



Mountain View Los Altos Union High School District  
Minutes for the Board of Trustees  
on Monday, October 27, 2025, in the  
District Office Board Room  
1299 Bryant Avenue, Mountain View, CA 94040  
6:00 PM Closed and 7:00 PM Regular Session

Voting Members Present: Thida Cornes, Vice President  
Vadim Katz, Board Member  
Alex Levich, Clerk  
Dr. Esmeralda Ortiz, President  
Catherine Vonnegut, Board Member

Voting Members Absent: None

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## 1.0 Call to Order

### 1.1 Call to Order

The Board President will call the meeting to order.

**Recommendation:** Call to Order.

Board President, Dr. Ortiz called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM and established a quorum, 5-0.

## 2.0 Public Comment

### 2.1 Public Comment on Items Scheduled for Discussion in Closed Session

This time is reserved for any person to address the Board of Trustees on items scheduled for discussion during Closed Session only. These presentations are limited to three minutes each. Speakers are not allowed to yield their time.

**Recommendation:** Listen to public comment.

There were no requests to address the Board on Closed Session matters.

## 3.0 Closed Session Agenda at 6:00 p.m.

**3.1 Consideration of Student Discipline or Other Confidential Student Matter Pursuant to Government Code §35146 and §48912(b)**

**Recommendation:** For Information/Action.

**3.2 Conference with Labor Negotiator Regarding Negotiations with CSEA, DTA and Non-represented Groups Pursuant to Government Code §54957.6 Agency**

**Negotiators:** Leyla Benson and Eric Volta

**Recommendation:** Information/action.

**3.3 Employee Discipline/Dismissal/Release Pursuant to Government Code §54597 - Two Potential Cases**

**Recommendation:** For information/action.

**3.4 Conference with Legal Counsel – Anticipated Litigation: Significant Exposure to Litigation Pursuant to Government Code §54956.9 - Two Potential Cases**

**Recommendation:** Information/action.

**4.0 Adjourn to Closed Session**

**5.0 Reconvene Open Session at 7:00 p.m.**

Board President, Dr. Ortiz, called the regular meeting to order at 7:13 PM

**6.0 Preliminary Business**

**6.1 Pledge of Allegiance and Roll Call**

The Board President will lead the Pledge of Allegiance and conduct Roll Call.

**Recommendation:** Information.

Board President, Dr. Ortiz, led the Pledge of Allegiance and noted that Trustees Vonnegut, Levich, Katz and Cornes were present—also, student trustees Claire Schwarzhoff (MVHS) and Lucy Lai (LAHS).

**6.2 Approval of the Meeting Agenda**

The Board will review and approve the meeting agenda.

**Recommendation:** Approve the meeting agenda.

**ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member **(Catherine Vonnegut)** Moved, Member **(Thida Cornes)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'Approve the meeting agenda'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 5 - 0**

Catherine Vonnegut Yes

Thida Cornes Yes

Esmeralda Ortiz Yes

Vadim Katz Yes

Alex Levich Yes

**6.3 Report on Action Taken in Closed Session**

**Item #3.4 Conference with Legal Counsel**

In Closed Session, the Board voted 5 to 0 to approve a compromise agreement with parents of a student to resolve potential and threatened claims against the District in exchange for funding of private services and an alternate program for student during the 2025-26 and 2026-27 school years in an amount not exceed \$27,000.00.

Member (**Catherine Vonnegut**) Moved, Member (**Thida Cornes**) Seconded to approve the Compromise agreement motion. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **carried. 5 - 0**

Esmeralda Ortiz	Yes
Catherine Vonnegut	Yes
Thida Cornes	Yes
Vadim Katz	Yes
Alex Levich	Yes

#### **6.4 Audience is notified that the open session will be audio taped and streamed**

At the beginning of the meeting, the Board president shall announce that a recording or broadcast is being made at the direction of the Board and that the recording or broadcast may capture images and sounds of those attending the meeting.

