CLAREMONT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Regular Meeting of the Board of Education Minutes
Date: Thursday, May 21, 2026
Richard S. Kirkendall Education Center | 170 W. San Jose Avenue, Claremont, California
(Hybrid Meeting)

Board of Education
Dr. Alex McDonald, President
Kathy Archer, Vice President
Cheryl Fiello, Clerk
Kathryn Dunn, Member
Richard W. O'Neill, Member

Board Members Present: Kathryn Dunn, Richard O'Neill, Cheryl Fiello, Kathy Archer, Alex McDonald
Student Board Members Present: Samantha Gutierrez, Andres Zamora

Administrative Staff Present:
Dr. James Elsasser, Superintendent and Board Secretary
Desiree Reyes, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services
Dr. Julie Olesniewicz, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services
Kevin Ward, Assistant Superintendent, Student Services
Dr. Rick Lopez, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources
Kara Evans, Director of Educational Technology and Innovation
Angela Gearhart, Exec. Secretary to the Superintendent

1. ZOOM LINK TO JOIN THE MEETING

2. OPENING ITEMS

2.01 Call to Order at 5:30 p.m.
The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

2.02 Establish a Quorum
A quorum was established with four Board members present: Kathryn Dunn, Cheryl Fiello, Kathy Archer, and Alex McDonald. Board Member Richard O'Neill was unable to be present at this time. Also present at the meeting were Dr. Elsasser, Executive Cabinet, Angela Gearhart, and Kara Evans.

3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

To adopt the Agenda as presented.

- Motioned by: Kathryn Dunn
- Seconded by: Cheryl Fiello
- Yeas: Kathryn Dunn, Cheryl Fiello, Kathy Archer, Alex McDonald
- Absent: Richard O'Neill

Motion Carried

4. CLOSED SESSION ITEMS / Public Comment

- 4.01 Public Comment on Closed Session Items
  There were no public comments on closed session items
- 4.02 Conference with Legal Counsel - Anticipated Litigation: Significant exposure to litigation pursuant to paragraph (2) or (3) of subdivision (d) of Section 54956.9: (One potential case)
- 4.03 Personnel Matters: Public Employee Appointments/Employment -Pursuant to California Government Code §54957
  - Assistant Principal
  - Principal
- Student Matters: Settlement Agreement 20260521A - Pursuant to Education Code §56157 and §56365 - §56366.5
- 4.04 Personnel Matters: Public Employee Appointments/Employment -Pursuant to California Government Code §54957
- 4.05 Conference with Labor Negotiator: Designated Negotiator: Dr. James Elsasser, CUSD Superintendent of Schools; CFA/CSEA/CMA/Unrepresented - California Government Code §54954.5 (f) pursuant to California Government Code §54957.6

- 4.06 Personnel Matters: Public Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release - California Government Code §54954.5(e) pursuant to California Government Code §54957

5. ADJOURN TO CLOSED SESSION

The meeting adjourned to Closed Session at 5:32 p.m. At this time, Richard O'Neill joined the meeting.

6. RECONVENE TO OPEN SESSION

6.01 Reconvene in Open Session

The Board reconvened in Open Session at 6:06 p.m.

6.02 Establishing a Quorum

A quorum was established with five Board members present: Richard O'Neill, Kathryn Dunn, Cheryl Fiello, Kathy Archer, and Alex McDonald. Also present at the meeting were Student Board Members Samantha Gutierrez and Andres Zamora, Dr. Elsasser, Executive Cabinet, Angela Gearhart, and Kara Evans.

6.03 Flag Salute

Board President McDonald led the Pledge of Allegiance.

6.04 Report of Action Taken in Closed Session

No reportable action was taken in Closed Session, and the following item was taken in Open Session.

To approve Student Settlement Agreement 20260521A.

- Motioned by: Kathy Archer
- Seconded by: Kathryn Dunn
- Yeas: Richard O'Neill, Kathryn Dunn, Cheryl Fiello, Kathy Archer, Alex McDonald

Motion Carried

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

7.01 May 7, 2026 Minutes - Regular Meeting of the Board of Education

To adopt the minutes from the Regular Board Meeting on May 7, 2026

- Motioned by: Richard O'Neill
- Seconded by: Cheryl Fiello
- Yeas: Richard O'Neill, Kathryn Dunn, Cheryl Fiello, Kathy Archer, Alex McDonald
- Student Advisory Vote (Yeas): Andres Zamora, Samantha Gutierrez

Motion Carried

8. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS/RECOGNITIONS

8.01 Special Order of Business/Recognitions

8.02 Student Recognition: 2026 Directing Change Program & Film Contest

The Board recognized Claremont High School students for earning honors in the 2026 Directing Change Program & Film Contest, recognizing their achievements in promoting mental health awareness, suicide prevention, social justice, and wellness through film and visual arts.

