



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
March 11, 2026 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
HIGH TECH HIGH**

Date: March 11, 2026

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Place: The Forum, 2150 Cushing Rd. San Diego, CA 92106
 Village-based Zoom accessibility:
 Conference Room, High Tech High Mesa, 5331 Mt Alifan Dr, Bldg. 900 San Diego, CA 92111
 Conference Room, High Tech Middle North County, 1460 W San Marcos Blvd, San Marcos, CA 92078
 Conference Room, High Tech High Chula Vista, 1945 Discovery Falls Dr, Chula Vista, CA 91915

Zoom(Video):
<https://hightechhigh-org.zoom.us/j/82510858918?pwd=Ilkywxv38CCK1xjViy4V7jv2jdBIIE.1&jst=2>

Trustees present: Gary Jacobs, Chairman; Christine McComish, Secretary; Randolph Ward, Trustee; Albert Lin, Trustee; Hadassah Avila, Student Board Member; Diego Harris, Student Board Member

Board Member	Present
Gary Jacobs, Chairperson	X
Christine McComish, Secretary	X
Albert Lin, Trustee	X
Lida Rafia, Trustee	
Randolph Ward, Trustee	X
Hadassah Avila, Student Trustee	X
Diego Harris, Student Trustee	X

Staff Present: Diana Cornejo-Sanchez, CEO; Isaac Jones, COO; Bobbi Norris, CFO; Patrick Frost, GC; Janie Griswold, CLO; Elizabeth Martinez, Executive Assistant to the Officers

Others present: Rodolfo Valentan, interpreter
 Kathy Figueroa, interpreter
 High Tech High staff
 Members of HTH community

CALL TO ORDER at 5:02 by Gary Jacobs, Chairman. A roll call of trustees confirmed a quorum.

1.0 BOARD CONSENT ITEMS

1.1 Approve the February 20, 2026 Special Meeting Minutes

1.2 Approve the February 25, 2026 Regular Meeting Minutes

1.1.1 - 1.2.1 Discussion: Staff members provided the Board an opportunity to review and discuss the Board consent agenda items.

1.1.2 - 1.2.2 Motion: There being no further discussion upon motion duly made by Christine McComish and seconded by Diego Harris, a roll call was taken to approve the motion.

Board Member	Ayes	Nos	Abstain	Absent
Gary Jacobs, Chairperson	X			
Christine McComish, Secretary	X			
Albert Lin, Trustee	X			
Lida Rafia, Trustee				X
Randolph Ward, Trustee	X			
Hadassah Avila, Student Trustee	X			
Diego Harris, Student Trustee	X			

2.0 INFORMATION ITEMS

2.1 Report of the Officers

Officer comments included the following:

- CEO Cornejo-Sanchez introduced Amy Briggs to provide an update on Special Education (SPED), following questions raised in prior board meetings regarding rising SPED enrollment and associated costs. Amy will share the work currently underway with the SPED committee and outline considerations for moving forward, given the rising cost and financial resources attached to that. Amy began by reviewing data over the last couple of years. Since December 2017, the organization has experienced a significant increase in the number of students identified with special needs. The most notable growth has occurred within schools in the San Diego region, reflecting a trend that is consistent with statewide patterns. The statewide average identification rate is approximately 12.45%, and increases are being observed at the organizational, state, and national levels. Amy shared as to why our numbers are increasing so much more than the average in California. She noted that many families are transferring from San Diego Unified School District, seeking alternative learning environments. Families often believe smaller school settings may provide more individualized attention. Data from the previous year indicated

that 46% of the 144 students assessed had been enrolled with High Tech High for less than one year, suggesting that many students are being evaluated soon after enrollment when academic or behavioral challenges become evident. This means that students are coming in and are assessed pretty quickly the moment they start struggling. The majority of students fall under specific learning disabilities: reading, writing & math, as well as other health impairments. 20% of our students are qualified under autism. This is where they are seeing challenges in the classroom; challenges in behavior.

