

Summary of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District Board of Education Special meeting of February 5, 2026

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Here's a summary of the Santa Monica Board of Education meeting:

Core Points

- Meeting Opening and Administrative Procedures
 - The February 5th open meeting from Malibu commenced with roll call, attendance confirmations, and the pledge of allegiance.
 - Agenda adjustments included pulling specific consent items related to student services and postponing the Malibu Middle school site presentation to a March meeting.
 - Approval processes for the agenda and previous meeting minutes were conducted smoothly with unanimous board consent.
- Recognition of Student Achievement
 - Three National Merit Scholarship Commended students from Malibu High School were honored.
 - Each student introduced themselves and shared their intended college study plans, predominantly in environmental sciences and business.
- Public Comments on School Safety and Environmental Concerns
 - Wade Major emphasized the importance of involving the Malibu school safety committee in campus security planning, with attention to visitor log retention and enforcement of video/audio recording policies on campuses.

- Kevin Keegan and Tiffany Murray raised significant concerns about pesticide use on Malibu campuses, referencing violations of local ordinances and inadequate responses to environmental contamination post the Palisades fire. They requested clear commitments to improve health safeguards and compliance with existing regulations.
- Union and Community Reports
 - Claudia from the union reported on Black History Month celebrations, political action related to Proposition 55 funding, and concerns about students' anxiety due to increased ICE enforcement.
 - Efforts were underway to educate families on constitutional rights and to offer preparedness presentations.
 - Facility issues such as HVAC problems at Santa Monica High were acknowledged with ongoing efforts to resolve them.
- Superintendent's Updates and Highlights
 - Updates included the use of district facilities for safe recreational activities (bicycles, scooters, skateboards) during specific hours to support student well-being.
 - Recognition of Black History Month's centennial and Career Technical Education (CTE) Month were underscored, highlighting the value of CTE programs in preparing students for career paths.
 - National School Counselor Week and National Signing Day celebrations were acknowledged, recognizing the vital roles of counselors and student-athletes.

- The superintendent shared insights from educational conferences and expressed gratitude for community support on his birthday.
- Consent and Action Items
 - Consent items, including revisions to board policies related to student services, were approved unanimously.
 - A key clarification was provided on excusing student absences related to parental immigration enforcement situations, granting principals discretion to excuse such absences flexibly.
- Malibu Education Foundation Quarterly Report
 - The foundation reported a 50% year-over-year fundraising increase, raising over \$300,000 mid-year.
 - Funds primarily support student-facing staffing and programs not covered by public funding such as instructional aids, athletics, and tutors.
 - Community engagement and partnerships with local restaurants and donors continue to grow, with a focus on building endowments for long-term funding.
- School Safety Policy Revisions
 - Updates were proposed to board policies (BP) and administrative regulations (AR) concerning visitor protocols, campus safety, and surveillance systems.
 - Emphasis was placed on clarifying visitor sign-in requirements, restricting unauthorized filming on campuses, and detailing enforcement measures for disruptive visitors.

- New state laws require reporting superintendent any registered sex offenders seeking campus access.
- Policy updates also incorporated behavioral threat assessment practices, active shooter drill procedures, and retrofitting classroom doors with interior locks.
- Surveillance and Privacy Concerns
 - Increased use of video surveillance inside school campuses was discussed to enhance safety and assist law enforcement response.
 - Board members expressed concerns about vague policy language regarding surveillance use, monitoring practices, and footage access.
 - It was clarified that cameras are not continuously monitored but can be activated during incidents; access to footage is limited to site administrators, security personnel, and law enforcement under specific conditions.
 - Further clarity will be provided in updated ARs, including cross-references to public records policies and clear guidelines on footage requests and privacy protections.
- PTA Council Report and Community Engagement
 - PTA highlighted ongoing concerns about street safety for students, including recent incidents involving traffic near schools.
 - The council supports Safe Routes to School initiatives and reported on parent education events addressing social media, screen time, and emerging issues related to AI in education.

- Upcoming events aim to engage students, teachers, and parents in understanding the impact of digital technology on youth.
- Board Resolutions
 - The board unanimously adopted resolutions honoring Black History Month and recognizing Career Technical Education Month, emphasizing the importance of these observances in fostering student awareness and career readiness.
- General Public Comments on Environmental and Health Issues
 - Public comments reiterated concerns regarding pesticide use on Malibu campuses and the district's response to contamination from wildfire aftermath.
 - Speakers called for district adherence to local ordinances, transparency, and proactive health protections for the school community.
- Board Member Comments
 - Board members expressed appreciation for career technical education programs and the recent successful partnership events showcasing student learning.
 - Praise was given to educators and students for their engagement and enthusiasm in project-based learning and career pathways.

