1. OPENING ITEMS

A. Call to Order

Board President Hector Camacho, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. He announced that in light of the current health emergency and the Governor’s March 17, 2020, Executive Order N-29-20 suspending certain provisions of the Brown Act allowing governing boards to conduct meetings through remote access, the County Board was conducting the meeting in a hybrid format, with Board members and participants joining both in person and via webinar. Board President Camacho also noted in the effort to increase accessibility and opportunity for community engagement, simultaneous interpretation of the meeting would be provided in Spanish using Zoom technology through the end of Public Comment and would continue further into the meeting if people were utilizing the channel.

B. Approval of Agenda

After a motion by Ms. Gerard and a second by Ms. Bonini, the Board approved, by a vote of six in favor (Alvaro, Bonini, Camacho, Gerard, Lempert, and Ross), none opposed, and one absent (Cannon), by roll call vote, the September 1, 2021, agenda as presented.
2. **PUBLIC COMMENT**

The following speaker provided live public comment via Zoom:

- Janice Pellizzari, SMCOE teacher and San Mateo County Educators Association (SMCEA) President noted that staff are tackling issues as they come up and expressed appreciation to Sarah Notch, Executive Director, Special Education and Instruction, and Karen Gnusti, Executive Director, College, Career, and Secondary Education, for their support.

3. **INTRODUCTION OF NEW/RECENTLY PROMOTED STAFF**

   A. **Rebecca Vyduna, Coordinator, Leadership and Administrator Services, Teacher and Administrative Development, Educational Services Division**

   Cheryl Agrawal, Executive Director, Teacher and Administrator Development, Educational Services Division, introduced Rebecca Vyduna, Coordinator, Leadership and Administrator Services, Teacher and Administrator Development, Educational Services Division in a half-time position.

   Coordinator Vyduna shared she is thrilled to return to SMCOE and work with the Teacher and Administrator Development team, as well as aspiring administrators across the region.

   B. **Sarah Watanabe, Coordinator, K-12 Strong Workforce STEM, Educational Services Division**

   Karen Gnusti, Executive Director, College, Career, and Secondary Education, Educational Services Division, introduced Sarah Watanabe, Coordinator, K-12 Strong Workforce STEM, Educational Services Division.

   Coordinator Watanabe stated she was excited to begin her work as the K-12 Strong Workforce STEM coordinator. She described how SMCOE’s equity focus echoes her own and her new position is the natural culmination of her past experiences. Coordinator Watanabe said she chose education as a career path to be part of a system which supports all students academically and celebrates what makes each student unique. She shared her past experiences managing grants and databases as a science teacher and incorporating career exploration and skills into her instruction.

   C. **Tami Moore, Associate Superintendent, Human Resources, Office of the Superintendent**

   Superintendent Magee introduced Tami Moore, Associate Superintendent, Human Resources, Office of the Superintendent, who has been with SMCOE for one year and after a national search through School Services of California Ms. Moore emerged as the top candidate.

   Associate Superintendent Moore described her new position as a great responsibility and an opportunity to demonstrate and apply all she has learned over the last year. She spoke of coming to SMCOE during a time of great change and expressed her excitement to move forward in her work. Associate Superintendent Moore looks forward to supporting educational outcomes for students by helping attract and retain a diverse and highly qualified workforce across the county; innovating Human Resources (HR) processes; helping bring the department into the 21st century; and collaborating with and learning from HR leaders across the county.
INTRODUCTION OF NEW/RECENTLY PROMOTED STAFF (continued)

D. Kevin Bultema, Deputy Superintendent, Business Services, Business Services Division

Superintendent Magee introduced Kevin Bultema, Deputy Superintendent, Business Services, Business Services Division, who brings more than 20 years of experience in school finance leadership to his new role.