- Amy then went on to address the rising cost of SPED expenses. She noted that this is due to a variety of factors. Students are coming in with 1:1 on their IEPs; which is hard to remove once implemented. They are working towards helping students become more independent. Students are coming from more restrictive settings than what we have, so a 1:1 is provided to support the students in the gen ed setting. There are also more requests for 1:1s from staff members than from parents. Students have high needs and have low independent skills, and teachers are not sure what to do; they see 1:1s as the solution. Case loads have been reduced with more Ed Specialists, which is good, but it is also contributing to the cost. There are school psychologists at every site. Contracted 1:1s are the biggest ticket & biggest challenge. A lot of the time, kids will have needs, and the quickest way to address them is with a 1:1. SPED has been working with directors, letting them know this is not an urgent need. She encouraged directors to go through Scoot sub before contracting a 1:1. San Diego Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services are very expensive.
- Amy shared the plan moving forward. They will be working in collaboration with the union and leadership to build out a robust Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) and Student Support Team (SST) system to ensure students are getting interventions before referral for assessment. They also want to create a continuum of services across schools with current staff. They are also looking at reviewing all 1:1s. There is a new tool to determine a student's need for a 1:1. We have been using an old evaluation tool. This new evaluation will be more targeted and clear for why a 1:1 is needed and when they are needed. They would look at a central team of people to support schools to help determine if a student needs 1:1. This approach will help to reduce potential bias when evaluations are conducted solely by site-based staff.
- Secretary McComish thanked Amy for her presentation. She noted that this is important, and she wonders if there has been a conversation about incorporating CA insurance to cover costs. She appreciates that Amy is always looking for ways to cover costs. Secretary McComish asked if current evaluations are used more for traditional school settings, and whether the new tool is well-suited for a Project-Based Learning (PBL) school. Amy responded that they are seeing students who do not need 1:1 in a traditional setting struggle more in our setting. Projects are executive functioning. Projects require planning out from day-to-day and week-to-week. We have more 1:1s because of our setting. As for the new evaluation tool, Amy will be going up for training to get more information. It is supposed to be very specific, with more observation and looking at the actual need. Out of all the charter systems, we have the most 1:1s with academic needs. Most of the time, 1:1s are needed for major behaviors.

HTH students have them for academics. These assessments will help determine the actual need. Secretary McComish would love to hear how it is going in the next school year once this is implemented. She thinks what Amy is prioritizing correctly, but in the future, maybe including a family piece that offers support for families to help know how to support their students. Amy replied that she and Casey Salmon have been talking about doing a webinar where families can come and ask questions, so they understand what would be required for an IEP.

- Trustee Lin asked Amy to clarify how Special Education (SPED) services are funded and whether the state provides financial support. Amy explained that funding is provided through AB 602, a state allocation model, which has increased from approximately \$500 per student in 2017 and is expected to reach \$1,000 per student in the coming year. However, she noted that this funding does not fully cover the cost of services. The organization is looking into dipping into general funds to address the gap. While some large districts allocate up to 60% of their budgets to SPED services, the organization is currently at approximately 25%. Trustee Lin inquired if there are any incentive for schools. Amy confirmed that there are no incentives tied to serving students with special needs, despite the higher associated costs.
- Trustee Lin asked regarding creating better professional development (PD). Amy acknowledged this concern and shared that many teachers feel underprepared to support students with special needs. The idea for PD is to foster greater collaboration among education specialists, general education teachers, and leadership teams in order to better support students with IEPs without over-reliance on one-to-one. Chairman Jacobs emphasized the importance of identifying solutions that are both financially sustainable and mindful of staff capacity, particularly in avoiding teacher burnout. CFO Norris shared that she has developed site-level estimates of SPED encroachment and will distribute this information following the meeting. Trustee Lin asked what the quality of the PBIS (pupil behavioral intervention service) is from school to school. Amy responded that several schools have been trained at different times. The focus will be on the multi-tier supports with the assumption that special education does not replace or take away, but rather is an addition to tier 1 & 2
- Trustee Ward noted that teachers generally have a strong understanding of student needs. Tier 2 is a higher intervention. Tier 3 is severe interventions. Amy added that HTH teachers understand students coming into classrooms with different levels of needs. They have seen an increase in need. Trustee Ward asked if there is a formal commitment to PBIS at every school site; as in program development. Amy confirmed that we are looking at formalizing a system of support, and will be providing staff training.

3.0 COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

3.1 Members of the public were provided time to address the board.

4.0 BOARD REPORT AND COMMENTS

4.1 Chairman's Report

4.2 Board Member Comment

Chairman and Board Member comments included the following:

- The Board recognized and congratulated faculty, staff, and students on a significant increase in University of California (UC) admissions, with acceptance rates doubling compared to prior years and exceeding organizational benchmarks. Additionally, High Tech High International (HTHI), High Tech Middle North County (HTMNC), and High Tech High Media Arts (HTHMA) were recognized as Distinguished Schools.
- Student Trustee Diego provided an update on the student representative program, noting that the Chula Vista site is now up and running. He shared that meetings have been scheduled with High Tech High Mesa (HTHM) on March 12 and HTH after. Everyone they have heard from loves the idea. Secretary McComish asked if they are just meeting with juniors and seniors. Student Trustee Diego clarified that the program is engaging students across all grade levels. While initial consideration was given to focusing on juniors and seniors, the team determined that including younger students—particularly freshmen—provides valuable and candid perspectives. Trustee Ward emphasized the benefit of early engagement, noting that students who are introduced to the program earlier can develop strong leadership skills over time. Student Trustee Diego said they are working with HTHM student senate, originally working with ASB. Chairman Jacobs added to take action on getting middle schools going to the community college

5.0 PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

5.1 None.

6.0 CEO CONSENT ITEMS

6.1 Approve the Instructional Days Academic Calendar for 2027-28

6.2 Approve the Asbestos Management Plans for all 16 High Tech High Schools

6.1.1-6.2.1 Discussion: Staff members provided the Board an opportunity to review and discuss the CEO consent agenda items.

