trustee Lavin-Kendall joined Dr. Valenzuela and both thoroughly enjoyed watching students engagement

## **9. PUBLIC HEARING**

*At this time, members of the public may seek clarification about any item on the agenda or not on the agenda as long as the item is under the jurisdiction of the Board. Comments shall be limited to three minutes per person for a total of 20 minutes. Any person interested in the following items on the agenda will be allowed an opportunity to address the Board at the end of Board discussion on that item.*

The Public Hearing opened at 5:42pm.

- Ethan Cosgrove, Rincon Valley Teacher's Association, addressed the Board regarding current issues facing Santa Rosa City Schools and the feasibility of consolidation
- Carrie Staten, lead negotiator for MARFAC, expressed the team's interest in opening negotiations with the Mark West Union School District in January 2026. Ms. Staten also brought to the Board's attention that the Sunshine Letter from MARFAC to the Mark West Union School District was a two sided document; page two had not been included in the document linked on Item 13.2. She requested that this be corrected following the Board Meeting.

### **9.1 Developer Fees Report 2024-2025 and 2024-2025 Developer Fee Financial Data**

- Renee Loeza, Chief Business Official provided the Board with a brief overview of the 202-2025 Developer Fee Financial Data

The Public Hearing closed at 5:57pm.

## **10. CONSENT AGENDA**

*The following items are considered routine and can be handled with one action since it is recommended that all items be approved unanimously. Board members may request that any item be discussed or moved to a future calendar.*

### **10.1 PERSONNEL**

- 10.1.1 Consideration of Approval of all items on the Personnel Form

### **10.2 BUSINESS**

- 10.2.1 Consideration of Approval of the Vendor Warrant Report

- 10.2.2 Consideration of Approval of Exhibit D – Amendment No. 06 – REVISED 11/18/25  
San Miguel Modernization – Additional Structural

- 10.2.3 Consideration of Approval of the Proposal/Agreement for School Facility Consulting

Services between the Mark West Union School District and Jack Schreder and Associates, Inc.

**10.2.4 Consideration of Approval of the Agreement between the Mark West Union School District and Bay Area Digital Solutions for the 2026-2027 TK/Kindergarten Digital Marketing Campaign**

**10.3 FACILITIES**

**10.4 MINUTES**

**10.4.1 Consideration of Approval of the Minutes of the November 9, 2025 Regular Board Meeting**

**10.5 ADMINISTRATION**

**10.6 DONATIONS**

On a motion by Trustee Lavin-Kendall, second by Trustee McKnight, the Consent Agenda was Approved. Aye=4, Nay=0, Abstention=0, Absent=1

**11. ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**11.1 BUSINESS**

**11.1.1 Consideration of Approval of the Mark West Union School District's First Interim Report for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year**

Part 1

Part 2

Part 3

Chief Business Official, Renee Loeza, highlighted some specific information in her talking points which have been reflected in budget projections. They included – the increase in district contributions for special education costs; the ongoing district contributions to pension costs; the district's negotiated increase in salary costs over the last few years and the fact that interest rates remain high. If the economic forecast continues on this trajectory, the district will be unable to maintain the 17% reserve as specified by Board Policy by the 2027-2028 school year. Further, as Mrs. Loeza has stated during her reports at previous Board meetings, the district has already entered deficit spending.

The Governor will present his budget in January 2026. At that point, Mrs. Loeza will have a better understanding of what, if any, current funding may be affected.

On a motion by Trustee Burke, second by Trustee McKnight, the Mark West Union School District's First Interim Report for the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year, Parts 1/2/3, were Approved. Aye=4, Nay=0, Abstention=0, Absent=1

**11.1.2 Consideration of Approval of Resolution #26-09, Developer Fees Annual Report 2024-2025 Fiscal Year**

On a motion by Trustee Burke, second by Trustee Lavin-Kendall, Resolution 26-09, Developer Fees Annual Report 2024-2025 Fiscal Year was approved. Aye=4, Nay=0, Abstention=0, Absent=1

Roll Call: Trustee Lavin-Kendall, Aye; Trustee McKnight, Aye; Trustee Burke, Aye; Trustee Azat, Aye. Trustee Smith was absent.

**11.1.3 Consideration of Approval of Resolution #26-10, to Establish Committed Fund Balances**

On a motion by Trustee Burke, second by Trustee McKnight, Resolution 26-10 to Establish Committed Fund Balances was approved. Aye=4, Nay=0, Abstention=0, Absent=1

Roll Call: Trustee Lavin-Kendall, Aye; Trustee McKnight, Aye; Trustee Burke, Aye; Trustee Azat, Aye. Trustee Smith was absent.

**11.2 CURRICULUM**

**11.3 FACILITIES**

**11.3.1 Consideration of Approval of the 2025 Facility Inspection Tool (FIT) Reports for –**

John B. Riebli Elementary

Mark West Elementary

San Miguel Elementary

Mark West Charter School

On a motion by Trustee Burke, second by Trustee Lavin-Kendall, the 2025 Facility Inspection Tool (FIT) reports for John B. Riebli Elementary, Mark West Elementary, San Miguel Elementary and Mark West Charter School were approved. Aye=4, Nay=0, Abstention=0, Absent=1

**11.4 BOARD POLICIES**

**11.5 ADMINISTRATION**

**12. EVALUATION OF THE BOARD MEETING** The Board members may comment or request items pertaining to the meeting

**13. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

13.1 Universal Pre-Kindergarten Planning and Implementation Grant Expenditure Report

13.2 Sunshine Letter from MARFAC to the Mark West Union School District

13.3 Sunshine Letter from the Mark West Union School District to MARFAC

Note: Immediately following the conclusion of the Board Meeting, the MARFAC Sunshine Letter to the Mark West Union School District was rescanned and sent to all certificated staff and Board of Trustee members.

**14. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next Regular Board meeting will be determined in coordination with the 2025 Board of Trustees Meeting Calendar during the Organizational Board Meeting on Tuesday, December 16, 2025 at 5:00pm. If approved, the next Regular Board Meeting will be held Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 5:00pm.

**15. ADJOURNMENT 6:37pm**

**ADA Compliance**

In compliance with Government Code § 54954.2(a), the Mark West Union School District, will, on request, make this agenda available in appropriate alternative formats to persons with a disability, as required by Section 202 of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12132), and the federal rules and regulations adopted in implementation thereof. Individuals who need this agenda in an alternative format or who need a disability-related modification or accommodation in order to participate in the meeting, should contact Alicia Mills, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent 707.524.2972.

Respectfully Submitted By:

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Dr. Rachel Valenzuela, Superintendent

Approved By:

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Victor McKnight, Board Clerk