Deputy Superintendent Bultema expressed gratitude for the opportunity to return to a county office of education and serve on a larger regional level. He described his background working in public accounting and then in smaller, rural school districts; at the Butte County Office of Education; and at the Chico Unified School District. Deputy Superintendent Bultema outlined the seven expectations for his role including integrity; serving others; valuing relationships; remaining committed to the organization; providing quality work; being highly trained; and being kind.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. August 18, 2021, Regular Board Meeting

After a motion by Ms. Gerard and a second by Ms. Alvaro, the Board approved, by a vote of six in favor (Alvaro, Bonini, Camacho, Gerard, Lempert, and Ross), none opposed, and one absent (Cannon), by roll call vote, the Minutes of the August 18, 2021, Regular Board Meeting as presented.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

B. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-54 Recognizing September 15, 2021 - October 15, 2021, as National Hispanic Heritage Month and Latinx Heritage Month in the State of California
C. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-55 Honoring Dolores Rainey on Her Retirement
D. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-56 Honoring Vel Anderson-Randle on Her Retirement
E. Adopt Joint Resolution No. 21-57 Recognizing September 2021 as National Suicide Prevention Month

After a motion by Ms. Gerard and a second by Ms. Alvaro, the Board approved, by a vote of six in favor (Alvaro, Bonini, Camacho, Gerard, Lempert, and Ross), none opposed, and one absent (Cannon), by roll call vote, the Consent Agenda.

6. EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

A. Conduct Public Hearing Concerning Sufficiency of Textbooks and/or Instructional Materials

Board President Camacho opened the public hearing concerning sufficiency of textbooks and/or instructional materials. Receiving no public comment, Board President Camacho declared the Public Hearing closed.
B. Adopt Board Resolution No. 21-58 Sufficiency of Textbooks and/or Instructional Materials

Jeneé Littrell, Deputy Superintendent, Educational Services Division, reported she was before the Board to bring SMCOE into compliance with Education Code 60119, which assures that students in all K-12 programs are receiving standards-aligned curriculum both in textbooks and digital materials.

After a motion by Mr. Lempert and a second by Ms. Gerard, the Board approved, by a vote of six in favor (Alvaro, Bonini, Camacho, Gerard, Lempert, and Ross), none opposed, and one absent (Cannon), by roll call vote, Resolution No. 21-58 Sufficiency of Textbooks and/or Instructional Materials.

C. Receive Report on Opening of 2021-2022 School Year for San Mateo County Office of Education Student Programs

Deputy Superintendent Littrell provided an update on the opening of the 2021-2022 school year for SMCOE student programs.

Ms. Bonini asked for additional information about Gateway’s use of Effective School Solutions. Deputy Superintendent Littrell reported that Effective School Solutions was implemented on the first day of school and provided intensive sessions with staff during the pre-service days around trauma-informed practices and supporting behaviors. The immediate feedback was that staff enjoyed and benefited from the expertise and guidance of Effective School Solutions, who are on site every day, including a full-time therapist. Per contract, they are a whole-school program helping all teachers, administrators, and support staff provide trauma-informed, supportive spaces for student learners and providing more intensive services for up to ten students.

Mary McGrath, Executive Director, Safe and Supportive Schools, meets with the schools team and Effective School Solutions to evaluate each referral received and determine if that student should receive individual services, would benefit from the school-wide support, or has existing mental health services which could be continued.

Ms. Bonini asked if the students were middle-school age. Deputy Superintendent Littrell replied that there are middle school students, but most students are high-school age. They are looking to serve students in 7th-12th grade.

Ms. Bonini asked for additional information on the COVID-19 testing protocol in place. She also asked if there have been any positive cases, and if so, what was being done to support student learning. Deputy Superintendent Littrell clarified that all staff members are tested weekly and contact tracing is performed when there is a positive result among the staff and students. In the event that a student needs to be quarantined or placed on a modified quarantine, the team arranges to provide curriculum. This is complicated for students on Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) so the team must be mindful to provide time-certain packet and textbook work so there is no “change of placement.” Deputy Superintendent Littrell indicated the team has worked with legal counsel to keep students safe, honor quarantine requirements, allow students to continue to learn, and not cross the line and put a student’s offer of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) at risk.
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION (continued)

Ms. Bonini referred to student work while quarantining and asked if the independent study program is being implemented with these students or if they are just quarantining. Deputy Superintendent Littrell said only students at Gateway qualify for independent study.