**Recommendation:** For information

#### **7.0 Communications**

##### **7.1 Student Board Member Reports**

Student Board members may wish to make a report.

**Recommendation:** Information.

Claire Schwarzhoff (Mountain View High School) and Lucy Lai (Los Altos High School) provided an update on activities at their respective schools.

##### **7.2 District Organizations: CSEA and DTA Updates**

At regular Board meetings, a single spokesperson of each recognized District organization (CSEA, DTA) may give a brief update. Items are limited to those that are informational.

**Recommendation:** For information.

District Teacher Association (DTA) President Dave Campbell spoke on behalf of DTA members to acknowledge the difficult discussion surrounding the Ethnic Studies course. He indicated that they want to maintain a collaborative, respectful process as these changes are navigated together. He also stated that this is not an easy conversation, but DTA appreciates the continued partnership and willingness to engage staff and the community. He also indicated that DTA remains committed to working together to finding solutions that reflect shared values.

##### **7.3 Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda**

Anyone wishing to address the Board on any topic not listed on the agenda should make a request to the Board President by completing a request to be heard form and present it to the Superintendent's Executive Assistant. The President will recognize those who desire to speak either during the "Public Comment" section or during the particular agenda item. Each speaker is allocated a maximum of 3 minutes. If you wish to speak on an issue not on the agenda, please be advised that the Board may not take action on any item not specifically listed on the agenda. The Board members may ask brief questions for clarification, but may not otherwise discuss the issue. The Board values constructive

community comments and suggestions and welcomes your participation in the democratic process.

**Recommendation:** Listen to public comment.

The Board received the following public comment(s):

Margaret Peterson

Ben Halsted

## **8.0 Recognitions and Resolutions**

### **8.1 MVLA Spotlight: Sybil Cramer, LAHS Green Team Volunteer**

**Recommendation:** Recognize MVLA Spotlight recipient

Assistant Principal Nicholas Betancur announced Sybil Cramer as the MVLA Spotlight Award recipient for Los Altos High School. He indicated that she has built a lasting legacy through her many years as a green team volunteer/leader on campus. He also expressed appreciation for all her years of dedicated service in making LAHS a model school of sustainability.

## **9.0 Consolidated Agenda**

### **9.1 Personnel Report**

Personnel Report

The Personnel Office reports the district's personnel changes at each meeting of the Board of Trustees.

**Recommendation:** Approve the Personnel Report.

#### **ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member **(Catherine Vonnegut)** Moved, Member **(Alex Levich)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'Approve the Personnel Report'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 5 - 0**

Catherine Vonnegut Yes

Thida Cornes Yes

Esmeralda Ortiz Yes

Vadim Katz Yes

Alex Levich Yes

### **9.2 Agreement Between Mountain View Los Altos High School and Concern Employee Assistance Program**

Concern's Employee Assistance Program offers MVLA employees and their dependents short-term counseling for personal issues such as marriage and family relationships, substance abuse, stress, anxiety, depression or loss of loved ones. And then, when appropriate, Concern counselors will assist in making referrals to community resources for additional support. Additional services such as one-time financial or legal consultations are also available as well. All MVLA Employees also have access to the Concern website which contains various resources and toolkits for health and well-being.

**Recommendation:** Approve the Agreement Between Mountain View Los Altos High School and Concern Employee Assistance Program.

#### **ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member **(Catherine Vonnegut)** Moved, Member **(Alex Levich)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'Approve the Agreement Between Mountain View Los Altos High School and Concern Employee Assistance Program'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 5 - 0**

Catherine Vonnegut	Yes
Thida Cornes	Yes
Esmeralda Ortiz	Yes
Vadim Katz	Yes
Alex Levich	Yes

**9.3 Mountain View High School's Journalism Trip to Minneapolis, Minnesota April 15-18, 2026, to Attend the National High School Journalism Convention.**

This is the initial request for 23 students and 3 chaperones to travel to Minneapolis, MN April 15-18, 2026, to participate in the National High School Journalism Convention. Per Board Policy 6153, students will miss two school days of instruction and will make arrangements with their teachers prior to their trip.