8.03 Student Recognition: 2026 Streets Art SAFE PSA Film Competition

The Board recognized Claremont High School students for earning honors in the 2026 Streets Art SAFE PSA Film Competition, recognizing their creative efforts to promote safe driving practices and public safety awareness through film and visual arts.

8.04 Student Recognition: 2026 Congressional Art Competition

The Board recognized Claremont High School students Xin Lu and Andrea Dorantes for earning honors in the 2026 Congressional Art Competition, including a fifth-place award and an honorable mention, respectively, for their outstanding artistic achievements.

8.05 Student Recognition: CFA/CTA Dolores Huerta Education Award in Art

The Board recognized Claremont High School students Andrea Dorantes, Quin Freede, and Elizabeth Delgado as recipients of the CFA/CTA Dolores Huerta Education Award for their artistic works reflecting the principles of social justice, empowerment, and service to others, with Andrea Dorantes also earning the California Teachers Association state award.

8.06 Recognition: Outgoing Student Board Members
The Board recognized Andres Zamora of San Antonio High School and Samantha Gutierrez of Claremont High School for their dedicated service as Student Board Members during the 2025–2026 school year and for representing student voices in Board discussions and District initiatives.

8.07 Recognition: You Are The Commitment Award
The Board recognized Michael Maust of Claremont Adult School as a recipient of the You Are The Commitment Award for exemplifying the District's core values of Excellence, Equity, Innovation, and Integrity through his service and contributions to the Claremont Unified School District.

9. ORAL REPORTS: BOARD OF EDUCATION AND STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS

9.01 Oral reports by members of the Board of Education and Student Board Members

9.02 Student Board Members

- Andres Zamora reported on events at Chaparral, Mountain View, Sycamore, Oakmont Elementary Schools, and San Antonio High School.
- Samantha Gutierrez reported on events at Sumner Danbury, Vista del Valle Elementary Schools, and Claremont High School.

9.03 Board of Education

- Board Member Richard O'Neill reflected on the District's Honor Our Own ceremony and shared thoughts on the future of the teaching profession.
- Board Member Kathryn Dunn thanked the Student Board Members for their service during the 2025–2026 school year. She also reported on CSBA Legislative Action activities, including discussions regarding the Governor's May Revision, highlighted the Honor Our Own ceremony, and shared that approximately 700 students were recognized at the Baldy View ROP Pathway Completion Ceremony.
- Board Clerk Cheryl Fiello reported on attending the Honor Our Own ceremony and the Elementary Band Concert, highlighting the performance that featured students from grades 3 through 12 playing together.
- Board Vice President Kathy Archer reported on the Elementary Strings Spring Concert and shared updates from the Claremont Educational Foundation, including the Slice of Summer campaign, the appointment of a new Board member, and the upcoming Topgolf fundraising event.
- Board President Dr. Alex McDonald shared end-of-year reflections and highlighted the elementary strings and band performances held at El Roble Intermediate School.

10. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

10.01 Information/Announcements
Dr. Elsasser provided updates on the Induction Colloquium recognizing teachers and administrators who cleared their credentials, Claremont High School's spring choir concert, the District's annual Honor Our Own celebration, and recent elementary music performances. He also shared an update on community engagement efforts related to a potential bond measure, noting that additional meetings would be held and that a summary of feedback would be presented to the Board on June 4.

11. EMPLOYEE ASSOCIATIONS

11.01 Comments by Employee Associations: CFA, CSEA Chapter 200, and CMA
CFA President-Elect Missy Wanocott commented on the Governor's May Revision and emphasized the importance of considering teachers in budget discussions.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Non-Agenda Items)

12.01 PUBLIC COMMENTS (Non-Agenda Items)
There were 12 online public comments and 9 in-person public comments received:

- David Sawhill expressed concerns regarding teacher compensation.
- Wendy Marlar expressed concerns regarding technology use in classrooms.
- Morgan Goodman expressed concerns regarding employee access to interdistrict transfers for their children.
- Hannah Corrales expressed concerns regarding employee access to interdistrict transfers for their children.
- Jillian Menjivar expressed concerns regarding employee access to interdistrict transfers for their children.
- Simon Ryschka expressed concerns regarding technology use in classrooms.
- Shanna Andrawis expressed concerns regarding teacher compensation.
- Philip expressed concerns regarding technology use in classrooms.
- Jaimie Roberts expressed concerns regarding teacher compensation.

13. PRESENTATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

13.01 Presentations and Reports

14. HUMAN RESOURCES

14.01 Recommendation for Assistant Principal at Claremont High School

Dr. Lopez presented the recommendation to appoint Geoffrey Payton as Assistant Principal at Claremont High School, effective July 1, 2026, following a comprehensive selection process that included interviews with district staff, administrators, and parents.

To approve Geoffrey Payton for the position of Assistant Principal at Claremont High School, with an effective date of July 1, 2026.