Board President Camacho asked for trend data for enrollment for Court schools, as well as maximum enrollment. Deputy Superintendent Littrell answered that enrollment for Hillcrest could go over 100 students. Board President Camacho asked about current enrollment relative to “normal” times. Deputy Superintendent Littrell reported enrollment had been steadily declining prior to the pandemic, with an average of 30-35 students enrolled in Hillcrest at any one time. Additionally, there was a significant dip when COVID hit, and there has not yet been a jump back to higher numbers.

Board President Camacho asked about trends in enrollment at Hillcrest, if there are differences in why students are enrolling, and how that factors into the type of program being offered. Deputy Superintendent Littrell explained that the team is unaware of the offenses for which students are brought in. This is confidential information, and the education team simply serves the students.

Board President Camacho wondered if that information would help with care. Deputy Superintendent Littrell spoke of the weekly multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings where SMCOE staff participates with probation and Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) staff to discuss the individual needs of students without violating psychological or criminal confidential information. They want staff committed to serving students, and other issues may distract from the ability to focus on student needs.

Ms. Alvaro commented that in all the years she has been involved in the Court schools, the team never had access to information on student offenses. Legally, this information could not be shared and they did not want to look at students in terms of their offenses. Board President Camacho stated it was not about the team knowing about the offenses, but that it might be helpful if someone in the education sphere, such as the Superintendent, was in the room when those discussions happen. Since the discussions are about adolescents and incarceration, he would love to have the education community be in conversations.

Ms. Bonini shared she has been attending the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission (JJDPC) meetings as a liaison from the Commission on Disabilities. While the JJDPC does not share offenses, they are inquisitive about demographics and provide that information, which is available on some level. They are also discussing how youth needs are more acute.

Mr. Ross asked if the team is experiencing notable differences in socialization and behavior management challenges after a year and a half of shelter in place, and if so, what responses are being discussed. He suspected these issues go beyond the borders of our programs and will be discussed in schools across the country and around the world. Mr. Ross described how learning loss is one challenge but there is an entire set of social and behavioral challenges which educators are not used to addressing and were not anticipated. Deputy Superintendent Littrell stated the team has engaged in conversations with Student Services Directors and mental health partners for the last year because families and teachers educating online were reporting many students in distress and presenting with mental health needs which could not be addressed during shelter in place. The team was in contact
EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION (continued)

with experts at Stanford and the state level, and many mental health professionals are suggesting it will take roughly seven years for young people to recover from the mental health toll caused by the pandemic. With the Mental Health Student Services Act (MHSSA) and funding from the State to support mental health and trauma-informed services, Executive Director McGrath and her team have been able to partner alongside districts, many of whom have hired mental health staff. Unfortunately, district leaders are already anecdotally reporting extremely concerning behaviors. In their third week of school, the team already had their first threat assessment of the year and is hearing that students are presenting in alarming ways. Deputy Superintendent Littrell indicated she is proud of the work of her team and appreciates that SMCOE leadership envisioned Gateway as a possibility to help students restore their confidence and be successful in their path.

Mr. Ross discussed how this is an unusual and real service which could be provided to districts at this time. He is also hearing anecdotal stories of unanticipated challenges educators are facing in many schools on a distressing scale. Mr. Ross agreed much of this arises from mental health needs, but the reality is that the needs of some students are so great that they impact the experience of all students and teachers. He indicated that Gateway providing a solution will be incredibly important and wondered if the team is prepared for the potential student population growth as this becomes more of a recognized issue.

Deputy Superintendent Littrell assured the team has done the best planning possible and is prepared for increased enrollment. They believe they may end up with as many as 30 students. She reminded the Board there are currently eight students at Gateway and the team reviews every referral with the goal to bring in students who will benefit from the program and works with districts to find the appropriate placement for students with greater needs. Deputy Superintendent Littrell shared the program was created in collaboration with districts based on what they were hearing, seeing, and anticipating. Because they were able to utilize grant funds, they were able to reduce the price charged per slot, so all districts reserved more slots. These districts are anticipating placing more students, and the program will continue to be built and strengthened.

7. OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A. Receive Report on San Mateo County Office of Education's 2021 Employee Survey Results

Superintendent Magee provided an update on SMCOE’s 2021 Employee Survey results.

Mr. Ross wondered if there were any survey responses which signaled opportunities to work on the different modes of communication for staff and stakeholders. He discussed how for organizational leadership, the communication question is always a problem, challenge, and opportunity for improvement. SMCOE does so much around communication through many channels, and he asked if that was a theme. Superintendent Magee agreed one challenge of a big organization is strong communication pathways. She noted Patricia Love, Executive Director, Strategy and Communication, and her team provide strong, reliable, stable methods of communication to all staff and especially around COVID. She added there is a need to increase direct communication with school staff on a more regular basis, where she can hear directly from them.
Superintendent Magee discussed hopes to share out highlights from meetings such as the Executive Leadership Retreat with all teams and develop new ways to provide voice for employees.

Board President Camacho referred to the narrative selection format of the survey and asked for an example of how that differs from Likert-scale questions. Superintendent Magee offered to follow up and share with the Board some of the questions and how answers were created. She explained a Likert-scale follows the scale of “strongly agree, agree, etc.” while these answers were more nuanced for some questions. The goal was to get more information out of the answer than a rating. Superintendent Magee reiterated she would share questions and answer choices with the Board.

Board President Camacho referred to the differences in experiences between those at 101 Twin Dolphin Drive and school site staff and recalled his question from two years ago about how each employee sees their role in supporting students. He wondered if it would help to administer two separate surveys, perhaps with the same questions, because the functions which occur at 101 Twin Dolphin Drive are so distinct from those in the field working day to day with students. He asked how that data would be different and help shape such a complex organization.

Superintendent Magee reported this data actually was acquired from the survey respondents, as most survey-takers noted their location. In the original survey in 2018, most of the dissatisfaction in the survey responses came from the school site level, and as a result of that data, SM COE worked on changing systems and mechanisms with the school teams. The 2019 data was significantly improved, so they felt they obtained the right information about what wasn’t working and were able to respond. Superintendent Magee noted this time around, it was a flipped experience with most of the neutral, disagree, or less satisfied answers coming from the central office. The team is now looking at structure, governance, and shared leadership to build that model as a priority moving forward, and she believes this will help impact those respondents. Superintendent Magee summarized that responses can be broken down by site.

Board President Camacho asked whether exit surveys are used with this data in planning. Superintendent Magee informed that Associate Superintendent Moore hopes to strengthen HR processes because there currently is little exit data for staff. There are interviews but data has not been collected for analysis. She indicated this is a goal for the revised HR processes.

B. Superintendent’s Comments

Superintendent Magee spoke of how COVID in schools has been taking up the headlines and SMCOE has been busy responding to and supporting schools in coordination with San Mateo County Health and the California Department of Public Health. Superintendent Magee said districts are working hard to assemble accurate and current dashboards for COVID cases in their school districts.

Local districts are also shifting their contact tracing process onto a statewide online system known as the School Portal for Outbreak Tracking (SPOT). Even though SPOT is not public facing, Superintendent Magee is encouraging districts to put out as much data as they can on a weekly basis.
Superintendent Magee reported that the Outdoor Education team, under the leadership of Karen Gnusti, Executive Director, College, Career, and Secondary Education, has been working all summer to prepare to launch Outdoor Education. She reminded Board members that the program was closed down the previous year under the distance learning model, but this year SM COE committed to hiring a full staff and has a plethora of COVID protocols that go above and beyond a school classroom. The team looks forward to welcoming the first schools attending Outdoor Education this month.

Superintendent Magee reported that testing protocols for SMCOE staff and students are up and running at the school sites. On September 7, all 101 Twin Dolphin Drive staff will return to work in person every day. Protocols are ongoing and regularly communicated to staff. Since cases are plateauing in the county, there are hopes to lighten up the testing in October based on conditions.