**Recommendation:** Approve Mountain View High School's Journalism Trip to Minneapolis, MN, April 15-18, 2026, to Attend the National High School Journalism Convention.

**ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member **(Catherine Vonnegut)** Moved, Member **(Alex Levich)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'Approve Mountain View High School's Journalism Trip to Minneapolis, MN, April 15-18, 2026, to Attend the National High School Journalism Convention'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 5 - 0**

Catherine Vonnegut	Yes
Thida Cornes	Yes
Esmeralda Ortiz	Yes
Vadim Katz	Yes
Alex Levich	Yes

**9.4 Los Altos High School's Journalism Trip to Minneapolis, Minnesota April 15-18, 2026, to Attend the National High School Journalism Convention.**

This is the initial request for 24 students and 2 chaperones to travel to Minneapolis, MN April 15-18, 2026, to participate in the National High School Journalism Convention. Per Board Policy 6153, students will miss two school days of instruction and will make arrangements with their teachers prior to their trip.

**Recommendation:** Approve Los Altos High School's Journalism Trip to Minneapolis, MN, April 15-18, 2026, to Attend the National High School Journalism Convention.

**ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member **(Catherine Vonnegut)** Moved, Member **(Alex Levich)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'Approve Los Altos High School's Journalism Trip to Minneapolis, MN, April 15-18, 2026, to Attend the National High School Journalism Convention'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 5 - 0**

Catherine Vonnegut	Yes
Thida Cornes	Yes
Esmeralda Ortiz	Yes
Vadim Katz	Yes
Alex Levich	Yes

**9.5 Mountain View High School's Choir Trip to Costa Rica, February 14-21, 2026 to Participate in Global Music Exchange and Performances**

This is the final request for 50 students and 10 chaperones to travel to Costa Rica, February 14-21, 2026, to participate in a global music exchange. Per Board Policy 6153, students will not miss any school days as this trip concludes over Winter Break.

**Recommendation:** Approve Mountain View High School's Choir Trip to Costa Rica, February 14-21, 2026 to Participate in Global Music Exchange and Performances.

**ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member (**Catherine Vonnegut**) Moved, Member (**Alex Levich**) Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'Approve Mountain View High School's Choir Trip to Costa Rica, February 14-21, 2026 to Participate in Global Music Exchange and Performances'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 5 - 0**

Catherine Vonnegut	Yes
Thida Cornes	Yes
Esmeralda Ortiz	Yes
Vadim Katz	Yes
Alex Levich	Yes

#### **9.6 Mountain View High School's Choir Trip to Sumba and Bali, Indonesia, April 3-15, 2026, to Participate in Global Music Exchange and Performances**

This is the final request for 50 students and 12 chaperones to travel to Sumba and Bali, Indonesia, from April 3-15, 2026, to participate in a cultural and music exchange. Per Board Policy 6153, students will miss three school days of instruction and will make arrangements with their teachers prior to their trip.

**Recommendation:** Approve Mountain View High School's Choir Trip to Sumba and Bali, Indonesia, April 3-15, 2026, to Participate in Global Music Exchange and Performances

##### **ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member (**Catherine Vonnegut**) Moved, Member (**Alex Levich**) Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'Approve Mountain View High School's Choir Trip to Sumba and Bali, Indonesia, April 3-15, 2026, to Participate in Global Music Exchange and Performances'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 5 - 0**

Catherine Vonnegut	Yes
Thida Cornes	Yes
Esmeralda Ortiz	Yes
Vadim Katz	Yes
Alex Levich	Yes

#### **9.7 Gifts And Donations**

The Fiscal Services Department reports gifts and donations the district has received at each meeting of the Board of Trustees. REPORT \$275 from James Chien to MVHS Dance \$500 from Frances Sijstermans and Ping Wang to LAHS Mandarin Program \$5,350 from Anonymous to MVHS Dance

**Recommendation:** Accept the gifts and donations listed above and request that acknowledgement be sent to the donor expressing the Board's appreciation.

