

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ~ DISTRICT 66

Board of Education Meeting Minutes ~ November 17, 2025

The Board of Education of School District 66 was convened in an open and public session on November 17, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the District Administration Office, 909 S. 76th St., Omaha, Nebraska.

Board members present: Adam Yale, President
Kris Karnes, Vice President
Meagan Van Gelder, Treasurer
Sarah Rider, Treasurer-Elect
Dana Blakely, Director

Board Member absent (excused): Beth Morrisette, Secretary

Notice of the meeting was given by placing advance notice on the front page of the District's website no less than 48 hours in advance of the scheduled commencement of the meeting as authorized by Board Policy 1220. Notice for this meeting appeared beginning on November 4, 2025, and appeared continuously up through the start of this board meeting. Notice of the meeting was also published in the Daily Record on November 14 and 17, 2025, and on their website at omahadailyrecord.com, as well as the NE Press Association website at nepublicnotices.com. Copies of proof of publication are attached to the official minutes. Notice of this meeting and the availability of the agenda were simultaneously given to all members of the Board of Education and available to anyone at the Board of Education office. All proceedings hereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

District Staff in Attendance: Mike Lucas, Mark Weichel, Andrea Haynes, Nick Lesiak, Kim De La Cruz, Kami Jessop, Kelcy Tapp, Laura Mann, Robert Aranda, Matt Lee, April Bridwell.

Others in Attendance*: Stephanie Adams. *Members of the public are not required to identify themselves to attend. Attendee names appearing in these minutes are those who signed a voluntary sign-in sheet.

Mr. Yale called the Board of Education Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He welcomed those in attendance and confirmed that public notice had been given of the meeting under the Nebraska Open Meetings Act and that a copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was posted at the meeting and on the district website, as required by law. He acknowledged that the meeting had been publicly announced and the agenda was available to any interested parties. Board Meeting attendance is noted above. Mr. Yale requested a motion to approve an excused absence for Ms. Morrisette. Ms. Blakely moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Yale requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the Board of Education Meeting held on November 3, 2025. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Mr. Yale requested a motion for approval of the minutes from the Board of Education Design Development Review Meeting held on November 14, 2025. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Ms. Blakely seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote.

Treasurer's Report

Dr. Van Gelder presented the treasurer's report for October 2025 and moved for approval of expenditures in the amount of \$17,175,444; Ms. Rider seconded. Approval of expenditures was passed by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the October 2025 financial reports (financial statements, general fund disbursement summary and general fund check register) are included in the board documents folder.

Communications

Ms. Elizabeth Power, Director of Communications and Engagement, shared student, staff and community highlights: On Monday, November 10th, the district celebrated the opening of the new Hillside Elementary with a ribbon-cutting ceremony and community open house; on November 4th, the Westside Foundation held a dedication event for Phase I of the Life Complex at Westside High School; and on Veteran's Day - November 11th - students across the district celebrated our veterans with special programs honoring their service to our country.

Bond Phase II Project - Approval of Loveland Elementary Design Development Package

Mr. Matt Herzog, Project Advocates, and Mr. Matt Wegener and Ms. Cynthia Ray, BVH Architects, presented the Design Development Package for the new Loveland Elementary School for approval. On Friday, November 14, 2025, at a public meeting, the Board of Education had the opportunity to preview the final Design Development package, which is now being presented for board approval. Construction is scheduled to begin in June 2026 at the school site and March of 2026 at the existing houses. Staff and students will move to the District's Swing School (108th & Grover) during construction. Dr. Van Gelder moved for approval; Ms. Karnes seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. Copies of the Executive Summary and slide presentation are included in the board documents folder.

Annual District Audit Report

Ms. Jamie Fay, CPA with Eide Bailly LLP, presented the Annual District Audit Report. Ms. Fay expressed appreciation for the assistance of District staff in handling requests for information that were made during the audit process. She reported that the District received a "clean, unmodified audit opinion", fairly presented and with no misstatements. Continued care and attentiveness to budgeting allowed the District to realize an increase of \$3,162,956 to the General Fund balance. The Board of Education Finance Committee met virtually with Ms. Fay prior the November 3rd board meeting. Copies of the Audit Report and Ms. Fay's slide presentation are included in the board meeting documents folder.