Superintendent Magee described being busy supporting legislative efforts regarding the education budget clean-up bill, especially around providing additional staffing to schools. Many schools are suffering from unfilled positions, have a need for substitutes for teachers out on quarantine, and to provide staffing for independent study. Lobbying efforts with the legislators have been focused on expanding the limits of the State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) contribution earnings for retirees in order to take advantage of the experienced retiree workforce in these emergency times. The other effort has been about building in as much flexibility with allowing qualified adults to come in and serve as substitutes. Superintendent Magee summarized these as the two big asks of the legislature.

Superintendent Magee indicated she is looking forward to the upcoming California County Board of Education (CCBE) conference.

Lastly, Superintendent Magee wished a happy birthday to Mr. Ross who was celebrating his birthday that evening and sent upcoming birthday wishes to both Claire Cunningham, Chief Deputy County Counsel, and Ms. Alvaro on September 14.

Board President Camacho asked about the expectations for program teachers who have to quarantine and whether they need to use sick leave. Superintendent Magee confirmed if they are sick, they use their sick leave and do not teach. If there was a case in a classroom which didn’t impact the teacher, the classroom would be on modified quarantine.

8. **BOARD MEMBERS**

   A. **Discuss/Act on Designation of the San Mateo County Board of Education's Voting Representative at the California County Boards of Education (CCBE) In-Person Meeting as part of the California School Boards Association (CSBA) Conference December 3, 2021, in San Diego, CA**

After a motion by Mr. Ross and a second by Ms. Alvaro, the Board approved, by a vote of six in favor (Alvaro, Bonini, Camacho, Gerard, Lempert, and Ross), none opposed, and one absent (Cannon), by roll call vote, Beverly Gerard as the San Mateo County Board of Education's Voting Representative at
BOARD MEMBERS (continued)

the California County Boards of Education (CCBE) In-Person Meeting as part of the California School Boards Association (CSBA) Conference December 3, 2021, in San Diego, CA.

B. Discuss/Act on Nominations for California School Boards Association (CSBA) Directors-at-Large: African American, American Indian, County

Mr. Ross suggested Dana Dean for the county nomination and explained Ms. Dean is a former CCBE President who might be willing to take on this responsibility. He surmised she would be receiving additional nominations.

Ms. Gerard suggested Bruce Dennis for the county nomination and informed Mr. Dennis is the current County Director-at-Large. She asked Mr. Ross if he had spoken to Ms. Dean about running for the office. Mr. Ross shared his understanding that Mr. Dennis did not want to run again and Ms. Dean is planning to step in. Ms. Gerard stated she was not aware of that information.

Board President Camacho informed the nomination is due by October 1. Ms. Alvaro wondered if Mr. Ross and Ms. Gerard could follow up with their prospective nominations and report back to the Board at the next meeting, in order to have a more informed discussion. Ms. Gerard said she was happy to do so. Board President Camacho confirmed this would have to happen by the next meeting because there is only one meeting between now and the deadline.

Mr. Ross stated he would report back with more information. He shared he would support Mr. Dennis’ renomination if he seeks this office but his understanding was that he did not intend to do so.

C. Second Reading and Potential Action on New Board Policy 6158 Regarding Independent Study

Ms. Alvaro asked if there were any changes to the Board policy from the first reading at the previous Board meeting. Marco Chávez, Associate Superintendent, Educational Services Division, confirmed the only changes were the cleaning up and removal of some legal references to Education Code scattered throughout the Board policy because these are typically not included in Board policies.

After a motion by Ms. Alvaro and a second by Ms. Gerard, the Board approved, by a vote of six in favor (Alvaro, Bonini, Camacho, Gerard, Lempert, and Ross), none opposed, and one absent (Cannon), by roll call vote, New Board Policy 6158 Regarding Independent Study.

D. Board Member Comments

Ms. Alvaro

Ms. Alvaro thanked the amazing Information Technology (IT) staff who helped put the Board meeting together because she knows it must have been complicated. She spoke of a friend on the Board of a non-profit in another state who is having difficulty making their Board meetings work.

