LOMPOC UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Trusting Relationships + High Expectations = Every Student Achieves

FILED
SUPERIOR COURT of CALIFORNIA
COUNTY of SANTA BARBARA
09/29/2026
Angela Braun, Executive Officer
BY M. Hanson Deputy Clerk

September 27, 2026

The Honorable Patricia Kelly
Santa Barbara County Superior Court
1100 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
pkelly@sbcourts.org

Stacy Mezzetta de Cossio, Foreperson
Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
sbcgj@sbcourts.org

Re: Public Participation Without Barriers: Brown Act Clarity at School Board Meetings

Dear Judge Kelly, Foreperson Mezzetta de Cossio, and Members of the Grand Jury:

The Lompoc Unified School District ("LUSD") provides this letter for the purpose of responding to the findings and recommendations issued by the Santa Barbara County Grand Jury. Although LUSD disagrees with the findings made by the Grand Jury, as described below, LUSD seeks to clarify its practices through this letter. Additionally, with this letter, LUSD also hereby reiterates its commitment to public transparency and desire to comply with the spirit and letter of the Ralph M. Brown Act ("Brown Act").

LUSD conducts the meetings of its Board of Education in accordance with the Brown Act. As stated in the LUSD goals, the Board values the engagement of all educational partners, including the public, and encourages members of the public to attend and participate in the meetings of the Governing Board. As required by law, LUSD posts required information regarding Board meeting dates and times, agendas, materials, and minutes on its website for public review. Agendas are also posted in front of the LUSD District Office, in accordance with the Brown Act. Each agenda includes specific information regarding opportunities for public participation in the meeting and the Board's protocols for public comment.

Because the Board desires to keep the public informed of events occurring throughout LUSD, the Board uses its meetings not only to conduct necessary business, but to inform the community of LUSD events and the status of LUSD projects and initiatives. A typical Board meeting includes student and employee recognition, presentations about school and district programs, updates on LUSD initiatives, and a comprehensive report by the Superintendent on activities and happenings throughout LUSD.

Additionally, the Board often invites students to perform at Board meetings, school sites provide detailed information about events occurring on campus, and the LUSD student Board member provides updates to the Board during regularly scheduled meetings. These events provide the community with the opportunity to experience the exciting accomplishments occurring at LUSD schools. These events bring students, parents, staff, and community members to Board meetings, and the Board meeting room is frequently full or close to full.

LUSD also seeks to engage the community outside of the traditional Board meeting setting by encouraging families to participate in a host of site-level and district-level committees and events throughout the year, including, but not limited to, LCAP (Local Control Accountability Plan) Committee, ELACs (English Learner Advisory Committees), DELAC (District English Learner Advisory Committee), PTAs (Parent Teacher Associations),"Coffee with the Principal"-type events, and multiple surveys.

With this background information provided, LUSD respectfully submits the following responses to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations.

Responses to Findings

Finding 1

Some education governing boards' agendas and public comment instructions imply that members of the public must complete a speaker card, sign-up sheet, online form, or provide identifying information to speak at a public meeting.

LUSD Response to Finding 1: Disagree

LUSD does not require members of the public to complete a sign-in sheet to attend a meeting of the Governing Board. Further, LUSD does not require members of the public wishing to make a comment at the Board meeting to complete a sign-up sheet or online form in advance of a Board meeting. However, the Board requests that individuals wishing to make a public comment at an LUSD Board meeting complete a simple form stating their name and the agenda item or topic they would like to address. LUSD does not require that public speakers provide their address, phone number, or other identifying information on the form. Please be assured that, to the knowledge of the undersigned, the LUSD Board has never refused to allow an anonymous speaker to present a public comment.

Once completed, the public speaker provides the form to the Superintendent's administrative assistant, who presents the forms to the Board President. Forms can be completed while the meeting is in progress.

LUSD requests that public speakers provide their name on the public comment card to facilitate an efficient and effective meeting, and, when appropriate, allow staff to respond to the speaker's questions or concerns after the meeting. The listing of the individual's name allows the Board President to call the public speaker to the microphone and helps ensure the time limits imposed

on all speakers is enforced equitably. The practical rationale for the form and stating of one's name appears to be understood in our community and at our meetings, and we request that individuals do so voluntarily.

Additionally, we encourage educational partners to engage in meeting the needs of students - often by joining SSCs (School Site Councils), ELACs (English Learner Advisory Committees), PTAs (Parent Teacher Associations) and other forums.

Finding 2

Website structure, language access, and accessibility issues at some education governing boards hinder the public's ability to find agendas, minutes, and participation instructions, particularly for Spanish-speaking community members and individuals who rely on accessible document formats.

LUSD Response to Finding 2: Disagree in Part

All information on the District's website can be translated into Spanish and other languages through the website's language-accessibility features. The LUSD Board agenda is available to the public within one click from the website's homepage. LUSD does not currently post Spanish versions of its meeting agendas and minutes on the website, but they can be translated through AI Assistant and are available upon request. LUSD has a practice of providing translation services at Board meetings when requested and will continue to do so upon request.

