



Board Meeting Summary / December 2025

STUDENT SHOWCASE



Nevada Union High School Culinary Arts Program

Nevada Union High School Culinary Arts Teacher, Kelli Sawyer and two of her star students, Kiara Siniscalco and Jolie Varanini shared cookies with the Board members and provided an overview of the popular and growing program. Their presentation included four course levels, dual enrollment, pathway completers, internships, the Miner Diner and a very busy catering program with over 90 events last year.

NJUHSTA President, Kelly Good announced that negotiations for the current year are complete and she expressed appreciation that the newly approved calendar reflects staff needs, despite unavoidable constraints. She clarified that the idea of a year-round/modified calendar was only an early "thought bubble," and any such major change would require broad community collaboration. She highlighted positive collaboration with CSEA and district leadership, noting that regular meetings have strengthened communication. She shared that staff are looking forward to a well-earned break and upcoming union social events. She concluded by acknowledging the emotion and courage shown by community members who spoke during public comment.

CSEA Chapter President, Kayla Bardsley shared positive updates from the recent chapter meeting, noting that four new members have joined, and staff expressed feeling welcomed and celebrated at the fall gathering. She welcomed Jessica Urzua as their new chapter secretary. She reported improved communication, strong relationships with administration and the Board, and a generally positive climate among members. Her goals moving forward include more frequent communication and gathering regular feedback from departments. She concluded by noting the chapter's continued growth and positive momentum.

Superintendent Frisella thanked the Trustees who attended the CSBA annual conference and highlighted the useful sessions on state budget and policy topics. He acknowledged concerns about recent violent incidents and noted that the district has been actively working on safety through staff training, bystander/upstander education, and strategic goals focused on school Safety, Culture, and Well-being. He provided an overview of the proposed 2026-27 school calendar, noting the earlier start date, efforts to balance semesters and alignment with regional districts.

Academic Update Report - Assistant Superintendent Levirt Griffin presented information on the California School Dashboard as well as a CAASPP overview that included information about how the State measures progress. The presentation highlighted CAASPP scores by site for ELA, Math, Science and ELPAC and reported an overall positive trend, district-wide as well as next steps for supporting continued improvement.

Safety, Well-Being, and Culture - Nevada Union High School Principal, Kelly Rhoden provided an update on Safety, Culture, and Climate, specific to Nevada Union High School. The report included emphasis on two of NU's goals; *Strengthen Tier 1 Instruction and Data Driven Practice* and *Strengthen Communication and Consistent Campus Culture*. In addition to focusing on attendance and interventions, she highlighted CTE pathways, Visual and Performing Arts programs, campus activities, and student clubs as key drivers of positive school climate.



Trustee Michael Howe (Student Representative) reported attending the CSBA conference and the Student Board Member Day when he connected with peers statewide and gained insight to strengthen student representation. He also met with ASB leaders from multiple school sites to gather student perspectives on upcoming agenda items with plans for regular future meetings.

Trustee Olivia Pritchett (Area 1) shared reflections from attending the CSBA conference, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, professional development, and a firm commitment to ensuring all students feel safe and that they belong. She noted that acknowledging difficult realities and listening to students who may be afraid to speak up is essential, and stressed the Board's role in presenting a unified message that every student matters. She also reported attending the Bear River/Nevada Union basketball game, highlighting the positive school spirit and student performances during the event.

Clerk Wendy Willoughby (Area 2) reported visiting multiple school sites, attending athletic events and arts performances, and participating in the CSBA conference, noting the value of professional learning and relationship-building with trustees, staff, and student leadership. She expressed interest in sharing conference insights with the Board to inform future work. She also reflected on the importance of collaboration as a guiding principle and addressed recent acts of violence, acknowledging the community's strong response while emphasizing the continued need for partnership, education, and proactive efforts to improve student safety, well-being, and school culture.

Trustee Kelly Clark (Area 3) shared reflections from attending the CSBA conference, noting that while districts statewide face common challenges, Nevada County's rural character and strong arts, agriculture, and outdoor culture make it unique. She emphasized the importance of fostering a spirit of charity, kindness, and goodwill in schools, encouraging students, staff, and the community to assume the best in one another to create safe, respectful, and supportive learning environments where all students can thrive.

President Andrew Klein (Area 4) addressed a recent email that mischaracterized district safety efforts, citing data showing improvements in student safety and academic outcomes. He emphasized that student safety should not be politicized, reaffirmed his commitment to legal compliance and fair discipline, and joined the Board in condemning violence while commending law enforcement and district staff and underscoring the need for consistent policy enforcement and modeling appropriate behavior to help the community heal.

Vice President Ken Johnson (Area 5) reflected on comments made during the meeting emphasizing that when students feel unsafe, their learning and overall well-being suffer. He stated that student safety must be the district's top priority, acknowledging that while the Board cannot control individual behavior, it has a responsibility to strengthen discipline practices, seek expert guidance if needed, and ensure schools provide a safe and supportive environment for all students.

ITEMS OF INTEREST/ACTION TAKEN

- The Board elected their 2026 officers, with no changes in positions.
- The Board heard public comment from more than 20 guests.
- The Board approved the First Interim Budget Revision.
- The Board accepted donations from the Blackbaud Giving Trust, Vassar Ranch, Drivers Ed Direct LLC, Jack Victor, Andrew Klein, N.U. Connection Boosters, Hunt Propane, and Robert and Linda Hoffman.
- Joint Venture Agreements (approved internship placements) were approved with Nevada County Resource Conservation District 530, J & S Smog, and Fletcher's Auto Glass, LLC.
- The Board approved the 2026/27 school calendar
- The Sierra TrailBlazers Running for Fitness Scholarship was established
- The Thomas L. Lott Scholarship was established
- The following new courses were approved:
 - EAP Music Theory (11-0)
 - Aviation 1: Introductory Course (9-0)
 - Intermediate Residential & Commercial Construction (11-0)
 - Entrepreneurship & Innovation (DE) (11-0)
 - AP PreCalculus (11-0)
 - Sociology (11-0)
 - Basic Foundation in Personal Finance (11-0)
 - Spanish for Heritage Speakers (13-0)
 - Global Arts and Crafts 1 (13-0)
 - Global Arts and Crafts 2 (13-0)
 - Basic Integrated Math 1 (13-0)
 - Basic Pre-Integrated Math 1 (13-0)
 - Technical Theater II (11Y-0N-2Absentions)
 - Production Drama Support (11Y-0N-2Absentions)
- The following course revisions were approved:
 - Ceramics 1 (11-0)
 - Studio Art 1 (11-0)
 - Biology & Sustainable Ag (5Y-3N-3Absentions)
 - Ag Mechanics II (11-0)
 - Ag Mechanics III (11-0)
 - Ag Mechanics IV (11-0)
 - Production Drama (13-0)
 - Technical Theater I (13-0)
 - Beginning Drama (13-0)
 - Competition Drama (13-0)

For details or additional information, please see the full meeting agenda [HERE](#).

The meeting recording can be found [HERE](#) when published.

* This is a summary only, official minutes are approved at the next regular Board meeting.



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