Ms. Alvaro indicated she is still waiting to hear about the library room reservation for the Board/Superintendent retreat because there is a long process to go through.
Ms. Alvaro shared she looks forward to attending the CCBE Conference remotely. She thanked Mr. Ross and the committee for the possibility to attend remotely because she is excited to hear what is going on but is happy to do so from home.

Ms. Alvaro complimented Executive Director Love and the Communications staff on their excellent work and wondered if there was anything which could be done to help local school districts allay fears and rumors. She shared hearing a rumor that teachers in San Mateo County must pay for their own substitutes so teachers are coming to school when sick, which is untrue. Ms. Alvaro indicated when the community has these fears, it affects how they feel about students going back to school. She also heard that schools in San Mateo County are not “bothering” to test staff for COVID, which is also untrue. She asked if anything could be done to help stop the rumor mill.

Mr. Ross
Mr. Ross agreed it had been an amazingly effective meeting and shared high hopes that the CCBE Conference will be equally effective in the hybrid format. He congratulated the entire staff for making the meeting work. Mr. Ross indicated he looks forward to people participating in the CCBE Conference and he looks forward to seeing everyone.

Mr. Lempert
Mr. Lempert wished Mr. Ross a happy birthday, and a soon-to-be happy birthday to Ms. Alvaro. He congratulated the team on their work on the hybrid meeting and stated he looks forward to seeing everyone in person at the next meeting. Mr. Lempert welcomed the extraordinary new leaders and congratulated Superintendent Magee on the new team.

Ms. Bonini
Ms. Bonini shared she looks forward to attending her first CCBE Conference.

Ms. Bonini noted in line with the resolution passed recognizing September 2021 as National Suicide Prevention Month, CSBA shared an article earlier that day focusing on the needs for schools to address the youth mental health crisis. She expressed her appreciation for the work being done by SMCOE in collaboration with many community partners. Ms. Bonini reported she attended a meeting earlier that day for the Mental Health and Substance Abuse Recovery Commission (MHSARC), for which she is a liaison, and they shared a calendar the Office of Diversity and Equity is putting out for Suicide Prevention Month with many different events. She encouraged everyone to check out the calendar and read the CSBA article. The MHSARC had shared statistics on the increasing rates of suicide and she reiterated she is appreciative of the work being done on this issue.

Ms. Bonini discussed quarantining and pivoting quickly to distance learning. She presumed SMCOE is doing its best to serve students, as are other districts, and explained the law is complicated right now. She has been speaking with Martin Fatooh, CSBA Public Affairs and Community Engagement Representative; district leaders; the community; and Senator Becker around advocating for flexibility. Ms. Bonini shared it would be helpful, in line with the Board’s resolution “Urging California to Set the Expectation of Fully Reopened Schools in Fall 2021” passed in May, to have flexibility in case of emergency. She stated independent study is
complicated and has many requirements, so her hope is to obtain traction around a temporary and feasible solution for distance learning which is time-limited.

Ms. Gerard
Ms. Gerard welcomed Deputy Superintendent Bultema and shared it was nice to see everyone after a long time. She is happy to be back.

Ms. Gerard reminded everyone attending the CCBE Conference about the strict COVID protocols being observed thanks to Mr. Ross, who was adamant about ensuring everyone’s safety. She informed that all county offices were also asked to contribute a gift basket. Superintendent Magee confirmed the gift basket was being put together by the Superintendent’s Office staff. Ms. Gerard described how the gift baskets create excitement at the conference.

Board President Camacho
Board President Camacho updated the San Mateo County School Boards Association (SMCSBA) newsletter was distributed. Superintendent Magee will be resuming Superintendent calls with County Board members beginning the following Tuesday, with two per month scheduled over the next three months.

Board President Camacho shared he looks forward to attending the CCBE Conference and presenting on SMCOE’s teacher pathways and model programs for which SMCOE is leading in the state. He is excited to be a part of that panel.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:53 p.m. Board President Camacho announced the next regular meeting would be held Wednesday, September 22, 2021, at 7:00 p.m. in a hybrid format.

Nancy Magee, Secretary
jlp