6.1.2-6.2.2 Motion: There being no further discussion upon motion duly made by Randolph Ward and seconded by Hadassah Avila, a roll call was taken to approve the motion.

Board Member	Ayes	Nos	Abstain	Absent
Gary Jacobs, Chairperson	X			
Christine McComish, Secretary	X			
Albert Lin, Trustee	X			
Lida Rafia, Trustee				X

Randolph Ward, Trustee	X			
Hadassah Avila, Student Trustee	X			
Diego Harris, Student Trustee	X			

7.0 ACTION ITEMS

7.1 Approve the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Charter School Second Interim Financial Reports to the Authorizers

7.1.1 Discussion: Staff recommends the Board Approve the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Charter School Second Interim Financial.

7.1.2 Motion: There being no further discussion upon motion duly made by Randolph Ward and seconded by Diego Harris a roll call was taken to approve the motion.

Board Member	Ayes	Nos	Abstain	Absent
Gary Jacobs, Chairperson	X			
Christine McComish, Secretary	X			
Albert Lin, Trustee	X			
Lida Rafia, Trustee				X
Randolph Ward, Trustee	X			
Hadassah Avila, Student Trustee	X			
Diego Harris, Student Trustee	X			

7.2 Approve the High Tech High Initial Proposals for Collective Bargaining

7.2.1 Discussion: Staff recommends the Board Approve the High Tech High Initial Proposals for Collective Bargaining.

7.2.2 Motion: There being no further discussion upon motion duly made by Christine McComish and seconded by Albert Lin, a roll call was taken to approve the motion.

Board Member	Ayes	Nos	Abstain	Absent
Gary Jacobs, Chairperson	X			
Christine McComish, Secretary	X			
Albert Lin, Trustee	X			
Lida Rafia, Trustee				X
Randolph Ward, Trustee	X			
Hadassah Avila, Student Trustee	X			
Diego Harris, Student Trustee	X			

7.3 Approve the Amendment to the Public Participation Policy

7.3.1 Discussion: Staff recommends the Board approve the Amendment to the Public Participation Policy. Trustee Randolph shared he knows this will not happen much. He questions if someone at the podium versus staff if there is a difference. Chairman Jacobs commented that the Board will get to see public comments in advance. Trustee Randolph responded, saying, let's say there are 5 and there is a lot of participation at the meeting, how will we see it - would Chairman Jacobs receive it in his packet? CEO Cornejo-Sanchez confirmed that written comments would be included in the Board packet prior to the meeting. Trustee Lin added that, for some participants, virtual engagement through Zoom may be the primary means of participation. Trustee Randolph further noted that current policy limits public comment to 45 minutes, meaning not all comments may be heard aloud during meetings. Trustee Lin believes it's an important role. Chairman Jacobs emphasized that the Board will always receive those letters. Trustee Randolph stated it is the role of the board. General Counsel Frost commented that we can always give it a try. If it doesn't work, we can change it. Secretary McComish shared that we are making this rule to protect against people who might not have the organization's best interest at heart. But, after hearing the teacher speak about it. Trustee Ward clarified that it was only one person who spoke on this item. Secretary McComish stated that they, as a Board, represent the interests of the organization. She extends the same feeling towards union reps - they are representing teachers. After hearing them, it does make sense to try it. If it doesn't work out it doesn't work out. It's important not to operate out of fear of what might happen and just try it. Trustee Lin added that advance access to written comments is particularly important for Board members who may not always be able to attend meetings in person. There are a lot of activities that might prevent people from being present. If we had to take 3 hours of public comments, it's the most important thing we can do. Secretary McComish further suggested that clearer communication to the public regarding the Board's role and areas of authority may help focus comments on actionable topics. Student Trustee Diego asked whether Board members attending via Zoom would receive digital copies of public comments under the proposed process. CEO Cornejo-Sanchez confirmed that they would. Trustee Randolph's final comment was why have public comments if you are not here? You don't get the public comments minutes.

7.3.2 Motion: There being no further discussion upon motion duly made by Albert Lin and seconded by Diego Harris, a roll call was taken to approve the motion.

Board Member	Ayes	Nos	Abstain	Absent
Gary Jacobs, Chairperson	X			
Christine McComish, Secretary	X			
Albert Lin, Trustee	X			
Lida Rafia, Trustee				X
Randolph Ward, Trustee	X			
Hadassah Avila, Student Trustee	X			
Diego Harris, Student Trustee	X			

8.0 CLOSED SESSION ITEMS

8.1 No closed session was held.

9.0 RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

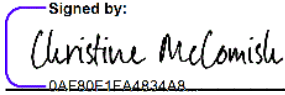
9.1 N/A

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to be brought before the Board, it was the consensus of the Board to adjourn the meeting at 5:54 pm.

Next Scheduled Meetings:

- Wednesday, May 20, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.
- Thursday, June 18, 2026 at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:  Signed by:
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Christine McComish, Secretary, High Tech High Board