

News Release

ORANGE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
ORANGE COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Orange County Board of Education and County Superintendent Reach Settlement on Budget Authority Dispute

COSTA MESA, Calif. — The Orange County Board of Education and the Orange County Superintendent of Schools have reached a settlement agreement that resolves a longstanding legal dispute over budget approval and submission authority. The agreement provides clarity on the roles and responsibilities of each office while reinforcing a commitment to collaboration in serving Orange County’s students, families and school districts.

The case dates back to 2019, when the county board filed a lawsuit seeking judicial clarification of its authority under California law to approve and adopt the Orange County Department of Education’s annual budget. The case was initially dismissed in 2022, but in January 2024, the California Courts of Appeal reversed that decision, allowing the suit to proceed.

The lawsuit was initiated during the tenure of former Superintendent Dr. Al Mijares, who retired in June 2024. Dr. Stefan Bean was appointed by the board in June and began his term as county superintendent on July 1, 2024.

Rather than continuing litigation, both parties have agreed to a settlement that affirms their commitment to working collaboratively in developing and preparing the department’s budget, including any board-approved revisions that meet all applicable state regulations under California’s Education Code. The agreement also reinforces the board’s role in approving and adopting the budget while clarifying the superintendent’s responsibility to submit board-approved budgets for state review.

Policies and procedures will be updated to reflect the terms and provide a structured process for future budget approvals.

“This resolution provides a framework for collaboration moving forward and ensures that the budget process remains transparent and efficient,” said Dr. Ken Williams, president of the Orange County Board of Education. “We are committed to working in partnership with the superintendent’s office to best serve our students, schools and communities.”

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Stefan Bean, Ed.D.

“This agreement allows us to focus on what truly matters — supporting our districts and enhancing educational opportunities for every student in Orange County,” said Dr. Stefan Bean, Orange County superintendent of schools. “By working together, we can continue to provide the high-quality programs and services that students, families and educators rely on.”

Both the board and the superintendent’s office expressed confidence that this agreement will bring long-term clarity and stability to the budget process, ensuring a more streamlined approach that allows them to focus on their shared mission of supporting students, educators and school districts across Orange County.

About the Orange County Department of Education

Along with providing direct instruction to Orange County students through its own alternative and special education programs, OCDE supports 28 local school districts that serve approximately 440,000 students with an array of services necessary for their operations, including professional development, high-speed internet access and security, legal guidance, fiscal oversight, payroll systems, Local Control and Accountability Plan assistance and approval, and student enrichment.

About the Orange County Board of Education

The Orange County Board of Education is composed of five elected members who represent trustee areas. The board approves the annual budget of the Orange County Department of Education and reviews its annual audit. It also serves as the appellate body for expulsion and interdistrict transfer appeals and reviews charter school petitions denied at the district level. Additionally, the board represents Orange County’s education community at the local, state and national levels while working to promote student achievement and educational opportunities.

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