LUSD recognizes the importance of ensuring that Board information is accessible to all members of the community and will continue to evaluate opportunities to improve language access.

Finding 3

Some governing boards provide no way to participate remotely while public comment is officially open.

LUSD Response to Finding 3: Disagree in Part

LUSD values community involvement and participation in the education of District students and the operation of the District's programs. To promote public transparency, LUSD currently provides the community the opportunity to view its Board meetings remotely in real time via a livestream.

The Board requests that members of the public make in-person public comments at the Board meetings. However, members of the public are always welcome to submit concerns and comments in writing/email. Board member email addresses are available on the District's website.

Finding 4

Some governing boards do not consistently post meeting minutes in a clear and easy-to-find location, which makes it harder for the public to track Board actions over time.

LUSD Response to Finding 4: Disagree

Minutes from all LUSD Board meetings are available on the LUSD website. The Board's agendas and minutes are accessible within one click of the homepage. LUSD maintains an archive of Board meeting minutes so members of the public can review Board actions over time.

Responses to Recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Grand Jury recommends that each education governing board, where listed in Table 1 below, review agenda language and public comment instructions to plainly state that speaker cards, sign-up sheets, and online forms are optional tools used solely to help organize public comment, and to affirm that any person may address the Board during public comment periods without providing a name, address, or other personal identifying information. To be implemented by December 31, 2026.

LUSD Response to Recommendation 1: Will Be Implemented

As stated above, LUSD does not require attendees or speakers to sign their name on a sign-up sheet or submit online forms. The District will review its speaker cards and practices to ensure that speakers are aware that their desire to anonymously address the Board will not preclude them from doing so. LUSD will also review its speaker card and practices to ensure that potential speakers are aware that the request for their name on the speaker card is made for organizational purposes only.

Recommendation 2a

The Grand Jury recommends that each education governing board, where listed in Table 1 below, place a prominent, direct link to current agendas on its primary homepage, as required by Government Code section 54954.2. To be implemented by December 31, 2026.

LUSD Response to Recommendation 2a: Has Been Implemented

Lompoc currently provides easy access to Board agendas through the LUSD website. In addition, when a new Board agenda is posted and until the Board meeting is held, information regarding the upcoming Board meeting is prominently displayed on the LUSD website and at the district office.

Recommendation 2b

The Grand Jury recommends that governing boards serving districts with more than a 20% Spanish-speaking population provide Spanish-language translations of their meetings, agendas, and minutes on their websites. To be implemented by December 31, 2026.

LUSD Response to Recommendation 2b: Will Be Implemented

Lompoc recognizes the importance of providing Spanish-language translation of Board agendas and minutes to Spanish-speaking members of the public. LUSD recognizes that pursuant to Government Code section 54953.4, LUSD is required to provide translations of the Board's agenda when 20 percent of district's population speaks English less than "very well." The District will comply with its obligations under the Brown Act. Additionally, LUSD will review the feasibility of providing a similar translation of the meeting minutes.

Recommendation 3a

The Grand Jury recommends that each education governing board, where listed in Table 1 below, provide video conferencing for remote participation, which also can be used as a broadcast archive. To be implemented by December 31, 2026.

LUSD Response to Recommendation 3a: Will Not Be Implemented At This Time

As stated above, LUSD provides the community with a livestream broadcast which allows members of the community to observe the meetings of the Governing Board. However, the Board has elected not to allow remote public comment at this time. As a preliminary matter, nothing in the Brown Act requires the Board to accept remote public comment when the Board conducts an in-person meeting. Moreover, in the Board's experience, allowing members of the public to provide in-person comment on matters under the Board's jurisdiction and on the Board's agenda balances the right of the public to participate in the Board's meetings with student and employee privacy and the Board's need to conduct efficient and productive meetings in a public setting.

Recommendation 3b

The Grand Jury recommends that, where remote participation is offered, agendas clearly explain how the public may observe and provide comment remotely at any time public comment is open. To be implemented by December 31, 2026.

LUSD Response to Recommendation 3b: Will Be Partially Implemented

As stated above, LUSD provides a livestream of the Board meetings. Information regarding how to access the livestream is provided on the LUSD website. Additionally, as stated above, LUSD does not provide for remote public comment during its Board meetings. Therefore, LUSD has no information to provide regarding remote public comment. However, LUSD will ensure that information related to public comment clearly states that public comment will only be received in-person during the Board meetings.

Recommendation 4

The Grand Jury recommends each governing board adopt a written practice for promptly posting approved minutes on its website. As a best practice, approved minutes should be posted within five business days after approval, with past minutes kept in an accessible online archive. To be implemented by December 31, 2026.

LUSD Response to Recommendation 4: Has Been Implemented

LUSD has an established practice for promptly posting approved Board meeting minutes on its website. LUSD staff works to ensure that approved minutes are posted online as soon as possible following approval by the Board. LUSD maintains an accessible online archive of Board meeting minutes so members of the public can review historical Board actions.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

LOMPOC UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Tracy Phillips
President, Board of Education

Dr. Clara A. Finneran
Superintendent