- Motioned by: Richard O'Neill
- Seconded by: Kathryn Dunn
- Roll Call Vote (Yeas): Richard O'Neill, Kathryn Dunn, Cheryl Fiello, Kathy Archer, Alex McDonald

Motion Carried

15. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

15.01 Update on Equitable Grading Practices

Dr. Olesniewicz introduced five Claremont High School science and history teachers, who provided an update on equitable grading practices in CUSD secondary schools, including criterion-based assessment, common grading practices, and strategies to promote fairness, consistency, and student mastery.

At 7:55 p.m., Student Board Members Samantha Gutierrez and Andres Zamora were excused from the meeting.

16. BUSINESS SERVICES

16.01 Resolution #19-2026 Approving the Engineer's Report for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 in Connection with the Recreation

Ms. Reyes presented Resolution 19-2026 approving the Engineer's Report for Fiscal Year 2026–2027 for the Claremont Unified School District Recreation Assessment District, including the annual assessment methodology, budget, and proposed maintenance and improvement projects for District recreational facilities. The resolution was presented as part of the annual process required under the Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972.

To adopt Resolution #19-2026, approving the Engineer's Report for fiscal year 2026-2027 in connection with the Claremont Unified School District Recreation Assessment District.

- Motioned by: Cheryl Fiello
- Seconded by: Richard O'Neill
- Roll Call Vote (Yeas): Richard O'Neill, Kathryn Dunn, Cheryl Fiello, Kathy Archer, Alex McDonald

Motion Carried

16.02 Resolution #20-2026 Declaration of Intention of the Board of Education to Levy and Collect Assessments Within the Claremont Recreation Assessment District for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Ms. Reyes presented Resolution 20-2026 declaring the Board of Education's intention to levy and collect assessments within the Claremont Unified School District Recreation Assessment District for Fiscal Year 2026–2027. The resolution established June 18, 2026, as the date for a public hearing and noted that the proposed assessment rate would remain unchanged from the prior fiscal year.

To adopt Resolution #20-2026 declaring the Board of Education's intention to levy and collect assessments with the Recreation Assessment District for fiscal year 2026-2027 and appoint Thursday, June 18, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. as the date and time to hold a public hearing to hear objections thereto.

- Motioned by: Kathryn Dunn
- Seconded by: Richard O'Neill
- Roll Call Vote (Yeas): Richard O'Neill, Kathryn Dunn, Cheryl Fiello, Kathy Archer, Alex McDonald

Motion Carried

17. GENERAL ITEMS

17.01 First Reading of Board Policies: 4119.24, 4219.24, 4319.24, & 6112

Dr. Elsasser presented a first reading of Board Policies 4119.24, 4219.24, and 4319.24, Maintaining Appropriate Adult-Student Interactions, and Board Policy 6112, School Day. Following Board discussion, a revision was suggested to BP 6112 to clarify that periods of recess total at least 30 minutes, and Board Clerk Cheryl Fiello and Board Member Kathryn Dunn were selected to work with staff on proposed revisions to the Maintaining Appropriate Adult-Student Interactions policies for a second reading.

18. CONSENT CALENDAR

18.01 Approval of Consent Calendar

To approve the Consent Calendar as presented.

- Motioned by: Cheryl Fiello
- Seconded by: Kathryn Dunn
- Yeas: Richard O'Neill, Kathryn Dunn, Cheryl Fiello, Kathy Archer, Alex McDonald

Motion Carried

18.02 Budget Transfers

To approve these transactions as presented.

18.03 Board Orders

To approve the A and B Warrants and Purchase Orders as of April 2026 as presented.

18.04 Gifts

To accept donations and gifts as listed in the attached.

18.05 Vendor Agreements

To authorize the following agreements with the attached vendors.

18.06 Certificated Personnel Actions

To approve the Certificated Personnel Actions as presented.

18.07 Classified Personnel Actions

To approve the Classified Personnel Actions as presented.

18.08 Consultant Agreements

To approve Consultant Agreements as presented.

18.09 Lease Agreement for Claremont Educational Foundation Summer Programs

To approve the Lease Agreement for Use of School Property between CUSD and CEF for Summer 2026.

18.10 Adoption of Board Policies: 1312.2, 5113, 5113.1, 6142.92, 6142.93, 6142.94, & 6152.1

To adopt Board Policies 1312.2, 5113, 5113.1, 6142.92, 6142.93, 6142.94, & 6152.1 as presented.

19. CALENDAR OF EVENTS

19.01 New or Revised Calendar Information

There are no changes to be made.

20. ADJOURNMENT

20.01 Final Adjournment

The meeting adjourned in closed session at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

_____

Dr. James Elsasser, Superintendent
Secretary to the Board of Education

Attested and Approved:

_____

Cheryl Fiello, Board Clerk
Board Approved on the 4th day of June 2026