New Courses at WHS for the 2026-2027 School Year

Ms. Kim De La Cruz, Director of Secondary Teaching and Learning, shared an extensive list of new courses that will be offered at the high school in the 2026-2027 school year that includes: 1) Project Lead the Way; 2) Aerospace Engineering; 3) Forklift Operator; 4) Commercial Drone Flight: Physics, Operations, and Part 107 Exam Prep; 5) Project Lead the Way Human Body Systems; 6) Forensic Science 2; 7) Project Lead the Way Cybersecurity; 8) Sculpture - 3D Design; 9) Digital Art and Design 2; 10) EL English 1; and 11) Unified Show Choir and Adaptive Music.

Additionally, a number of courses across the curriculum will reflect name, structure, and / or prerequisite changes that will open up coursework choices for students. A copy of the Executive Summary is included in the board documents folder.

Strategic Plan Report - Goal 4: Finance, Safety and Infrastructure

Dr. Mark Weichel, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; Dr. Matt Lee, Interim Director of Technology; Mr. Erin Vik, Director of Nutrition Services; and Mr. Andy Wane, Director of Facilities provided an update on strategies that are aligned with Goal 4 of the Strategic Plan: Finance, Safety, and Infrastructure. They highlighted a number of key elements as they relate to: short and long term budget goals and maintaining a favorable cash reserve; the pursuit of alternate funding sources through state and federal grants, and the Westside Foundation to sustain / develop innovative programming and facilities; the establishment of short and long term facilities maintenance and planning goals; providing secure, safe and well-maintained facilities that ensure student and staff safety; providing high-quality meals that are well balanced and nutritious; and maintaining a technology infrastructure that provides reliable connectivity, printing, and support services. Copies of the Executive Summary and slide presentation are included in the board documents folder.

Update on District WE-SIDE Initiative

Ms. Dani Herzog, Coordinator of District Special Projects, provided an update on the District's WE-SIDE initiative (**Welcoming Equity Support Inclusion and Dignity for Everyone**) that was launched in the summer of 2020 with the goal of ensuring that every single person in our school community - and our visitors - feel welcomed and valued. Ms. Herzog shared highlights of the many activities, events and opportunities that have grown from the initial 2020 discussion of how we - as a school community - can make sure that we are supporting our students, staff and families from all backgrounds. Opportunities for involvement are available at all grade levels and have been incorporated into district professional learning sessions. At the district level, engagement activities are made available for the whole community, including Community Walks (i.e. - movie night at Film Streams; tours at El Museo Latino, the Samuel Bak Museum, and the Great Plains Black History Museum); regular Westside UNIFIED events; and the WE-SIDE Multicultural Fair, a free event for families held in the spring. The 4th Annual WE-SIDE Multicultural Fair is scheduled for May 2, 2026. Copies of the Executive Summary and slide presentation are included in the board documents folder.

Board Policies for Review

Mr. Nick Lesiak, In-House Legal Counsel, presented revisions to two existing policies for board consideration and discussion. Revisions represent minor updates to defined terms and the addition of clarifying language.

#6300 - Controversial Issues (Instruction) - These revisions come from KSB's policy book and are intended to outline the requirements for teachers teaching controversial subjects.

#6400 - Student Trips (Instruction) - These (minor) revisions are mostly intended to clarify existing language and fix defined terms.

Policies will be presented for approval at the Board of Education Meeting on December 8, 2025. Redline copies of each policy and the Executive Summary are included in the board documents folder.

Personnel Report: Employment Actions Related to the Contracts of Certified Staff Members

Dr. Andrea Haynes, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and District Operations, presented the personnel report (three certified staff retirements) for board approval. Ms. Rider moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. A copy of the personnel report is included in the board documents folder.