Key Conclusions

- Board Commitment to Student Safety and Well-being

The meeting reflected a strong focus on enhancing student safety through updated policies, improved facility conditions, and strengthened community partnerships. The board recognizes the evolving challenges related to

campus security, environmental health, and digital surveillance, and is taking active steps to address these areas through policy revisions and community engagement.

- Recognition of Academic and Extracurricular Excellence

Celebrating student achievements such as National Merit commendations and National Signing Day underscores the district's commitment to supporting diverse pathways for student success, including academics, athletics, and career readiness.

- Environmental Health and Compliance as a Priority Concern

The public's concerns about pesticide use and contamination highlight the necessity for the district to align its practices with local environmental policies and public health standards. The board acknowledges these concerns and the need for transparent and timely responses to safeguard the health of students and staff.

- Importance of Community Involvement and Union Collaboration

Union reports and PTA updates demonstrate the value of collaborative efforts in addressing student needs, including mental health, immigration-related anxieties, technology impacts, and traffic safety. These partnerships contribute to a holistic approach to education and well-being.

- Need for Clear and Transparent Policies on Surveillance and Privacy

The discussion revealed a gap in clarity regarding surveillance camera use and visitor protocols. The district plans to enhance administrative regulations to clearly define when and how surveillance is used, who has access to footage, and how privacy is protected, ensuring both safety and trust in school environments.

- Ongoing Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The recognition of Black History Month and CTE Month, alongside efforts to reflect diverse histories and prepare students for future careers, signals the board's dedication to fostering an inclusive and equitable educational experience.

- Flexibility in Addressing Student Attendance and Immigration Issues

The policy allowing principals to excuse absences related to immigration enforcement demonstrates responsiveness to current community realities and the district's commitment to supporting students facing challenging circumstances.

Important Details

- Visitor and Recording Policies

- Visitors are required to sign in and provide identification unless special accommodations are made.
- Unauthorized recording on campus is prohibited except for educational purposes or public events.
- Enforcement guidelines are evolving, with input from legal and school safety experts.

- Visitor Log Retention

- Transitioning to the Ricotta visitor registration system allows indefinite retention of visitor logs, though a formal retention policy aligned with California school district standards is pending development.

- Surveillance Use and Monitoring

- Cameras primarily serve perimeter security but are increasingly used indoors.
 - Live monitoring occurs only during incidents; otherwise, footage is reviewed retrospectively as needed.
 - Access to footage is limited to designated personnel and released only under legal or safety circumstances.
- Environmental Health Concerns
 - Public comments pointed out recent pesticide applications without proper notifications, signage, or safety protocols, allegedly violating the Healthy Schools Act and local coastal program policies.
 - The district faces calls to cease use of toxic chemicals on Malibu campuses and improve transparency and compliance.
- Student Services and Attendance Flexibility
 - Board Policy revisions grant principals discretion to excuse absences linked to family immigration enforcement incidents, recognizing the impact on student attendance and well-being.
- Malibu Education Foundation Funding Focus
 - Raised funds support critical gaps in public funding, including instructional aids, tutoring, athletics, and arts programs.
 - Efforts continue to grow endowments and donor engagement to ensure sustainable support.
- Black History Month and CTE Month Observances
 - February marks the 100th anniversary of Black History Month, with district-wide educational activities reflecting on African American contributions.

- Career Technical Education Month highlights partnership events and programs preparing students for workforce success.
- Union Initiatives Addressing ICE Activity
 - The union is actively supporting families affected by immigration enforcement through education and preparedness events, focusing on constitutional rights and mental health support.
- PTA Focus on Digital Challenges and AI in Education
 - Parent education events address the complexities of social media, screen time, and the emerging role of artificial intelligence in student learning.
 - Emphasis is placed on cultivating human skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and resilience.
- Upcoming Events and Engagement Opportunities
 - PTA Council's February 24th event will screen a documentary on social media's impact on youth, inviting broad community participation.
 - Malibu Education Foundation plans its annual gala in October to further fundraising efforts.
- Facility Improvements and HVAC Issues
 - Ongoing problems with heating and cooling systems at Santa Monica High are being addressed with a promised clearer timeline for resolution.
- Board Member Appreciation and Community Connection

- Superintendent Shelton expressed appreciation for the board and district staff, highlighting the importance of community in sustaining educational progress and personal milestones.
- Policy Implementation Timeline
 - Revised board policies and administrative regulations related to school safety will be brought back for action and information in future meetings, with updates to the online policy manual and training for management teams.
- Legal and Privacy Compliance
 - Coordination between policies on surveillance, public records requests, and privacy protections is ongoing to ensure consistency and legal adherence.

This comprehensive overview captures the critical elements, decisions, and ongoing concerns discussed during the Santa Monica Malibu Unified School District Board meeting, reflecting a multifaceted commitment to student achievement, safety, community engagement, and environmental responsibility.

Please be aware this transcript/summary was generated by an AI and may contain errors or omissions. For complete and accurate information, please consult the original audio or video recording of the meeting.