##### **ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member (**Catherine Vonnegut**) Moved, Member (**Alex Levich**) Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'Accept the gifts and donations listed above and request that acknowledgement be sent to the donor expressing the Board's appreciation'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 5 - 0**

Catherine Vonnegut	Yes
Thida Cornes	Yes
Esmeralda Ortiz	Yes
Vadim Katz	Yes
Alex Levich	Yes

#### **9.8 Minutes for the Board of Trustees Study, Closed and Regular Meetings Conducted on October 13, 2025.**

Minutes for the Board of Trustees Special, Closed and Regular Meetings Conducted on October 13, 2025, are presented for approval.

**Recommendation:** Approve the minutes for the Board of Trustees meeting(s).

**ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member **(Catherine Vonnegut)** Moved, Member **(Alex Levich)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'Approve the minutes for the Board of Trustees meeting(s)'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion. **Carried. 5 - 0**

Catherine Vonnegut	Yes
Thida Cornes	Yes
Esmeralda Ortiz	Yes
Vadim Katz	Yes
Alex Levich	Yes

## 10.0 Items Pulled from Consolidated Motion for Discussion

N/A

## 11.0 Public Hearing

### 11.1 MVLA District Teachers Association (DTA) and MVLA District Sunshine Agreement for 2025-26 Contract Reopeners

District Teachers Association and District Sunshine Agreement for 2025-26 Contract Reopeners

The Board of Trustees will consider approving the District Teachers Association and District Sunshine Agreement for 2024-2025 Contract Reopeners

**Recommendation:** Approve 2025-26 mutual contract reopeners (District and DTA) as described

Leyla Benson, Associate Superintendent of Personnel, introduced the items for the Public Hearing.

The Public hearing opened at 7:47 PM and closed at 7:48 PM.

## 12.0 Business/Action Items

### 12.1 MVLA District Teachers Association (DTA) and MVLA District Sunshine Agreement for 2025-26 Contract Reopeners

District Teachers Association and District Sunshine Agreement for 2025-2026 Contract Reopeners

The Board of Trustees will consider approving the District Teachers Association and District Sunshine Agreement for 2025-26 Contract Reopeners

**Recommendation:** Approve 2025-26 mutual contract reopeners (District and DTA) as described

**ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member **(Catherine Vonnegut)** Moved, Member **(Thida Cornes)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'Approve 2025-26 mutual contract reopeners (District and DTA) as described'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 5 - 0**

Catherine Vonnegut	Yes
Thida Cornes	Yes
Esmeralda Ortiz	Yes
Vadim Katz	Yes
Alex Levich	Yes

### **12.2 Northwest Special Education Local Plan Area (NW SELPA) Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Nomination.**

The Northwest Special Education Local Plan Area (NW SELPA) Community Advisory Committee (CAC) is composed of parents, educators, and community members dedicated to supporting students who receive special education services. The CAC provides guidance to NW SELPA on issues related to special education programs and services, while also promoting collaboration among families, schools, and the broader community. The CAC meets several times each year and organizes parent trainings to strengthen understanding and advocacy for students with disabilities. In accordance with Education Code §56191 and the Northwest SELPA Local Plan, the Board is asked to consider representatives from the Mountain View Los Altos Union High School District (MVLA) for nomination to the NW SELPA CAC. This formal Board nomination fulfills SELPA requirements for establishing official membership on the CAC. Both Lara Gill and Makenzie Gallego were nominated by their peers in recognition of their dedication, experience, and knowledge of special education. Their personal experiences as parents of students in the program inspire their continued commitment to fostering inclusive and supportive educational environments.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Board appoint Lara Gill and Makenzie Gallego as District Representatives to the Northwest Special Education Local Plan Area (NW SELPA) Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for one year, 2025-26.