Disposal of District Property (Policy 3450)

Dr. Lucas requested board approval for the sale of equipment and furniture from Hillside and Westgate, and surplus equipment from the Service Center and high school weight room, with proceeds going to the General Fund. Some of the school building furniture will be utilized at the Swing School for Loveland students and staff. The sale - to be held in January 2026 - will be advertised to other area school districts / teachers, community centers, churches, etc. Westside staff will have the opportunity to claim items at no charge, only if the item is to be used in their classroom or building. At that time, our Building Service staff will move these items to the identified classroom or building. Staff will have the opportunity to purchase any items they wish to claim for their own personal use. Ms. Karnes moved for approval; Dr. Van Gelder seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. A copy of the Executive Summary is included in the board documents folder.

Legislative Priorities for the 2026 Legislative Session

Dr. Lucas presented the District's Legislative Priorities for the 2026 Legislative Session for board approval. Priority statements are: (1) Westside Community Schools supports legislation that will help with recruiting and retaining high quality staff; (2) Westside Community Schools supports a school finance model that is predictable and sustainable without limiting the current levy authority; (3) Westside Community Schools supports the current net option aspect in the state's formula; (4) Westside Community Schools opposes funding to any entities not subject to the same accountability and standards as Nebraska public schools; and (5) Westside Community Schools supports "local control" to be utilized as often as possible, as locally elected officials are extremely accountable and capable to make decisions in the best interest of their school district and community. Dr. Van Gelder moved for approval; Ms. Rider seconded. Motion carried by unanimous roll call vote. The 2026 Legislative Session is scheduled to convene on January 7, 2026. A copy of the Executive Summary is included in the board documents folder.

Written Report: Computer Science and Technology Annual Curriculum Report

Per the Computer Science and Technology Education Act that was passed by the Nebraska Legislature in the Spring of 2022, Ms. De La Cruz submitted the annual Computer Science and Technology curriculum report for review by the Board of Education. A copy of Ms. De La Cruz's Executive Summary is included in the board documents folder.

Public Comment: There were no requests for public comment.

Board Member Representation / Legislative Updates / Announcements

The Board was represented at a number of activities and meetings over the last two weeks, including: the Westside Life Complex Dedication; Hillside Elementary ribbon-cutting ceremony; walk-throughs at Sunset Hills, Underwood Hills and Westside Middle School; monthly assembly and principal meeting at Prairie Lane;

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Loveland Design Development review meeting; board policy subcommittee meeting; 3:1 meeting; District CPR class; and family meal distribution.

November 19-21, 2025	State Education Conference - CHI
November 26-28, 2025	Thanksgiving Break - No School
November 27-28, 2025	District Offices Closed
December 1, 2025	BOE Board Orientation Planning Workshop - 4:00 p.m. - Hoich Alumni House
December 3, 2025	Special Education Showcase for State Senators - 10:00 a.m. - ABC Building
December 8, 2025	Board of Education Meeting - 6:00 p.m. - ABC Building
December 15, 2025	Bond Oversight Committee Report - 6:00 p.m. - ABC Building
Dec. 22, 2025 through January 5, 2026	Winter Break - No School

There being no further business, Mr. Yale adjourned the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

Beth Morrisette, Secretary, Board of Education

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NOTICE OF MEETING**

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11/14, 11/17 ZNEZ



The Daily Record

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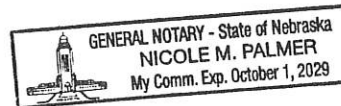
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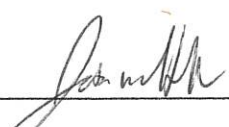


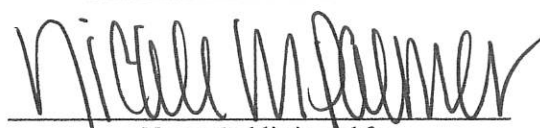
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Subscribed in my presence and sworn to before
me this NOVEMBER 17 2025


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My Comm. Exp. April 6, 2028.

Chris R
Notary Public