#### **ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member **(Thida Cornes)** Moved, Member **(Catherine Vonnegut)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'It is recommended that the Board appoint Lara Gill and Makenzie Gallego as District Representatives to the Northwest Special Education Local Plan Area (NW SELPA) Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for one year, 2025-26'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **5** Nay: **0**. The motion **Carried. 5 - 0**

Catherine Vonnegut	Yes
Thida Cornes	Yes
Esmeralda Ortiz	Yes
Vadim Katz	Yes
Alex Levich	Yes

### **12.3 Ethnic Studies**

During the 2025 legislative session the California legislature did not fund AB 101 the Ethnic Studies mandate. In 2023, MVLA raised the graduation requirements to 40 credits in Social Studies by adding a year of Ethnic Studies while AB 101 was still considered a mandate. Moving forward, MVLA will consider the approval of Ethnic Studies as a local mandate. The Board will consider one of three options for Ethnic Studies identified at the October 13 Board Study Session meeting. Option A: Status Quo (with possible curriculum adjustments) Option C1: Mandate Ethnic Studies as a semester course Option C2: Mandate Ethnic Studies as a semester course w/ an additional semester Social Studies Course

**Recommendation:** For information and discussion.

Trustee Member Alex Levich moved to approve Option C1 and Vadim Katz seconded the motion. The Trustees discussed the options and then voted on Option C1.

#### **ORIGINAL - Motion**

Member **(xxxxxx)** Moved, Member **(xxxxxx)** Seconded to approve the **ORIGINAL** motion 'For information and discussion'. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **(xx)** Nay: **(xx)**. The motion. **(xx) - (xx)**

See below for Trustee Levich's amended motion on Ethnic Studies options.



### 12.3 Ethnic Studies

During the 2025 legislative session the California legislature did not fund AB 101 the Ethnic Studies mandate. In 2023, MVLA raised the graduation requirements to 40 credits in Social Studies by adding a year of Ethnic Studies while AB 101 was still considered a mandate. Moving forward, MVLA will consider the approval of Ethnic Studies as a local mandate. The Board will consider one of three options for Ethnic Studies identified at the October 13 Board Study Session meeting. Option A: Status Quo (with possible curriculum adjustments) Option C1: Mandate Ethnic Studies as a semester course Option C2: Mandate Ethnic Studies as a semester course w/ an additional semester Social Studies Course

**Recommendation:** For information and discussion.

#### **AMENDED - Motion**

Member **(Alex Levich)** Moved, Member **(Vadim Katz)** Seconded to approve the **AMENDED** motion. Trustee Alex Levich moved to approve Option C1 and Trustee Vadim Katz seconded to approve Option C1. Upon a roll call vote being taken, the vote was: Aye: **3** Nay: **2**. The motion **(Carried)**. **3 - 2**

Catherine Vonnegut	Yes
Thida Cornes	No
Esmeralda Ortiz	No
Vadim Katz	Yes
Alex Levich	Yes

**Note:** Student Trustee Lucy Lai (LAHS) and Claire Schwarzhoff (MVHS) were released at 8:42 PM.

The Board received the following public comment(s) on Agenda Item #12.3:

Sophia Caramagno,	Jorge Pacheco Jr.
Kevin Heiken,	Nir Paz
Marta Heiken	Satish
Debra Strichartz	Maria
Maureen Griffin	Tanya Maluf
Karl Kramer	Anut Chardon
Cindy Sidiaris	Eran Tamari
Tomas Margain	Likbin
Anastasia Espinosa Grunina	Eran Arkin (sp)
Julie Yick	Nadav
Mark Balch	Amber Dyer
Eliana Tekie	Igal Fridman
Kiyoshi Taylor	Candida Diaz
Kenan Moos	Chelsea Doguchi
Guy	Ilana Cohen
Marina Dergun	Nellie Brook
Allyson Rosen	Einav Garten
Alexander Sadovsky	Dafna Horn
Guy Reshef	Will Dawoodi
Ilan Frank	Sarah Townsend-Handley
Tal Shalon	Jenny Polyakov
Elinor Tamari	Sarah Horigstein
Jeanine Valadez	Karla Padua
Ella Maluf	Rae Le
Toni Moos	Ron Bellamy

After the Ethnic Studies discussion, the Board President called for a break at 9:52 PM.

The Board resumed the Board meeting at 9:58 PM.

### **13.0 Board Operations**

#### **13.1 Board Suggestions for Future Board Reports/Meetings**

Trustees may wish to share suggestions for future Board reports/meetings.

**Recommendation:** For information.

Trustee Cornes indicated she would like to discuss the Health online class as a Study Session or discuss next steps.

Trustee Vonnegut agreed there should be a discussion on the online Health class meeting requirements.

Superintendent Volta indicated that the next meeting will be a study session to update the Board Policy following the Ethnic Studies change. President Ortiz concurred.

#### **13.2 Communications/Correspondence**

The Board of Trustees may wish to share communications/correspondence.

**Recommendation:** Information.

N/A

#### **13.3 Legislative Update**

The Superintendent will share updates on legislation relevant or of interest to education.

**Recommendation:** For information.

N/A

#### **13.4 Next Meeting: November 17, 2025, Regular Session, at 7:00 PM in the MVLA District Office, Board Room**

The Board of Trustees will meet next: Regular Board Meeting - Monday, December 15, 2025, District Office, Board Room

Future Board Meeting dates are:

Regular Board Meeting - Monday, January 12, 2026, at MVLA District Office, Board Room

Regular Board Meeting - Monday, January 26, 2026, at MVLA District Office, Board Room

Regular Board Meeting - Monday, February 9, 2026, at MVLA District Office, Board Room

Regular Board Meeting - Monday, March 9, 2026, at MVLA District Office, Board Room

Regular Board Meeting - Monday, March 23, 2026, at MVLA District Office, Board Room

Regular Board Meeting - Monday, April 20, 2026, at MVLA District Office, Board Room

Regular Board Meeting - Monday, May 4, 2026, at MVLA District Office, Board Room

Regular Board Meeting - Monday, May 18, 2026, at MVLA District Office, Board Room

Regular Board Meeting - Monday, June 8, 2026, at MVLA District Office, Board Room

Regular Board Meeting - Monday, June 15, 2026, at MVLA District Office, Board Room

**Recommendation:** For information.

### **14.0 Resume Closed Session if Needed**

**14.1 Items not Completed During the First Closed Session will be Carried Over to this Closed Session**

**Recommendation:** Information/action.

The Board did not reconvene into closed session.

**15.0 Reconvene Open Session and Report Out Action Taken in Second Closed Session**

**15.1 The Board will Reconvene Open Session and Report Out Any Action Taken During Second Closed Session**

**Recommendation:** Information/action.

N/A

**16.0 Adjournment**

**16.1 Adjourn Meeting**

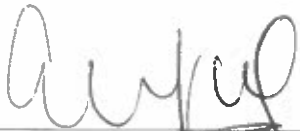
The meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Mountain View Los Altos High School District will adjourn.

**Recommendation:** Approve to adjourn the meeting.

Dr. Ortiz, Board President, adjourned the meeting at 10:52 PM.

*Mountain View Los Altos Union High School District  
Board of Trustees Minutes for October 27, 2025.  
Closed and Regular Session  
District Office Board Room  
1299 Bryant Avenue  
Mountain View, CA 94040*

*Minutes approved on November 17, 2025:*



*Dr. Esmeralda Ortiz, President*



*Alex Levich, Clerk*



*Eric Volta, Secretary*